

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 17 – NO. 40

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

\$1

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

SEPTEMBER 5, 2019

NEWS ANALYSIS

Enrollment Loss, Family Decisions Cause Collapse of County's Historic Football Programs

By JEFF SINGLETON

FRANKLIN COUNTY – “It is truly sad for this [Turners Falls football] era to end like this,” Turners Falls High School athletic director Adam Graves wrote in an email to school officials on August 22. “As someone who attended games as a little kid with my grandfather, to playing on this field with some of our present coaches, to coaching on the sidelines, and now as AD, this has been a very difficult and emotional decision.”

As most Turners Falls High School sports fans are by now aware, the school's football program has been canceled, at least for this year, due to low player turnout. Instead, Turners students wishing to play the sport could be traveling to Mohawk Trail Regional High School in Buckland, another program with a long and proud tradition but with declining participation.

The combination of the two under Mohawk's name and schedule, which is called an “emergency co-op” arrangement, must still be approved by the board of the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA). Their decision is expected on Friday.

Even if the co-op plan is approved, there will at most be one

see **FOOTBALL** page A4

Judge Rejects Stay of State Forest Logging

By JEFF SINGLETON

WENDELL – A state Superior Court judge has rejected a request from the Wendell State Forest Alliance for a temporary stay in logging at a portion of the forest while the group seeks to halt the project as a violation of state law. The lawsuit was directed at the state Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), which is directing the “forest management” project on 88 acres of the 7,566-acre forest.

The alliance has argued that the logging violates a number of state laws, including a 1958 law prohibiting commercial activities on park lands, except for the “quiet enjoyment of the people,” and the Global Warming Standards Act (GWSA), which requires the state to reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

The lawsuit also argued that DCR violated the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), which requires state agencies to evaluate the environmental impact of proposed projects; failed to give the public adequate input into the project during the planning process; and violated public records law in ignoring requests for evaluations of the project's carbon impact.

see **FOREST** page A6

BACK TO SCHOOL!



Every morning at 8 a.m., the “Walking School Bus” to Sheffield Elementary departs from Fourth and L streets in Turners Falls. School staff and volunteers escort students and help with street crossings. The state of Massachusetts only reimburses districts for busing students who live more than 1.5 miles from their school, and downtown falls within that radius.

West County Residents Angry Over Late Notification of Deadly Acid Spill

By SARAH ROBERTSON

COLRAIN – Tens of thousands of fish are estimated to have died in the North River over the holiday weekend after a chemical storage tank apparently failed at the Barnhardt Manufacturing Company, releasing gallons of sulfuric acid into the river.

According to the state Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), Barnhardt employees discovered a tank of sulphuric acid leaking at their facility around 6 a.m. Sunday morning. They worked immediately to stop the leak, then reported the incident to MassDEP around 8 a.m., according to MassDEP deputy regional director Catherine Skiba.

“They believed it was all in containment. It wasn't until later in the day that they noticed there was a release,” Skiba said. “They didn't know there was fish kill until the environmental police were notified.”



The mass death of fish in the North River caused widespread public alarm.

Neither the MassDEP nor local Colrain authorities made any attempt to notify the public of the spill on Sunday.

“I think people are outraged there wasn't public notice given about safety concerns,” said Eric Halloran, vice president of Deerfield River Watershed Trout Unlimited. “I think those concerns are valid,

because people do swim in the river every day, and let their kids play in the river.”

Halloran lives along the river in Shelburne, and noticed dozens – and then hundreds – of dead fish washed up in the rocks and eddies on Sunday afternoon. After taking photos, he reported the fish kill

see **ACID** page A7

Iconic Road Directory Restored

By ED GREGORY



Jason Clark of Ashfield repainted the historic marker's lettering on August 16.

MONTAGUE CENTER – The date of placement of the road directory at the east end of Main Street in Montague Center has an elusive focus. I find no definitive date in Edward Pressey's *History of Montague* (1910), or other historical writings on the Town of Montague or Montague Center.

Casual conversation with a few “old-timers” from the area offer speculative dates, i.e. “late 1700s,” “around 1800,” or “sometime during the 1800s.” A reasonable hypothesis might be circa 1800 to 1825. New Salem, settled in 1737, was the most recently settled town listed on the road marker, though “South Deerfield” may date to the early 19th century.

The road directory was re-lettered in 2000 by Mary Melonis, archivist and founding member of the Montague Historical Society. In the time between then and the present, the integrity of the original

see **RESTORED** page A6

GILL SELECTBOARD

Ward Questions Montague's Tax Deal With Hydro Company

By MIKE JACKSON

“Why couldn't they hold out for the whole assessment?” Gill selectboard chair John Ward asked on Tuesday, responding to news that the neighboring town of Montague had reached a settlement with FirstLight Power over a disputed tax bill. “Any less is a bad precedent.”

Like Montague, Gill has been engaged in a “two-pronged approach” to resolving the question of the hydro company's disputed property tax assessments: a formal process before the state appellate tax board, and the direct negotiation of a possible compromise.

Ward's comments came after the Gill selectboard held a breezy, 27-minute meeting Tuesday evening, in which they briefly discussed Montague's announcement of a settlement, as well as FirstLight's ongoing application to relicense its Northfield Mountain and Turners Falls hydroelectric operations with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

see **GILL** page A5

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

McDonald Will Depart From Top Waste Post

By MIKE JACKSON

Bob McDonald, hired in 2016 as superintendent of Montague's wastewater treatment plant, gave public notice of his resignation at the August 26 selectboard meeting. His last day will be September 13.

“I really enjoyed my time here with you folks,” McDonald said. He told the *Reporter* that he was leaving for a position in the town of Templeton, a significantly shorter commute from his home.

“I think you've helped to raise the department to a higher level than we were at,” selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz told him. “I know that it's a very difficult job – you're at the end of the pipe, and sometimes it all ends up there.”

McDonald said he would be available to help the town with its EPA filings until a successor is hired.

“It's advantageous to us that we have a veteran staff,” town administrator Steve Ellis said, reporting on the prospect of a transition without a superintendent.

Kuklewicz said the town may need to bring in an outside contractor on an interim basis until the position is filled.

McDonald's tenure has coincided with a time of turmoil for the department, as regulatory agencies ordered a halt to the so-called “Montague Process,” a staff modification of the plant's intended design that had allowed the town to bring in revenue by processing significant volumes of sludge from other jurisdictions; the loss of PaperLogic, one of the sewer system's last remaining industrial customers; and dramatic hikes in sewer fees, determined to be necessary to balance the books.

This summer, the town hired see **MONTAGUE** page A8

Index of Contents

Letters to the Editors.....A2	An Alternative Montague.....B1
Illustration.....A2	ArtBeat: Russian Icon Museum.....B1
Local Briefs.....A3	Gardener's Companion: Don't Flush.....B2
Leverett Selectboard Notes.....A4	September Library Events.....B2
Gill-Montague School Committee Notes.....A5	Montague Police Log.....B3
Wendell Selectboard Notes.....A6	Comic Strips.....B4
Ten Years Ago.....A7	NatureCulture Page.....B6
Valley View: A Final Walk.....B1	A&E Calendar.....B7



The Montague Reporter

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The Ring of Eyes

It turns out that when science fiction writers and filmmakers used to portray the coming dystopia of total surveillance, they usually got one thing wrong. They tended to imagine the suffocating system that would strip away our precious human freedom and privacy would be built out by a single central power, seeking to extend its knowledge into all corners of our lives.

But even the classic totalitarian states of the 20th century, with their party members and secret police and purges of dissidents, did nothing to prepare us for the purest technology of control: the \$200 doorbell.

Crime in America is at a historic low, but anxiety about it is riding as high as ever, and fear is a great money-maker. Last year, the logistics monopoly Amazon acquired a company called Ring, which specializes in home-security devices networked to what some have called the Internet of Things.

Millions of front doors in this country are newly equipped with these automatic cameras, facing the street. Owners can use them to review, via their phones, who has dropped a package on their porch. Ring is not the only company to provide such a product, but it has also made two important advances.

The first is the Neighbors app, a social-media network by which owners can share the video streams with each other, compare notes, and catalog suspicion about all the things the cameras can see.

It's a special kind of massively distributed neighborhood watch group, and while that may sound innocuous to some, anyone who has spent much time reading police logs in the newspaper should be able to imagine the downside to encouraging the most suspicious minds to peer at an endless stream of strangers together.

The second is Ring's partnership with local law enforcement agencies – 405 and counting. No departments in our area have signed up, but the idea is spreading very rapidly, with almost no public discussion of its implications or potential for abuse.

Ring supplies police departments with packaged talking points about their use of the for-profit technology, and advises them how to request, through its "law enforcement portals," users' surveillance video without a warrant. Though your own doorbell's footage expires automatically within 60 days, if you agree to share it with local police, it survives indefinitely, and can be

passed around among agencies.

Consider, then, what this massive cloud-based video archive could be used for, given that we have also recently crossed into the age of swift and accurate facial recognition software.

Americans squirm with distaste when we see reporting on Beijing, dense with closed-circuit cameras that help police track the identities of everyone who moves through the urban space.

And yet many of us are buying Ring cameras from Amazon, the same company that owns a cloud-based facial recognition system called Rekognition. Amazon's press releases brag that this software can now accurately identify subjects' genders, as well as their emotional states, ranging from confusion to happiness to fear.

Amazon is marketing Rekognition, too, to local police departments, requiring them to sign non-disclosure agreements about participation in pilot programs. Last year the company even pitched it to the Department of Homeland Security, suggesting it could be helpful in immigration enforcement.

Our world is changing more rapidly than anyone can really comprehend. It would be just as much an error to get stuck down the endlessly deep rabbit-hole of paranoia as to brush away these concerns; the proliferation of technologies of control doesn't mean that the control they could enable has taken hold.

For now, what seems most important about this burgeoning surveillance cloud is that it is largely manifesting through the actions of individual consumers, investing in their personal security against looming unknown threats.

(Or even just against the ordinary and well-known threat of package thieves – but even that reflects a growing dependence on online shopping for home delivery, another form of withdrawal into individual comfort at the expense of community well-being.)

Should "citizens," with "nothing to hide," be concerned about the prospect of computer networks tracking them as they walk down the street, automatically gauging their fear? We will leave that to the reader to decide. There are certainly other things to worry about, including the physical and mental effects of too much worrying.

But as we watch these clouds move across the radar screen, each of us should try to imagine that one day we, too, could be the stranger in the neighborhood.



Municipal clerk Betsy Sicard and administrative coordinator Bryan Smith smile amidst piles of administrative paperwork at the Erving Town Hall offices. The building is notable for being particularly hard hit by the 1970s board-and-batten takeover, but there are plans to liberate the former schoolhouse's brick facade in the future.

Letters to the Editors

Forest Alliance Has Simple Goal

I was reminded of Daniel Patrick Moynihan's famous quote "Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not to his own facts" after reading Michael Idoine's letter in last week's *Montague Reporter*. I'm pleased we agree on the dire health impacts on our climate, but it is important to know the facts on the Climate Crisis when talking about forests.

Most every week these days a new study or paper on climate science comes out confirming that intact forests are best left alone to capture CO₂ emissions from our overburdened atmosphere. The Wendell State Forest Alliance (WSFA) has been sharing these studies on their Facebook page

and in their literature. The fact is "blocking all of the logging in Wendell State Forest" (excepting hazard trees) will help "mitigate unlivable climate degradation."

And yes, we all use paper and wood products (hopefully of the recycled kind) and do other things affecting our climate, which is all the more reason to do everything we can to conserve and protect the environment. I know WSFA isn't suggesting we stop using wood for heat or building our homes. They are simply asking we preserve and protect some 11% or so of public lands in the Commonwealth for carbon capture, rather than be subjected to destructive logging for private profit.

Finally, no one is "demeaning and denigrating" logging contractors, to my knowledge. In fact, WSFA's Code of Conduct states "Our attitude will be one of openness and respect toward all we encounter in our actions." This also applies to DCR employees who WSFA members have been interacting with during the logging.

The leadership of DCR, to the contrary, have been repeatedly disrespectful to the Alliance through their lack of communication and refusal to meet with some of the citizens of the Commonwealth who love, and actually own, our public lands.

Don Ogden
North Leverett

The Cultivation of Mistrust

Glen Ayers' letter to the editor in the last issue demonstrated an unnecessary disrespect toward our community newspaper. I've chosen not to defend my own opinions from similar treatment, and I've chosen not to be outspoken of late. That said, I do choose to defend the *Reporter*, which I have supported for many years.

Glen calls the newspaper anti-environmental, when I know from reading years of coverage that this is not the case.

The *MR* has covered pro-environmental issues such as land protection, Fiske Pond and Mormon Hollow in Wendell as examples, solar development impacts on the environment, the issues surrounding the CT River, water quality issues in Leverett, Fukushima, Vermont Yankee, the Solar Rollers, and many, many others.

That the paper's views do not perfectly coincide with his own

does not mean the *Reporter* is anti-environmental. The juxtaposition of his letter with a half-page Guest Editorial by a WSFA member on the turn of a page demonstrated just how unfounded his accusation was.

Glen has accused this paper of thoughtlessness. I find the *MR* to be highly thoughtful. It also often breaks important stories that other newspapers miss. The *MR* is also generous with editorial space and, as I recall, has devoted lots of print to the Wendell State Forest Alliance, including Glen's railing letter.

I understand that the logging issue means a great deal to Glen and others, but I felt he went too far in this case and that his sentiments were really misplaced.

The *MR* needs our support. Very few journalistic outlets are as generous in giving voice to their readers, and if the important pillar of journalism falls due to the cultivation of mistrust at the national,

regional, or local level, we are all in trouble.

The same, by the way, holds true for cultivation of mistrust in science and our agencies tasked with land conservation.

We have enough mistrust cultivated at the national level, which is in fact a major impediment toward addressing climate change.

As such, it also does no one any good for Glen to characterize those with whom he does not see eye-to-eye, such as DCR foresters, as "climate deniers," which he has done publicly. Such rhetoric cheapens his arguments, creates mistrust between important stakeholders (DCR and WSFA included, among many others), and keeps us further from a long term solution to addressing climate change at the state level.

Ray DiDonato
Wendell

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LOCAL BRIEFS

Compiled by **CHRIS PELLERIN**

Public Service Announcement: Beginning Monday, September 16, 2019 the Turners Falls Water Department will begin shutting off water to properties with water usage bills more than 90 days overdue. Bills were mailed on May 1, and were due June 1.

Payments can be made at the Water Department Office, 226 Millers Falls Road, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. A drop box is located to the left of the front door for payments after hours. Any questions, please call Suzanne at (413) 863-4542.

The **Kiddleidoscope** program continues each Friday at the Great Falls Discovery Center, 2 Avenue A in Turners Falls from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. The program includes a story, interactive games, and a craft to introduce young children to wildlife along the river. Meet in the Great Hall. For ages three to six, accompanied by an adult. Siblings and friends welcome.

The theme for Friday, September 6 is **Butterflies**.

Many people now want to “age in place” in their homes, but may need support as physical and cognitive challenges present themselves. Learn about a growing national community movement, **the Village to Village network** (www.vtv.org), on Saturday, September 7 from 10:30 a.m. to noon at Greenfield Savings Bank, 282 Avenue A, Turners Falls.

Village Neighbors is a new non-profit organization to help seniors in Leverett, New Salem, Shutesbury and Wendell stay in their homes as long as possible. This was the first Village in Franklin County to open for services, recently joined by Northfield Neighbors at Home and other local communities also designing their own Villages.

Come hear about what a VT Village is, how Village Neighbors organized, and what challenges and rewards they have experienced in their first months. Light refreshments provided courtesy of Greenfield Savings Bank.

On Saturday, September 7 from 11 a.m. until 12 p.m., celebrate the beginning of fall and a new school year with a **children’s cruise on board the Heritage Riverboat**.

Travel beneath the French King Bridge, towering 140 feet above the boat. Cruise alongside rocky cliffs, over the “Deep Hole,” and enjoy an outing on the beautiful Connecticut River. The fee is \$8 per person and reservations are required by booking online at www.bookeo.com/northfield or by calling (800) 859-2960.

“Time to Act” is the theme of a picnic sponsored by the Democratic Committees of Leverett, Pelham, New Salem, Shutesbury, Sunderland, and Wendell. The annual Fall event will be held on Sunday, September 8 at the Shutesbury Athletic Club, 282 Wendell Road, Shutesbury from 3 to 5 p.m.

Congressman Jim McGovern, state senator Jo Comerford, and state representative Natalie Blais are invited guests. Additionally, Tadea Martin-Gonzalez, representing Pioneer Valley Students for Gun Control, will speak. Representatives from area action organizations including Climate Action Now, Medicare For All, We the People Massachusetts, Abortion Rights Fund of Western MA., Western MA Young Democrats, and Voter Registration will be on hand to provide information on ways to be active and involved.

All are welcome. Music by the Helen Winter Trio, food, and drink will be provided. For more information, contact Barbara Tiner at BJTiner@icloud.com.

The 5th Annual **Senior Health and Safety Expo** will be held at the Schuetzen Verein, 55 Barton Cove Road in Gill, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Tuesday, September 10. For questions call Deputy Ray Zukowski, (413) 774-4726. Sponsored by the Franklin County Sheriff’s TRIAD program, Charlene Manor, and the Northwestern District Attorney’s Office.

Gill-Montague school students can go to the Great Falls Discovery Center, 2 Avenue A, Turners Falls between 1 and 4 p.m. on Wednesday, September 11 for a **self-guided game day!**

Meet at the Welcome Desk to grab an outdoor bike path B-I-N-G-O sheet or an indoor scavenger hunt for animals in the watershed. Test your conservation habit forming powers with a memory game and more! For ages six and up, accompanied by an adult.

Learn how to **protect yourself from Medicare fraud** at 3 p.m. on Thursday, September 12. This workshop is free and open to all at the Leverett Public Library, located at 75 Montague Road, Leverett.

Learn how to prevent, detect and report health care errors, fraud and abuse. Tools will be provided to become a more informed and engaged health care consumer including information about new Medicare cards. Meet a representative of the Massachusetts Senior Medicare Patrol Program.

For more information and to reserve your seat, please contact Fay Zipkowitz, member of the Leverett Council on Aging, at (413) 548-1022 or email the_czarina@fastmail.fm.

On Thursday, September 12 from 7 to 8:30 p.m., naturalist John Root will speak about **Edible Perennial Gardening and Landscaping**. In this presentation in the Great Hall of the Great Falls Discovery Center, find out how to establish and maintain a variety of perennials for harvesting fruits, nuts, and vegetables.

Participants learn how to establish and care for these plants using organic methods of cultivation. Nutritional and medicinal benefits of the plants are discussed as well. Sponsored by the Friends of the Great Falls Discovery Center.

What is “**functional medicine**,” and how can it help you? This very big question is the topic of a talk at 6 p.m. next Thursday, September 12 at Green Fields Market, 144 Main Street in Greenfield.

Rosie Fanale, APRN, RNCS, a psychiatric nurse practitioner, psychotherapist, music therapist and functional medicine practitioner who has her office in Shelburne Falls, will discuss the functional medicine approach, which may have reversed early Alzheimers, MS, lupus, and other neurodegenerative and autoimmune disease, as well as certain mental illness diagnoses. She will share case studies of how changing diet and lifestyle, correcting nutrient and hormone deficiencies and environmental toxins has reversed disease processes in individuals who were formerly told there was no hope.

The talk is free, and open to the public.

Looking ahead...

The Hopkinton-based theater group, the “Enter Stage Left Theater” along with the “Point ‘n Swing Big Band” are coming to Athol. Together, they will be recreating a “**USO Show**” called Sing! Sing! Sing! at the Athol High School Auditorium, 2363 Main St, Athol on Sunday, September 15 from 2 to 4 p.m.

Hosted by Bob Hope, played by Mark Laumeister, this show features 30 songs, 20 vocalists, 10 dancers, and is accompanied by the “Les Brown Orchestra.” This vaudeville-style show includes musical numbers, dance routines and comedy sketches. You’ll enjoy performances by Gene Kelly, Al Jolson, Judy Garland, Jimmy Durante, the Andrews Sisters and many other stars!

This show is sponsored by the Athol Veterans Park Development Corporation, a non-profit organization, along with support from Athol Savings Bank. Proceeds from this year’s show will go to the AVPDC, and will be used for activities that recognize and pay tribute to veterans.

General admission tickets are \$15 and are now on sale at the

following locations: Brooks MacMannis Florist and Greenhouse in Athol, Trail Head in Orange, the Athol Council on Aging and the Erving Senior Center. For questions or further information, contact Cindy Hartwell at (978) 828-7665 or email atholmusical@gmail.com.

Learn more about supporting our threatened pollinators at two talks presented by Greening Greenfield’s Planting for Pollinators campaign.

On Wednesday, September 18, Steve Jackson, plant coordinator at Nasami Farm, will present a talk entitled “**Fall Planting of Native Trees and Shrubs**.” On Wednesday, October 2, master gardener Larri Cochran will speak about “**Fall Gardening for Pollinators, Helping Bees & Butterflies Survive Winter**.”

Both events are free and will be held at the First Congregational Church, 43 Silver Street, Greenfield at 6:30 p.m. Refreshments will be served.

Enjoy a walk back in time along the popular canalside bike path in Turners Falls on Thursday, September 19 from 5 to 7 p.m. Join local historian Ed Gregory, Northfield Mountain’s Kim Noyes, and Massachusetts DCR’s Janel Nockleby to **discover the rich and colorful industrial history** along this scenic paved path.

Historical maps and photographs will help bring the sights and sounds of our industrial heritage alive. Wear comfortable walking shoes and meet at the entrance of the Great Falls Discovery Center (2 Avenue A, Turners Falls). Total walking distance is no more than two miles on flat terrain. Wheelchair accessible. Please pre-register for this free event by calling (800) 859-2960.

ReVamp will be an **upcycled fashion show** as part of FAB Fashion Passion 2019 the weekend of September 21 and 22 in Turners Falls. The organizers are searching for pieces made from recycled clothing or other materials. Contact Rachel Teumim at rteumim@gmail.com for more information.

Montague resident Betty Tegel invites everyone to come to an **Emergency Preparedness Training** class, sponsored by the MA Office on Disabilities, from 1 to 3 p.m. on Wednesday, September 25 at the Turners Falls Fire Department. This course is offered in response to damage from extreme weather events, and the need to provide support for our elders.

The event is free. **Please register by September 7** at the fire department (use the non-emergency line). A free emergency kit will be given to all participants.

Registration is now open for the 23rd annual Connecticut River Conservancy’s (CRC) **Source to Sea Cleanup**. CRC invites volunteers to continue the tradition of getting dirty for cleaner rivers on Friday and Saturday, September 27 and 28.

There are three ways for volunteers to get involved in the Source to Sea Cleanup this year: report a trash site in need of cleaning, find a cleanup group near you to join, or organize and register your own local group. For more information or to register, visit www.ctriver.org/cleanup.

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FOOTBALL from page A1

game played on Bourdeau Field in Turners Falls this season, and the annual Thanksgiving "Turkey Day" rivalry with Greenfield will be put on hold. Mohawk plays home games and practices at the high school campus in Buckland. Its annual Turkey Day rivalry with Frontier Regional, located in Sunderland, actually takes place the night before Thanksgiving.

The decision to cancel the season could also affect athletes and football fans from the four towns in the Pioneer Valley Regional School District. Pioneer, which has seen its own program collapse over the past few years, began a two-year co-op arrangement with Turners Falls last year.

A number of students had signed up to play this year, according to Pioneer's athletic director Gina Johnson. Johnson said the athletic directors in MIAA have approved the Mohawk-Turners co-op proposal, under the condition that Pioneer is also included. But getting Pioneer students to travel to Mohawk for daily practice and games, even if transportation is provided, could take some convincing, according to Johnson.

According to school officials at Turners, Pioneer, and Mohawk, the collapse of the historic football programs in their districts has been caused in large measure by steadily declining enrollment. The programs have also been affected by enrollment losses under the state's school choice program, and the increasing viability of sports teams at the regional technical school, Franklin County Tech.

"Our school population numbers are decreasing and many students are choosing to attend other local schools," wrote Graves in his public letter. "There are close to 30 football players from Turners Falls who will suit up for other local teams."

Michael Sullivan, the superintendent of the Gill-Montague Regional District, has calculated that "district enrollment," which subtracts school choice and charter school losses, at Turners Falls High School declined by nearly 50%, from 392 to 206 students, between 2007 and 2019.

During most of this period, Turners Falls football rosters hovered be-

tween 20 and 25, according to data reported on the MassLive website. These numbers certainly allowed the school to field a team, but left the program vulnerable to a large graduating class and a small cohort of players entering the high school.

Both Pioneer and Mohawk show similar trends, although their rosters seem to have varied significantly more from year to year. (Several athletic directors and coaches questioned the MassLive data, which is dependent on coaches annually submitting forms to the website.) The site's roster data suggests that all three regional districts that are now proposing a co-op arrangement have abruptly experienced a virtual collapse of their football programs in the past two years.

Not all of the decline, however, may be attributable to total enrollment loss at the schools. High school football participation has been declining nationwide, year by year, over the past decade. This phenomenon has been attributed to everything from increased awareness of the long-term risks associated with concussion to the rise of smartphones.

But the experience at Franklin County Technical School, which draws students from over 19 towns, presents a sharp contrast. Tech's total enrollment has declined by less than 10% over the past decade, and the school, which covers grades 9 through 12, enrolls over 450 students. MassLive shows football rosters at the school ranging from 40 to 50 players over the past decade.

Time will tell if 2018 will have been the last year of the Turners Falls football program, and whether the proposed co-op arrangement between Mohawk, Turners, and Pioneer will prove viable.

In his public letter, Graves held out the possibility that the program could be revived. "Hopefully through retaining our students and encouraging others to play, Turners Falls will be able to have a varsity team in 2020," he wrote.

"Football means a LOT to this community, and losing the team is devastating to many involved including our marching band and cheerleaders, as well as the community as a whole."

Hazardous Waste Collection Event

FRANKLIN COUNTY – The Franklin County Solid Waste District is holding its annual household hazardous waste collection on Saturday, September 21 at the GCC Main Campus and the Orange Transfer Station.

Residents and businesses must pre-register by September 16. Online registration forms may be completed at: www.franklin-countywastedistrict.org/hazwasteday.html. Paper registration forms have been provided to participating town offices and transfer stations. Participants will be assigned an appointment time to bring wastes to the collection; the appointment time will be provided by mail after registration is processed.

This collection is for the residents and businesses of the following towns: Athol, Barre, Bernardston, Buckland, Charlemont, Colrain, Conway, Deerfield, Erving, Gill, Hawley, Heath, Leverett,

Montague, New Salem, Northfield, Orange, Petersham, Phillipston, Rowe, Royalston, Shelburne, Sunderland, Warwick, Wendell, and Whately.

This collection event is free for all residents, except those of Barre and Sunderland, who must pay to participate. Space is limited. For business registration and pricing information, call (413) 772-2438.

Greenfield and Leyden residents are not eligible, and should call (413) 772-1528 for info on disposal.

This collection provides an opportunity to dispose of hazardous items that should not be put in the trash, such as leftover oil-based paints, stains, thinners, household cleaners, pesticides, herbicides, pool chemicals, motor oil, anti-freeze, automobile batteries, and other household chemicals.

For a complete list of acceptable items, see www.franklin-countywastedistrict.org/hazwasteday.html.

NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Decision Postponed In Leverett Highway Hire

By **ROB SKELTON**

What might have been a *pro forma* hire of an experienced neighboring road boss, George Emery of Sunderland, turned contentious Tuesday evening as members of the hiring committee pressured the selectboard to choose instead a less-experienced Leverett lifer.

After interviewing both candidates, selectboard members Julie Shively and Tom Hankinson, minus their absent chair Peter d'Errico, balked on the decision, putting it off until Friday morning, 8:30 a.m.

Hiring committee members Isaiah Robison, Jenny Roberts, and Will Stratford stressed the importance of an in-town road boss, citing precedence – even though candidate Emery's address is Ripley Road in Montague, close by the Leverett line.

"I don't think it matters if they live in town. I want to hire a professional," said Hankinson.

"We certainly can't hire based on where people live," said Shively.

"You run the risk of having a lack of heart," if an outsider gets the job, said Robison – excepting the current fire and police chiefs, he added.

The two chiefs were also on the committee, but neither expressed a preference publicly. Police chief Scott Minckler said they hoped to find the right person to make things better.

"I think we brought two good candidates, and we'll leave it in your hands to make a decision," he said.

"I have never seen these roads look so bad," said former road crew member Roberts.

Robison faulted Emery for leaving the meeting after his interview, and said that Emery doesn't know how to run a road grader, as Sunderland has "one mile" of gravel road.

Evidently, the hiring committee thought it had a better candidate in Matt Boucher, who works for Wagner Wood in Amherst and once worked on the Leverett road crew under Stratford. Had Emery not applied with his ten years running a streets department, the job certainly would have gone to Boucher.

Previous Leverett road boss David Finn was reportedly brittle about criticism, did not successfully interface with other departments, did not jump in on

the work, and made the colossal mistake of grading without blowing the leaves off the road. The interview questions reflected these structural shortcomings, to ensure their mitigation.

Initially Hankinson said he favored the more experienced Emery, but after hearing opposition from the committee and being drawn into a side discussion around the four-day versus five-day workweek, he said, "We have two good candidates."

"I'm torn," said Shively. "We're not waiting for Peter. It's up to us, Tom."

"Difficult circumstances with individuals requires political finesse as well as getting the job done," said Hankinson.

"Finesse doesn't matter when you speak the truth," piped up Robison.

Boucher cited his years dealing with the public and angry customers, his construction and treework chops, and his leadership capacity, and asked the board a number of leading questions.

By staying at the meeting and trumpeting his candidacy, backed by supporters on the committee, Boucher may or may not have made the necessary sway. Friday will tell.

Other Business

Part-time Leverett police officer Jill Bancroft was okayed by the selectboard for a full-time position, pending a physical examination, a psychiatric evaluation, and completion of the police academy.

An illegal wi-fi download at the town hall on August 20 at 5 p.m. has prompted a selectboard directive to slow the signal, since three violations will cancel the service.

Resident and fin com member Steve Nagy asked when the town will contact water engineers Wilcox & Barton to schedule a date to do a test of the Goodale well, which is contaminated by a plume emanating from the former landfill. Answer: next week.

A shipping container placed on property at 1 Dudleyville Road, considered an eyesore by neighbors, has drawn the attention of the con com, since it violates wetland setback standards.

The elementary school has requested a change of date for the annual harvest festival, to be held October 5, or later if the change is okayed.

Mercury-containing products such as wall-mounted thermostats, mercury thermometers, fluorescent light tubes, and compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs) should never be disposed of in the trash. At the 2019 Franklin County Hazardous Waste Collection Event, the only acceptable mercury-containing items will be thermostats, thermometers and similar items; fluorescent bulbs will not be accepted at this collection.

CFLs and other fluorescent bulbs are accepted at Franklin County municipal transfer stations (handle carefully, hand to attendant), Lowe's Stores (accepts all types

of fluorescents), and Home Depot (CFLs only).

Additionally, mercury-containing items and bulbs are accepted year-round from district residents at the regional hazardous waste collection sites in Bernardston, Colrain, and Conway.

For more information, contact the District office at (413) 772-2438; email info@franklin-countywastedistrict.org; or visit www.franklin-countywastedistrict.org.

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GILL from page A1

“The five-year [relicensing] process was supposed to be ‘13 to ‘18,” selectboard member Greg Snedeker commented.

Town administrator Ray Purington told the board the town was still searching for qualified legal counsel in the matter of FirstLight’s transfer of its Northfield and Turners licenses to two different subsidiaries. FERC approved the transfers, but also granted Gill the right to officially appeal the decision.

Ward criticized the *Montague Reporter* for a headline in our August 22 edition describing Montague’s settlement, which released a significant amount of money tied up in the assessor’s overlay fund, as a “windfall.”

“I didn’t like it being called a ‘windfall’ if Montague had to ‘settle’ in its settlement,” Ward said. “If FirstLight gets Montague to settle, is there an expectation that Gill will settle?”

Snedeker said he was interested to learn more details of Montague’s decision. “I’d imagine there was a lot of money tied up in overlay,” he said.

Purington pointed out that the value of FirstLight’s assets in Montague is “almost a 10 to 1 comparison,” compared with those in Gill.

The company has formally challenged its Montague valuations for FY’14 through FY’19, and its Gill valuations for FY’14 through FY’18.

Enter the Dragon

The meeting began with a visit from Kyle Dragon, the new animal control officer Gill will share with the towns of Northfield, Heath, Colrain, Shelburne, Buckland, and Monroe. The board congratulated Dragon on beating out 74 other candidates for the position, which was created by the Franklin County Sheriff’s Office.

“My hope is to make animal control more professional,” Dragon said, handing the board members business cards. He said he planned to coordinate with the participating towns to streamline their bylaws pertaining to animal control.

“It makes it easier for the customers, and also makes it easier for the enforcer,” board member Randy Crochier reasoned.

Dragon said he thought the program might grow to include more towns, following in the path of the regional dog shelter.

Six-Town Study

Gill is seeking to appoint three members – including one of its existing representatives to the Gill-Montague school committee – to a regional school district planning committee, which would study the feasibility of replacing the Gill-Montague and Pioneer Valley districts with a new, six-town district.

Both districts have been struggling to maintain programs in the

face of declining enrollment, and this year consultants estimated the towns could save money by consolidating a single shared middle school and a single high school. The regional planning board would study the feasibility of this, and related proposals, in more detail, and make a recommendation to the six towns.

Gill residents interested in volunteering are encouraged to send resumes and letters of interest to Purington by September 19.

“You’d make a good representative,” Crochier told Snedeker, joking that if too few volunteers step forward, he might be “volun-told” to take the post.

“If there’s other people in town, it’s always good to get other people involved,” Snedeker said.

Other Business

The town has received six applications for the open highway superintendent position, and finalists will be interviewed next week.

Crochier, also a member of the board of health, warned residents that eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) has been discovered in the county, and that they should watch out for standing water where bugs can breed.

A hazardous waste collection day will be held September 21; the registration deadline is the 16th. The next bulky waste collection day is scheduled for October 19.



The Logic Of Compromise

By MIKE JACKSON

MONTAGUE – In our last issue, we reported on a settlement reached between the town of Montague and FirstLight Power over disputed tax valuations of the hydroelectric company’s assets in town (August 22, *Major FirstLight Tax Settlement Frees Up Cash For Montague*, page A1). Details of the agreement were not yet public, as the documents had not been signed by all parties.

Montague’s director of assessing Karen Tonelli was out this week, but town administrator Steve Ellis was available to answer questions about the town’s decision to reach a deal with the power company. As it turned out, as of Wednesday the documents had still not been signed and returned, so the final figures weren’t public, but Ellis spoke on record in general terms about the settlement.

The dispute concerned three pieces of FirstLight’s holdings in town: the Cabot Station and Turners Falls No. 1 hydro plants, and the overarching category of “personal property,” such as machinery. Beginning in FY’14, the company challenged Montague’s valuation of its assets every year before the state appellate tax board (ATB).

“There’s a limited number of experts in the valuation of utility [property],” Ellis said, stressing that the town believed its valuations to be fair. “We’re compelled to select the lowest qualified bidder.”

Another of FirstLight’s local assets, the Turners Falls dam, is taxed in both Gill and Montague, and so the two towns pitch in to get it assessed.

The outside experts assessed the three line items in question at a total of \$114,183,603 for FY’14, ‘15, and ‘16, and then re-assessed it at \$135,238,718 for FY’17, ‘18, and ‘19. During the six years under appeal, the commercial tax rate in Montague fluctuated between \$24.85 and \$26.30.

Added up, the tax revenue affected by the dispute amounted to \$19.2 million. As the appeals pro-

cess wore on without resolution, the town has been forced to set aside a significant amount of money in case of an adverse ruling.

“They are the largest taxpayer in the town of Montague,” Ellis explained. “We’re excited by the prospect of resolving years of uncertainty.” The town received a favorable ruling before the ATB for the first of the six years, but the company appealed it. “They would literally get a new bite of the apple every succeeding year,” he said. “Uncertainty isn’t good for municipal government.”

According to Ellis, FirstLight has now indicated it would withdraw its objection to the FY’14 through ‘16, and the parties arrived at a “settled figure” for FY’17 through ‘19. The next revaluation will come in FY’22.

“I believe this agreement is really good for Montague,” he said. “It reduces, dramatically, the uncertainty associated with any negative finding that might have come out of an ATB process.” Any amount the state might eventually rule Montague overtaxed the company, he added, would need to be repaid with an 8% annual fee tacked on – every \$100,000 difference back in 2014 would mean a \$158,687 loss in 2020.

“The old game isn’t working for anyone,” Ellis argued, “and there’s an understanding that increased engagement, discussion, and cooperation in the valuation – and in the conversation that happens after valuation is established – may lead to a smoother process.”

Responding to concerns raised in Gill about whether Montague’s decision could adversely affect that town’s position at the bargaining table, Ellis said he didn’t see why that would be the case.

The deal, he said, “reflects a strategic decision by a community, and by the utility that they were in discussion with, to come to terms that were considered mutually favorable and agreeable. It could present to Gill the outline of a framework for a deal.... The overall financials do not harm our cash flow.”

NOTES FROM THE GILL-MONTAGUE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Positive Messaging Seen As Crucial For Middle/High School Turnaround

By MIKE JACKSON

The last Gill-Montague school committee meeting of the summer started on a pessimistic note, focusing on low enrollment at Turners Falls High School, but over the next two hours, the tone gradually grew more optimistic.

Turners Falls resident John Putala, a parent of two recent graduates, used the public comment period to share the idea that the declining enrollment was the fault of the school committee.

“When it’s out in the public that this board is insinuating that the student body, and community as a whole, are either racist or bullies, why would people want to keep their kids here?” he asked. “We have a mass of kids leaving the district, and they’re not going to better schools, in my opinion.”

Putala said that though he himself had favored changing the Indians mascot, he felt the committee had “ostracized both sides” of the issue. “Did you see how Mohawk did it? They pulled the bandaid off, and that was it,” he said. “I think that battle really hurt both sides of the community.”

Erving representative Theresa Kolodziej was next. “Any time anything appears in the paper, it is an advertisement for the school,” she said, reading a passage from the *Greenfield Recorder* about the loss of the high school football program.

Kolodziej, who said she had opened the 17th Subway franchise in the state, compared the school district to a business. “The prime thing you have to do to stay in business is have customers,” she said.

“As a representative of the

taxpayers of Erving, I think that the [Erving] school committee... should see what percentage of [our] kids are choosing out, and whether the decision to stay in Turners makes sense.”

“Football enrollment is down dramatically everywhere,” Montague member Heather Katsoulis pointed out. “I have to think the brain injury stuff is making an impact.”

“We don’t choose what goes in the paper,” said Cassie Damkoehler, also of Montague. “Sadly, sometimes it’s the negativity that sells.... We have no control what goes into the *Greenfield Recorder* or the *Montague Reporter*.”

Superintendent Michael Sullivan reported that an alumnus and parent had created a Facebook group, “Positively Gill Montague Regional School District,” to help share positive news and perspectives about the schools. As of press time, it had 350 members.

Committee members praised the state of the school buildings, prepared for the first day of classes.

Sullivan also discussed the proposal to bus football players to Buckland to form a “co-op” team with Mohawk Regional. He referred to “red tape” complicating the question of hiring a bus driver, but said a “workaround” had been devised.

Damkoehler commented that the district had a relatively large 8th grade class, and if they can be retained for 9th grade it might be possible to revive the football program.

Business manager Joanne Blier reported on ongoing capital projects, and shared an operating statement.

She also discussed transportation. The state reimburses the district for any student bused from out-

side of a 1.5-mile radius, or a half mile for kindergarten. Downtown Turners Falls is within 1.5 miles of Sheffield Elementary, but when the central office researched busing kids from within a closer radius on the district’s dime, it discovered it would have to add two buses, at a cost of up to \$140,000 per year.

The committee unanimously approved job descriptions and salaries for top administrators, and unanimously appointed Jane Oakes as Gill-Montague’s voting representative at this fall’s Massachusetts Association of School Committees conference.

The principals of each school presented to the committee on their official improvement plans, and Sullivan ran through the bullet points of the overall district improvement plan, which included a focus on building relationships.

Elementary school principals Conor Driscoll (Gill), Sarah Burstein (Hillcrest), and Melissa Pitrat (Sheffield) had collaborated on their school improvement plans, and presented sitting together at the front table. “We thought you might fall asleep if you heard it three times over,” Burstein told the committee.

The last half hour of the meeting featured newly hired secondary school principal Joanne Menard, who has hit the ground running with a dizzying list of new initiatives and reforms.

Menard said that the incoming deans of students would be assigned to entire classes and follow them through their school career, with Rebel McKinley taking this year’s 7th, 9th, and 11th graders, and Mike Duprey taking the even classes.

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NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Wendell Selectboard Summer Jam Catch-up

By JOSH HEINEMANN

Two of the Wendell selectboard's summer meetings were attended by only two board members each and were short, but the August 21 had a full agenda, and a full complement of members. The meeting started with the board of assessors – Anna Seeger, Luke Doody, and chair Chris Wings – who were invited to discuss short-term rentals, such as Airbnb. The board of health had asked for this discussion, and its chair, Barbara Craddock, also joined the discussion after it began.

Seeger, a builder, began with questions about the town-owned building at 97 Wendell Depot Road. She has expressed interest in renovating the house as a rental, and has visited the site and tried to locate the septic system. She found a pipe going back from the house, but did not find what it led to. The house was built close to 1800, so its electricity and plumbing, including the septic system, were added long afterwards, but still before Title 5.

Selectboard member Christine Heard said she could not recall any work on the property's septic system in her 40 years as a neighbor. Before 1970, septic systems were often simply a tank in the ground. She said she would be shocked if the system in place could be upgraded, but suggested questioning Dave Wilder, who installed septic systems in years past, and might remember what is there.

The board of health has no record of a septic design.

A community solar project has also been proposed for the 12-acre property. It was designed around wetlands, but that made its edge too close to a legal house lot and setbacks for a legal subdivision. National Grid is currently leasing three acres and a right-of-way to build a mobile substation, which will allow it to upgrade its Wendell Depot substation without interrupting electricity transmission. The upgrade is planned to allow connection of solar farms, potentially including the community solar farm at 97 Wendell Depot Road.

With these questions seeming to be circular, board members shifted discussion to Airbnb and other short-term rentals, which developed and grew without regulation from the state. An Airbnb, with no tax and no required inspections, has had a financial advantage over a traditional bed and breakfast.

Since July 1, the state requires every Airbnb establishment to register and pay a 6% tax. On top of that, each host town, with a town meeting vote, can establish a local tax of up to 6% and a community impact fee of up to 3%, which would be collected by the state and returned to the town. 35% of the community impact fee must be spent on affordable housing and infrastructure.

The Airbnb must carry \$1 million in liability insurance; Airbnb provides the insurance for facilities registered with them. Facilities that are rented fewer than 14 days a year are exempt from state tax.

It is unlikely that every short-term rental facility has registered with the state, or is operating with the intention of doing so. Heard said that some do not advertise, and get customers through word of mouth.

For some potential renters a lack of electricity, or running water, might be seen as virtues, like camping but with a sound roof. Such units would not pass state rental laws.

Wings said the town stood to make some money. Selectboard member Laurie DiDonato said she thought it would be a good idea to find out what other neighboring towns are doing, and avoid putting Wendell owners at a disadvantage.

Town coordinator Nancy Aldrich said she might find advice through the Small Town Administrators of Massachusetts (STAM), or a list-serv of administrators.

Ancient Curtain

The early town curtain, old enough to list three-digit telephone numbers for its sponsors, is rolled up and wrapped in Tyvek, hanging high at the back of the town hall stage. Town facilities engineer Jim Slavas, a member of the group interested in the curtain, told the selectboard that a consultant has said it is beyond reasonable restoration. What was thought to be mold is actually tar stain that resulted from a leaking roof.

Kathy Becker proposed a respectful disposal, but Slavas said the Smithsonian may have some interest, and have the money for a full restoration. The most economical way to save something of the curtain is to take a high-resolution photograph of it and enhance that.

Slavas suggested getting an estimate for actual restoration. "If it costs \$3,000, that's one thing," he said. "If it costs \$35,000, that's another."

Selectboard chair Dan Keller said he saw no problem with getting an estimate.

Native Pollen

During the spring and summer, Wendell's pollinator-friendly group suggested leaving part of the north common mowed less frequently, to encourage the native wildflowers pollinators use and depend on. The most recent mowing of town properties left about 1/3 of the common alone, and members of the pollinator group already found what seemed to be a small gentian, and a dwarf fern that were able to grow with the grass allowed to grow just six inches.

Others in town, however, prefer that the common keep its mowed appearance. Harry Williston had scheduled time at this meeting, but did not come because of inclement weather.

Keller suggested that the town-owned field in front of Fiske Pond could act as well as the common, being pollinator-friendly.

DiDonato, who talks with the pollinator group, said that the idea is to develop a pollinator corridor, and that Fiske Pond is more isolated from other places with wildflowers.

Since that meeting, the northern third of the common was mowed.

Head Count

Town clerk Gretchen Smith forwarded the board a proposal from the western Massachusetts census office suggesting that trusted community members are more likely to get cooperation on the census than out-of-town strangers.

Heard said she knew of people who, not trusting the federal govern-

RESTORED from page A1

construction has been compromised via Mother Nature's seasonal activity, and a thriving ant colony beneath it.

During April of 2019 the Montague Historical Society and Montague Historical Commission decided to jointly fund the project to renovate and restore the historical attributes of the marker in its entirety.

The re-building and overall painting of the marker was undertaken by Paul Interlande of Turners Falls, and the addition of the listed towns was artfully accomplished by Jason Clark of Ashfield.

The Montague Center road directory now stands for another stint in time serving its purpose while enhancing the aesthetic appeal and historical qualities of the village where it resides. If you have any clues as to how old it is, please get in touch.

Ed Gregory is a member of both the Montague Historical Commission and Society.



Local historians are curious about the marker's age.

GREGORY PHOTO

FOREST from page A1

The lawsuit was initially brought before the court on August 21, when Judge Michael Callan gave both of the parties several days to file additional briefs. His three-page ruling was issued on August 30.

Callan did not focus on the substantive issues raised by the Alliance, but rather on the procedural question of when plaintiffs would be entitled to a stay.

For example, the judge stressed that "it is well known" that a preliminary injunction can only be issued when plaintiffs have a "reasonable likelihood of success" in the broader lawsuit, and if they can show they will suffer "harm" if the injunction is not granted.

"The plaintiffs have not met these conjunctive elements," Callan declared.

The judge's ruling, like his comments at the initial August 21 hearing, expressed some irritation at the timing of the lawsuit. "This matter had its genesis in 2016," he wrote. "The plaintiffs have unduly delayed in bringing this case such that there is an entity under contract with the Commonwealth performing selective tree cutting in Wendell State Forest."

The judge also stated that a forest-cutting plan on the scale of the Wendell project was not subject to environmental impact review under the "thresholds" of MEPA.

A more detailed critique of the substance of the Alliance's complaints was presented in a memo to the judge from the state attorney general's (AG) office, which represented DCR. The memo, for example, denied that DCR's failure to evaluate the carbon impact of the plan was a violation of the GWSA. The AG argued that the Department of Environmental Protection is the only state agency designated to establish "emission limits" for state projects under that law, and that it has established no guidelines for forest-cutting projects.

The AG memo thus also rejected the Alliance's complaint that DCR was withholding public records of its evaluation of the carbon impact of the project, because the agency was not required to undertake such an evaluation.

ment in any capacity, are unwilling to cooperate with the census taker. She allowed that having someone meet the selectboard could be useful in the effort to get an accurate count of citizens.

Staffing Concerns

Town accountant Brian Morton has been out sick for the summer, and Wendell has continued to pay FRCOG for his services. Bills are not getting paid, and are accruing interest.

Helen Williams, the town's assistant assessor, sent the selectboard a letter that announced her intention to retire by the end of 2019. She will be hard to replace.

Keller said that the police succession committee had changed its focus from just the chief to the entire department, and was close to issuing a request for proposals for a consultant. They will write and dis-

"DCR cannot produce documents that do not exist," the memo noted.

After the court ruling, the Alliance issued a press release suggesting that Judge Callan had "failed to address either of the plaintiffs' main arguments in this case." Therefore, the plaintiffs "will continue their lawsuit for injunctive relief over the next two years."

One of the lead plaintiffs, Gia Neswald, who with Glen Ayers presented the complaint to the judge on August 21, told the Reporter that the Alliance was looking for a "lead attorney" to coordinate future court challenges.

Neswald also noted that the Alliance will be building support for legislation to restrict logging in all state forests. A bill introduced by representative Susanna Whipps of Athol, H. 897, would potentially eliminate the state forest category of "woodlands" under which DCR implements forest-management logging operations. A hearing on the bill before the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture will take place at 1 p.m. on September 24 at the state house in Boston.

Meanwhile, the DCR forest-management program, or "industrial logging" as the Alliance calls it, continues at Wendell State Forest. Neswald estimates that the project is two-thirds completed, with perhaps two weeks to go.

According to Judge Callan, "The plaintiffs allege no more than generalized subjective concerns regarding the future use of a small portion of the forest. The entire forest, including the small area at issue, is and will remain open for use to the public for this and future generations."

According to the Alliance press release: "The issues this case raises are applicable to the more than 12,000 acres of public lands that DCR has targeted for commercial timber extraction since 2016, and furthermore, to all of the more than 450,000 acres of DCR-managed land that are entirely unprotected today."



tribute a questionnaire for residents to get a better idea of what people want and need.

At the July 24 meeting the selectboard got a letter from town counsel Kopelman and Paige informing the town that the fee for legal consulting was increasing by \$10 an hour. Keller proposed considering changing lawyers, and Heard suggested writing a letter back expressing Wendell's concerns.

Town coordinator Nancy wrote that letter, and board members reviewed and sent it on August 7.

That night's agenda had an item about the property at 131 Locke Village Road, but that discussion was postponed, because town counsel had not yet given an answer to building inspector Phil Delorey's questions about that property.

Burning Items

Citizen Michael Joyce wrote a

letter to the selectboard that outlined the expense and waste involved in shipping Wendell's trash elsewhere to be landfilled or incinerated. He proposed a micro-incinerator at the WRATS.

Aldrich said that the Baker administration awarded Wendell and Shutesbury up to \$985,000 in community development block grant, to be administered by the FRCOG.

She said that the Pan Am Railroad gave the fire department a check for \$4,872.65 in reimbursement for work it performed after a train derailment.

Treasurer Carolyn Manley told board members that she has five or six properties ready for auction, and thought spring would be a good time. The fire department is using the house at 120 Wendell Depot Road for training, and has a plan to burn the structure, which has been condemned for years.

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FACES & PLACES



PHOTO COURTESY RAY PURINGTON

From left, firefighter Will Boryc, lieutenant Mitchell Waldron, and engineer Greg Parody install a driveway number sign on Main Road in Gill. The Gill Fire Department has started a community project to install reflective numbered signs for every driveway in town, with the goal of getting every driveway marked before the first snow, at no cost to residents. Funding is provided by the Gill Firemen's Association and a donation from the Northfield Mount Hermon School. Greenfield Farmers Cooperative Exchange assisted with the metal posts.



PATRICIA DUFFY PHOTO

Members of the Ghost Light Theater company volunteered to refresh the gardens around Leverett Town Hall, mulching and planting extensively in exchange for the use of the hall for rehearsal space last month.



MAGGIE SADOWAY PHOTO

Maggie Sadoway shared this photo of her grandkids Leith and Astrid, who set up a stand in the Patch in Turners Falls to sell potholders and origami Leith made, along with chocolate chip cookies they baked together, with a little help from their mom. Leith, who enters second grade this week, explained: "I don't like that Trump is separating immigrant children from their parents, so I'm raising money to send to the lawyers who are helping the kids." All proceeds from the stand went to RAICES. Leith has made well over 500 origami creations and shows no signs of slowing down, and Maggie reports that the cookies and lemonade were delicious.

ACID from page A1

event to the state environmental police sometime after 1 p.m.

Around 2:30 p.m., the environmental police notified MassDEP of the die-off. MassDEP officials immediately began sampling water downstream, and determined the pH levels posed "no threat to the public" by that time, according to Skiba.

"Had there been a threat, public notice would have been issued," Skiba said.

Skiba said MassDEP is still investigating the incident, and will be conducting follow-up investigations of the Barnhardt facilities.

"Although we do not have an exact volume of acid that was released at this time, we do know that this was not a complete failure of the tank, but rather a leak in a seam," she said. "Once they discovered the acid had sprayed outside of the tank containment area, containment of the impacted soils and cleanup was conducted."

MassWildlife also responded to the scene on Sunday and collected samples of the dead fish for testing, according to Skiba. Colrain police and fire departments were called to the factory the morning of the spill.

"We were told that whatever was leaking was contained," Colrain fire chief Nicholas Anzuoni said. "We really don't have the whole story yet, they're still investigating."

Chief Anzuoni said the accident now poses "no immediate danger to the public," but added on Monday: "If I had the choice, I would wait to go into the river for a day or two."

Public Concern

News of the die-off spread widely over social media on Monday before any public announcement or acknowledgement had been made of the spill.

Colrain resident Kellie Smith posted images on Facebook of dead fish by her home, shared by over 700 people. Smith said her 12-year-old son also found a dead duck upriver from their house, about a mile and a half downstream from the Barnhardt factory.

More dead fish were observed on Sunday at the confluence of the North and Deerfield rivers, a popular swimming spot known as Sunburn Beach.

"Regardless of the hazard, the public should be made aware and this is especially important during the summer when river recreation is at its highest," said Greenfield resident Jeremy Richard. "That most people found out from a post of what a mother found when she arrived at the river with her kids is also inexcusable."

Richard said he felt local news coverage minimized the damage caused by the acid spill by reporting that live fish were seen swimming in the river.

Halloran said he saw fish gasping near the surface of the water alongside the dead. He identified dead trout, dace, common shiners, and crayfish, and said the North River is also home to a protected species in Massachusetts, the longnose sucker.

"They're struggling, they're not acting normal,"

continued Halloran, a fly-fishing instructor with years of experience studying the river's fish. "I'm sure the juveniles in this section of the river were wiped out."

"I was talking to a guy right near my house who was fishing that very morning," Halloran said. "He should know - he was standing in the water."

He said he was also worried what effect the toxins could have on the birds of prey now eating the dead fish: "We have eagles and osprey and herons, otters even."

"MassWildlife estimates that tens of thousands of fish died due to the spill, most of which were longnose dace and blacknose dace," Katie Gronendyke, press secretary at the state Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, wrote on Wednesday.

Sulfuric acid is listed on the MassDEP's "High Hazard" chemicals list. In high enough concentration, the acid lowers the pH level of fresh water enough to burn the gills of fish and kill them.

According to tests taken by MassDEP, no wells should be affected by the acid spill, but the department has offered to test residential wells as a precaution, and is talking to the Shelburne Falls and Griswoldville water districts, which manage wells near the river.

Past Releases

Founded by Thomas M. Barnhardt in 1899, Barnhardt Manufacturing makes an array of cotton products for the global medical and pharmaceutical industries. The family-owned company claims the title "The First Family of American Cotton."

In 2007 it bought the former Fiberweb cotton bleaching in Colrain, according to the company website, making it one of eight similar facilities it owns across the United States. Today, fabric is mostly treated with hydrogen peroxide, rather than chlorine bleach.

The factory also has a treatment plant on site to process chemical waste before releasing water into the North River. In September 1999, a similar fish die-off occurred after a truck released hundreds of gallons of sulfuric acid into the river near the Fiberweb plant. That company paid a settlement of \$28,125 for the incident in 2003.

According to data analyzed by the *New York Times* 2009 series "Toxic Waters," the factory had 22 wastewater effluent violations between 2004 and 2008 - a period that includes ownership by Fiberweb and Barnhardt - and was out of compliance with at least one violation for every quarterly report.

Halloran said his organization, Deerfield River Watershed Trout Unlimited, "want[s] to work with these companies to help them protect the rivers better... Help them to figure out a better way to contain their operation, or be respectful of the life that's in the river, and work together, that's our goal."

"[Barnhardt] should have to try to figure out a way to clean it up, to maybe put money towards stocking fish, or give money towards conservation," he suggested.

Barnhardt did not respond to multiple requests for comment by press time.



LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here's the way it was September 3, 2009: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

Gill Rec Committee On the Hot Seat

The Gill Recreation Committee took center stage at the selectboard meeting on Monday, as the board discussed ways to bail the committee out of about \$1,200 of debt in their revolving account, and to plan ways to ensure smoother financial accounting of rec activities in the future.

Weeks earlier, the board had proposed dissolving the recreation committee because of their tangled financial accounts, which saw the balance in their revolving fund careen from \$7,500 in the black to \$1,200 in the red in the course of one fiscal year, while no clear accounting could be provided for expenditures from the committee's \$3,000 expense account, provided by the town.

An article to dissolve the recreation committee and turn over its responsibilities to the selectboard is on the warrant for Gill's upcoming special town meeting. Should

that article fail, another article later in the agenda calls for providing \$3,000 to fund the committee this year, on the condition that each program the committee sponsors going forward be accompanied by an itemized budget and revenue source, and be followed by a financial report to the selectboard within 30 days of completion.

Barton Cove Declared Unsafe for Swimming

Rusty Fish of Gill called on Monday to tell us not to swim in Barton Cove. High levels of *E. coli* bacteria have been detected by periodic monitoring conducted by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments.

Kimberly McPhee, the FRCOG's natural resources program manager followed up with a letter stating, "To date, the monitoring results indicate that *E. coli* bacteria is being washed into the river when it rains, making the water unsuitable for swimming for up to 48 hours after the rain ends. Monitoring data for the Barton Cove site indicate that the water has been consistently unsuitable for

swimming this season, even when it hasn't been raining, and can be unsuitable for boating and fishing during and up to 48-72 hours after a rain event."

Montague Dedicates New Police Station

Hundreds turned out for the dedication and open house at Montague's new state of the art police station on Saturday morning. A steady drizzle did not discourage the crowds, which filled the emptied bays of the adjoining Turners Falls fire station to listen to remarks from politicians and building committee members.

As of Monday, the police department has completed its successful transition to the spacious, airy, geothermally heated and cooled space in the new 12,000 square foot facility on Turnpike Road, ten times the size of their former quarters.

The new building provides the police a central location from which to reach each village of Montague easily, and Chief Zukowski has promised no change to the police presence in downtown Turners.

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MONTAGUE from pg A1

an outside company to bring in powerful sludge-dewatering equipment to help deal with a buildup of solids at the plant. “We hit our goal – we’re down to 10,000 pounds,” McDonald reported to the board. “Our secondary [clarifier] has less than three feet of blanket in it.”

Additional Details

“The life of a municipality is long and complicated,” Ellis began, before launching into a discussion of another form of buildup.

In 2016, Montague created a new permanent police role – lieutenant – to address a request from then-chief Chip Dodge for a second department leadership position outside the patrolmen’s union. Compensation for the position was designed as a hybrid of police and town administrators covered by the National Association of Government Employees (NAGE). The resulting package lacks certain benefits enjoyed by Montague’s rank-and-file police.

“If we were to lose our lieutenant,” Ellis said, the town would prefer to replace him from within the department, but “if your benefits decline upon your ascension, and you essentially lose the opportunity for the kind of overtime that uniformed officers typically make,” the pool of internal candidates might be smaller.

Kuklewicz said he favored discussing the matter with the town’s lawyers and drafting a contract for the position, adding that lieutenant Chris Bonnett “has got some legitimate questions that we should sit

down and look at.”

“That’s fair,” selectboard member Chris Boutwell agreed.

“We’ve allowed the chief to work some [traffic] details, if members of the sergeants or patrolmen are not available to do that,” Kuklewicz suggested. “I’m not sure why we wouldn’t allow a similar revision for a lieutenant... That’s an important piece, believe it or not, of where the police make some extra overtime pay.”

Extraregionalization

Montague, Gill, Leyden, Bernardston, Northfield, and Warwick have all approved the formation of regional school district planning committees to join together in looking at the idea of a six-town school district. The Gill-Montague and Pioneer Valley regions have both been struggling to stop a vicious cycle of declining enrollment and reduction in programming.

“I don’t think there’s at this point any indication that there’s a ‘further regionalization or bust!’ mentality behind this,” said Ellis.

Montague’s moderator, Chris Collins, will now appoint three members – including one of Montague’s six reps on the Gill-Montague school committee – to the planning committee. Volunteers are asked to apply by Thursday, September 19.

“This is a committee that could have years of work ahead of it,” Ellis said, “[or] people may meet and determine that this is a non-starter for some reason.”

“It’s the first year that anybody can remember, for instance,

MONTAGUE REPORTER



Annabel Levine brought our paper up to Montreal in early August, and took this photo in the Japanese Garden at the Montreal Botanical Garden. Going somewhere? Take us with you! Send photos to editor@montaguereporter.org.

ON THE ROAD

that we’ve not been able to field a football team,” Kuklewicz reflected. “And there’s many reasons for that – enrollment is certainly one of them, and a change in the thought process around some of the organized sports, in the communities. But it’s too bad that we don’t have enough students.... [The district] continue[s] to make incrementally small, hopefully, changes, but changes nonetheless that have negative impact on the kids, eventually.”

“I don’t know the answer, but this certainly is a step toward trying to solve what’s becoming a larger problem throughout the county,”

Kuklewicz added.

Other Business

Adam Kleeberg was appointed as a laborer at the wastewater treatment plant, at a starting wage of \$17.12 per hour.

The selectboard approved a \$25,000 contract with Allied Testing for running tests on materials, such as concrete, being used to construct the town’s new public works facility, and a \$16,250 agreement with Tighe & Bond for required environmental monitoring at the town’s closed landfill.

The plan to lease the burn dump

to Kearsarge Energy as a site for a solar array is in limbo along with the Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target (SMART) program. Ellis said he hoped SMART or a similar incentive program at the state or federal level would restart, calling the land deal “a potential benefit of approximately \$2 million in capital expense avoidance for the community,” as the state requires Montague to cap the dump whether or not solar panels are built.

The Turners Falls power canal will be drawn down for its annual maintenance during the week of October 7.



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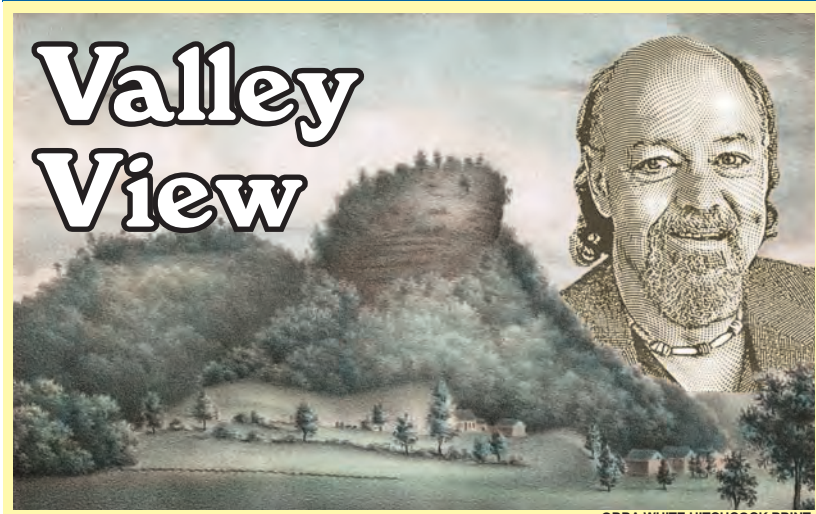
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By GARY SANDERSON

GREENFIELD – Old friend Billy Wardwell and his cheerful, trademark smile, full gray beard extending to his chest, stopped by on a bright summer morning carrying a large, earhtone, rectangular item from his car. On his way to 18 holes of vintage golf, he was clad in proper attire, right down to the bowtie and knickers that old, wood-shafted golfers wore.

What he lugged under his arm went back three generations deeper, to the first quarter of the 19th century.

Having picked up this bound volume of *Greenfield Gazettes* – dating back to the late Federal period, June 1, 1823 through June 1, 1825, plus one from 1817 – at South Deerfield bookbinder John Nove’s shop, he thought I may have an interest. He was right. I did. It’s still here, resting face-up on a leather ottoman in the study, containing many little tidbits of interesting information that speak to the days of aspiring young Greenfield.

Anyone who’s read old newspapers knows that the local-news product is spotty at best, even poor notwithstanding staples like obituaries, legal notices and an occasional special-interest story. The latter are sparse. Most of the “news” is regurgitated from city newspapers dropped off at local taverns by mail stages and post riders.

Then, of course, there are the merchant’s advertisements, which give you a feel for what’s happening in the business district. In this case, you find familiar names to anyone who’s explored early 19th-century Greenfield – artisans like pewterer Samuel Pierce, cabinetmaker Daniel Clay, foundry man William Wilson, and painter George Washington Mark all trying to make a go of it.

Mixed in with the ads are bulletin-board, lost-and-found notices about livestock, purses and wallets, and even an occasional personal plea that strikes your funny bone. Try this one on for size, a notice that appears several times in 1823, headlined “Look Out!” in bold, black, attention-seeking letters. Posted by jilted husband Elijah Clark of Leyden and dated Aug. 13, it reads:

“Whereas my wife Lydia left my bed and board on the 18th of March last without any provoca-

tion, I do hereby forbid all persons harboring or trusting her on penalty of law.”

So, tell me, do you suppose Mr. Clark is a batterer? Just a thought. The first that came to mind.

Other than that, you’re apt to find detailed accounts of public hangings in New York City or Atlanta, piracy on the high seas, devastating fires, or some scurrilous bank embezzlement scheme in Philadelphia or Newark, NJ.

Then, once in a while, you get a tale like the one brought to the paper by an anonymous local informant who thought readers would be interested. Although it would be tough to chase down two hundred years later, I suspect the source could have been Deerfield historian Epaphras Hoyt, identified by Historic Deerfield Inc. as a man of affairs who served as High Sheriff of Franklin County from 1814 to 1831... also active as an author, surveyor, postmaster, justice of the peace, register of deeds, and major general in the Massachusetts militia during his long life of public service.

The source is irrelevant. It’s the story of Benjamin Munn that matters. Found dead on a road from Deerfield to Shelburne on the evening of July 26, 1824, this wayward joiner had a distinguished and mysterious past. He was, as they say in Chicopee, quite the boy, yet no youngster when he met his sudden hilltown demise.

Born Feb. 1, 1738 in Deerfield, Munn had been around, to say the least. I suppose a good Federal Period carpenter would never go hungry, and Munn was all that. Carpentry was in his blood, so to speak, he the third in a line of three Deerfield carpenters named Benjamin Munn.

Munn was also fifth-generation Connecticut Valley, dating back to namesake progenitor Benjamin Munn, a Hartford founder, Pequot War veteran and early Springfield resident who died there in 1675, probably killed by Indians. Son John Munn (b. 1652, Springfield) settled at Westfield and fought at the King Philip’s War Falls Fight (May 19, 1676).

John’s son Benjamin, our Benjamin’s grandfather (b. 1683, Westfield), was the first of the three consecutive Deerfield carpenters named Benjamin. He came to Deerfield with his mother and see **VALLEY VIEW** page B5

TRAVELOGUE

Montague: Bigger in Texas?

By DANIEL SKARZYNSKI

MONTAGUES – Depending on whether you count abandoned mining towns and uninhabited islands, there are anywhere from nine to eleven Montagues in the United States. The competition is stiff. Montague, New Jersey boasts that state’s highest point, while Montague, Michigan claims the world’s largest weathervane. If we decide to count the island, Montague Island in Alaska is the 26th largest in the country. Montague, California has a mild climate.

And yet, for all those lofty achievements, our Montague leads the pack. It is the oldest and most populous, and I don’t think I need to explain why that makes it best.

If you had no idea there were so many Montagues, you’re not alone. Until recently I had never considered it myself, but once I knew better, I suggested to my friends that we make a stop of at least one other Montague on a cross-country road trip we had planned. There was no clear reason to make the stop other than perhaps a little adventure, or at least an affirmation of our Montague’s primacy.

Thin motivations, I know, but that’s the nature of exploration. The whole profession was founded on vaguely exciting plans that wouldn’t survive being written down. This plan followed suit: we gave it no thought, and immediately agreed it was a top-notch idea.

Though the weathervane was tempting, we decided on Montague, Texas. Naturally: I hold nothing against Michigan, but it doesn’t smack of adventure any more than Massachusetts. Texas, on the other hand? Based on my limited knowledge, the place is chock-full of cow-



Nicholas Skarzynski, the author’s brother, comforts himself with a Montague Reporter in Montague County, Texas during their cross-country journey this summer.

boys and gulches and dust and guns and barbeque and, if you get too close to Austin, yuppies. In other words, as long as you keep clear of Austin, it sounds about as different from Franklin County as you can get.

While we’re on the topic of counties: there was an element of disappointment to what we found in see **TRAVELOGUE** page B5

ArtBeat
Windows Into the Holy
by Trish Crapo

CLINTON, MA – I always feel like a voyeur when I look at religious art. The venerated figures from Christian narratives – or any religious narratives – feel unfamiliar and secretive to me, their gestures laden with mysterious meaning. I feel like an outsider trying to navigate a world full of clues meant for someone else. I recently wandered through the exhibit, “Wrestling with Angels: Icons from the Prosopon School of Iconology and Iconography,” at the Museum of Russian Icons in Clinton, spying on the rich colors, detailed imagery, and mystical symbolism of these contemporary icons.

It’s surprising and wonderful that the only museum in the US dedicated to Russian icons, and housing the largest collection of icons outside Russia, is just a little over an hour’s drive from Turners Falls.

The museum is quiet and interestingly lit. Colored light just below the ceiling in some of the galleries changes hue imperceptibly, morphing from one color to another in the few seconds it took me to take two photos. There is either sonorous see **ARTBEAT** page B8



A view of the dramatic staircase at the Museum of Russian Icons in Clinton, which houses the largest collection of Russian icons and related materials outside of Russia.

Pet of the Week



“CHI CHI”

She has her bags packed, and is waiting for you to take her home.

Chi Chi loves catnip-filled mice, will follow you around, likes to be up on high places, and meows if you touch her belly. She hasn't met a toy she doesn't like.

She has lived indoors with adults

and older children, but would probably do great with little ones. She may prefer a home with no other pets, or would like a slow introduction to resident animals.

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

Senior Center Activities

SEPTEMBER 9 THROUGH 13

GILL and MONTAGUE

The 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 machine when the center is not open.

M, W, F: 10:10 a.m. Aerobics; 10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise

T, W, Th: 12 p.m. Lunch

Monday 9/9

8 to 9:15 a.m. Foot clinic by appt. 1 p.m. Knitting Circle

Tuesday 9/10

10 a.m. TRIAD Health & Safety Expo at Scheutzen Verein

10:15 a.m. Chair Yoga

11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Senior Farm Share Pick Up

Wednesday 9/11

11:30 a.m. Friends Meeting

12:30 p.m. Bingo

Thursday 9/12

9 a.m. Tai Chi

10:15 a.m. Chair Yoga

1 p.m. Cards & Games

4 p.m. Gentle Yoga

Friday 9/13

Senior Center open

ERVING

Erving Senior Center, 1 Care Drive, Erving, is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. for activities and congregat meals. Lunch is at 12 p.m., with reservations required two days in advance. Call (413) 423-3649 for meal information and reservations.

For information, call Paula Better, 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 9/9

8:45 a.m. Step & Sculpt

9:30 a.m. COA Meeting

10 a.m. Healthy Bones & Balance

11:30 a.m. Breakfast Brunch

Tuesday 9/10

8:45 a.m. S.W.A.P. Exercise

10 a.m. Stretch & Balance

12 p.m. TRIAD Safety Expo

Wednesday 9/11

8:45 a.m. Line Dancing

10 a.m. Chair Yoga

12 p.m. Homemade Lunch

12:30 p.m. Bingo

6 p.m. Pitch

Thursday 9/12

8:45 a.m. Aerobics

9 to 11 a.m. SHINE

10 a.m. Healthy Bones & Muscles

12 p.m. Congregate Lunch

1 p.m. Computer Class

Friday 9/13

9 a.m. Quilting Workshop

9:15 a.m. Walking for Fitness

9:30 a.m. Bowling Fun

12 p.m. Lunch

LEVERETT

For information, contact the Leverett COA at (413) 548-1022, ext. 5, or coa@leverett.ma.us.

Wednesday 10 a.m. Flexibility & Balance Chair Yoga at the Town Hall. Drop-in \$6 (first class free).

Friday 12 p.m. Senior Lunch. Call (413) 367-2694 by Wednesday for a reservation.

WENDELL

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

SEPTEMBER LIBRARY LISTING

Montague Public Libraries

Turners Falls: Carnegie (413) 863-3214

Montague Center (413) 367-2852

Millers Falls (413) 659-3801

Erving Public Library (413) 423-3348

Gill: Slate Library (413) 863-2591

Leverett Public Library (413) 548-9220

Wendell Free Library (978) 544-3559

Northfield: Dickinson Library (413) 498-2455

MONTAGUE PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Starting in September, *Music and Movement with Tom Carroll and Laurie Davidson* will be meeting at the Millers Falls Branch through December. 10 to 10:45 a.m.

WENDELL FREE LIBRARY

Saturday, September 7: Film, *Lost in Space*. 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, September 14: *Lunar Carnival* kicks off the 35th year of the Wendell Full Moon Coffeehouse. 7:30 p.m.

LEVERETT LIBRARY

Thursday, September 5: Library Book Group. Book selection: *Gilead*, by Marilynne Robinson. 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, September 7: *The Bike Rodeo*, presented by Leverett Public Safety. 1 to 3 p.m.

September 10 & 24: *Tuesday Music Gathering*. New! Hosted by Gene Stamell. All levels. Will start with acoustic music.

Change in Content:

While all the libraries have regular weekly events, such as children's story hour, exercise classes, or book groups, rather than repeat them every month, we now will be listing only the one-time special events for each library by month, or any changes (time, venue, new topic) of regular events.

Come with ideas of how you'd like the group to evolve. 6:20 to 7:50 p.m.

Sunday, September 15: Join your Leverett neighbors to start planning our 250th town anniversary party. 3 to 5 p.m.

Saturday, September 21: Film screening of *The Lost Forests of New England*. 1 to 2:45 p.m.

Thursday, September 26: Film screening of *The Ecology of Co-evolved Species*. 6:30 to 7:45 p.m..

Sunday, September 29: *Leverett Co-op Story Time*. Featuring *The Apple Pie Tree*

by Zoe Hall. 10 to 11 a.m.

Sunday, September 29: *Birding in Costa Rica*, with Connie Lentz and Bart Bouricius. 2 to 3 p.m.

DICKINSON LIBRARY, NORTHFIELD

Wednesday, September 11: *Reading in Fiction, Non-Fiction and Poetry*. This month's reading is *Wind from an Enemy Sky* by D'Arcy McNickle. 3 to 4 p.m.

Thursday, September 19: *Fungus Among Us*. Mushroom identification with *Melissa Pariseau*. Co-sponsored by the Northfield Garden Club. 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, September 24: *Dear Phebe*, a literary quest by poet Judy Wells to find out whether family lore was correct and she is related to Emily Dickinson. 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Thursday, September 26: *Let's Make a Plan... for Extreme Weather* with Tracy Rogers. Part of *Climate Preparedness Week*. 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

THE GARDENER'S COMPANION

Avoiding the Plumber



By LESLIE BROWN

MONTAGUE CITY – No offense: actually, some of my best friends are plumbers. During my eighteen years at the Tech School, I met plenty of aspiring plumbers, and I would have been proud to call many of them my own.

It's just that I work hard at tending to my drains and pipes at home because I don't want to call one; they are too darn expensive.

So recently, wandering the 'Net (conserve-energy-future.com), I encountered an article entitled "25 Things You Should Never Put Down the Drain." I share them below.

Some items on this list might sound ridiculous, as in the category of, "of course, who would do that?" But bear with me. Not only do these drain-dumpings block your drain, they also enter the environment to share their toxicity elsewhere.

Pasta: Continues to swell in the drain, and could cause future blockages.

Rice: See above.

Egg shells: Granular cloggers.

Coffee grounds: See above.

Cooking oils, salad oils, and mayo: Clog creators.

Motor oils, transmission fluids, antifreeze: ditto.

Grease, fat on/in food like ham slices, bacon, gravy: Similar.

Dairy products: More of the same.

Animal feces, cat litter. Those dinky sticky labels on food like fruit, vegetables and the lot.

Sanitary feminine products,

condoms, paper towels: Ditto.

Flushable wipes. Solvents. Bones. Cleaning solutions. Medicines. Flour.

You get the gist.

Because we don't want to hire a plumber regularly, we have nice little net drain fillers that catch almost everything – although you do have to empty these little safety nets somewhere, in our case into the trash can. But they're only good for small items, and do nothing to trap liquids, which still get into your personal septic system or the town sewer, and ultimately into the water we drink or swim or boat in.

We use many of these items, and while not intentionally dropping them down the drain, we experience their accidental escape. For example, when cooking pasta, we often drain it in a colander, and some of it gets by us. But we *do* use them. Aside from drain blockage, what's the big deal?

The above items not only block our drains: they contribute to the pollution of the earth's environment, an impact we can ill afford in these times of serious global change.

So, what to do?

Medical wastes, like unused medicines, can be brought to your local pharmacy, which has a safe disposal bin.

Many of us gardeners use compost piles to create rich earth, which we later feed our garden soils. We keep our compost in plastic bins with lids we can open and bottom doors from which we can shovel out what we need. But we choose not to use bones or other liquids toxic to our pets or to wild animals, so open composting depends much on where and with what creatures you live.

Note that many of the listed no-no's involve paper, and we haven't

even mentioned the controversial paper towel. We are adjured to use washable, recyclable cloth instead.

As an alternative to toxic cleaners, they recommend organic products and/or homemade ones.

Here are some homemade organic cleaners we make and use:

General cleaners: Baking soda and vinegar, in equal parts. 4 tablespoons of baking soda in 1 quart warm water. Half a lemon for juice, and Borax for a heavy scrub.

For grease: 1½ cup sudsy ammonia with equal parts water for oven racks, etc.

For glass: 2 cups water; ½ cup white vinegar, ¼ cup rubbing alcohol.

For brass: white vinegar or lemon juice with table salt.

For the ring around the tub: one part non-gel toothpaste to one part baking soda.

For clothing: 1 gallon hot water, 1 cup powdered dishwasher detergent, and 1 cup regular liquid chlorine bleach.

Stone countertops: 2 drops mild dishwashing liquid, 2 drops water.

If fragrance is desired, you can add lemon rind, herbs, or your favorite essential oil.

Strictures as tough as these would be hard to follow. At least we can choose those most manageable for our households and still take good steps to care for our perishable environment.

Since many parts of the waste stream involve water, we can take care in our drain-dumpings to preserve the quality of this resource before it becomes again part of mother earth.

Clean water and air are two gifts we wish to leave to our children and those who follow, all over our beautiful planet.

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MONTAGUE COMMUNITY TELEVISION NEWS

The First Week of September!

By MIKE SMITH

MCTV has been releasing videos from the recent music festival Barbés in the Woods. Keep an eye on montaguetv.org for the latest videos! MCTV also recorded a short seminar called "Don't be a Victim," presented by George Holmes at Greenfield Savings Bank in Turners Falls. George advises elders on new scams that aim to steal their money and possessions, as well as their information and identity. This is something that everyone should watch and educate themselves about, the video will be coming soon to montaguetv.org.

Also, don't forget to register for MCTV's 120 Second Film Festival! Check out montaguetv.org for more information and to register.

Did we miss something? If there's a local event you think is worth recording, let us know! We'd be happy to send out one of our producers to capture the event. Or we could train you how to use a camera, and get you recording your own videos in no time!

Contact us at (413) 863-9200, infomontaguetv@gmail.com, or stop by 34 Second Street between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., Mondays through Fridays. We'd love to work with you!

CULTURAL REVIEW

Daughters of Krypton

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – The movie *Supergirl* was produced in 1984. The title character was played by Helen Slater. From what I can recall of the movie, her acting was okay.

I know of more than just her work from this movie. Sometimes an actor or actress from a previous TV show or movie about a certain character plays another, different character in a related TV series. Helen Slater did this with Supergirl. The first time was as Lara-El, Young Clark Kent's biological mother, in a 2007 episode of the prequel Superman series called *Smallville*. The episode was mainly centered on their version of Supergirl, played by Laura Vandervoort.

Helen Slater has also been doing this continually, for a second time, as the adopted mom to Supergirl in a CW series about her called *Supergirl*. I can recall her performance from those works a lot better, so I guess those works were better showings of her acting ability.

People must have found Laura Vandervoort's portrayal of Supergirl to be reasonably good, because they also had her play that character on *Smallville* for a whole season, and for a couple of appearances before the series ended. She also had her turn at playing a different char-

acter, like Slater did in the *Supergirl* series. She also was, in my opinion, a more hot-looking Supergirl than Helen Slater was.

As for the actress's name who plays Supergirl in the *Supergirl* series, it's Melissa Benoist. Her acting must have been seen as good by viewers. I believe that certainly helped with the show getting four seasons to its name, just like Grant Gustin's acting did for him in the *Flash* TV remake.



Another thing about Benoist that worked nicely for her is her wonderful singing voice. That and Gustin's were a part of a great musical crossover episode between her series and his. I have watched this episode multiple times. Together, those individuals' voices make up a good duet.

As for who I liked the best as Supergirl, in order, the first is Melissa Benoist. You can say she's a different kind of Supergirl, in part, because before her none had ever sung or been in a musical episode of a show.

Laura Vandervoort portrayed her as a Krypton on Earth, trying to adapt to having superpowers, very well.

And as for Helen Slater, I liked her in those other roles better than I did as Supergirl. That is how I would list who I liked the best.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Demolition Derby; Concerning Photographer; "Playing Games"; Pink Liquid; Bulging Eye; Moth

Sunday, 8/18

3:28 p.m. Caller from Avenue A reports her ex-boyfriend is sending harassing and threatening messages via Facebook. He brought her a jeep as a gift and texted that he is on his way to pick it up. Officer advised of options.

5:08 p.m. Small black-and-white dog with "Hamilton" tag on his collar found, caller attempting to find owner and will bring to shelter if unable to. Officer advised.

9:06 p.m. Panhandling complaint at FL Roberts. Gone on arrival.

Monday, 8/19

1:28 p.m. Safety hazard reported; juvenile on scooter with no helmet.

3:12 p.m. 911 caller on Maple Street believes someone may be in her home. Cleared by officer and K-9.

Tuesday, 8/20

1:09 a.m. Teens working on car in Fourth Street alleyway making loud noise. Cleaning up.

8:21 a.m. Accidental alarm at Carnegie Library.

2:58 p.m. Report of suspicious male walking near truck entrance at old PaperLogic. Officer observed male walking over bridge to Greenfield, nothing suspicious.

5:45 p.m. Callers on Federal Street complaining of loud revving engines and sound of cars smashing like a demolition derby in a backyard. Officer could not locate.

9:53 p.m. Fire in a basement on Montague Street; residents out of home, uninjured, fire department on scene and under control.

11:54 p.m. Report of a group of people being loud in Rendezvous parking lot as they were leaving. Officer advised them of the complaint.

Wednesday, 8/21

8:56 a.m. Female trespassed from Food City. Store manager is going to sheriff's office for formal order, due to previous shoplifting.

10:49 a.m. Disturbance on Highland Street. Party states many people have complained to her about the neighboring home with a very loud TV that plays all day and night. Found elderly couple with hearing problems; they will turn it down.

3:53 p.m. North Leverett Road caller reports two young girls walking alone along the road, appear to be under ten years old. Concerned that there was no adult with them. Officer did not find girls in the area.

4:51 p.m. Officer checked area near Strathmore/Indeck, and noticed open fence near stack. Signs of someone there, but not presently.

5:57 p.m. Report of two young males breaking glass in the skate park. Both have taken off on

scooters, one with short blonde hair and one with short brown hair. Officer spoke with father of the young males and they cleaned up the mess.

7:30 p.m. Unattended fire in a backyard from Fifth Street across from the bank. TFFD responding.

8:01 p.m. Aggressive driver in a dark blue Scion observed on Old Greenfield Road. Plate number taken by caller.

9:02 p.m. Report of a man in a wheelchair hitchhiking by FL Roberts on Third Street. Caller concerned he is not visible to drivers and may get hit. Officer spoke to party, who was at Rendezvous earlier, and they are fine.

Thursday, 8/22

12:20 a.m. Employee at FL Roberts reports that a man in a wheelchair is refusing to leave the property. Officers located male on Unity Street, courtesy transport to Morris Avenue.

11:49 a.m. Jogger reports a yellow lab ran out from the side of a house at her and she is concerned that the dog was off leash and appears aggressive. ACO notified.

12:47 p.m. Three or four kids reported being annoying at Fourth Street address.

2:03 p.m. Housing Authority requests assistance disposing of narcotics found at Third Street address. Old prescriptions disposed of in lobby med box.

2:47 p.m. Central Street caller reports neighbors are giving him a hard time and won't move their car parked on the sidewalk. Officer advised.

5:21 p.m. Request from Third Street wondering if an officer can verify the VIN on a vintage motorcycle on their property. Officer called back; no answer.

8:05 p.m. Larceny of an electric wheelchair reported on Newton Street in Millers Falls. Landlord has surveillance footage showing a man in black shorts and tank top taking the chair. Chair later recovered in Erving near the Green footbridge by another male, returned to party. Officer to follow up.

Saturday, 8/24

6:52 a.m. Injured bird found near Discovery Center in Turners Falls. Not a bird of prey; bird cannot fly. Attempted to contact Tom Ricardi to see if he can help with regular birds, but no answer. Officer advised nothing we can do to help.

11:03 a.m. Honda Civic not stopping for officer on Canal Street; pursued into Greenfield; plate number obtained and chase given up. GPD advised party reported this car stolen from Grove

Street in that town.

2:01 p.m. Call from Swamp Road about a Great Pyrenees named Abby that got loose. Very friendly, 75 pounds, tags and collar on. Left cell number to call if found. Reported found later.

4:23 p.m. Skittish pit bull mix running in and out of traffic on Park Street.

4:54 p.m. Caller later corralled pit bull in fenced-in yard and will bring to shelter when they can leash it.

4:56 p.m. Suspicious person reported at Unity Park; male taking photos of kids in bathing suits. Described as 60 years old, long blue denim shirt, dark brown hair and goatee. Officer advised.

8:22 p.m. request for help clearing smoke from burnt food in a microwave on Third Street. TFFD advised.

8:34 p.m. Complaint of males checking cars on a four-wheeler and hoverboard near Keith Apartments. Officer found two juvenile females, one on a hoverboard and one on a power wheels on the sidewalk. They stated they are not casing cars, and are heading home.

11:43 p.m. Noise complaint about a wedding at the Shea Theater; party breaking up for the evening, no need to respond; just wanting to put on the record.

11:55 p.m. Fireworks reported on the Prospect Street bridge. Unable to locate, area clear and quiet.

Sunday, 8/25

1:51 a.m. Caller observed van going off road in the area of Long Plain Road, and people walking away from the scene carrying a large bag headed toward Montague Center. Unable to locate; Sunderland PO on the case.

5:40 a.m. Car reported off the road near the Senn Farm on Wendell Road. Four-door Honda sedan looks like it might have been in an accident, according to caller. Officer on scene found driver in the back seat, not needing medical attention at this time. Rau's en route.

6:47 a.m. Disturbance at Third Street dumpster; female searching for belongings that may have been thrown out; no issue here.

1:35 p.m. Second Street caller reports someone banging on her door looking for her husband.

2:53 p.m. Fight reported at the skate park; verbal only; officer advised.

4:59 p.m. Probation violation warrant issued for male who has not kept GPS locator charged. Located at 5:51 p.m. near Discovery Center, brought to station.

5:18 p.m. Walk-in reports a dog ran into the road

and damaged his car last night; dog owner disputes. Situation mediated; owner to pay for damage.

6:54 p.m. Open gate and open door in Southworth tunnel reported by caller; all secured.

9:02 p.m. Motorized scooter reported stolen from L Street. Follow up with RMV.

Monday, 8/26

8:40 a.m. Animal complaint of dog defecating on Third Street and being aggressive with children. Ongoing issue; ACO contacted.

11:14 a.m. Hit and run observed on Park Street; mirror hit by car, caller followed vehicle to Greenfield and following now on French King Highway. GPD to locate.

11:59 a.m. Call about a suspicious male at Unity Park last Saturday taking pictures of children; "well dressed" male with "higher end camera like a reporter would use." Advised.

10:41 p.m. Caller states her neighbor was assaulted and jumped by females in the Fourth Street alley. Believes she is bleeding and has various injuries. Ambulance and TF responded; victim signed patient refusal.

Tuesday, 8/27

1:07 p.m. Investigation of suspicious trucks and campers at Third Street and Canal that may be used as dwellings. Man with wife who is a traveling nurse involved.

2:01 p.m. Female trespassed from Farren Care Center.

4:43 p.m. Male at Food City asking for money and swearing at people. Gone on arrival.

6:13 p.m. Traffic hazard on Oakman Street: cones in road. Officer moved to side.

10:35 p.m. Suspicious white pickup truck reported at Strathmore/Indeck shining its lights into the lower section of the loading docks. Older male with beard; found to be the night watch.

Wednesday, 8/28

7:45 a.m. Larceny on Central Street reported; man believes package was delivered and then stolen at his address.

9:34 a.m. Walk-in believes her phone was stolen yesterday. Find My Phone app shows it in a house on Avenue C. Officers checked; house empty. Party called back to say it was located at a friend's house.

Thursday, 8/29

5:09 p.m. Main Street caller reports neighbor's cat is on their front porch with a bulging eye. There is blood dripping out of its nose, and the caller does not feel comfortable approaching the neighbor.

see MPD page B4

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Funding Available! Montague Cultural Council Seeks 2020 Proposals

MONTAGUE – Individuals and organizations are encouraged to apply for grant funding from the Montague Cultural Council to support community-oriented arts, humanities, and science programs during 2020. Applications will be accepted from now until October 15.

Last year the Montague Cultural Council (MCC) awarded 31 grants ranging from \$100 to \$350 for projects including musical performances, theatrical productions, art-making workshops, readings, exhibitions, and educational programs. These cultural activities were organized by artists, non-profits, public agencies, and other local groups and have taken place at a variety of public locations, including schools, the Great Falls Discovery Center, the Montague public libraries, the Shea Theater, and the Brick House Community Resource Center.

Funding for these grants comes from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, which receives an annual appropriation from the state legislature and then distributes funds to

329 local cultural councils. MCC encourages proposals from a broad range of applicants to fund programs that allow residents of all five villages to experience a diverse array of programming. In some cases MCC fully funds programs, but applicants are encouraged to seek additional funding sources.

Interested? Review the Massachusetts and Montague Cultural Council guidelines carefully. The application and guidelines are online at mass-culture.org. For a printed copy of the application, please contact us. MCC members will review the applications and name this year's awards by January, 2020.

If you have an idea for a cultural event and are considering applying for a grant this year, please come meet with us at the Wednesday Farmers Market on September 4th and 11th from 3 to 6 p.m. The market is held at Peskeomskut Park on Avenue A in Turners Falls. Questions may also be emailed to Kate Martineau, chair of the Cultural Council at montaguelcc@gmail.com.

MPD from page B3

Gone on arrival; advised of options. 7:23 p.m. Gun shots reportedly heard from out of the woods on Greenfield Road. Caller wonders if neighbors have a shooting range and if that is legal so close to houses. Advised.

11:10 p.m. Loud explosions reported from G Street. Unfounded; no smoke, no smell, nothing seen.

Friday, 8/30

9:38 a.m. Possible illegal dumping reported on Third Street. Party coming out of building that is being repainted inside and dumping pink liquid down the drain. States there is an odor of paint thinner. Officer advised, found it was dirty water from cleaning the floor.

10:56 a.m. Dog yelping in a distressed way inside a Main Street home. Officer arrived as owner did; all set.

12:34 p.m. Suspicious person reported on Vladish Avenue. Caller's daughter was walking her dog and a man in a blue pickup pulled over and asked to pet the dog. Daughter, who has learning disabilities, allowed this and says that the man did not say anything else or try to do anything to her. Officer advised.

10:56 p.m. Possible disabled motor vehicle in front of the Farren Care Center. Found to be woman with a moth flying around her car.

Saturday, 8/31

1:11 a.m. Fourth

Street resident reporting a male and female having sexual relations outside behind her apartment. Officer could not locate.

3:47 a.m. Security monitoring company reports some heavy equipment in Millers Falls looks like it has its lights on and people standing on it from their camera surveillance. Officer checked area, located equipment with keys in it. Company will continue to monitor as they cannot get keys at the moment.

11:42 a.m. Horse loose on Hatchery Road. Returned home.

2:00 p.m. Report of two needles found near fish ladder, requests officer to dispose of them. Cleared.

2:50 p.m. Fire alarm at Colle Opera House set off by people grinding cement. Cleared.

8:04 p.m. 911 call from Millers Falls about two females fighting with baseball bats, one of them bleeding from the hand. Involved male, female contacted and to talk to officer at station.

9:03 p.m. Caller from bike path reports four or five teenage boys with bandanas on their faces on the path, with another boy who appeared to be hiding. Boys said they were "just playing a game." Officers unable to respond due to high call volume.

10:09 p.m. Kids running around people's backyards on Clark Avenue. Officer made

contact with youths, who said they were just playing a game after a birthday party.

Sunday, 9/1

7:49 a.m. Two small dogs wandering around Lake Pleasant yard. Dog owner's father contacted to retrieve dogs.

11:29 a.m. Barking dog on Grove Street. Owners contacted.

1:54 p.m. Confused elderly male reported to be on Montague side of General Pierce Bridge. Courtesy transport home provided.

3:49 p.m. Caller believes three men in a car by the fish ladder are smoking marijuana; specified their race. Unable to locate.

4:40 p.m. Caller just wants it on record that the concert at the Millers Falls Rod and Gun Club is very loud and disturbing his peace.

8:12 p.m. Prospect Street (TF) caller reports loud argument in neighbors backyard. Found to be verbal; transport home provided to one involved party.

8:50 p.m. Caller from Turners Falls Road wants it on record that music from the RPM Festival is too loud to be going on at this time on a Sunday night.

9:23 p.m. Millers Falls female states her boyfriend keeps coming to her house and yells from the street or kicks her door, and then takes off in a blue Chevy van. Has done this seven times today. Advised; will pursue civil options.



AUDITIONS A Midsummer Night's Dream

GREENFIELD – In mid-January, 10 Forward (formerly the Root Cellar) will host a two-night production of Shakespeare's comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Come to 10 Fiske Avenue this Sunday, September 8 to try out for your favorite part, or just to watch. If you need to access the space, which is below the ground floor, via an elevator rather than stairs, contact the venue at (413) 773-3290.

Auditions will take place in two time blocks: from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and from 6 p.m. on into the evening. Audition sides will be provided; no need to prepare. No experience necessary.

Climate Change Theater/Readings

GREENFIELD – Greening Greenfield and Local Access are proud to present Climate Change Theatre Action Greenfield, a series of public readings and performances which will be held in downtown Greenfield over several weekends this autumn.

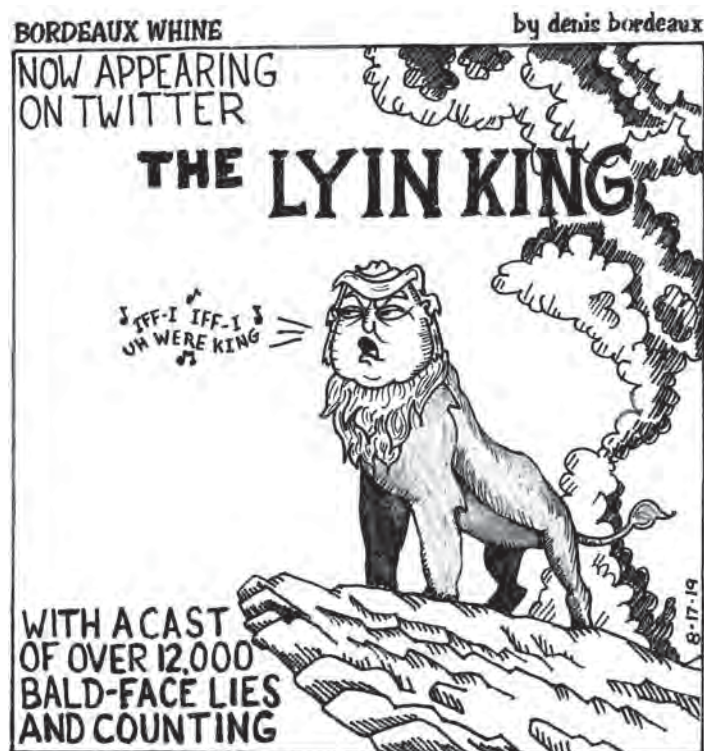
CCTA Greenfield is part of Climate Change Theatre Action, a worldwide series of readings and performances of short climate change plays presented biennially to coincide with the United Nations COP meetings.

CCTA Greenfield will be holding auditions for the readings/performances on Saturday, September 21, from 2 to 5 p.m., and Monday, September 23, from 6 to 9 p.m.

Auditions will take place at 170 Main Street, Greenfield. They will be held on the hour, so please arrive at one of the following times: Saturday, September 21 at 2, 3, or 4 p.m.; Monday, September 23 at 6, 7, or 8 p.m.

Please RSVP with the date and time you plan to attend by emailing localaccess@aol.com or texting (206) 234-9146. You can also RSVP on the Facebook event, "Auditions for Lighting The Way."

We welcome performers and non-performers alike to participate in this series! If you would like to get involved in this project another way, please contact Jan Maher at localaccess@aol.com or (206) 234-9146, or via www.facebook.com/cctagreenfield.



WENDELL FREE LIBRARY NEWS Movie Screening: Lost In Space (1998)

WENDELL – In the year 2058, the Earth will soon be uninhabitable after the irreversible effects of pollution and global warming! Professor John Robinson, lead scientist of the Jupiter 2 Mission, will lead his family to the habitable planet Alpha Prime to prep it for colonization.

The Jupiter 2 is equipped with a hyperdrive that allows faster-than-light travel, which will eventually be employed to evacuate the citizens of Earth. However hypergates must be constructed on Earth and Alpha Prime to provide stable points of departure and arrival. Dr. Zachary Smith is bribed by a terrorist organization to sabotage the mission, and ends up an unwilling stowaway as the ship blasts off.

Lost In Space, rated PG-13, will screen this Saturday, September 7, at 7:30 p.m. at the Wendell Free Library. The movie will be preceded at 7 p.m. by an episode of *Fireball XL5*, "Faster Than Light."

This is the next in the monthly series of Science Fiction/Fantasy and Horror/Monster movies at the library, located in the center of Wendell. Admission is free. For more information, visit www.wendellfreelibrary.org or call (978) 544-3559.

Upcoming movies in this series include *The Blob* (1958), October 5; *Event Horizon* (1997), November 2; and *The Thing* (1982), November 30.

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Play Reading: *Campus Unrest*

GREENFIELD – Local author Talya Kingston’s powerful play, *Campus Unrest*, kicks off Silverthorne’s fall rehearsed play reading series called Theater Thursdays. The play will be read at 7 p.m. on Thursday, September 12 in the Green Fields Market meeting space at 170 Main Street. The reading is free and open to the public.

Talya Kingston describes the action of the play in the following manner: “Tensions are high nationwide and violence on the streets too abundant. The ripple effects of this are felt on a small New England college campus, where a British academic couple and a first generation student each attempt to find their own voice, escape ghosts of the past, and move the conversations around injustice one step forward.”

Under the direction of Trena Loftin, the cast of six readers includes Rachel Braidman as newly-arrived history and gender studies professor Mia, Silk Johnson as Mia’s partner Kwame, and Terna Tilley as fellow faculty member Angela. Steve Folmar will read the role of student activist Darren Williams, while Julissa Rodriguez reads Jo Milner, whose classes Mia has taken over; Joan Sartori reads the roles of both a faculty wife, Sue Spencer and a colleague, Professor Cellino.

Playwright Talya Kingston is a dramaturg, playwright, and educator with a particular investment in new play development and theatre for social change. She is the associate artistic director at Where Arts and Activism Meet Theatre, a lecturer in dramaturgy at UMass Amherst, and the North-East Region VP for the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas (LMDA). Talya is also a proud member of the Northampton Playwrights Lab, where *Campus Unrest* was developed.

An integral part of Silverthorne Theater’s mission is to promote the development of new work, especially by regional New England playwrights. In 2018, Silverthorne staged world premieres of three

new works, two of which were from such writers.

Theater Thursdays readings are followed by audience discussions. The purpose of the readings is to give a platform for new work to be heard, and when possible, to be able to give playwrights direct audience feedback. It also gives Silverthorne, the resident theater company at Hawks & Reed Performing Arts Center, a look at plays that they might consider fully producing in future seasons. These will be held in different locations in the region. Look for more information about each reading at silverthornetheater.org.

The Revolutionists Starts Fall Season

Silverthorne’s mainstage production this fall begins with Lauren Gunderson’s *The Revolutionists*, a very different take on the French Revolution from the viewpoint of four prominent women of the time. The show opens Thursday, September 19 and runs through Saturday, September 28 at Hawks & Reed Performing Arts Center in Greenfield.

A brutal comedic quartet about four very real women who lived boldly in France during the French Revolution’s Reign of Terror, this fast-paced play directed by Gina Kaufmann centers on the lives of feminist playwright Olympe De Gouges, assassin Charlotte Corday, former queen Marie Antoinette, and Haitian rebel Marianne Angelle. These four hang out, murder Marat, lose their heads, and try to beat back the extremist insanity in revolutionary Paris.

The director brings a cabaret aesthetic to Silverthorne’s production; audiences can expect a fluidity of performance space and interconnection between actors and audience.

The play premieres September 19 and repeats on September 20, 21, 26, 27, and 28 at 7:30 p.m., with a Sunday matinee on the 22nd at 2 p.m. Tickets are available through eventbrite.com or by calling (413) 768-7514.

TRAVELOGUE from page B1

Montague, Texas. I might as well get it out of the way now, as I’m sure you’ll find it equally disappointing.

They’re bigger than us. They have more than twice the people we do. True, Montague, Texas is actually Montague County, Texas, and their population is spread over 938 square miles compared to our 32, but that’s nitpicking. If we’re counting ghost towns, we’re counting counties, and on size, they beat us fair and square. If bigger is better, they are.

In age we still have an advantage: Montague, Texas was established in 1857, to our 1754. Upon further inspection, it strikes me that age is the more important of the two. I’m sure I don’t need to explain why.

Anyhow, adventure in mind, we approached the Montague County offices early one Monday morning. The four-story brick and pillared structure rises commandingly above the few buildings which separate it from the surrounding rangeland, and despite the tendrils of mist cooking off the Texas grass, we saw it well before we reached it.

Closing the distance by 8 a.m., we found parking around the building to be ample at that time of day – which I suppose says nothing about the demand for parking in general. Availing ourselves of the surplus, we disembarked from our RV to see if we could find someone with whom to establish diplomatic ties.

Soon we saw a woman approach, and it was clear to us she worked there. Clear from her demeanor. It was a Monday morning, after all. I knew then that we were treading unstable ground, and I quickly cast about for the right words. Words which would assure her of our friendliness, while also communicating our willingness to leave her alone immediately. Words that were placating, yet respectful. Clever words.

Words like “I know this sounds strange, but we’re from Montague, Massachusetts.”

To you, those words may not seem clever and careful at all, and that’s because they aren’t. But they are what I said. I’ve never been good at thinking on my feet. To our collective surprise, she smiled. “Well that’s just great. Are ya’ll here for a tour?”

Assuming that “tour” was Texas slang for “road trip,” we conceded that we were. As it turns out, tour means the same in Texas as it does here.

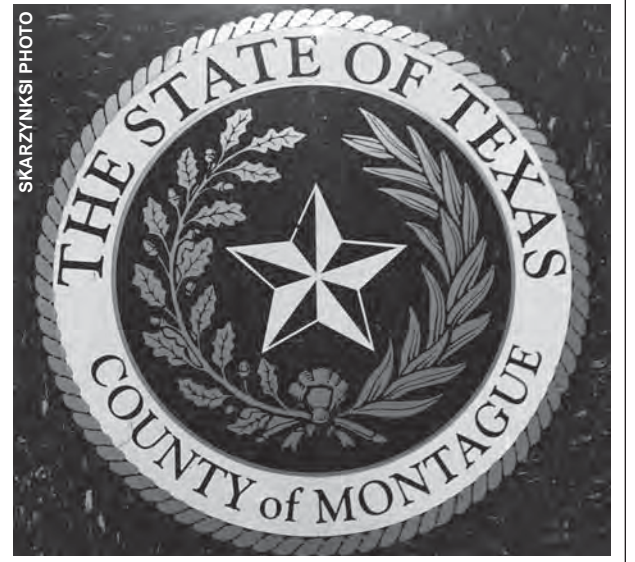
“Let’s see, then,” she said. “I can show you the old jail. It’s up on the fourth floor.” And she did.

Beginning our tour she seemed somewhat unsure of the situation, as any of us would be, but once warmed up to the idea, her civic pride shone through.

She showed us not only the old jail, but the old courtroom gallery, the town records, and the space under the roof where a dome used to top the central stairwell. Back when it did, one could look up into its gilded vault all the way from the first floor. The dome was removed after being damaged in a tornado, and the central shaft filled with an elevator. There was a good deal of opinion regarding the elevator; she was not the only Texan to mention to us how nice everything looked in the pre-elevator days.

Beneath that perished dome, apparently deciding we were all good-natured or at least harmless, she finally told us. With a careful smile she said, “Here we actually pronounce it *Mon-Tayg*.” Then she added, to our dumbfounded silence, “Let’s see if we can get you in to see the third jail.”

How many jails? you’re probably wondering. By my count, at least four. Three of them are still stand-



The Montague County Seal, as displayed on the floor of the county offices in Texas. The similarity to our own town’s seal, featuring a five-pointed star, “seemed like good fun” to our travel writer.

ing, one is operational, and she did get us into the third. Luckily, that’s not the operational one. The third jail houses the town historical commission, and a generous member came down to give us a tour.

On that note, I have more bad news. While our history may be longer, it doesn’t sound half as exciting.

Take their jails, for instance. The first jail was torn down by horse thieves after they had already destroyed the courthouse. Their logic was that with no courthouse and no jail, there could be no law, and thus no criminals. I never found out if this approach worked.

The second jail was built inside the new courthouse, which struck me as unfairly tempting to hapless horse thieves. Yet the building survived to maturity, and the second jail died of natural causes when the criminals multiplied, and its cells did not.

The third jail looked appropriately sturdy, but that was a deception. It was subject to such frequent escapes, including that of Bonnie and Clyde associate Floyd Hamilton, that they were forced to build the current jail. By all counts, that jail is serving well.

So, outlaws? Sure. And cowboys? Of course. The old Chisolm trail passed through Montague County. The Nocona Boot Company started there. There was a hat company, but it burned.

By the time all was said and done, we’d had several tours, a history lesson, and even found our way onto the roof of the county offices. That was a highlight, as you could see for miles over the flat country of north Texas – although I have a sense we weren’t supposed to be up there, so I won’t mention who took us.

We met the sheriff, a man so soft-spoken he must be as tough as they come, and we were given wooden nickels minted in 1957 to commemorate the county’s centennial. The people were kind, interested, and welcoming, particularly the woman we first met who took us under her wing.

So, having scouted the territory and returned alive, having exchanged tokens of good will and established trade-relations, I’ll end by rendering my final proclamation on the topic of our long-lost compatriots. They may have us beat. I hate to admit defeat, and so won’t do it fully, but folks – it’s close.

Here’s the caveat: if we are beat, I just might have to change my opinion on the whole subject of losing. It was such a hospitable process, I don’t think I’d mind doing it again.



VALLEY VIEW from page B1

stepfather John Richards, the Deerfield schoolmaster who arrived before 1698, according to historian George Sheldon. Richards’ stepsons, brothers Benjamin and John Munn, joined their mom as the first of the family to live in Deerfield.

Benjamin I, his wife Thankful Nims, and their infant child survived the famous 1704 Indian attack in the family’s snow-covered, cellar home on the Richards lot. Thankful was the daughter of Deerfield’s Godfrey Nims, and removed to Northfield.

Son Benjamin II (born 1709, Deerfield) married Mary Wait, daughter of “Brave” Benjamin Wait of Hatfield, a famous Indian fighter and scout who was a victim of Deerfield’s 1704 Meadow Fight. Benjamin II and Mary produced our Benjamin, born 1738 in Deerfield.

Our Benjamin’s first cousin in John (b. 1741, son of John, Benjamin) was one of the first permanent settlers in the part of Deerfield that became Greenfield, then Gill. The family operated the ferry there, retaining the property around Munn’s Ferry Road into the mid-20th century.

Our Benjamin Munn was a French and Indian War soldier of distinction, having served from

about 1755 to 1760 under commanding officers the likes of legendary Israel Putnam and Robert Rogers (of Rogers Rangers fame) in the Lake George-Fort Ticonderoga-Crown Point-Lake Champlain theater.

Surviving the perilous frontier campaigns, Munn married Patty Bartlett of Northampton, where they lived briefly before packing up for Sudbury and opening a tavern. From that post, he answered the 1775 call from Cambridge to fight the British at Bunker Hill before, soon thereafter headed to the Maine frontier due to “pecuniary embarrassments” (financial difficulties, in the current lexicon), and then to Nova Scotia, leaving his wife wondering where he fled. An unsubstantiated online report on one of the genealogical sites claims he was, like convicted brother Phineas, a Tory, but that seems dubious given his Bunker Hill service.

Although little appears to be known of Munn’s Nova Scotia life, he surely carved out an identity as a carpenter and faded from the memory of Deerfield friends and neighbors. Then, a half-century later, in 1822, out of the clear blue sky, presumed long dead by most who had known him as a young man, Munn

returned to his native town without warning, like a ghost from the past.

According to the anonymous newspaper informant, Munn’s circuitous trip home had been chronicled in an 1822 *Gazette*, which I did not chase. It was a journey worthy of notice, if not local folklore. The 84-year-old man had walked some 100 miles to a ship anchored in Halifax port, sailed to Boston and proceeded to hoof it another 100 more miles home to Deerfield.

There, his widowed younger sister Lydia Bradley was living on The Street, and another younger widowed sister, Mary Joiner, was living in Shelburne, either at a home she had shared with late husband Edward Joiner, or possibly with son William Joiner and daughter-in-law Content (Bardwell) Joiner. Content was the daughter of Ebenezer Bardwell, an early settler of Foxtown (the southeastern Shelburne/Bardwells Ferry area). Both Edward and Mary

died in Shelburne. The Deerfield Joiners (also spelled Joyner in some records) can be confusing to follow due to the fact that there were two Edwards and two Williams.

Regardless of where Mary lived in Shelburne, it’s safe to assume that it was in Foxtown, and that the route from Deerfield would have crossed the Deerfield River to Wisdom, then up either Old Albany or Hawks roads to the western hills. The newspaper doesn’t identify the road Munn traveled, suggesting readers would know the route.

Then again, maybe it was just shoddy reporting, always a possibility.

In Deerfield, Munn likely bunked with sister Lydia. By the time of his phantom return, his ex-wife, who had presumed herself a widow and married Timothy Parsons of Northampton, had herself been dead for five years. Anyway, according to the Aug. 3, 1824 *Gazette* account,

Munn left Deerfield on foot to visit his Shelburne sister. The day was Monday. Witnesses had seen him along the way before he was later found dead by the side of the road that evening. He had walked about 10 miles before expiring.

There were reports of rain and hail storms passing through that day. The coroner ruled death by natural causes. The newspaper correspondent praised Munn as a walker with “remarkable power of limbs for traveling... Few young men walked with greater ease or rapidity.” He was 86.

So, there you have it – the tale of Travelin’ Man Benjamin Munn, the former Rogers Ranger, found dead over an embankment along the road to his sister’s Shelburne home on July 24, 1824. Although there seems to be no record of his final resting place, it’s not far away. Apparently, he wanted to die where he was born.



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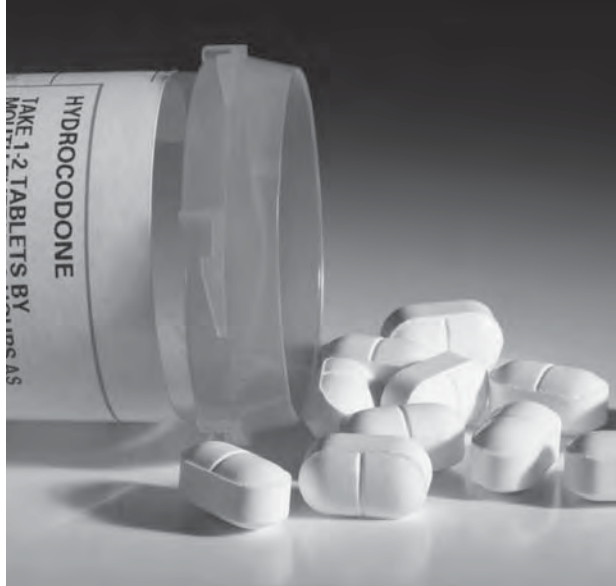
NatureCulture: The Science Page

WARREN ONDRAS PHOTO



Contributions to NatureCulture are welcome. What are you interested in? Would you like to write about birds, weather, science of any kind? We need your input. Send articles for consideration to: science@montaguerreporter.org. Thank you!
- Lisa McLoughlin, editor

The Dangers of Opioid Use



Opioids are a leading cause of death in Massachusetts. (Creative Commons photo by Flickr user Don Johnston LC)

By LISA MCLOUGHLIN

FRANKLIN COUNTY – From 1999 to 2017 over 702,000 Americans died from drug overdoses, with 68% of those involving opioids, and 130 people every day die from opioids in the US. Opioid overdoses have skyrocketed to become the worst drug epidemic in modern history. Over 42,000 Americans died from opioid overdoses in 2016, which was more than deaths from automobile accidents or firearm-related homicides.

Massachusetts is especially hard-hit, with 30 deaths per 100,000 people in 2016, compared to about 14 deaths per 100,000 in the rest of the United States. In Massachusetts, people aged 25 to 34 years are the most affected, with over 65 deaths per 100,000 people, and ages 35 to 44 not far behind with 60 deaths per 100,000 people. Locally, most of us know someone affected by opioids.

According to the Center for Disease Control, opioids are not always a good option for chronic pain, while they may be effective for acute pain (lasting less than 3 months). Some people are at high risk to develop an opioid use disorder, but anyone using an opioid for longer than two weeks can become physiologically dependent on them. Addiction is exhibited by a loss of

control, continued use despite harm, compulsive use, and cravings.

There are special concerns for pregnant women who use opioids. The drugs enter the fetus through the bloodstream, and can create a dependency in the womb. Some babies (about 40%) will experience withdrawal after birth, a phenomenon known as neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS). Similar to an adult's withdrawal from addiction, this involves excessive crying, tremors, and difficulty sleeping and eating.

A study of 860 newborns, half of which had been exposed to opioids in the womb, showed that the heads of the exposed babies were about 1 centimeter smaller on average. It has not been shown yet whether this means the babies have smaller brains, but the researchers will continue to study them to see if they have cognitive impairment or behavioral problems. The study that found the size differential for skulls, first published last December in *Pediatrics* and reported upon by Aimee Cunningham in the January 2019 issue of *Science News*, included among the NAS babies those whose mothers had taken buprenorphine or methadone used to treat addiction.

Instead of these medication-assisted treatments, current research recommends gradual withdrawal during pregnancy, which researchers believe will not harm the fetus. In the past, the recommendation had been to use the medication-assisted treatments if a woman was pregnant, a recommendation which still holds for women who have had difficulty with a past attempt at withdrawal.

Besides being dangerous to pregnant women and their fetuses (and later, babies), opioids prescribed before pregnancy could also affect the fetus. Women who were prescribed opioids within three months of becoming pregnant were 2.5 times as likely to have a child with autism spectrum symptoms.

Resources available in Franklin County to help with opioid addiction include:

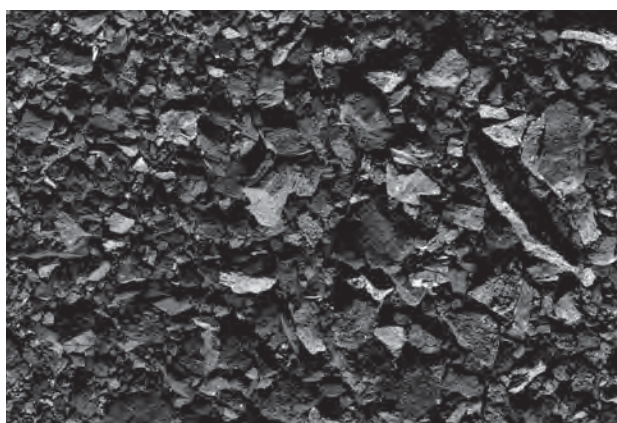
Drug helpline: (888) 633-3239

Health Care Resources Center: 177 Shelburne Road, Greenfield, (413) 774-3321

Clean Slate: 1 Arch Place, Third floor, Greenfield, (413) 376-4343

Northern Hope Center: 298 Federal Street, Greenfield, (413) 733-1423

Asteroid Exploration... and Destruction



A rocky region near Bennu's equator. (NASA/Goddard/University of Arizona photo)

By LISA MCLOUGHLIN

TUCSON, AZ – According to NASA, the 500-meter-wide asteroid Bennu may contain “unaltered material from the very beginning of our solar system.”

NASA is currently studying Bennu by means of a spacecraft called OSIRIS-REx. This craft was designed to help discover the origins of the solar system, how planets form, and how life began with – among other things – spectrometers, which measure the presence of chemicals based on light absorption and emission.

The OSIRIS-REx spectrometers picked up signs of

hydrated minerals about a month before the spacecraft reached the asteroid, according to a 2019 *Science News* article by Lisa Grossman. Later they detected the presence of magnetite, which strengthened scientists' confidence in the past presence of water.

Once a good place on Bennu's rocky surface is identified, the spacecraft will land and collect pieces of asteroid dust smaller than 2 centimeters. The asteroid has multiple particle plumes of material blowing off it, more boulders and craters than anticipated, and may even contain caves.

We can expect to get the samples in 2023, or slightly later, because all the surprises on Bennu have forced the NASA team to think creatively, adapting their strategy to the conditions they discovered. In turn, the data collected up close has helped NASA update its Earth-based computer models, so next time they will know how to read a surface covered with small boulders.

Those readers worried about asteroids hitting Earth will be pleased to learn that NASA is planning its first test of DART, the Double Asteroid Redirection Test. In 2021 NASA will send a spacecraft to crash into a small asteroid that is part of a binary pair, a moon called Didymos B that orbits a larger body called Didymos A. Scientists will observe what happens to each part of the pair when they crash DART into the smaller moon in September 2022. Neither body is threatening Earth.

R.I.P. Didymos B...

Eating Local Food Lowers Your Carbon Footprint

By LISA MCLOUGHLIN

NORTHFIELD – The BBC has created a “climate change food calculator” that tells you the impact of what you eat. The 2018 news article discusses the climate impact of individual foods.

Most of us are aware by now that beef is the highest polluter in terms of global warming gases. But the impact varies a lot depending on where the beef is raised: cattle raised on previous rainforest areas are associated with 12 times the greenhouse gas emissions of cattle raised on natural pastures.

Our pastures in New England may not be naturally open spaces, but they have been here a long time, so sourcing meat locally could really reduce your carbon footprint. Note that a similar range of impact can be applied to chocolate and coffee, two plant crops often grown in deforested areas.

Still, even the best-sourced beef has a higher impact than any vegetable protein source. A quarter of greenhouse gas emissions globally come from food production, with

58% of those emissions coming from animal products, and half from beef and lamb alone. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change recommends less meat and other animal products, more local and seasonal food, and planning ahead and cooking creatively, so as not to have to throw food away.

“What we eat is one of the most powerful drivers behind most of the world's major environmental issues, whether it's climate change or biodiversity loss,” study researcher Joseph Poore told BBC News.

We are lucky to have so many sources of local food in our area. Farmers markets and farm stands in season, and buying direct from farms is possible throughout the valley (check out buylocalfood.org). Coops tend to carry locally sourced meat including McCuskers in Buckland, Green Fields Market in Greenfield, River Valley in Northampton, the Leverett Village Coop, and the Quabbin Harvest Coop in Orange. Restaurants serving local meats include Great Falls Harvest in Turners Falls and the Gill Tavern in Gill, among others.



Cattle grazing. (Creative Commons photo by Flickr user Andrew Gustar)

September 2019 Moon Calendar

First Quarter
Thursday,
September 5

Full Moon
Saturday,
September 14

Last Quarter
Saturday,
September 21

New Moon
Saturday,
September 28

Mountains of the moon. (ASA/GSFC/Arizona State University photo)

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

EVENTS

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

Flourish with Grit, Turners Falls: *A Trio of Poets. Cindy Snow, Amanda Lou Doster, and Amy Gordon* read from their work published by Slate Roof Press. Refreshments. 6:30 p.m.

Looky Here, Greenfield: *The Big Draw*. Figure drawing session with a model in monthly sessions. \$ donation. 7 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Falltown String Band*. 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Donna the Buffalo*. Roots band with a danceable groove. \$. 8 p.m.

North Village Smokehouse, Millers Falls: *TNT Karaoke*. 9:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Immortal Jellyfish*. 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

First Congregational Church, Greenfield: *Music of Activism*. Performers include *Juan Pedraza, Fiery Hope, Mary Wheelan, Visioning Bear Singers, and Musica Franklin*. Donations welcome. 10 a.m.

FAB Fashion, Turners Falls: *Fab Fashion Open Model Castings*. FAB is casting men and women runway models for Fashion Passion on September 20 through 22 during Turners Falls Fashion Week. Women should wear heels. All models to provide hard copy photo with contact information. Info: richie@ricierichardsonfab.com. 3 p.m.

Wendell Free Library: Movie, *Lost in Space Movie*. Dr. Zachery Smith works on hyperdrive gates to evacuate Earth to planet Alpha Prime after global warming makes life unbearable. Preceded by an episode of *Fireball XL5*. Part of the Sci-Fi/Horror Fantasy series. 7:30 p.m.

Montague Bookmill, Montague Center: *Ari & Mia Friedman, Roger Street*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

CALL FOR DESIGNERS

ReVamp is an upcycled fashion show as part of FAB Fashion Passion 2019, September 21 and 22 in Turners Falls. This call is for wearable pieces made from recycled clothing or other materials, with creative interpretation and whimsy encouraged. Workshops will be held before the event; contact Rachel Teumin at rteumin@gmail.com for more information.

EXHIBITS

Artspace Gallery, Greenfield: *Watercolors by Ruth Oland-Stuckey*. Her style takes inspiration from the Japanese watercolor masters depicting landscapes, fruits, branches, and other elements from nature. Through September 20.

Barnes Gallery, Leverett Crafts & Arts Center: *Susan Valentine Open Studio and Exhibit*. September 5 through September 29. Reception Sunday, September 8, 4 p.m.

St. James Church, Greenfield: *Dance Spree*. Freestyle boogie: no shoes, no alcohol, no rules. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Woody & Sunshine*. 9:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Jazz Brunch with Soul Jazz*. 11 a.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Traditional Quebecois Session*. 3 p.m.

FAB Fashion, Turners Falls: *Fab Fashion Open Model Castings*. See Saturday's listing. 3 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *TNT Karaoke*. 9 p.m.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

Greenfield Library: Movie, *The Natural History of the Chicken*. Documentary looking at America's \$40 billion a year poultry industry and a humorous look at domestic chickens and the people raising them. 10 a.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Little Arcs, Kimaya Diggs, and Eleanor Levine*. Sweet night of precious songs. \$. 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *The O-Tones, Girls From Mars*. \$. 6:30 p.m.

Memorial Hall, Shelburne: *Ropes*. Play about three brothers

dance and luring song. \$. 8 p.m.

North Village Smokehouse, Millers Falls: *TNT Karaoke*. 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: Presentation, *Alvah Crocker*. Learn about the founder of Turners Falls with *Cliff Schexnayder*, author of *Builders of the Hoosac Tunnel*. Followed by question and answer period. 1 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Traditional Music Session*. 3 p.m.

Antenna Cloud Farm, Gill: *Jen Curtis & Friends*. Violist Jen Curtis with pianist Jeanette Fang and members of the Melodic Refuge Orchestra with an eclectic mix of styles and compositions. \$. 3 p.m.

St. James Church, Greenfield: *Greenfield Drum & Dance*. African dance, followed by a Drum and Dance instead of the usual Dance Spree. \$. 6 p.m.

Looky Here, Greenfield: *David Liebe Hart* (Adult Swim) live show & movie screening, *Shrek Retold*. \$. 7 p.m.

Memorial Hall, Shelburne: *Ropes*. (See Friday listing.) \$. 7 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Duke Robillard Band*. \$. 7 p.m.

Montague Center: *Montague Common Hall Open Mic #35*. Big-town performance in a tiny village. Donation. 7:30 p.m.

Wendell Full Moon Coffeehouse, Wendell: *Lunar Carnival*. Energizing and inspiring bohemian sounds with a magical blend of soulful harmonies. To benefit Launchspace at the Orange Innovation Center. Dessert-O-Rama, coffee and tea, fun for all ages. Donation. \$. 7:30 p.m.

St. James Church, Greenfield: *Dance Spree*. Freestyle boogie: no shoes, no alcohol, no rules. \$. 7:30 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Boy Harsher* tour kickoff, featuring *Sibling*. \$. 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

Antenna Cloud Farm, Gill: *Jen Curtis & Friends*. (See Saturday listing.) Indoor concert. \$. 3 p.m.

Memorial Hall, Shelburne: *Ropes*. (See Friday listing.) \$. 7 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Traditional Irish Music in the Wheelhouse*. 7 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *TNT Karaoke*. 9 p.m.



Cindi Oldham, "Unity Street," oil on canvas, 9" x 12". Turners Falls artist Oldham asks whether thinking about trees and plants as sentient beings would influence our actions in *Speaking for the Trees*, a show of paintings and related text at the Great Falls Discovery Center during September. The Center is open daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. A reception and tree walk are planned for this Saturday, September 7, at 1 p.m.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Toulouse Control, Actual Rose, Sam Gas Can, Botanica Wilde*, and karaoke. \$. 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Scotty K's Open Mic*. 8 p.m.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Music in the Morning*. Song, movement, laughter for young children and their caregivers. *Marcy Gregoire* and *Hilary Lake* with puppets, costumes, instruments. \$. 10:30 a.m.

Hawks & Reed: *Comedy with Jon Ross*. In the Wheelhouse. 8 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Shout Lulu*. 7 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Salsa Wednesday*. With *McCoy* and *DJ Roger Jr.* \$. 8 p.m.

killing time in an airport on their way to their estranged father's last tightrope walk. Footlights at the Falls production. \$. 7 p.m.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Paula Bradley, Rafe Wolman*. Great Falls Coffeehouse Series presents old-time and early country music with Paula and Rafe. A lively and joyful musical celebration that includes songs and tunes with some clogging. Coffee and baked goods available. Suggested donation \$6 to \$15. 7 p.m.

Montague Common Hall, Montague: *String Sextets in September*. Mohawk Trail Concerts presents *Adaskin String Trio* and the *Elm City Ensemble* performing Dvorak and Brahms, while photography by *Liz Gardner* is projected. Free for 16 and under. \$. 7:30 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Immaterial Possession, Camo by Camouflage, Underwear*. Hypnotic

Brattleboro Museum & Art Center: New exhibits for the summer include beach scenes, activist photography by *Dona McAdams*, immersive installations, steel sculpture, and more. Through September 23.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Speaking for the Trees*. Paintings by *Cindi Oldham*. What if, in addition to sustaining us, trees were sentient? What if they had communities and wept for each other? What if they nursed and cared for their young? Would that

change everything? Opening reception Saturday September 7, 1 p.m. Tree walk at 2 p.m. Through September.

Greenfield Gallery: *Linda Leighton: From The Gardens*. Photographer's thoughtful meditations on a garden theme.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: Paintings and sculpture by *Annaleah Gregoire*. Gregoire draws inspiration from examining issues such as the encroachment of technology on the natural world and incorpo-

rates many techniques such as ceramics, bronze casting, laser cutting and 3D printing.

Nina's Nook, Turners Falls: *Mapping the Body*. Multi-media installation by *Nancy Lautenbach* featuring her Pod series inspired by the female form in collage, drawings, and sculpture. September 12 through October 26.

Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne Falls: *Karen Iglehart: Entering Abstraction through Color*. Oil paintings. *Carson Converse:*

CALL FOR ART

Nina's Nook in Turners Falls invites artists to submit erotic art for *Triple SSS 2020: Sensual, Sexual, Smut*. Submit up to three jpegs to erotic-art2020@gmail.com by January 15. A \$10 participation fee is asked at drop off to help with expenses relating to the reception.

Modern Art Quilts. Dawn Siebel: *The Endangered*. Reception for the three exhibits on Sunday September 8, 3 p.m.

Shelburne Arts Coop, Shelburne Falls: *Local Color*. Art inspired by the landscape of western Mass by member artists. Through September.

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ARTBEAT from page B1

background music being played or an atmosphere so resonant you come away remembering background music. Both times I've visited, I spent several hours happily immersed in the museum's timeless feel.

The current exhibit, up through October 20, presents 46 examples of contemporary icons created by 16 iconographers working in a style developed by the school's founder, Vladislav Andrejev. Andrejev, who had been prohibited from practicing religious art during the Soviet era, emigrated from Russia to the US in 1980.

The Prosopton School's style is imbued with "a vitality and energy reflective of the school's American experience," signage in the museum states. Prosopton School icons are further described as "intuitive and gestural," "youthful, free, and somewhat playful."

This distinction will be better understood if you save this exhibit for last, visiting the second floor of the museum first. After viewing some of the very old, amazingly ornate icons in the museum's permanent collection, the brighter colors and looser physicality of the icons of the Prosopton School will seem more striking.

A Flea Market Find

The museum had its humble beginnings in a Moscow flea market. Gordon B. Lankton, a plastics engineer who worked his way up to become president of Nypro, an in-



Icons from the Prosopton School of Iconology and Iconography, which are brighter and more lively than their older counterparts, form the current exhibit at the Museum of Russian Icons in Clinton, MA.

ternational injection molded plastics company in Clinton, picked up an icon at a flea market in 1989 while on a business trip to open a Nypro factory in Russia. The museum's collection now includes over 1,000 icons and related items, including icons dating back as far as the 15th century.

The museum's vision is to "enhance relations between Russia and the United States through the medium of art, especially Russian icons," a vision that seems particularly vital, even urgent, in these dangerously divided times.

The museum opened in a former mill building across the street from the Nypro buildings in Clinton in 2006, and has expanded several times to include a modern addition and an adjacent former courthouse and police station. Several barred, brick holding cells in the basement of the police station now serve as small rooms in which to view videos on the making of icons or other relevant topics.

Throughout the museum an audio tour, which you can patch into using your phone or by picking up a headset, provides information on

selected icons, and there are video screens at various stations providing supplemental information. Some of the icons that include particularly small details have magnifying glasses hanging on cords on the wall nearby – a nice touch, and one that served to increase my curiosity as well as my sense of being well taken care of by the museum.

Down in one of the holding cells, a video shows Vladislav Andrejev, founder of the Prosopton School, explaining through a voice-over interpreter that, for the icon painter, the religious subject of his or

her work is not only "depicted on the board but also realized in one's soul." It was interesting to think of painting as a spiritual act as well as a physical one, evidenced by the tools and materials displayed in a nearby glass case: tempera paints, brushes, pigments, a mortar and pestle for grinding them, and sheets of gold leaf.

A self-serve tea room adjacent to the old holding cells offers tea, coffee and packaged Russian chocolates and cookies. The walls are lined with samovars, the highly decorative metal urns used to boil water and make tea in Russia, and a glass cabinet currently holds examples of the intricately painted red, black and gold woodenware known as Khokhloma. On the first floor, there's also a research library in the Center for Icon Studies, which can be visited by prior appointment.

After my visit, as I was revisiting the museum's website, I found this statement: "To the Orthodox believer, icons are considered to be a window or portal into the holy."

In that sense, we are all voyeurs, peering through for a glimpse of the divine.

The Museum of Russian Icons, 203 Union Street, Clinton, MA 01510. Open Tuesdays through Fridays 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, contact info@museumofrussianicons.org or (978) 598-5000.



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