

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 18 – NO. 28

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

\$1

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

MAY 14, 2020

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Town Can't Legally Block Feverish Members From Town Meeting, Lawyers Warn

By **JEFF SINGLETON**

The Montague selectboard voted for the second time in recent weeks to purchase a temperature-taking for potential use at the town's June 13 annual town meeting, despite advice from town counsel that members with high temperatures cannot be barred from the meeting.

The decision came at a joint meeting with the town board of health, after a lengthy discussion during

which members of both boards struggled with the trade-off between public safety and the rights of elected town meeting members.

The Seek Scan Temperature Kit allows an individual's temperature to be taken from a safe distance. The purchase was endorsed at a previous meeting of the board, but the issue was reopened when town administrator Steve Ellis said he had received an opinion from town

see **MONTAGUE** page A7

LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Leverett Seeks Larger Venue For Its Meeting

By **JERRI HIGGINS**

On Tuesday night the Leverett selectboard agreed to a time and date for the annual town meeting – from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, June 20 – and to try to have as few items on the agenda as possible to minimize communal time spent.

The board considered, but quickly shot down, using the Leverett Elementary School gym and cafeteria. That room would accommodate about 54 people with proper spacing, or close to 70 people if those who live together sat together.

Board member Tom Hankinson agreed to follow up on several possible venues to hold the meeting: a potential tent rental, a local or neighboring school auditorium, a facility

see **LEVERETT** page A4

COVID-19 Distribution Update:

The *Montague Reporter* is temporarily mailing issues to all subscribers and available to read online. Starting next week, we will also be adding a third option: local pickup spots for subscribers. See Page B8 for more details!



Montague highway superintendent Tom Bergeron (left) looks on as Patrick Flanagan and Jack Nelson of Carriage House Designs lower the Spinner Park statue onto a custom-made cradle on Monday morning. The statue is going to the company's Canal Street shop for refurbishment while the downtown Turners Falls park is renovated and rearranged.

LASTING MEMORIES

That's Another Story: Part III



George F. Bush (front row, second from left), a longtime Patriots season ticket holder, celebrated his 90th birthday in 2016 with friends at Gillette Stadium.

By **MIKE JACKSON**

TURNERS FALLS – George F. Bush is a living link to Turners Falls' past. He was born on Fifth Street in 1926 and moved to Fourth Street eight years later. He has been there ever since, besides a stint in the Navy during the Second World War, and time spent at college.

Many remember Mr. Bush as a teacher and coach. Last week's installment brought us up to 1959, when he moved from the grammar school to Turners Falls High School.

This is the final part of our interview, which has been reordered and edited for clarity. A tremendous amount of interesting conversation did not make it in.

MR: When did you end up retiring as a teacher?

GB: I taught for 30 years. I retired in '82, when I was 55.

MR: So you have had a success-

ful retirement!

GB: I was by myself, single, and I wanted to enjoy my retirement when my older brothers did, because I felt that if I waited longer, they might not have been around.

As it was, it turned out very well. I was able to go on different tours with some of my brothers. I was comfortable living the way I was living – no responsibilities, and I still had my pension coming up. I lived with my mother until she was 79. She passed away in '69 or so. She had cancer of the larynx, which she'd gotten from the cotton mill.

I've been on 24 tours, to over 50 countries. Italy and Greece, and Egypt and Israel, and England and Ireland, and Australia and New Zealand, and the Fiji Islands...

MR: Did you ever make it back to Japan?

GB: Yep. I didn't go to Sasebo, but I got to Tokyo... But the one

see **STORY** page A6

Shuttered Businesses Hope for Rent Relief

By **SARAH ROBERTSON**

FRANKLIN COUNTY – Local businesses and their landlords are in a holding pattern, waiting out closures, shifting to curbside and online services, and tackling problems day by day as uncertainty and anxiety around the pandemic mounts.

"We need these stores in town," said Oliver Miller, who owns several storefronts in downtown Turners Falls. "If I was the kind of landlord who said you have to pay your rent no matter what, they'll never reopen again."

According to a recent poll by the US Chamber of Commerce, 54% of small businesses have closed at least temporarily or might close in the coming weeks.

Of the 500 firms surveyed, 17% had requested flexibility in rent payments.

The *Reporter* spoke with business owners and landlords in the Turners Falls and Greenfield areas to see how they've been doing. Generally, property owners told us they are dealing with rent issues on a "case-by-case" basis, assessing their tenants' needs and responding with temporary concessions or deferments.

For Antique Revival & Collectibles, a consignment store that recently moved to Main Street in Greenfield, rent is being deferred until the store can reopen. The store plans to pay back the missed months through a payment plan. "My landlord is at least willing to stretch

see **RENT** page A8

Advocates Fear a Hidden Rise in Violence

By **ISABEL KOYAMA**

FRANKLIN COUNTY – The number of domestic violence-related police reports in Montague has not changed dramatically since Governor Baker put a statewide

stay-at-home advisory in place in late March, Montague police chief Christopher Williams told the *Reporter* yesterday.

According to department records, there have been 147 domestic violence calls since May 13, 2019,

24 of which were made in the seven weeks since the advisory took effect. Five of the 36 domestic violence-related arrests and summons in the past year, and three of the 15 incident reports filed, were made during the quarantine.

"We haven't seen a rise [in domestic violence calls], and we definitely haven't seen a decrease," says Williams of his department's data. "We've had a handful of arrests."

Nevertheless, local and national experts alike warn that domestic violence is almost certainly increasing behind closed doors, despite some decreased crime rates overall.

One April 22 article by The Marshall Project comparing data from three major US cities points out that domestic violence is difficult to assess based on police data alone, since studies show "only about half of victims of violent domestic crimes call the police when

see **ADVOCATES** page A7



The New England Learning Center for Women in Transition (NELCWTT) in Greenfield is the county's main support center for survivors of domestic violence.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Early Voting in Spring Elections: An Opening for Deeper Reform?

By **JEFF SINGLETON**

FRANKLIN COUNTY – Spring elections are upon us, and in response to the COVID epidemic, towns in the region have decided to move voting to June and to reduce the number of polling hours. Towns are encouraging early voting by mail, responding to recent state legislation that liberalizes that process, but registered voters must request ballots from their local town clerk.

That stumbling block, which might both limit absentee voting and swamp town clerks with applications, has sparked a broader debate about how to conduct voting in fall elections and beyond.

Several weeks ago the Montague selectboard voted to move the annual town election from mid-May to June 22. Last week, at the request of town clerk Deb Bourbeau, the Montague board voted to reduce election-day polling hours, formerly all day, to noon to 7 p.m.

Bourbeau justified the change by saying the shorter hours were meant to "protect election workers, and to protect voters..." But she also noted that poll workers in Montague generally sit at one of five polling places from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. "That's twelve long hours," she said, "and it's generally very, very slow."

The town of Wendell has also see **VOTING** page A5

GILL-MONTAGUE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

School District Braces for State Budget Cuts

By **MIKE JACKSON**

Before the coronavirus pandemic, the Gill-Montague school district was on track to send "one of the healthiest budgets we've passed in years" on to the towns for approval, outgoing superintendent Michael Sullivan reflected at Tuesday night's remote school committee meeting. Buoyed by increases to educational funding

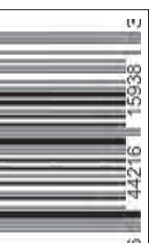
under the state's Student Opportunities Act, Gill-Montague was hoping to add nine new positions in the fall.

But as shock waves spread through the US economy, that is no longer the case. Dramatic decline in state revenue are likely to trickle down as a loss in state aid, currently estimated by the administration at nearly \$800,000, or over 3% of its proposed FY'21 budget.

see **GMRSD** page A3

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The Montague Reporter

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GUEST EDITORIAL

LaRose: It's Time For a Massachusetts Service Corps

By WILL LaROSE

ATHOL – In the midst of the Great Depression, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) reshaped the face of rural America. In less than a decade, "Roosevelt's Tree Army" became one of the most successful programs in American history, with nearly three million young men, aged 17 to 28, in its ranks. By the end of the program, these corpsmen had established 700 new parks, assembled over 40,000 bridges, and planted 3.5 billion trees across the country.

The CCC quickly became a fixture in every community across the nation, providing economic relief to the hard-hit youth of the Great Depression. In Massachusetts alone, this program had 31 camps and over 6,200 corps members helping with projects spanning from the Berkshire Mountains to Cape Cod.

Known for its deep commitment to serving the community, developing local youth, and creating the next generation of service-oriented leaders, the CCC was a remarkable program for our country. As our Commonwealth faces yet another economic downturn from COVID-19, it's clear that we must revive the Massachusetts CCC.

Fortunately, policymakers have a roadmap. In addition to President Roosevelt's model, we can also examine several states that have adapted their own modern versions. Whether we look to our fellow New Englanders in Vermont¹, our neighbors across the border in New York², or states out west like Montana³ and California⁴, there are several active and flourishing Service Corps programs Massachusetts can emulate.

This Massachusetts Service Corp could provide a low-cost option to tackle the unique environmental, conservation, and infrastructure needs of our state, 59% of which is classified as rural.⁷ Additionally, the program could be further divided into regional corps, allowing for groups like a North Quabbin or Pioneer Valley Service Corps – where the focus can be on projects that serve

unique community needs.

In addition to providing a much-needed jolt to our rural economy, the Massachusetts Service Corps can serve other purposes. Similar to the long-term effects of serving in the military, young adults who serve as corps members receive numerous developmental benefits like training, vocational skills, communication, budgeting, and leadership.

Usually serving for one to two years, corps members often look back on their experience as a launch board to their personal confidence and careers and as a transformative period where they learned the value of service. The Massachusetts Service Corps could also serve as a pipeline and training ground for the state's many vocational schools.

Wherever Corps programs are developed, it is one of the few programs in the country that enjoys widespread support as a win-win initiative. Corps programs are powerful tools to help build communities, capacity, infrastructure, engagement, and the economy. They are also great for young adults, future employers, and community leaders. These programs build the present and prepare for the future; and give our younger members of the community a reason to stick around, reducing the brain drain across our state.

My proposed Massachusetts Service Corps has the flexibility to become a stand-alone entity within the Department of Conservation and Recreation, or expand upon existing initiatives like the Student Conservation Association. This plan also has the ability to revitalize our rural economy and develop the talent of our local youth.

Whatever final form this program takes, it is time we had leaders who put forth creative and innovative ideas. It is time the 2nd Franklin District took concrete steps to secure our future. It is time we founded the Massachusetts Service Corps.

Will LaRose lives in Athol. He is a candidate for state representative in the 2nd Franklin District.



A couple weeks back, an unnamed fisherman pulled a four-pound bass out of the power canal in Turners Falls. The fish was released, but "GeeBee" caught a photo and sent it to the MR, and we filleted it into an illustration.

Letters to the Editors

What Was The Point Of Asking?

I first want to thank the *Montague Reporter* for its excellent coverage of so much of importance to all of us during this pandemic. I am particularly grateful for the continual comprehensive reporting by Mike Jackson, Jeff Singleton, and Samantha Wood.

I only wish that the Montague selectboard would pay as much attention to their articles as I, and so many others, do. Indeed, I was frankly stunned to learn from Jeff Singleton's coverage of the recent selectboard meeting [May 7, "Annual Town Meeting Slated for Turners Falls High School Gym"] that our board has decided to sidestep established COVID-19 guidelines for assembly.

What makes it even worse is that the board completely ignored the results of its own survey of town

meeting members, in which 74 percent said their first choice was a virtual meeting. What was the point of a survey if the board had no intention of listening to what the respondents said?

It seems pretty clear to me, and to others I have spoken with, that the response was genuinely motivated by a desire for us all to stay safe. The COVID risk will not be over on June 13. Virtual meetings do work.

I have talked to several of my fellow town meeting members who are also quite perplexed by this decision. I know of at least 10, including myself, who will not be present on June 13 in the gym.

Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno
Turners Falls

Doesn't Like Ceaseless Shrieking

During this uncertain time, with unemployment and food prices rising, it is more clear than ever that churches are invaluable social institutions for underprivileged members of our community: providing basic needs, social supports through internet services, as well as care packages and meal trains to unwell people.

However, from the top of Seventh Street in Turners Falls it is clear that one religious institution that is "doing good" during the day is adding to the semi-apocalyptic aesthetic of the pandemic of COVID-19.

Our Lady of Peace church has long hosted a community meal on Monday evenings at 5:30. People from all over Franklin County have grown to rely upon this act of kindness and mutual aid.

Acts like this are even more valuable as of late. Pantry programs have reduced hours and changed their locations in order to supply food to a larger number of folks in need, and some other community meals have become harder to access, with churches unable to allow individuals inside to eat. On top of this, the supply of volunteer and paid labor needed to pull off community meals is in high demand, due to health and safe-

ty concerns during the pandemic.

In spite of all of the services Our Lady of Peace provides to our community during the daytime and evening, they also add to the overall feeling of weariness to their immediate neighbors. Aside the fact that their steeple clock is wrong and their bells ring off hours, anyone who lives in proximity to Our Lady of Peace knows all too well about their electronic birds.

These robot birds, as many know, "squawk" all night long, giving the illusion that somehow as neighbors we all have played Jumanji through Zoom and opened a jungle hellscape portal at Seventh and L.

The sound of these robot birds, some of which sound more like howler monkeys, are meant to keep real birds from roosting within the steeple. However, in the 21st century, with a church's funding, it is hard to believe they cannot afford other options that create less of a dystopian nuisance between the hours of 10 p.m. and 8 a.m., when these "birds" are active.

Children and parents alike are stuck at home under threat of illness, and the last thing that they need is a "Small World"-style robot keeping

them up at night, or contributing to their nightmares. While it is not currently possible for their surrounding neighbors to petition the church in person through signatures, it is a big surprise that no noise complaints have been filed jointly by neighbors in order to stop this bird terror.

Montague town bylaws for entertainment licenses say "the fact that the noise is plainly audible at said distance of 200 feet shall constitute prima facie evidence of a violation." Why are churches not held to the same standard during quiet hours?

With decreased in-person attendance and contractors able to work, there seems to be nothing stopping Our Lady of Peace from providing yet another invaluable service to their community: Kill the fake birds in your steeple, before we band together as a community of neighbors and collectively force the issue.

Our sleep is precious during this uncertain time, and one hopes that can be understood by such a giving institution. So please, heed this appeal to stop adding to greater anxiety during this landscape of uncertainty.

Rosa Whelpley
Turners Falls

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LARKIN-ROSSI ILLUSTRATION

LOCAL BRIEFS

Compiled by NINA ROSSI

Spring **Bulky Waste Collection Day** has been canceled, according to a notice from the Franklin County Solid Waste District. It had been scheduled for this Saturday. There is a possibility it may be held this summer, but don't count on it. The next "Clean Sweep" pickup date on the schedule is October 17.

The District's offices have been closed to the public, but you may reach staff by emailing info@franklincountywastedistrict.org or calling (413) 772-2438 for information about disposal of hazardous and other materials, recycling, and composting.

The **Shea Theater** reports that they raised **\$13,000** during their "Liquidation" sale on Giving Tuesday last week. The non-profit received generous donations of coffee, cider, salad greens, and beer to sell in addition to their stock of wine from the lobby bar that they did not want to put through the hot days of summer in the empty theater.

Director Linda Tardiff says that programming is on hold until at least September. The theater is still campaigning to bring the level of donations up to \$20,000 total. Please help them out if you can!

You might be interested in some of the film offerings hosted by **Greenfield Garden Cinema, Epsilon Spires in Brattleboro, and Amherst Cinema**. You can help support innovative programming by watching films at these three "virtual cinemas." They provide streaming access, for a fee, to interesting and provocative films during this

shutdown period. Your selection is available for a number of days, so you can choose when to watch it.

Epsilon Spires and the Garden, for instance, are showing *The Infiltrators*, a documentary thriller that "tells the true story of young immigrant activists who are detained by Border Patrol and thrown into a shadowy for-profit detention center – on purpose." Also offered by both services is *Spaceship Earth*, a true story of how, in 1991, eight volunteers spent two years inside a simulated environment, Biosphere 2. Prices range from \$3.99 to \$12.

The Garden is also offering t-shirts for sale through their website www.gardencinemas.net, to help keep the place going through this tough time.

A free resource for **social-justice schooling at home** has been published by the Civil Rights Memorial Center. The "Civil Rights Activity Book" is a new online children's activity book that commemorates the heroes of the civil rights movement. The downloadable book includes coloring pages, a word search, a crossword puzzle, a timeline of the movement, a maze, and quizzes on various movement leaders.

All activities help build knowledge about the movement, and there are answers provided at the end of the book. Find a link to this printable PDF through the Southern Poverty Law Center website: www.splcenter.org.

The Art Garden in Shelburne Falls offers art supplies to those in need during the shutdown. "We have lots of paper and some basic art supplies that we are happy to share," writes

director Jane Beatrice Wegshieder.

In springtime, the Garden usually hosts a big Draw Around event at the Arms gymnasium in Shelburne. During this pandemic, they are suggesting a Stay-At-Home draw-around and offer a coloring page you can print at home. Call (413) 625-2782 to sign up for an e-newsletter with links to more information.

Assets for Artists is offering **online workshops for artists**. The organization has released details for two webinars so far, and hope to retain the intimacy of the in-person workshop via the Zoom video conferencing platform. Registration is limited, and priority is given to Greenfield Community College students and artists who live in the Valley.

The first workshop is "Creative Practice Within Virtual Communities" at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, May 27. Shey Rivera Rios leads this session designed to help community-focused artists continue their work with digital tools in virtual spaces.

A second webinar called "Creative Resiliency in a Time of Crisis" provides resources for "turning one's creative practice toward management, adaptation, business resiliency, and self-advocacy." With Ngoc-Tran Vu leading; Wednesday, June 17 at 2 p.m. Learn more at www.assetsforartists.org.

The first Northfield-based **Authors and Artists Festival** will now be an online event scheduled from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. each Saturday in June. The event celebrates creatives and creativity. Speakers include Archer Mayor, National Beat Poet Laureate Paul Richmond, Lise Weil, Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina, Simone Alter-Muri, JuPong Lin, Cheryl Savageau, Christina Uss, and Deanna Cook, as well as many local authors and poets. Activities include an open mic, art show, and children's programming.

Check out all the events and register to attend at www.AuthorsandArtistsFestival.wordpress.com.

The effort to create a **Poor People's Assembly & Moral March on Washington** is going digital this year for their June 20 campaign.

Inspired by the Poor People's Campaign launched fifty years ago by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and other leaders, organizers hope "to hold the largest digital and social media gathering of poor and low-wealth people, moral and religious leaders, advocates, and people of conscience in this nation's history. A global pandemic is exposing even more the already existing crisis of systemic racism, poverty, ecological devastation, the war economy and militarism, and the distorted moral narrative of religious nationalism. On June 20, the 140 million poor and low-income people across this nation will be heard!"

The group is campaigning to ensure that the wealthy and corporations pay their fair share; to protect voting rights and prohibit racist inequalities; end military aggression; ensure environmental rights and transition to a green economy – among other demands. Learn more on their website, www.poorpeoplescampaign.org, and their Facebook page.

Do you enjoy **non-fiction and political cartoons**? I recently discovered *The Nib*, a magazine chock full of cartoons featuring everything from the "powerful personal stories to coverage of our daily dystopian hell world." Check out their humor at www.thenib.com.

The publication exists in digital form and as a print magazine, with membership levels ranging from \$4 a month for digital access to \$40, at which level you get to have your likeness drawn in the magazine.

But guess what? If you live, recreate, or work in one of the towns we cover, you could appear in one of my Page A2 illustrations and get your 15 minutes of fame right here! Send a picture or arrange a photo opp: editor@montaguereporter.org.

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GMRSD from page A1

Sullivan and business manager Joanne Blier presented a back-of-envelope emergency plan to offset that loss with \$245,000 in federal pandemic aid, \$235,000 from revolving funds and free cash – made possible in part by decreased spending this spring – and the remaining \$320,000 accounted for by "postpon[ing] most FY'21 position increases (or reductions in existing positions)." Blier said federal aid might total \$252,000.

If the state legislature does not pass a budget by June 30, and local budgets are delayed, statutes dictate that the schools must start the new fiscal year using a monthly "1/12" budget – possibly limiting spending to one-twelfth of the previous annual budget.

Sullivan explained that increases promised under the Student Opportunities Act have not been funded on Beacon Hill, and might not be.

"It's worth noting that a lot of people think FY'22 is going to be an even harder year," he warned. "We won't have that \$250,000 from the feds, and state revenues might not have bounced back, either."

Improvisation

This grim news came sandwiched on the agenda between two other difficult items: planning for this spring's high school graduation, and planning for education in the fall.

Turners Falls High School principal Joanne Menard is working with Montague public health officials to determine whether graduation, tentatively set for Friday, June 5, can safely be held on the school's football field. Around 50 seniors are set to receive diplomas, and each could bring six family members, resulting in a crowd of 350.

If the football field is vetoed, the backup

plan is a drive-through diploma handoff.

"The football field feels sort of small," outgoing Montague member Cassie Damkoehler lamented. "I know nothing is going to replace the graduation ceremony."

Sullivan reported that the state has granted schools permission to order custodians back to work, and that Gill-Montague custodial staff have started into "special projects" usually reserved for the summer so that teachers and students can be given a wide berth if they are physically in the buildings for summer school.

The administration has surveyed teachers about how remote learning is going, and the results are widely varied. At Gill Elementary, between 70 and 80% of students are regularly logging in for instruction and completing tasks; at Hillcrest, the reported range is "0-40%."

Montague member Jen Lively pointed out that "the staff at Hillcrest have given a lot of offline suggestions" to families for learning support. "Everyone has told folks to keep the screen time to a minimum," she said, "and then we're trying to do remote learning."

On Tuesday, Hillcrest teachers held an automobile parade through the town.

Sullivan reported that interviews are underway for a new principal at Gill Elementary.

The district has sourced about 300 additional Chromebooks for students engaged in remote learning this spring, and is setting up internet hot spots for families lacking access, though "fewer than 20 families" appear to need the assistance.

The committee voted to accept a \$4,000 donation from Dean's Beans Organic Coffee Company toward the district's meal program, which is feeding 400 youth. Blier said the money would be used for "refrigeration, packaging, transportation, et cetera" of the food.

A Fluid Situation

Talk turned to the fall semester. "I think we've got to think about how next year is going to look like reentry, rather than recovery," Sullivan said. "We don't have the capacity to double our teaching staff, and we don't have any extra space, so the only way I can see you get significant social distancing among kids is if a lot of them are home for part of the time."

Schools in Germany, he noted, have been experimenting with bringing some students in on Mondays and Wednesdays, and others on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

"Instead of figuring out who's teaching the at-home kids and who's teaching the school kids," Sullivan argued, "it might make more sense if you start thinking about teaching one class, and half the kids are tuning in from a distance."

"If that's the direction we're going in," said Montague member Haley Anderson, "we also need to consider grading and assessment, for kids who are trying to learn at home – and maybe we throw it out the window, a little bit."

Michael Langknecht agreed with her. "The previous system wasn't really a fair system in terms of grading," he said. "So many places where inequity, or concerns about inequality, came from." Langknecht pointed to the Powertown in the 21st Century project, an initiative studied and shelved last year that sought to reshape Turners Falls High School around "competency-based learning" goals for each student, as a possible inspiration.

"Equity's going to be huge," said committee chair Jane Oakes of Gill. "Who ends up doing what, because of the availability of resources.... The assumption that some people have made, that some people will be able to work from home – that doesn't mean you will be able to teach your child, or even care for

your child. A full day's work is just that."

Sullivan recommended a simple schedule, with classrooms combining in-person and remote students. "If you have children who are gone for a couple weeks because they're sick," he said, "or someone in the home is sick, or you have teachers who are out for a little while – with a lot of people coming and going, and a fluid situation, that might be the thing that grounds us."

Lively noted that some families may be less comfortable than others with the prospect of sending their children into the classroom. "The plan needs to include kids that don't want to come back at all, physically," she said.

Finally, the committee debated whether to accept school choice students for the fall, whether intra-district or from outside towns.

Executive assistant Sabrina Blanchard reported that thus far, she was only seeing applications for Gill Elementary, and inquiries from Warwick stemming from the announced closure of the Warwick Community School. Anderson said she would recuse herself from the conversation as her own family has submitted one. Sullivan said twelve native Gill kindergartners were expected to start in the fall.

The question hinged largely on what class size would be appropriate, but without knowing what school will even look like, committee members postponed a vote. Sullivan warned that if no school choice was allowed, the district's relationship with the town of Erving would be affected, and members agreed.

The committee decided to hold its next meetings on June 9 and 23. District elections will take place on June 22. Incumbent Bill Tomb is running unopposed in Gill, and no candidates have stepped forward for the two Montague seats opening up on the committee this year.

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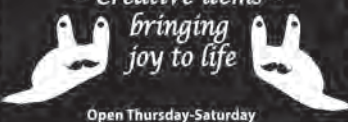
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GUEST EDITORIAL

Saving the Waters of the United States

By JACK CLARKE

WASHINGTON, DC – There are almost one hundred lawsuits pending against the Trump Administration as it does its best to recklessly dismantle America's common-sense public health and environmental protections.

In addition to taking advantage of the coronavirus pandemic by providing an enforcement holiday for industrial polluters, among the most blatant rollbacks is one taking place under the Clean Water Act of 1972.

A proposed rule coming out of the White House would gut defenses against pollution for about half the country's wetlands and millions of miles of streams that are primarily fed by rainfall. It is an unprecedented and dramatic setback of decades of environmental security for our nation's waters.

And it won't be going unchallenged, as Mass Audubon, the Conservation Law Foundation, and the National Resources Defense Council, along with five watershed groups from around the country, have filed a legal action in the federal district court in Boston to stop the repeal.

Although America's overall water quality has improved significantly since passage of the Clean Water Act, a recent federal assessment showed that nearly half of the nation's rivers and streams, a third of our wetlands, and a fifth of our coastal waters and Great Lakes waters are still in "poor biological condition."

Rather than reverse an almost five-decade legacy of clean water protection, we need to step up our efforts in the fight against pollution along

with the negative impacts of climate change.

The Clean Water Act is one of the nation's most important environmental laws. It safeguards permanent and temporary rivers, lakes, channels, creeks and streams that millions of Americans rely on for drinking water and for activities such as swimming, fishing, and hunting.

The law also protects millions of acres of associated wetlands that keep those water bodies healthy by filtering out pollutants and reducing flood damage – these are public health and safety benefits that should not be lessened in this time of climate change-induced weather disruption.

In New England, the rule changes would also affect isolated wetlands and thousands of vernal pools – seasonal bodies of water in forests that provide habitat to many wildlife species including resident and migratory birds.

Of the Bay State's 143 breeding bird species recently evaluated by Mass Audubon, 43 percent are "highly vulnerable" to the effects of climate change alone. Reducing the protections for critical waters used by avian life to breed, nest and raise their young will only add to their levels of stress and vulnerability.

Nationally, we've already lost 3 billion birds in the past half-century due to pollution and loss of wetlands habitat, and we know that two-thirds of North American bird species are now at further risk of extinction from climate change. This rule change piles on the threats.

The decisions to reform environmental laws should be based on sound science – science that informs and drives public policy, not the other way around. In this case, and as it has in the

past, the White House has dismissed all scientific evidence.

Just this past winter, an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) advisory panel of 41 scientists responsible for evaluating the scientific integrity of the agency's regulations, including the proposed clean water standards, concluded that the new rule ignores science by "failing to acknowledge watershed systems." They found "no scientific justification" for excluding certain bodies of water from protection under the new regulations, noting that pollutants from smaller and seasonal bodies of water can have a significant impact on the health of larger water systems.

It is no surprise, as *The New York Times* pointed out several weeks ago, that "...a disregard for scientific advice has been a defining characteristic of Trump's administration."

EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler, a former coal lobbyist, is re-writing the law at the behest of industry groups including the American Farm Bureau, American Gas Association, National Cattlemen's Beef Association, the American Petroleum Institute, the National Mining Association, US Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers, the American Farm Bureau, and the Heritage Foundation.

So, in response, some of the country's leading conservation advocates are fighting the rollback in the courts – at the behest of the nations' waters and public health.

Jack Clarke is the director of public policy and government relations at Mass Audubon.

LEVERETT from page A1

at UMass-Amherst, or some other accommodation that would allow an anticipated 150 attendees to maintain social distance while participating effectively. Whatever setting is ultimately chosen, it may require a microphone and PA system for the selectboard and town meeting members.

"Be clear that it is *pro bono*," added board member Julie Shively of any venue not under the town's auspices.

Coronavirus Response

Leverett board of health chair Michael Fair and member John Hillman called into Tuesday night's meeting, held using the GoToMeeting conferencing platform.

In an effort to support Leverett residents who are symptomatic for COVID-19 but do not yet qualify for testing, Fair got approval from the selectboard to hire Mary Ryan to conduct contact tracing. Ryan currently conducts COVID-19 positive contact tracing for the Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative, an initiative supported by Partners in Health and the state Department of Public Health, using Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) funding.

"We'd love to hire her on a contract basis to cover cases that fall between the cracks," said Fair. Leverett has also received emergency funding from FRCOG for expenses related to the pandemic. Fair said that any conflict-of-interest concern is avoided because Ryan will be working with symptomatic residents who have not been tested, while her work for the statewide contact-tracing initiative is focused on positive test cases.

On Monday, the board of health passed a resolution "deputizing, basically, the police force to become health agents, to be able to enforce health regulations," Fair told the selectboard. The decision came after complaints that at least two Leverett postal workers have not been wearing masks on the job, despite Governor Baker's executive order that all

workers must wear masks or maintain six feet of distance.

Prior to any police action, the board will speak with Tracy Bagdon, Leverett post officer in charge, to seek her assurance that the governor's mandate is being adhered to.

Reached by phone Wednesday morning, Bagdon told the *Reporter* that the state's COVID-19 regulations do need to be followed.

Other Business

Fire chief John Ingram told the board that while his department is working on a FEMA grant reimbursement of \$3,000, which will cost his department about \$150, as the grant requires a 5% local match.

Ingram said he had already submitted COVID-related bills to the federal agency, but heard back that they will have to come out of the department's operating budget, because the town has not yet been approved for reimbursement. This will bring the fire department budget into deficit spending. The selectboard voted to create a deficit spending account for the department.

The board approved the department hiring Leverett resident Brendan Kelly as an on-call firefighter.

Police chief Scott Minckler requested an exception to the personnel board's decision to not allow him to carry over two extra weeks of vacation time he has accrued during the state of emergency.

"By policy, we can carry over two weeks of vacation. I requested to carry over four weeks of vacation this year, with it only being a one-time request due to the pandemic," Minckler said. "I don't believe it's right for the chief to be gone for an extended period of time during such a difficult time."

Shively responded that the personnel board has a good vacation policy in place, and they do not want to set a precedent. Minckler responded that he wasn't trying to set one.

"Everything sets a precedent," said Shively. "One of the reasons we can't carry over vacation time is that we have a financial liability for

NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

"Selectmen" Send Name Change to Town Meeting

By KATIE NOLAN

On Monday night the Erving selectboard re-opened the warrant for the June 17 annual town meeting and inserted a new article to authorize special legislation to change the board's name from "board of selectmen" to "select board." Selectboard chair Jacob Smith said that the purpose of the name change was "to be more inclusive to everyone who may serve on the selectboard in the future."

At the same time, the board corrected a reference in the warrant to adoption of Chapter 44, Section 22F of the Massachusetts General Laws regarding setting fees, and added an introductory note regarding the change in the meeting date from the first week in May to June 17.

The board then approved the amended warrant.

The board received bid documents for the River, Warner, and Strachan streets roadway project prepared by the town's consultant Weston & Sampson, Inc. Board members will review the documents and decide whether to approve them at next week's meeting.

Town coordinator Bryan Smith told the board that Air Quality Experts, Inc. of Atkinson, NH, began the asbestos and hazardous mate-

rials cleanup project at the former International Paper Mill on May 4, and that the expected completion date is June 30 or sooner. He said that Air Quality Experts did not want to exercise their option to take the scrap metal after the cleanup.

The board reviewed the text and graphics for the town's FY'21 budget document, considering how to present pie chart and bar graphs illustrating current and past budget information. Bryan Smith said all changes would be made before the May 18 board meeting. The final budget document will be printed and sent to every household in Erving.

Bryan Smith said that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners has agreed that contractors may complete the punch list of final tasks on the town's new library building as essential construction that may be done during the COVID-19 emergency. However, walk-throughs for commissioning the building "will have to wait." He said that outdoor site work had not been done, because the soil is still "too soft."

The board agreed to write a letter to the Federal Highway Administration supporting designating the Mohawk Trail (Route 2) as a National Scenic Highway.

that... If you decided in August to quit, then we would owe you the extra two weeks of vacation time."

"You're valuable all year round, not just especially now," added board chair Peter d'Errico. "And [COVID-19] could be worse in the coming winter." D'Errico advised Minckler to use as much of his vacation time as he can in the coming weeks.

The timeline of a Municipal Vul-

nerability Preparedness grant received by the town will be extended to June 2021 from its original June 2020 completion date.

Town administrator Marjorie McGinnis told the selectboard that the next step is holding public listening sessions, which she and the board would rather hold in person than try to conduct electronically.



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VOTING from page A1

changed the date of its election to Monday, June 1. The polling place for those not mailing in absentee ballots will remain the town office building at 9 Morse Village Road. The time allowed for in-person voting has also been shortened by one hour, noon to 7 p.m.

Wendell's town website describes procedures for those voting in person. Only two voters will be allowed in the polling place at a time; entrances and exits will be marked to ensure social distancing; and voters are encouraged to bring their own pens and pencils.

Similar measures are being taken in Erving and Gill. The Erving election has been delayed until June 22, and the polling time has been reduced from eleven hours to ten. Voters may still cast their ballots at town hall at 12 East Main Street if they choose, with social distancing measures to be determined as of this article.

The spring local election in Gill has also been moved back to June 22. In-person voting will continue to take place at the fire station on 196 Main Road.

Mail-In Democracy

All town clerks in the region say they are encouraging early voting by mail to reduce in-person voting. State law has been liberalized, in terms of the criteria for allowing early voting, but continues to require each registered voter to fill out a form to request a ballot.

As of this week, Wendell's town

clerk has mailed request forms to every local household, and Erving will soon follow suit. In Montague and Gill, however, voters need to ask the town clerks for those forms. Ballot request forms can be downloaded from the towns' websites, and in Montague, may be picked up at town hall. Gill is installing a drop box at town hall for completed absentee ballots.

The one major exception to the encouragement of absentee voting is the town of Leverett, which continues to elect local officials at its spring annual town meeting. Last night the Leverett selectboard voted to move this meeting to June 20, but hedged on the exact location.

The traditional venue is the gym/auditorium at the town's elementary school, but this room would not allow social distancing of the potential 100 to 150 attendees. The board is searching for a larger location, potentially in a nearby city or town.

Ballots to All Voters

The expansion of mail-in voting has led to demands from legislators and advocacy groups to make voting in the September state primary and the November general election more accessible to the public.

A number of bills to facilitate early voting in these elections are currently before the legislature.

The most widely supported bill, H.5075, would require the Secretary of State to mail ballots for the November election to every registered Massachusetts voter without a for-

mal application. The bill also allows early voting by mail in the September primary, but would still require an application for that ballot.

H.5075 is supported by voting reform organizations such as Common Cause, and has been sponsored by 82 legislators, including Adam Hinds, Joanne Comerford, and Natalie Blais, whose districts include Franklin County towns.

Secretary of State William Galvin, whose office oversees state elections, has also supported expanded mail-in voting in the fall, but a proposal he issued last week would still require voters to apply for a ballot in November.

Galvin has been critical of reform proposals that would simply mail ballots to every registered voter. "Some of these proposals, they're great for press releases," Galvin told the Boston Globe in mid-April. "But they're not good for actually conducting an election."

The Joint Committee on Election Laws will hold a hearing on election reform bills this Thursday. Galvin is scheduled to address the hearing, but as of this writing, no legislators have agreed to sponsor his proposal.

Conventional Wisdom

Voter advocacy groups see proposals to liberalize mail-in and early voting this fall as a prelude to long-term changes in election policy. Liberal and progressive Democrats, who may believe that such reforms will benefit them politically, have tended to support this viewpoint.

NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

Anticipating Collapse in State Aid, Gill Eyes 5% to 10% Spending Cuts

By GEORGE BRACE

Gill's May 11 selectboard meeting was again held by conference call, and was brief. Members of the town's emergency response team said they had no significant COVID-19 news to report.

Board members approved a request from Northfield Mount Hermon School (NMH) for an extension of the closure of Mount Hermon Road, signed a letter of support for the designation of the Mohawk Trail as a national scenic byway, and discussed preliminary thoughts on FY'21 budgeting, which is about to begin.

After the emergency response team's status report of basically "no news," the board considered extending the closure of Mount Hermon Road. Tim McKinney, assistant director of environmental health and safety for plant facilities at NMH, said that the school wanted to continue isolating itself, and that the wooden gates currently blocking the road were working well.

The town's police, fire, and highway departments have all said they see the closure as being in the best interests of the town and school, and so the board approved the request, choosing to revisit the issue on July 15.

Board members and fire chief Gene Beaubien took the opportunity of speaking with McKinney to ask him about the school's outlook for the summer and fall. McKinney said summer programs had been canceled, but last he had heard, the school was hoping to be open in the fall. He said the decision was still

"up in the air" due to uncertainty about the virus, but the school was anticipating being open.

McKinney said plans for the Gilder Center construction project were moving along, as well as work on the boathouse, though the latter was moving slowly due to work crews needing to observe distancing precautions. Overall, McKinney said it was hard to stay ahead of things, but "we're doing our best over here."

Profile Enhancement

The selectboard unanimously approved sending a letter in support of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments' application to designate the Mohawk Trail as a state scenic byway within the Federal Highway Administration's National Scenic Byway program. ("It's a mouthful," said town administrator Ray Purington.)

A number of questions were raised prior to the vote, including where the exact start and end points of the Trail were. Board member Randy Crochier quoted from Wikipedia in saying that the trail ran from Westminster to Williamstown, which came as a surprise to many, if not all, in attendance.

Board chair John Ward asked if there were any restrictions that came along with the designation, to which Purington replied that there weren't, and that the designation was more of a "feel good" thing.

The board discussed potential impacts of the designation on economic activity. Ward expressed reservations over an increase in activity possibly creating traffic issues and pumping more CO₂ into the atmosphere, but

voted in favor of the letter.

Greg Snedeker said he wasn't sure the designation would promote activity, citing the example of the French King Bridge, where the state bought up land around the bridge to keep the area scenic.

Ward read from documentation which stated the designation of the Trail as a scenic byway would "enhance its profile, and help elevate it as an economic development, tourism, or preservation engine."

"You get the best of both worlds," said Snedeker with a chuckle.

FY'21 Budget

Board members and Purington shared preliminary thoughts and observations on the upcoming town budget process, and what changes would be necessary due to the virus situation.

Purington said town administrators were "just guessing" at what state aid might be like next year, and that he'd seen opinions ranging from reductions of 2 to 3 percent, to 40 to 50 percent. He said the only real consensus was "don't build your budget around the governor's proposal from January."

Purington also said he wouldn't be surprised to see the state enact an interim budget. "I think they'll have to do it," he warned.

Finance committee chair Claire Chang suggested that town departments should put in requests of 5% lower, and 10% lower.

Crochier said he thought some of the stipends for town workers had gotten a little higher than other localities due to cost-of-living adjustments, and said that while he wasn't

Town of Montague – Notice of Public Hearing FY'19 CDBG AMENDMENT

The Town of Montague will hold a Public Hearing on Monday, May 18, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

Online Video/Audio Conferencing Using Zoom:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88009277176 • Phone In: 1 (929)205-6099
Meeting ID: 880 0927 7176 • Password: 336187

The purpose of this hearing is to discuss the reprogramming of approximately \$64,000 of surplus funds from the Town's FY19 Community Development Block Grant to the following activities:

1. Forgivable loan programs to assist small Montague businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. CDBG eligible activities under consideration are Microenterprise Assistance to businesses with 5 or fewer employees, including the owner, and Assistance to For-Profit Businesses of more than five, up to ten full time equivalent employees. The proposed loan programs would augment funds available to Montague businesses through the existing Four Town Trust Fund administered by the Franklin County Community Development Corporation on behalf of the Town of Montague.
2. Additional funding to Social Service agencies funded through the FY19 CDBG allocation to address unforeseen expenses incurred in carrying out current programs.

Any agency or individual who wishes to be heard on this matter will be given the opportunity. In addition, comments in writing or by email to townadmin@montague-ma.gov will be accepted prior to the hearing. Special accommodations will be attempted upon written request to the Selectboard's Office.

Richard Kuklewicz, Montague Selectboard Chairman • May 13, 2020

Republicans, on the other hand, have tended to oppose expanded voting procedures. President Trump has called mail-in voting "corrupt."

But a special election this week in Orange County, California to replace Democratic congresswoman Katie Hill, who resigned last year in the face of a sex scandal, may complicate this presumed political dynamic. The election for the congressional seat, which flipped to the Democrats in 2018 for the first time in decades, was conducted "almost entirely by mail."

According to the website The Hill, registered Republicans, who statistically trail the number of registered Democrats in the district, had a significant edge in their rate of returning mail-in ballots. As of last week, about 45% of returned ballots came from Republicans, compared with about 35% from Democrats.

On Wednesday, Democrat Christy Smith conceded the race to Republican Mike Garcia, with early counts indicating a 56% to 44% victory for Garcia.



PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Gill Town Election

The Selectboard has voted to postpone the Gill annual election to June 22, 2020 due to the COVID-19 outbreak. We are hoping this will have us in a better position to carry on a more normal election.

Absentee ballots will be available beginning on April 29, 2020 for those who wish to vote, but are concerned about maintaining proper social distancing. The absentee ballot application can be downloaded from the town website, www.gillmass.org. (Please note that COVID-19 is "reason" enough to put on the application.)

We have installed a drop box at the rear door of the Town Hall for your absentee ballot applications and ballots. Your ballots can also be mailed to the Town Clerk, Town Hall, 325 Main Road, Gill, MA 01354. Fill the application out and mail to that address, put in the drop box, or email it to

townclerk@gillmass.org.

The Town Clerk will be glad to help explain the process if you have any questions, and more information will be posted on the town website as they become available.

To register to vote, you must be a US citizen, a resident of Gill, and at least 18 years old on or before the town election or town meeting. You may register in person (when the Town Hall opens), online or by mail (postmarked no later than the final registration date). Voter registration forms are available at the Town Hall, or you may register online at www.usa.gov/register-to-vote.

Town Clerk office hours are Mondays 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesdays 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Wednesdays 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and Thursdays 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. The town clerk, Doreen Stevens, is also available by appointment at (413) 863-8013.

making a motion to reduce them, he felt they should be looked at.

Snedeker, chair of the capital improvement planning committee, said all capital requests would have to be reviewed. "Everything should be on the table at this point," said Snedeker, "even if it's just for one year." He added that he would need more information before deciding where to make cuts.

Other Business

The board decided to hold a special selectboard meeting on May 18 to review indicative pricing for the town's aggregated electricity purchasing initiative, which will be provided on May 15. The board will choose two of six options for elec-

trical service to the town, and if they give the go-ahead, Purington will execute the contract on May 20.

The meeting closed with a public service announcement that absentee ballots for upcoming town elections on June 22 were now available at town hall, or can be mailed to residents.

A resident asked if the ballots were postage paid. Purington replied that the town will pay the postage to mail the ballots out, but residents were responsible for dropping them off at the town hall, or paying the postage to mail them in. He said the application for the ballot can be done by email, but that the ballots themselves cannot be sent that way.

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STORY from page A1

continent that I didn't go to, what do you think that was?

MR: Antarctica?

GB: Yeah. [Laughs.] And I would have gone there, if I'd stayed in the Navy!

My brother Frank and I – he was the one who died just a couple years ago, he was 87 – would go on tours together. We took a tour of Poland, and part of the three-day option was to go to Ukraine. So we took that option, obviously.

The part of Poland that our mother would have been living in was the eastern part. After WWII, Stalin wanted that as part of Russia. At that time Russia was known as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and one of those republics was the Ukraine, and that's where it is today. To compensate Poland, they took the eastern half of Germany and made that part of Poland.

So we went to the big fourth-largest city in Ukraine, which was 100 miles from where she was from. We had three days or so in the Ukraine. When my mother was living, was still getting letters from relatives. She couldn't read them; she had to have the Ukrainian people come in and read the letters, and also write them. I had saved a couple of those letters, so we brought them and her birth certificate.

When we got there we had our own guide, and we had a one-day trip to where she lived when she was born up to 16 years old. Just a farm village, that's all it was – chickens out in the front lawn, the roads weren't paved.

That was quite an emotional experience. We had a letter, but we didn't know who the people were. We got there on a Sunday, and I had a picture of one of the relatives. They were having mass: the men were outside, the women were inside the church.

I showed the picture to one of these men. "Oh, we know who he is! In fact, he lives just across from the church." And so we found out that he was my mother's nephew, and he was the one who was writing. His mother was my mother's youngest sister. They could speak English very well.

MR: So you knocked on a door, and you met your first cousin for the first time!

GB: Yeah. We told him who we were. He was married and had a family, and he was a music teacher in high school in that village. He played the accordion, and we asked him to play a polka for us. The most popular polka is called the Beer Barrel Polka, and that's what he played.

The word got around that we were there, and other relatives came. It was like a banquet for him. Later on I found out that his son had been killed in a motorcycle accident, and he'd never played the accordion since, until that day.

It was a very emotional get-together – and it was one of the best tours that we had. This was ten or 15 years ago.

MR: What was your mother's name?

GB: Mary Bush Zukowski... She was an immigrant, 16 years old, coming over here. Couldn't read or write, Ukrainian or Polish, and then coming over here and raising a family, working in a cotton mill. She went to night school to become a citizen while she was working in the mill, but as far as writing or reading, the best thing

she could do was write her name.

But she had four boys, and all four of us went to college, and three of us got master's degrees. Three of us were teachers-coaches, and the fourth one was an actuary who worked for John Hancock Insurance.

If we really wanted to we could have formed our own prep school!

Discipline was very great, growing up. Even though she didn't know English very well, she knew the report cards, and she knew the difference between an A and a D....

Very often, when they used to have Mothers of the Year, I was tempted to nominate her.

MR: I'm enjoying our conversations! Have you been getting any responses to the first two articles?

GB: Oh yeah. Well, you had one Letter to the Editor that was very nice, and my friends that I talk to all enjoyed it.

MR: I'm supposed to ask you this: Do you still like caramels?

GB: I think I probably was chewing them when I was teaching. I always would have an apple, too, for lunch. That was probably my Contemporary Affairs class.

I loved that class, where you didn't have a textbook. You used the newspapers, magazines, and filmstrips... And hoping that they would continue, once they graduate, to read newspapers or magazines, or something like that.

MR: Here's another one: What happened to the guy that Sheffield was named after?

GB: Okay, you're asking for it! Joe Sheff was my high school teacher in biology, general science, physics, and so forth. He was also my basketball coach my sophomore year, and assistant football coach, and the head track coach. When I was a senior, he got drafted. He had a bad knee, he had a wife and an adopted child. He was living in the last house on Crocker Avenue before you come to Montague Street...

I was the basketball captain my senior year, and he left me his books that he used for coaching, because he knew I might go into coaching. "George," he says, "when I come back, I'll have you return the books."

He was in the battle of Anzio, the same time my brother Lou was there. Lou found out he was there, so he went over to invite him for dinner, because the officers had better meals than the enlisted men. They were very good friends, they both graduated from Mass State and so forth.

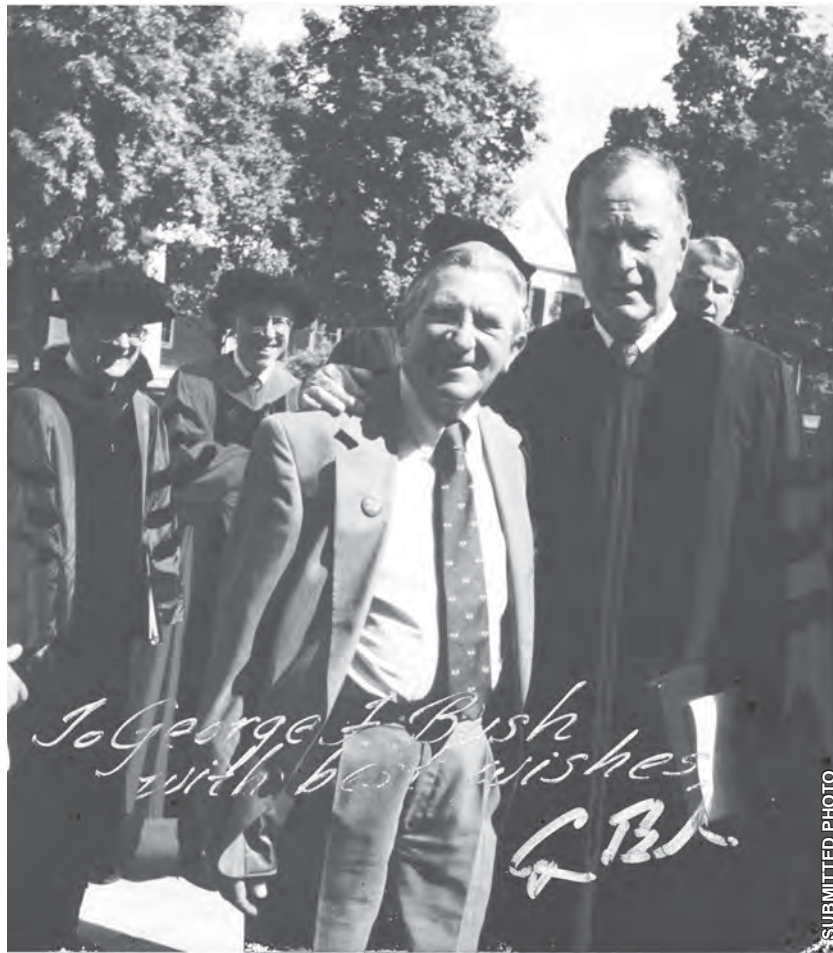
The next day my brother Lou was going to have him come back over, and he found out that Joe got killed.

MR: The next day.

GB: And the fellow that told him about it was the son of the undertaker from Turners Falls, believe it or not. His name was Roy McCarthy.

Later, when the war was over, they decided to dedicate the football field in his honor. My brother was the main speaker. And then you had the high school burning down and a new one being built, so you no longer had Sheff Field the name of the football field. What they did was name the new school building after him. There's a little monument in front of the school that tells a little something about him – a lot of people might think Sheffield is the name of a person.

He was wonderful. Some might disagree with me, but I was captain of the basketball team, and really it was his team he had built up my



"To George F. Bush with best wishes": Mr. Bush shares a name with two US presidents. Here he is at Williams College, where he met George H.W. Bush. "I played baseball against him," our Mr. Bush recalls. "That's another story! When he was a senior at Yale, I was a sophomore at Williams. He was a first baseman... They beat us – after all, they were an Ivy League school, we were only 1,200 and they were in the thousands. Later on, after he was president, USA Today had a picture of him in that baseball uniform. I cut the article out and I showed him, and I said 'I played baseball against you....'"

sophomore and junior year....

MR: Here's the last question I promised I would ask: Nina, who's the features editor here, runs a little shop right between the package store and Black Cow Burgers... Do you remember what used to be there?

GB: Nook? We didn't have that there. That was in between the next building. The next building in was Royal Cleaners.

[Mr. Bush pulls out a notebook with an extensive handwritten list of businesses he remembers from his childhood downtown.]

I started from St. Kazimierz, and went up the Avenue.... You could put out a whole newspaper!

MR: [Peering at the list, indeed considering putting out a whole newspaper.] The Rendezvous is the Rendezvous again.

GB: Right! But I can tell you who the doctors were, who the dentists were, who were the pharmacists, how many we had.

You know what was the unusual thing, in my days? Six barbers! Today we have one, Denise at Eddie's Barber. Six barbers – there was one right here [gestures next door] on the first floor of the Turners Falls Inn, Paul Kozich.

It started at Saint Kazimierz' right in the basement with Teddy Molongoski, and went right down the avenue. Right here on Fifth Street, you know where the beauty salon is? Just above that you had a barber there. We had one on Fourth Street, Walter Krol. He was my godfather, in fact.

MR: The water department office was on Fourth? What's there now?

GB: Well, apartments are there now. Before there used to be a jeweler, Milkey Jeweler, and a furniture store, right in the same spot.

We had 14 grocery stores – how do you like that? We had one right here on Fifth Street, Daignault, then over to Fourth Street you had the Polish coop, that was the big one.

MR: That's the Survival Center.

GB: And Schule's meat market,

that was on the corner of Fourth. Right across was Gignis's, that was a small grocer. And you had one down on the corner of Second and L Street, it was Polish but I can't remember what his name was.

But most of the groceries, as you notice, were on Third Street.

MR: Solomon Grocery, Gem Market...

GB: Yup. First National was the big one. And then Girard's and Matthew's, all on Third Street, and LaPierre, a small one across the street from them. The fire house was on Third Street, and next to that was a shoemaker, and before him on the corner was McCarthy clothing store. We had two automobile dealers at that time! One was Beaumier, with Ford, and then on the lower end of Third Street, Cassidy had Pontiac.

At the opera house, on the ground floor on the corner was the Colle House pharmacy, and then in fact they used to have boxing matches on the third floor, or second, and then later on they had a bowling alley up there.

MR: Did you used to go into the Shea Theater?

GB: Five cents for movies. And then on weeknights they had family night, where they would give out dishes. Right next door was the Greenfield Recorder branch office.

MR: What was downstairs where Between the Uprights is now?

GB: That was a bar – I forget the name, but "Peanut" Desautel ran the bar... The first thing that was put down where the Shady Glen is was an ice cream drive-in. Right opposite was the Grand Trunk, you've heard of that hotel.

I think the town offices were on the first floor of the Grand Trunk. Later on, at the end of that street, you had a gasoline station run by Skip Escott, a Sunoco. And then that Crocker block, you had a couple doctors' offices on the second floor, Dr. Rys and Dr. Sullivan.

MR: Sabato's Cone Shop... How

many places could you get ice cream back then?

GB: Well, Equi's, it was only a nickel, and the Cone Shop was right across the street from where the Brick House is now, but they moved over to the Avenue. Up above it on the second floor was a printing shop where I used to get my baseball tickets printed, across the alley from Hubie's Tavern.

MR: Hey, it says the town jail?

GB: Well it was more of what you'd call a lockup. Right next to the American House. You know the story of John L. Sullivan getting knocked out by one of the loggers?

Before my time, you'd have the loggers come down, and they would stay overnight in Turners and they would stay at the American House. John L. Sullivan was in the bar, and he challenged anybody – these two loggers said "yeah, we'll take you on." The logger threw the first punch, and knocked him down, and out. The other logger said, "We'd better get out of here before he wakes up!"

MR: We've got to cut ourselves off. I was going to suggest we make this a monthly column.

GB: I want to talk about Unity Park, when I was growing up. Did you know we had a bandstand? We had band concerts on Sunday night, and in back of the bandstand, where now you've got the basketball courts, there were two tennis courts.

But they had band concerts every Sunday night when I was a kid, and they would have peddlers, who would have a basket and fill it up with candy and go down among the cars and try to sell the candy... I would get mine from Drago's, because that's where I used to hang around. But others had popcorn in their baskets. That was a ritual for the kids those days.

And on that hill, there was a World War I cannon, and being kids we would have a lot of fun climbing up on that cannon. But they eventually took that down. And when you had baseball, that whole hill would be filled with people watching the semi-pro baseball games....

MR: I've got more than enough for Part III! If we talk too much more today, it'll just all be overflow.

GB: Yeah, okay!

I want to make sure we get something about my retirement, as far as traveling and being a 50-year season ticket holder at Patriots games, and tailgating at the games. And of course, I winter in Florida.

And plus, what I do now: I walk the bicycle path for an hour. Probably two miles. Five days, sometimes six, depending on the weather. Meeting a lot of your former students, and making new friends.

The bicycle path is on one side of the canal, and you have benches there. I go as far as the third bench past the South End bridge. Younger days, I would go all the way, but now I can stop there and rest, and meet kids that you had in school.

They would say, "Hi Mr. Bush!" And I would look at them and say, "You have to tell me who you are... When I had you in school, you didn't have a beard!"

And that's always very nice. And they still respect you, and you're still Mr. Bush, you're not George.

MR: Do you want to make this into a monthly column with me?

GB: Yeah. You can mention that at the end of this particular column.



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MONTAGUE from page A1

counsel, the firm Kopelman & Paige, warning against using the device to keep members with elevated temperatures from entering the meeting, which will be held in the high school gymnasium.

When asked what law prohibited the town from barring members with fevers during a pandemic, Ellis said he had not requested a specific legal citation, but trusted the opinion of counsel. "We can have a voluntary temperature check at the door, but we don't have a clear right to deny entry to the meeting," he said.

Town meeting member Ariel Elan, who attended Monday's virtual meeting, questioned the need for temperature measurement. "One sneeze would not carry that far," she said, noting all those attending would be wearing masks.

On the other hand, selectboard and public health board Michael Nelson, who works for the state department of public health, warned that "it only takes one sneeze" to spread the coronavirus. Nelson said he was "very conflicted" over the issue.

Emergency management director John Zellman said he would "hate to see someone come in sick, and then spread it amongst a hundred people. It would just open a Pandora's box." He said the town could be vulnerable to a lawsuit if that happened.

Board of health director Daniel Wasiuk urged the boards to err "on the side of caution."

The selectboard voted to continue with the purchase of the measurement kit, noting that it could be useful when town offices and board meetings reopen in the coming months. The motion called temperature testing "voluntary," but did not establish clear criteria for the device's use.

The board trimmed the number of articles on the town meeting warrant from 36 to 18 with the goal of reducing the length of the meeting, which traditionally takes an entire Saturday from eight in the morning to four in the afternoon. Necessary procedur-

al articles remain in the warrant, as do salary ranges and key budget appropriations, including for the town operating budget, the school district assessments, and the water pollution control facility (WPCF).

The board consolidated a number of special articles for time-sensitive construction projects, including needed upgrades to school buildings, the senior center, and the WPCF. The warrant still includes an appropriation for walking paths in Millers Falls but eliminates two articles requesting additional liquor licenses from the state.

A petitioned article to appropriate funds "to facilitate the repair of the public stairway leading from the Millers Falls Center to Highland Park" remains.

The two boards discussed the potential "phased reopening" of town offices and the local economy during the coming months. No votes were taken. The officials expressed a consensus that the town needs to wait for new directives and guidance from the Governor's office, which are said to be forthcoming next week.

Nelson said the main goal should be to make key town offices more accessible, with tougher decisions about the libraries and recreational facilities perhaps taking longer. "It won't be like turning on a light switch," he said.

Elan asked if the boards had encouraged the state to consider different criteria for less densely populated areas such as Franklin County.

Nelson responded that the board had "reached out" to state legislators in a letter which argued that western Massachusetts was in a "different position from the east" in its experience of the pandemic. No data was cited at the meeting to support this popular theory.

Lake Parkers

For the second time in two weeks, the selectboard entertained a long discussion of parking in the newly-created Rutters Park lot in Lake Pleasant. Several village residents

have been parking there, leading to warnings that their cars will be towed, since the lot was created by federal grant funds for park users.

Resident George Shapiro told the board several weeks ago that he had been assured during the park planning process that he would be allowed to park in the lot. He has also stated that another local resident, named Mo, was given a parking space by the town when she complained.

This week's discussion began with a statement by parks and recreation director Jon Dobosz that he had met with Shapiro and heard his "valuable opinion." However, Dobosz said, he had come to the conclusion that there could be no long-term parking by village residents in the Rutters Park lot. He said there were "not too many options" for parking except for a "grassy area" on the side of the park and on nearby Lyman Avenue. Dobosz said he was unsure about the status of Lyman Avenue, and hesitated to put his "stamp" on the grassy areas, because they had been planted with federal funds.

Ellis said the town needed to consider a more "comprehensive" solution to the parking problem in Lake Pleasant, including a "single municipal parking area" for residents. Shapiro said that the town had reduced parking in the area, and that it was "not just me" who has been parking in the new lot.

The board indicated that the discussion will continue in two weeks.

Other Business

The selectboard voted on ten sewer abatement requests, confirming all the recommendations of new WPCF superintendent Chelsey Little.

This was Little's first abatement hearing in Montague. The board approved all of her recommendations, approving four requests and rejecting six. The highlight of the discussion was the approval of what Little called a "little bit interesting" request, based on heavy use of town water by seven horses

and a "mini-donkey" on Turners Falls Road.

Sewer bills are based on winter water usage.

Ellis updated the board on the revised construction schedule for the new department of public works garage. He said the carpenters, who had been pulled off the project by their state union in response to the COVID epidemic, were back at work. However, there had been a "labor supply" disruption experienced by some of the contractors due to the pandemic.


Ellis said the project, which had been scheduled for completion in mid-summer, would now be completed in early to mid September.

The board approved a change order, not to exceed \$115,000, for additional electrical work on the garage. Kuklewicz, until recently the town's inspector of wire, said the explanation for the transformer relocation on the change order was a "bunch of gibberish," but voted for the appropriation anyway.

The board approved a letter supporting a request by the Montague and Gill historical commissions to remove an "inaccurate" plaque celebrating the reconstruction of the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge in 2014. The plaque calls the bridge the Gill-Montague Bridge, which contradicts the name on another nearby plaque from 1938.

The Montague selectboard letter, however, calls for replacing the more recent plaque with one with a correct name.

The board approved a proposal by Ellis to submit a grant proposal under the state's "Community Compact" program for funds to enhance the town's financial forecasting. The grant will be used to fund a collaboration with the University of Massachusetts' Collins Center For Public Management to enhance town forecasting over the next few fiscal years, and for "mentoring" some recently hired town officials.

The next selectboard meeting will be on May 18. 

LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here's the way it was May 13, 2010: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

Brown, Oakes in Running for G-M School Committee Seat

There is one race in the offing for a three-year seat on the Gill-Montague regional school committee in the election on Monday, May 17. Jane Oakes, a retired Gill Montague teacher, is challenging the incumbent, former Gill finance committee chair Sandy Brown, for a three-year seat on the school committee.

Voters in Gill and Montague are able to cast ballots for school committee candidates from either town.

Developers Tour Turners

"Turners Falls is exciting now," with its broad boulevards and burgeoning arts scene, photographer Gregory Heisler, artist-in-residence at Hallmark Institute of Photography, told a bus tour of 55 real estate developers visiting Franklin County from the Boston area on Wednesday morning.

Heisler, a Manhattanite whose website shows him photographing Bill Gates and Bono with their arms around the globe, knows from exciting. He said he bought a country house in Catskill, NY when homes there were going for "\$30,000 to \$50,000." A few years later, "the same homes were selling for ten times that amount," the dapper portraitist related.

"Ten years from now, it will be a little late to be starting stuff in Turners," warned Heisler, who is now looking to purchase a place in the Turners area for a second, or perhaps a third, home.

After viewing the sights of downtown Orange, the developers took a guided tour of Turners from the Discovery Center down the canal side trail, to get a close look at the Strathmore Mill in all its rustic glory. Or rusted glory.

They tramped up Fifth Street to see firsthand the success of Turners' commercial homesteading program, in the form of Ristorante DiPaolo, a handsomely renovated

addition to the Avenue A district, purchased for \$1 from the town of Montague as a derelict wreck a few years back. Now it is a successful night spot featuring top-of-the-line Italian dining.

They continued down the Avenue, admiring the restored brick buildings that once housed choice regional watering holes like the Montague Inn and the American House, now part of the tidily maintained Power Town apartment complex. They continued past the beauty and nail salons, did not stop at the AB Plus auction house, and took in the renovated Moultenbrey and Crocker Bank Building before crossing back to the Hallmark Gallery for a pep talk from Franklin County Chamber of Commerce president Ann Hamilton.

The developers' tour was arranged by MassDevelopment, the state's financing and development authority. MassDevelopment's Robert Culver said his agency was working with the legislature in Albany to pass a visitors tax to bring in much-needed revenue from all the New Yorkers who have been moving north to the Bay State recently.

Montague to Apply for Green Community Status

The town of Montague took the final steps on Monday to become a Green Community recognized by the state Department of Energy Resources, and with hardly a moment to spare, as the paperwork must be into the DoER by the afternoon of Friday, May 14.

"The application is being mailed today," said town energy committee chair Chris Mason on Wednesday afternoon. "We've met all the criteria."

Achieving Green Community status will allow Montague to immediately apply for up to \$1 million in competitive grants for the installation of energy saving measures or green energy generating equipment on town buildings, or even for energy conservation measures in private homes in town from a state pool of \$7 million, Mason said.

ADVOCATES from page A1

they are assaulted by a family member."

Added pandemic-related factors, including increased isolation from family and friends and unprecedented economic insecurity, might contribute to victims' underreporting, experts say.

"The eerie part of this has been that, locally and nationally, many domestic violence hotlines became very quiet," says Mary Kociela, director of the Domestic and Sexual Violence Programs for the Northwestern District Attorney's Greenfield office. "We know that it's not because the abuse has stopped, but we do think part of what is happening is that it's harder for victims to find a space and time where it's safe to call for help."

Kociela says that calls to the DA's domestic violence intervention program were unusually slow when social distancing was first implemented. But in the past couple of weeks, she has noticed calls picking up again, which she says is actually "a positive thing."

"We've been trying to get the word out to victims that even though the local community domestic violence staff is working remotely, the hotline is still available," says Kociela. "Even though the courts are closed, you can still call the courts to get a restraining order. They just created an online PDF form so victims can apply for a restraining order right from home."

Kociela adds that she hopes this remote service will continue to be available even after social distancing measures are lifted, because it saves victims the trauma of potentially having to see their offenders face to face in court.

"Domestic violence and sexual assault are prevalent anyway," concurs Andrea Ociesea Sears, program coordinator for the Women's Resource Center at the Montague Catholic Social Ministries (MCSM) in Turners Falls. "And we all acknowledge that with the stay-at-home order, there has to be an increase. It's common sense."

Sears says part of her work is to refer clients in domestic violence situations to local resources such as the

New England Learning Center for Women in Transition (NELCWIT) or Safe Passage, and then follow through with them. She also reports cases of domestic violence to the Department of Children and Families.

While many of the center's direct in-person services – including a food pantry, family playgroup, and literacy group – have been temporarily put on hold, the organization continues to work with families virtually, using Skype, Facebook, and email.

"It's going to be tricky," says Sears of the coming months, "but we have a positive attitude that we will continue to serve our community, in a modified way."


Rachel Gordon, co-executive director of NELCWIT, says she has also observed a decrease in calls to their 24/7 crisis hotline during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The overall number of calls has gone down, but the severity of the situations people are calling about has gone up," laments Gordon. "We're really concerned for our clients right now. We are always concerned for them, but especially now."

NELCWIT is the primary sexual and domestic violence crisis center for Franklin County and the North Quabbin.

Aside from their walk-in hours and supervised children's visitation program, they have been able to continue almost all of their services remotely. The organization's 24/7 crisis hotline, (413) 772-0806, has continued as is, and counselors have transitioned to conducting calls with clients online via a secure video platform.

Although these resources are still available amidst the pandemic, Gordon says that survivors in dangerous situations may have more difficulty finding the privacy and time for a video call, let alone an opportunity to leave.

"How do you find a new place to live during a pandemic?" she asks. "We do expect that whenever we get back to a more reopened world, there will be a tidal wave of people that needed support this whole time, but weren't able to get it." 

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RENT from page A1

it out. It's better than nothing," said store manager Ada Naser. "Hopefully, when we reopen, I can make enough to make that extra amount every month."

Naser paid full rent for March, despite the store closing in mid-month, and is not charging her consignment vendors for their booths in the store until they can reopen.

"To me it's a moral thing. How can I charge my vendors when they're not receiving money either?" she said. "I'm not selling their stuff."

Antique Revival rents the storefront from Robert Cohn, the retired former owner of the Cohn & Company real estate firm. Cohn said that of his four current commercial tenants on Main Street, only Green Fields Market is still paying rent in full, while the rest have deferred.

"You've got to work with these people to help everybody you can," Cohn said. "At the end of March I reached out to tenants I knew were likely to have issues. We worked it out before it happened."

Cohn has worked in real estate in the Franklin County area for 47 years, and says the economic downturn caused by the coronavirus is unlike anything he has ever seen.

"I was in the business during the recession of '73, for the meltdown of interest rates escalating in '81, the banking crisis of '98, the 2001 dot-com bust, the 2008 financial crisis," he said. "This is the granddaddy. This one takes the cake. No one has ever seen anything like this."

Really Hard To Know

Last year Cohn sold Cohn & Company to property manager Timothy Grader, who owns buildings in Greenfield, Amherst, Northampton, Westhampton, and Holyoke, as well as a property management company in Longmeadow. In Greenfield Grader now rents space to between 45 and 50 commercial tenants.

"I'm deeply concerned about the small business people who make up our communities, and want them to stay in business and stay open," Grader said. "We are granting deferrals and concessions where we can."

Blue Dragon Apothecary, a small herbal dispensary that offers massage therapy, acupuncture, and a weekly health clinic, rents an upstairs office from Grader on Main Street. Owner Mary Ryan said she recently took another job to make ends meet until the pandemic is over, because she has not received any break on rent.

"Small business owners need a break right now, and Timothy Grader isn't forgiving our rent," Ryan

said. "It's scary, it's frustrating."

According to Ryan, when Grader bought the building from Cohn last fall he raised Blue Dragon's rent, disregarding an agreement she had with Cohn to keep rent low in exchange for upgrades and renovations she made to the space.

Rise Above Bakery also rents a storefront from Grader, and has been paying full rent despite the café being closed to the public. Instead they have been selling bread for pickup, and delivery through the Sunderland Farm Collaborative.

"It's been very difficult. We're making a lot less money that we did before," said owner and baker Brian Meunier. "We're very fortunate we have a product we can put outside the door, and do curbside pickups."

Grader told the *Reporter* that about 90% of his tenants are paying rent in full. "I have a lot of tenants who are deemed essential," he said. "That might skew mine. I have cell tower companies and internet service providers, and medical centers."

Grader said he is unsure whether tenants deferring rent will pay it later in full, utilize payment plans, or receive some forgiveness. For now he says he is dealing with business owners on a case-by-case basis, addressing their individual needs. He said that about 40% of his business expenses go toward mortgage payments, with other expenses including taxes and maintenance.

"It's important to be compassionate on all sides, both when tenants ask and when landlords respond," Grader said. "It's really hard to know what's going to be next."

Sacrifice Zone

Some local landlords say they are taking financial hits to help businesses stay afloat. Cohn, now a retired Greenfield resident with no debts or mortgages, said he would rather lose money than see his remaining tenants go out of business.

"I want to work with people to keep them viable and keep the downtown turning in the right direction," Cohn said. "I'd rather sacrifice than see my tenants sacrifice."

Four years ago, Oliver Miller bought a commercial and residential building on Avenue A with four empty storefronts. After substantial renovations, the Upper Bend Café, Textür Blow Out Bar, Two Birds, and Mystic Pinball now occupy those storefronts. All four have been closed, though the Upper Bend is reopening this week for takeout.

"It's already such a struggle to open a business in a small town," Miller said. "I might have some losses

in the short term, but I'm hoping at the end of it we can bounce back."

Miller said he has been in constant communication with his tenants since the shutdown, and told them that if they could pay April rent – to help pay his annual tax bill, mortgage, and other expenses – he would make this month's rent free.

"We've worked so hard to get the town to this place, at least for me personally, to get the building to a place where we have these businesses, and people are doing well and walking the streets," Miller said.

Holiday Spirit

Some local banks have offered to defer mortgage payments to ease struggles caused by the pandemic. Greenfield Cooperative Bank offers commercial and residential borrowers a two-month "payment holiday," with no late fees or impact on one's credit, in which payments are deferred until the end of the loan term.

"A payment holiday is not a loan forgiveness – it's just a delay in payment," said Miller, who said he opted to defer his mortgage payments. "Just because we get a payment holiday doesn't mean we can forgive everyone's rent."

Cohn & Company owner Timothy Grader said he is working through a local bank to defer payments on one of his multiple mortgages. "The two local banks in Greenfield have been amazing," Grader said. "I have not seen that same level of community support in other towns."

Jane Trombi, head of the residential loan department at Greenfield Cooperative Bank, told the *Reporter* that 15% of all borrowers through their bank, commercial and residential, are opting to defer payments for April and May. Additionally, the bank has helped at least 225 businesses process Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan applications, worth \$18.3 million.

"We worked weekends, we worked overnight, and I know the other local banks did the same thing," said executive vice president Tony Worden. "At our size, our customers are small businesses, so that program was vital to them."

Rise Above Bakery applied for and received a PPP loan, which Brian Meunier says is the main reason the bakery is still making rent.

"When that ends and I don't have the extra funds to pay, I don't know what we're going to do," Meunier said. "I just feel fortunate that we're able to work hard right now."

Mary Ryan said that she was hesitant to apply for a PPP loan at Blue Dragon Apothecary because she



doesn't know when the business will be able to use it for payroll. "I don't know if we'll recover, and then we'll have a big debt to pay," she said.

If The Crisis Lingers

Maria Danielson and Scott Seward, owners of John Doe Jr. Used Records and Books in Greenfield, applied for a PPP loan, and in the meantime said they are receiving some Pandemic Unemployment Assistance from the state.

"Part of our business is online, so we've been ramping that up as much as we can," said Danielson. "We're selling more online, but it's maybe a quarter of the business we would do total." The used record store is still paying rent, but their landlord, Wayne Gass, agreed to walk back a scheduled increase, keeping their rent the same for the coming months. However, the more they sell online, the less the business receives in unemployment assistance.

"As things go, we might want to talk about deferring rent. He wants to work with us," Danielson said. "I'm sure it's no good for anybody if there are more 'For Lease' signs in Greenfield storefronts."

Across the river, Oliver Miller said he is hopeful for, but not counting on, government assistance to offset lost revenue from his properties. If the crisis lingers, he said he would consider using tenants' security deposits for one month's rent, and making arrangements with them on an individual basis. "Obviously people are getting benefits in stimulus checks, and maybe unemployment, but you need that money to pay your mortgage or rent, or pay for food for your family," Miller said.

David Jensen, a retired Montague

building inspector, also owns property in downtown Turners Falls, and leases three commercial spaces.

"Some are paying rent, and some are hit pretty hard and are at the least postponing their rent," Jensen said. "Depending on what the government does, we'll see after that."

Jensen said he feels dubious that the economy will return to normal, even with government support.

"Running a business in a relatively low-income area is not easy, so I have a vested interest in their survival," he said. "The little shops, I can imagine, they're the hardest hit."

"I look back to the 2008 crash where rich people got richer again," Jensen added. "We'll see what type of equity comes out of this, if any."

Ada Naser said she hopes to reopen Antique Revival by June 1, but is wary that business may be slow due to the pandemic. "I can't see me *not* reopening, because now I owe [Cohn] the money for these months," Naser said. "But if I wasn't in there, it'd be empty."

On Tuesday, governor Charlie Baker announced a four-phase plan to reopen the Massachusetts economy that could begin as soon as next week, saying the state's COVID-19 testing results are now "trending in the right direction."

"There aren't people beating down the door to open businesses here," Miller said. "Those who have are really setting the tone.... As much as I want them to be able to get back out there and make some money and pay rent, I also don't want them to rush into it, and put themselves and others at risk."

Additional reporting was contributed by Mike Jackson.

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OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER

MAY 14, 2020

Pamela Blalock: Valley Randonneuse Extraordinaire!



JOHN BAYLEY PHOTO

Pamela Blalock climbs out of Castlemaine, on the west coast of Ireland, 2016.

By CAROLINE MANNAERTS

CONWAY – Some people recover from major surgery by staying home and taking it easy for a while, but Pamela Blalock is not your average person. When she was told to convalesce after shoulder joint replacement surgery, she temporarily used a recumbent trike for long rides around the Valley, rather than the two-wheel bike for which she’s internationally known.

In 2013, when she was hit by a truck from behind while riding her fixed gear bike, she was soon walking 10 miles every day to stay sane until she could again hop on a bicycle. A couple years later, she biked to chemotherapy appointments after being diagnosed with breast cancer. When she wrote on her popular blog, “Dear Life, Please stop throwing shit at me, signed Pamela” a friend posted, “What the cancer doesn’t know is that it’s just been diagnosed with a case of Pamela Blalock!”

The retired software engineer and usability specialist, who turns 60 next year, discovered childhood freedom on a bike. She rides nearly every day on routes throughout the hill towns surrounding the Connecticut River Valley, a long blond ponytail or two neat braids flying gracefully behind her. Her hair has almost grown back to replace the iconic golden braids claimed by chemotherapy, braids which earned her the nickname she still uses on her blog and on the popular cycling app Strava: “Fixie Pixie.”

Blalock met her husband John through cycling events, and they’ve been a couple ever since they started riding a tandem bike together. She says they’re riding tandem frequently during these days of the pandemic.

“I love my rides out here,” says Blalock, who moved to western Massachusetts from Boston in 2015, after their house there became uninhabitable due to ice damage. She grew up in North Carolina – she had been traveling back there to take care of her ailing father in 2013 when she was hit by a distracted truck driver. She loves the

hills, low-traffic roads, and temperate summers of New England.

Blalock rides year-round and has participated in many New England hill climb time trial races such as Ascutney, Burke, Equinox, Whiteface, and Greylock, in addition to international cycling events in Ireland, New Zealand, and France. Pamela has completed the Boston-Montreal-Boston (BMB) Randonneuring event, also called a “brevet,” a 1,200 kilometer out-and-back course between Boston and Quebec, Canada, three times.

She’s also completed the event which the BMB is modeled after in France, Paris-Brest-Paris, a 1,200 km (750 mile) long randonneé (or brevet) two times. Neither the BMP nor the BPB are “races,” though. To emphasize this, the results are posted alphabetically.

Distance Riding

Blalock’s first long distance ride occurred at age 15, when she decided to run away from home to her grandparents’ house, about 50 miles away. She used her bike to get there, of course, and stopped at a friend’s house along the way, who then alerted Pamela’s parents of her whereabouts.

She started riding with clubs in college, then participated in a randonneuring event, or brevet, and discovered her passion. “I became seriously hooked on long-distance riding,” she said.

Brevets are a series of long-distance rides that serve as qualifiers for the Paris-Brest-Paris, pushing riders to their limits with courses of 200 kilometers (about 124 miles) – or more.

“Randonneuring was more about overcoming obstacles, whether it was distance or weather related, or a chain-link fence where there wasn’t supposed to be one, and then you had to look at your route and figure out how to get around it or over it,” she said, adding that what she most likes is the challenge, as opposed to racing or speed that are the focus of other events.

Blalock started out with a 100-km brevet, and then decided to skip see **BIKING** page B4

WEST ALONG THE RIVER: LEGENDS OF THE SUMMER OF 1942

BY DAVID BRULE

TURNERS FALLS – The currently running three-part interview of Mr. George F Bush brought to mind the championship season of the TFHS baseball team of 1942, of which he was the youngest member.

The venerable and enduring former history teacher and coach may well be the last surviving member of the group of young men who took Fenway Park by storm in the come-from-behind barn-burner on that day of June 20, 1942.

The following article, which we printed in June 2012 on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of that victory, recounts the legendary

game as well as behind-the-scenes stories provided by winning pitcher Walt Kostanski and others.

It was a fine June day, just last week, when I made my way along a quiet Crocker Avenue and turned onto Davis Street. A fine June day, that is, meaning rain showers every hour, followed by bright sunshine, causing the treelined streets to glisten, before the rain came back drumming on the newly green leaves of the maples.

Up the steps to the Kostanski home I went. The doorbell rung, the door opened, and a warm welcome by Virginia Kostanski. Our man Walter waited inside, ready to

talk baseball. For we are coming up on the date of June 20, when, in 1942, Walter and his teammates had played a game in Fenway Park, forever celebrated in this town.

I wanted to talk to Walter to get a sense of what it was like that day, before the surviving members of the team gathered for their reunion the following noon. Eventually we got around to baseball, but before that we talked about everything under the sun. Walter is a Millers Falls boy, where I have deep roots, and although a generation separates us, there are plenty of village characters, family relations, and oral history that we have in common.

see **WEST ALONG** page B5



POLLY FRENCH ILLUSTRATION



Left to right: Arthur Burke, Harvey Welcome, Paul Whitman, Walter Kostanski, Francis Bourdeau, Theodore (Tech) Mucha, Michael Milewski, Edward Myleck, Raymond Zukowski, John Togneri, Earle Lorden, and mascot Donny Burke.



MARY AZARIAN WOODBLOCK PRINT

By LESLIE BROWN

MONTAGUE CITY – We have planted two double rows of peas and a raised bed of lettuces.

We are also harvesting our first steady growth in the asparagus bed.

THE GARDENER’S COMPANION

Waiting for Spring Warmth

After several days of partial sun and a spectacular cerulean blue sky, we are having a day of steady rain. This comes just in time to save us from watering the products already growing in the garden. Tomorrow, conditions should be perfect for seeding green beans around the homemade triangular trellis.

Next, we’ll finish using the broad fork to loosen the soil in an empty square to prepare it for sprawling vegetables like squash and cucumber, and another square

for tomato plants. The weather’s still too chancy to rush into planting less hearty vegetables, but we’ll prepare the beds and then drive over to Martin’s for some compost.

We have our own compost bins, and had one ready for digging when we were visited in the wee small hours by a sizable critter – a small bear, a bobcat, or a monster raccoon – which knocked over said compost bin and spread the contents all about in order to pick out any tasty bits.

see **GARDENER’S** page B3

Pet of the Week:

Last week, "Contented Montague Cat Lady with Loving Companion" read the Pet of the Week letter out loud to her kitty companion, Peanut. This is Peanut's response.



Peanut Responds to "Open Letter"

Dear Cat Lady By Circumstance Only,

My mom and I have shared a sweet relationship for 15 of my 17 years. I often gaze lovingly into her eyes and blink and purr to tell her how happy I am. I crave that connection to our souls.

We play almost every day, when I have the energy. (Sometimes kidney disease slows me down.) I peek around the doorway to the front hall and wait for her; when she lunges at me, I zoom up the stairs. She throws crunchies across the room for me to chase, we bat toy soccer balls back and forth, and I can't wait for when she puts "nips" (catnip) on a stuffed animal mouse for me to lick up and rub my face against. I can count on crunchies and nips at night and happily wait downstairs for our fun before mom goes upstairs to sleep.

We have nightly laptops when I jump onto her lap for belly rubs while she reads or watches a light box with ever-changing pictures and sounds. The good news is that

she sits for long periods, so it's prime laptop time. My favorite position is head down, not your typical laptop placement.

I admit that there are times when I yowl for her attention, to insist that she play with me or give me love, at night before her light goes out upstairs, and lately when she talks to others at another glowing light box she sits in front of for hours during the day. What is that about? It upsets me so much that I have barfed a couple of times; one time I did a big snarf and barf.

Fortunately, she doesn't get angry at me for the mess, though she does grumble a little, muttering about "the cleanup on aisle one." And, she occasionally tells me to go play in traffic (I don't go outside) when I won't stop asking for attention or chewing on plants (which makes me barf),

and she's doing some unnecessary task that doesn't involve adoring me and meeting whatever need I have at that moment.

She's learned that when she pets me, and I watch her hand, that it's time to give me space. Once in a while, she doesn't read – or ignores – the cue, so I give her a gentle nip. I almost never draw blood when I nip or gently grab her hand to tell her to stop, or when we're goofing around.

I do get upset when she gives me "pokies," a cute name she gives for the not-at-all-cute activity of poking the scruff of my skin with a sharp object and making me wait for five minutes or so for fluids to flow under my skin and give me a temporary weird bulge.

I do feel better afterwards, so most of the time I don't hide away post-pokies. She tells me it's to help

Dakin Now Accepting Humane Award Nominations

LEVERETT – Dakin Humane Society is accepting nominations for its Dakin Humane Awards until July 31. Nominees should be people who go out of their way to care for animals in need; people who volunteer to help animals; or people and/or animals who have provided significant public service or shown courage in a crisis.

Finalists in each of the award categories will be picked from among the nominees and notified of their selection in August. The ceremony will be livestreamed in the fall, and one winner in each of the categories will be announced.

There are five awards: the Frances M. Wells Award, for notable contributions to the health and welfare of animals; the Youth Award,

which honors a hero 16 years or younger whose care and compassion makes a difference in the life of an animal; the Champion Award, for a public servant who makes life better for tens of thousands of animals and people; the Richard and Nathalie Woodbury Philanthropy Award; and the Animal Hero Award, which recognizes an exceptional animal and handler (when applicable) whose valor and devotion proved lifesaving in disastrous or challenging circumstances.

Nominations are online only at <http://bit.ly/2NOcgps>. Mail-in nominations will not be accepted. Nominees should live in central or western Massachusetts, or northern Connecticut. For more information, visit www.dakinhumane.org.

my kidneys, and I trust that she's trying to help me.

It did take us a while to figure each other out and read each other's signals, but now we're both super happy to be companions. When I first arrived, I only knew one meow, an insistent one. Now, I coo; when I'm super content I meow silently – which she calls "lippies" because you can only hear a gumming sound; I meow gently to say hi; and I yowl when I want attention or food. She speaks my language, imitating my various meows and even

a quiet, breathy "kyy" sound to tell me she's happy too. I blink in reply.

So, it sounds like you and your necessary roommate haven't gotten to know and understand each other yet, but, in time, you may become inseparable companions. And, as for getting a dog instead, they bark, roll in dead animals, run off, and need to be taken out to do their business in all kinds of weather – need I say more?

Blinkingly,

**Peanut
Montague Center**

Senior Center Activities MAY 18 THROUGH 22

GILL and MONTAGUE

The Gill Montague Senior Center is closed and will reopen when advised by state and local authorities that it is safe to do so. This measure is taken not lightly but with the utmost concern for the most vulnerable in our community.

The Council on Aging staff will be available for referrals and information from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Mondays through Thursdays, at (413) 863-9357 by telephone, and coa@montague-ma.gov by email.

ERVING

Erving Senior Center director Paula Betters writes that the Center is closed until at least May 4:

"All programs are canceled or postponed. With that said, I will be here or at least checking my messages daily. I want anyone to call me and leave a message if they have any questions or concerns regarding food or other services. I will call them back and if we can

help with services of any kind we will do so. I am working with other agencies so we can be sure to keep our seniors healthy & safe."

Paula can be reached at (413) 423-3649 or paula-betters@erving-ma.gov.

LEVERETT

Leverett senior activities are currently canceled. Further updates are being distributed via TTY telephone and email. For more information, contact the Leverett COA at (413) 548-1022 x 5, or coa@leverett.ma.us.

WENDELL

Wendell senior activities have been canceled. The Wendell Senior Center is closed. The Wendell Council on Aging will continue to provide transportation for essential medical visits if volunteers are available. For more information or for rides, call Nancy Spittle at (978) 544-6760.

Local Supermarket Senior Accommodations

Supermarkets in Massachusetts are now required to provide special hours for seniors and immunocompromised shoppers. Call ahead – this information is accurate as of April 8; hours and accommodations are still changing.

Big Y: Senior hours from 7 to 8 a.m. (413) 772-0435

Foster's: Senior hours from 7 to 8 a.m. (413) 773-1100

Food City: Senior hours from 7 to 8 a.m. (413) 863-9591

Green Fields Market: Senior hours from 9 to 10 a.m. Curbside pickup available. Order by 8 p.m.; order ready for pickup between 1 and 6 the following day. Delivery also available. \$6 per delivery inside Greenfield. \$8 outside Greenfield. (413) 773-9567

McCusker's Market: Only six customers allowed in store at a time. Curbside pickup available. Order between 12 and 1 p.m. for pickup the following day. Delivery available. \$10 per delivery. Email pickup@franklincommunity.coop (413) 625-2548

Stop and Shop: Senior hours from 6 to 7:30 a.m. (413) 774-6096

May 19: A Day of Remembrance

By REPORTER STAFF

THE GREAT FALLS – The 8th annual Day of Remembrance gathering is canceled due to COVID-19, but the Nolumbeka Project is planning alternative ways that people can still come together in mind and spirit to commemorate the 344th anniversary of the May 19, 1676 Great Falls Massacre.

The Massacre occurred during a respite period from the conflict known as King Philip's War, when hundreds of Native families were gathered under the Falls for the annual fish run. Peace talks had been going on for several months but Captain William Turner, commander of the Hadley garrison, decided to take action and led more than 150 men up to what is now the town of Gill and slaughtered elders, women and children who were asleep. Warriors gave chase to the English soldiers fleeing downriver, but killed relatively few, including Turner. The massacre was a turning point in the war.

The Nolumbeka Project asks people who are interested to share their personal impressions and insights of this pivotal event, and submit their offerings to nolumbekaproject@gmail.com on or before May 17. They will organize these responses on May 18, and share with everyone early in the morning of May 19 via their Facebook, website, and by email.

"We didn't feel as if a Zoom event would be an appropriate way to commemorate the massacre. The significance is so much deeper than learning the history of what happened 344 years ago," stated Diane Dix, one of the founders of the Nolumbeka Project. "This gives us time to reflect on the significance this event had and how long lasting and far-reaching the wounds are. And how broad the impact was."

When submitting, specify wheth-

er or not to include your name. "This will be a social distancing way we can all privately pay our respects to the victims and to the river," states a press release put out by the Nolumbeka Project.

Writing prompts in the press release include the following suggestions: "What do our ancestors want to tell us and what are our descendants asking us to do? What are the stories buried in time and in the ground? What comes up for you when you consider how the lifeways in this area were changed forever after that fateful day? How is this information different from what we were taught by mainstream educa-

tion? What impact did this event have on the Indigenous people of the Northeast? What was this place like for 12,000 years until this brutal pre-dawn attack on non-combatant women, children, and elders? What are your thoughts?"

The group is also planning to host a formal ceremony with tribal representatives officiating at the Pocumtuck Homelands Festival on August 1 and 2. There will also be a weekend-long exhibit commemorating the Great Falls Massacre and the Reconciliation Ceremony sponsored by the Local Cultural Councils of Gill and Montague. Stay posted at www.nolumbekaproject.org.

Reconciliation Elegy

For the Narragansett People and the People of Montague

Today we gather at the river
Our place in the living NOW
Rolling minute into hour
Hour into centuries. Our home
is made of history.

Captain Turner and his men
In full heat for self-protection
Slew Pocumtucks young and old
And in turn were slain.

Today around the fire
Narragansetts and Montaguans gather
On the bank of the shining river
Along its green and fragile edge.
Its surface sometimes calm and blue.
A second sky for us to view, or a
Momentary grove of trees
Rippling in a water breeze.

Narragansetts speak their part
We speak ours. Both from this vantage
Know a flow of blood is not
The river to the future.

The earth sustains us one and all
And life is sweet, but short.

We are searching for the word
Lost in the swirling tumbling Falls.

Some say they swirl in dawn's early fog
Forms still fishing in the river.

We are searching for the gestures
To heal and reconcile us all.

Some say they see at sunset a red stain
On the water, on rocks banking the river.

Part prayer, part longing for grief
To cease. Part recognition of our shared
Estate. The word repeated paves the way
Til word become road
And we go in peace.

In our mind's eye, Pocumtucks, Captain
Turner
And his men live on
Through three hundred, twenty eight
years of days.
(Memory thwarts death in this small way)
And memory brings us to this day.

– Patricia Pruitt

Written for the Reconciliation
Ceremony on May 19, 2004.

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102 AVENUE A TF MA

GARDENER'S from page B1

This same creature also pulled the bird feeder off the high wire which kept the bird food away from the squirrels, and cleaned it right out.

We suspect the bear. As far as we know, bobcats don't care for sunflower seeds, although a smallish one did come through once looking like a sheepish adolescent kicked out of the nest.

In any case, we did manage to rake most of the compost back together, and replaced the plastic bin over it.

Still, we can use a load of compost to spread over those garden beds not yet in use. I can also spread some composted manure around the tomato plants I haven't yet bought or set out.

In the past, I have grown fifty or sixty tomato plants and shared them around the community, but lately there seems to be less interest. If we do have extra plants this year, I'll bring them downtown to the community garden. Meanwhile it is too early for tomatoes, as we have had several light frosts this month already and are unlikely to be finished yet.

Thank goodness for garden therapy. We have just received a lengthy email from our landlady at Wells Beach. Apparently the governor of Maine has closed all of the beaches in the state through the end of August. This end-of-summer trip has always been our vacation treat, so we'll hope that things will change before the late summer comes along.

We are staying well, wearing our masks when out and about, and shopping early in the day before

the preponderance of traffic in the stores. My only medical regret is that connecting with the medical professionals is limited to tele-visits, as I sorely miss my weekly allergy injections. I'll try them again tomorrow when the office in Greenfield is usually open; I'm even willing to drive to a Northampton site, if that is available. I'm wondering what they are doing for people who have dangerous allergies to bees, etc. Maybe they just get sent to the overburdened emergency rooms.

In the meantime, I just take more allergy pills than I prefer, with less reduction of my symptoms, and hope the stores don't run out of Kleenex!

My primary allergen is mold. Short of buying a brand new home without a damp cellar or the woodstove housed in the cellar, we're unlikely to make any major life changes that would help, so I look forward to returning to my weekly visits to the allergist's nurses.

Meanwhile, the rain is over and the sun has come out again, so I'm going to indulge in the best therapy: fresh air, blue sky, and the warmth of the sun. As the daffodils go by, there are new blooms to see. The lilacs will open soon, both white and lavender; the roses have new leaves and the start of buds. A friend gave me some forget-me-nots and they are in full bloom. The lily of the valley has put its green leaves up, and buds are starting to show here and there.

Every day there is a new beauty to be seen.

Happy spring therapy to all!

**HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG****Cabin Fever: Numerous Disputes Between Family Members, Exes, Neighbors Boil Over****Monday, 5/4**

8:50 a.m. Report of five trucks parked on Turnpike Road below Walnut Street; drivers cannot see to safely go around them. Officer spoke to landscaping crews, advised of other parking options but advised they cannot remain parked there due to the hazard.

12:24 p.m. Report of vehicle driving at what caller estimates to be 70 MPH on Avenue C; last seen turning onto Griswold Street. Officer spoke with vehicle operator, who advised they left something on the stove and had been racing home to turn it off. Party advised.

2:15 p.m. Caller from [a street in the Hill neighborhood of Turners Falls] reporting that the male who lives downstairs just got in her face and threw things at her. Caller advises she is not injured. Caller also advises she heard the male threaten to kill his girlfriend several times earlier today. Officer advises taser deployed; requesting additional units. AMR and TFFD also responding. Male party under arrest; being transported by ambulance to Baystate Franklin Medical Center. Party transported back to station. Party highly agitated, threatening staff, kicking cell door, and covering camera. Party later released on bail; charged with assault with a dangerous weapon; assault on family/household member; disorderly conduct; resisting arrest; and assault and battery on a police officer.

Tuesday, 5/5

2:03 p.m. DCF requesting police assistance with a removal. Services rendered.

6:35 p.m. Caller from Avenue A reporting that her neighbor's fire alarm has been going off for 45 minutes. Smells like burnt food; no visible smoke or flames, but reports that neighbor is highly intoxicated outside and refuses to go in to deal with the alarm. TFFD advised and en route.

6:55 p.m. Caller reports that a male just got into his vehicle and drove out of the Patch. Caller believes party is intoxicated. Area search negative.

6:57 p.m. Caller reports that a woman is on East Main Street bothering people who walk and drive by. Area search negative.

Wednesday, 5/6

3:37 a.m. Caller from East Main Street states that a female has been yelling and banging for over an hour trying to get into her building. Second caller states that a female believed to be involved was waving her hands and yelling and stepped out in front of caller's car as she was driving down the road. Officer requests attempt to find keyholder or landlord to let female into her building.

10:27 a.m. Caller from Randall Road states that neighbors are outside playing really loud music and the bass is shaking her windows. Tenant agreed to lower music.

1:27 p.m. Caller from Randall Road complaining of very loud music.

1:53 p.m. Caller from Federal Street states that her neighbor is damaging the sidewalk and placing railroad spikes in the ground on her property, trying to intimidate her. Town surveyor is coming tomorrow to determine property lines.

2:35 p.m. Caller requesting PD assistance with her ex-fiance, who is taking things from the apartment and creating a disturbance. Party has taken female's vehicle without her permission. Involved male located with vehicle. Removed to hospital.

3:07 p.m. Caller reporting a suspicious male wearing a green bandana walking around the parking lot of the First Congregational Church on L Street; party appears to be on something. Officer moved male party along. No impairment observed.

3:35 p.m. Caller from Avenue A reports that her neighbor urinates outside by the dumpster where everyone can see; ongoing issue. Officers will keep an eye out. Message for party in question.

3:46 p.m. Caller from Turners Falls Road reports that her uncle who does not reside there anymore is out back at the farm stealing equipment. Officer states that property was allowed to be removed from farm. Party verbally trespassed from that address.

4:09 p.m. Caller from Sherman Drive reporting sick raccoon in yard. Officer reports animal gone on arrival; advised caller to call back if animal returns.

5:21 p.m. Anonymous caller reporting that a party in the back seat of a vehicle in CeCe's parking lot has a handgun, possibly a pistol.

Caller states parties are getting food inside CeCe's now. Officer reports that party is in possession of a legal firearm and has a valid license. Firearm was secured on arrival; just purchased at the Gun Rack.

Thursday, 5/7

7:31 p.m. Caller reports that a male party was riding a motorcycle down Old Greenfield Road and didn't realize that the gate was closed on the bridge; party went over embankment with motorcycle. Caller conferenced with AMR; Shelburne Control advised. TFFD responding with ambulance and engine. Officer reports that bike was towed and party was picked up by his dad.

10:14 p.m. 911 caller immediately stated that there is no emergency but that he went to Lake Pleasant to visit with family and was just harassed by two females with ties to his ex-girlfriend. Refused to take down business number. Took call from another party who stated that original subject drove by her residence multiple times before parking by the basketball court; states that subject has no reason to be in Lake Pleasant other than to harass her. Caller and her mother approached subject and asked him to stop driving by or they would call the police; states that subject then became very aggressive. Officer reports subject gone on arrival and possibly intoxicated; attempting to locate subject on Route 63.

Friday, 5/8

2:13 p.m. Report of male asking people for money downtown. Delay due to call volume. Area search negative.

5:22 p.m. Report of unattended inactive fire smoldering between the Third and Fourth street alleyways. TFFD advised. Caller called back to say that the residents have put their fire out and it no longer appears to be an issue. TFFD advised.

Saturday, 5/9

11:35 a.m. Report of larger children's toy in the road a short distance past Cumby's on Avenue A. Referred to an officer.

12:13 p.m. Caller requests to have on record that twice in the past week she's observed what appears to be a coydog on Spring Street.

3:42 p.m. Caller states that she is at the community garden at the corner of Third and L streets and that some wires that run through a tree are arcing and crackling. FD responding.

4:33 p.m. 911 caller from K Street requesting assistance with a property dispute involving a motor. Determined to be civil matter. Advised of options.

6:04 p.m. First of two calls requesting assistance with removal of unwanted female on Second Street. Caller and involved female spoken to by officer, advised to stay apart, keep to themselves, and walk away if things start to escalate again.

Sunday, 5/10

1:06 p.m. Report of three subjects skateboarding and loitering on the steps at St. Kazimierz Society. Upon arrival, officer advised parties were about to leave. They were advised.

6:57 p.m. 911 caller from Second Street states that her son-in-law smashed a window in her apartment then took off in her daughter's car. Officer off with two involved parties. Suspect not on scene. Officer reports witnesses were not very cooperative. Officers clear and checking area for black Chevy Impala the suspect drove off in.

8:23 p.m. Caller from O Street states that a neighbor was yelling angrily at his son for an unknown reason. When the caller went to ask what was going on, the neighbor began yelling at him, too. Caller called back to say that the neighbor came over and they settled everything; no police response needed.

**TV REVIEW****Apple TV's *Amazing Stories***

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD — I enjoyed watching reruns of this '80s TV series called *Amazing Stories* that Steven Spielberg was a part of. Apple TV has decided to do a remake of the series, which Spielberg is a part of again. This is the second TV series out of Apple TV I have decided to review.

Another thing about this show is that a couple of producers of this show are the ones who did *Lost*, Edward Kitsis and Adam Horowitz and they even managed to get Josh Holloway, one of their former *Lost* stars, to be in an episode of the show.

In the first episode, which is called "The Cellar," this guy named Sam who restores houses for a living finds a time portal in a storm cellar. I won't spoil it by saying when he ends up and what happens while he is there, but he makes a difference in one young woman's life. Like him, she's looking for a place to fit in. They both end up finding it.

This wasn't a bad first episode. It made nice use of time travel. Works of sci-fi seem to like using time travel as part of the story quite a lot, which sometimes makes for very good stories.

I should also add that this won't be the last episode of this show where time travel of some sort happens. I think there is one that involves a pilot out of the World War

II era coming to the present. That is just what I am guessing happens in the episode.

Another thing that is occurring is that, like in the '80s one, they are going to use well-known actors of the day. Back then I would name Hayley Mills, Andrew McCarthy, and Patrick Swayze as some of the well-known actors that were used. By the time their episodes were made, they already had some of their work being reasonably well-known. Hayley Mills had two of the *Parent Trap* movies and *Pollyanna*. Swayze's was the *Outsiders*, *Red Dawn*, and the *North and South* miniseries. Andrew McCarthy's was *Pretty in Pink*.

Besides Josh Holloway, who people obviously know from *Lost*, the new series will have Edward Burns, an actor who was in *Saving Private Ryan*.

I am very curious to see what the episode Josh Holloway is in will be about, and also to see how they will use time travel in the episode I think might involve the World War II pilot. There may turn out to be a whole list of people I know of from film and TV in this show. I guess we will have to wait and see!

Lastly, I learned that Steven Spielberg wrote an episode of the '80s one. He could do that again, and knowing how good some of his sci-fi work was, that could be a very good episode indeed.

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BIKING from page B1

the 200-km and go directly to the 300-km brevet, because the 100-km “just wasn’t hard enough.”

“I did a lot of both long-distance events and the more intense, shorter hill climb races, up until I was hit in 2013,” she said.

Finding Joy

“Riding my bike is something that gives me the ultimate feeling of joy,” Blalock said.

After her accident seven years ago, she said she had some doubts about whether she would ever get back on it.

“One of the things that really hit me hard was: is this going to take away the thing that gave me the most joy?” she said. “I was angry at this driver, not because of my broken bones as much as for my broken confidence.”

She has no memory of the crash, or the three hours before or after it happened. Her memory starts when she woke up in the hospital, and she thinks that probably helped her because she doesn’t suffer flashbacks.

“It certainly was the worst thing that ever happened to me on a bike, but I was also incredibly lucky,” she said.

By “lucky,” she means that she only broke her back, not other bones, that she was near a major trauma center, and she wasn’t paralyzed or left with brain damage. When the truck hit the rear wheel of her fixed-gear bike, it stopped the wheel, which caused the pedals to stop and Pamela to keep going, so that she was thrown clear. Based on the damage to the bike, had she not been thrown clear, the crash would have crushed her left leg.

She began walking ten miles every day as soon as she could. Because she had to wear a back brace for a long time, she lost most of the muscle in her back. When the surgeon finally told her she could remove the brace and go out and ride, it was December, and she wasn’t sure she was ready. Then there was a lovely, warm day in January and her bike was sitting in a shop, so she drove over to get it and then rode out on the bike path.

“It felt normal; it wasn’t scary or wrong,” she said. “It was just good. I continued riding on the bike path for a little while, and was soon able to progress to riding on the road again with a friend. My joy was back, and it felt good to ride.”

A New Normal

Blalock and John live in Conway with their cats in a house, every nook and cranny of which contains a piece of cycling décor in both expected and unexpected ways. During the racing season, they like to “pay it forward” with kindnesses they’ve received during their journeys in other countries by hosting riders who trav-

el to western Mass from throughout the world. The couple lead touring rides in New England and in Ireland, John’s homeland.

Blalock always plans routes up the steepest climbs and has taken to labeling her routes with “SDB,” which stands for “Sadistic Bitch,” or “Sadie B” for short. Besides tough routes, there are rules she enforces.

“When you’re on a bike ride with me, don’t ever mention the “R” word, because then it will surely happen!” she said. (The “R” word, meaning “rain,” of course!)

Blalock isn’t letting the pandemic stop her from riding each day. She and John are riding their tandem bike on local roads, more and more, and so far, they have had no unplanned stops on a bike ride. For shopping trips by bicycle, she carries sanitizer and a different mask for every store she is planning to go into.

“For a long time now, I have gotten around by bike. I have commuted to work, done my shopping, done my errands, etc. I like the reward of doing something under my own steam. I like seeing new places, and I like seeing them at a pace that I can appreciate them.” explained Blalock. “If you’re traveling around in a car, you don’t necessarily see them, so I get real enjoyment from cycling, from taking in the scenery, meeting new people, all that kind of stuff.”

On long bike rides, however, Pamela and John prefer to ride self-supported, carrying everything they need with them, and passing by their favorite coffee shops without going inside – oh, the horror! Unfortunately, her days of “coffeeneuring” have been suspended for the time being. “Coffeeneuring is a take-off on randonneuring, with a host of arcane rules, but it is fundamentally about riding bikes and drinking coffee and taking photos,” Pamela writes in one of her blog posts.

Ever since that 2013 back injury, Blalock has participated in more touring activities, rather than organized events. She prefers to call them organized events rather than competitions, because “Brevets aren’t competitions, an important distinction,” and she doesn’t keep track of her awards or trophies, either.

But last year, she pinned on a number and won the women’s fixed gear division of the annual Mount Washington Auto Road Bicycle Hillclimb. Throughout her career, she has raced up Mount Washington twelve times, and she and John have twice won the tandem division in the New Hampshire event. Now she’s training for the 2020 event, whether or not it is held as planned.

“It was pretty emotional for me to climb back up the mountain again after so much trauma to the body,” she said. “I’m still training as if Mount Washington is going to happen.”



Pamela climbing on the Sonoma coast, California, around 2011.

MONTV / MUSIK / MOUNTAIN**#21: Jon Collin****Interview by J. BURKETT**

TURNERS FALLS – Jon Collin is a musician from the UK who currently resides in Sweden. He actively tours all over (including the States ... and quite a few times in western Mass), and has a lot of releases out now.

His music is usually solo electric guitar, which can get loud and noisy, but also quiet and subtle. Hopefully he will come back to western Mass later this year!

MMM: When did you start playing music?

I started playing the guitar when I was about 14 or 15. Never played music as a child, family is amusical, but I got a classical guitar that belonged to my cousin and then at some point me and my brother bought a Yamaha electric guitar between us...

Played in a “regular” band (riff-heavy!) between the ages of 18 and 21, then freer music in duos with different people (mostly Tom Settle) in and near Manchester from then, then solo more and more for the last ten years or so.

MMM: What are some of your influences?

JC: Nature and outdoors, photographs, paintings, walking, people, the woods, water.

Most of the things that have the biggest influence on me these days are non-musical, but some big musical influences when I was most influence-able (though I still am!) were the Velvet Underground (everything leads back there), Neil Young, Sonny and Linda Sharrock, Rallizes Denudes, John Fahey, John Cage, Fluxus-related things, records and CDs (and CDRs!) from e.g. Time-Lag, PSF, Eclipse... the column Byron used to write in *Arthur Magazine*...

I discovered WFMU and Volcanic Tongue at exactly the same time, I guess around 2004 or 2005-ish (I think just after VT started), and there was a lot of crossover between those two things. Around that time me and Tom Settle went to a festival called Le Weekend in Scotland... I think we were 21. We borrowed my brother’s car and saw amazing things: Kousokuya, Suishou No Fune, Flaherty/Corsano, Dredd Foole. I talked about that show with Ed Yazjian on tour last year. We locked ourselves out of the car at the foot of the William Wallace

monument and had to get somebody to help us break in. (There was another monument in the car park, but it’s a stone sculpture of Mel Gibson playing William Wallace in *Braveheart*, with mouth wide open.)

Not long after that festival Chris Corsano moved to Manchester and it felt like exciting things started happening in town and I don’t think that’s coincidental.

MMM: Your records remind me of the rolling landscape of rural England... Do you think there is a connection?

JC: Yes, but there’s also a connection to the many, many, many awful things about England. I lived in the countryside for a while and am glad you can hear that. I’ve been recording outside more and more in recent years, so the connection to surroundings is more explicit.

I’ve never really been in a recording studio and practice rooms give me the willies. Other than a place in Sheffield that my friends have had for years that’s in an old but still functioning industrial works, next to Sheffield United’s football ground ... that feels like a living place with industrial and other noise coming into the room. I’ve recorded there quite a bit.

MMM: Do you like much current music? What about hip hop or Neil Young?

JC: I like hip-hop AND Neil Young, how did you know!? If by “hip-hop” you mean songs like “People On the Street” by Neil Young.

Just kidding! But I don’t know that much current music, other than what friends are making, and what people who I’ve been into for a while are making.

Around where I am now, there’s not too much contemporary music I like in Stockholm but there is in Gothenburg, around the band Enhet För Fri Musik and the members of it and the labels that they run. Also in Finland, there’s always weird music there.

MMM: Any upcoming releases or tours?

JC: A few releases, a vinyl version of a double tape I put out last year called *Water & Rock Music Volumes 3-6*, and making a compilation of old material from tapes for a label in Gothenburg. Also a collaborative record with some people from Manchester that is just about finished, and a couple of postal collaborations

that have started since people started being at home all the time.

No tours planned, due to the “situation.”

MMM: Do you like UK folk music like Fairport, Shirley Collins, Steeleye Span, and Roy Harper? Led Zeppelin?

JC: YES, YES, yes, not really, and no, I never got into Led Zeppelin.

I avoided a lot of UK folk music for a time because a lot of times the cover art would make my eyes scream. But I got into a lot of that music at the time of big influences (see above) ... especially Fairport (and especially Sandy Denny), but also Incredible String Band, Comus, COB.

I worked in a university library for a few years from age 21 and was sometimes in the music library and they had a good folk section with e.g. all the *World Library of Folk and Primitive Music* LPs.

MMM: Can you compare playing in the USA and the UK?

JC: People buy records at shows in the US! But taking the bus is an ordeal and the Megabus is considered the classier option.

But yeah, I’ve generally found people involved in playing and organizing unpopular music in the US to be incredibly generous and enthusiastic. Not to say that they aren’t in the UK, maybe you just feel it more when you’re a long way from home.

MMM: Do you have any fave venues to play?

JC: Houses, churches, weird spaces, outside gigs, Larry’s Corner in Stockholm, Gothenburg, Belgium, Prague, I had a really nice time in Marseille recently, also played at a big fort in the south of Germany not long ago, that was great... and Mystery Train Records in Amherst, Mass of course.

MMM: Do you have any other music projects right now?

JC: Nothing regular. I have a duo with my friend Kelly and she was just here in March, but we’re in different countries so don’t do it that often. I was in a band in Stockholm for a while but the drummer moved to London.

I played a lot of one-off shows with different people in the US a year ago and that was a magical time of ephemeral music and fights on the Greyhound bus.

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WEST ALONG from page B1

Virginia herself was exceptional in recalling details of those days when everyone knew everyone, and for that matter, it seemed like everyone had family connections!

The occasion that prompted my visit was the upcoming 70th reunion of the Turners Falls High School baseball team that won the State Championship back in 1942.

If you know your history – and there are still many around here who lived through it – 1942 was a dark year indeed, called by some historians The Year That Tried Men's Souls. Things were going badly for America in the Pacific and in Europe. Pearl Harbor had been attacked in December of 1941. Hitler's troops had stormed through Europe and were preparing to invade England. At home, gas rationing, food rationing, and the draft were changing everyone's daily existence. The Greatest Generation was gearing up for its greatest challenge.

Against this ominous background, the sports teams in our town were providing welcome distraction and respite from the bad news. Especially the TFHS baseball team. The Turners juggernaut was plowing through the competition; the Powertown team was knocking off adversaries left and right. The effort was headed by two dominant twirlers, Walter Kostanski and Artie Burke, backed by canny and effective base running.

"We had good pitching, and good speed on base," Walter says. By the time the playoffs came around, Walt had 73 strikeouts and 3 shutouts; Artie Burke had fanned 32, while his teammates, especially Hennick Welcome, Tanny Bourdeau, and Chucky Mucha, had stolen a total of 51 bases! "We had speed! A lot of those guys were on the track team too, and they knew how to run, you'd better believe it!" adds Walter.

Turners began the playoff march to Fenway Park by defeating Amherst 1-0 in the semis, then knocking off West Springfield, and next taking the Western Mass Championship, handily beating Classical of Springfield 8-4.

The stage was set to face Arlington High School in Fenway Park on June 20. It has to be noted here that in those days there were no divisions in schoolboy sports based on school size, or town population. It was a free-for-all, and the best teams in the state were matched up to slug it out. So small but powerful Turners was slated to take on the big-city town of Arlington.

Much has been written about that great battle in Fenway. The Turners teams under coach Earle Lorden had already made the finals in 1937 and 1940, losing in heart-breaking defeats to Lynn English and then to Belmont. This time they were determined, and destined, to take it all.

They arrived in Boston by bus, the day before the game, and after spending the night on the 7th floor of the Lenox Hotel (for good luck!) the team was rested, ready for action. Turners fans had taken up a collection so that the team could take the trip to Boston the night before and get some sleep for the game. The Arlington boys, of course, slept at home.

June 20 turned out to be a beautiful day when the game started at 3 p.m. The line-up listed the following: Tanny Bourdeau, shortstop; Artie Burke, right field and pitcher; Hennick Welcome, catcher; Ted Mucha, third base; Walt Kostanski, starting pitcher; Mike Milewski, center; Ray Zukowski, center; Paul Whiteman, left; Ed Mlezcko, second base; John Togneri, first base.

Also on the roster and eager for action were younger players Jack Bassett, George Bush, Ray Hilliard, Bill Martin, and Edward Neipp.



Turners Falls fans go wild as their team ties the score in the eighth inning.

Quickly, things took a turn for the worse for the Powertown team, and they were behind 4-0 by the seventh inning. But then, the tide turned and the game headed for one of those thrilling, pulse-pounding Hollywood endings. In the 7th, Mlezcko doubled, bringing in a run. Then in the 8th, hits by Bourdeau, Kostanski and Mucha set up a chance to add to the score. Gump Zukowski stepped up to the plate and knocked a powerful double that caromed off the left field wall to bring the runners home, and the score was tied.

By the bottom of the 9th, the tension continued. It looked like the game would go extra innings, when Burke got on board with a single. Then mighty Welcome stepped up to the plate and powered a fat pitch into a soaring triple off the center field wall, driving in Burke, while pandemonium broke out in the

stands. Burke made his way around the bases, pouring on the speed, heading for home. Jack Mullen, the home plate umpire, threw a body block on one Turners fan, just to clear the way so that Burke could cross the plate to make it official!

Newspaper accounts of the jubilation that followed describe the scene as Turners fans swarmed the field, but that celebration was dwarfed by the welcome the team received back in Powertown. After a hearty meal during which the team devoured late edition newspaper accounts of their victory, they caught the last train home, going west.

Kostanski described the long ride on the "milk train" that stopped in every station along the way, but the boys had a little more room when they dropped soldiers off in Ayer for Fort Devens. "Besides, in those days, trains ran on coal and I tell you, it was a smoky, sooty ride and it smelled pretty bad," recalls Kostanski.

Meanwhile, the word among Turners fans back home was spreading fast. Much in the tradition of Paul Revere, the word spread through the five villages to gather at the Turners fire station at 1:45 a.m. to head out for the Greenfield train station.

Townpeople organized a parade: Chief Charles Earley got the Hook and Ladder ready to lead the caravan over to Greenfield; the police there granted permission for the procession, the only condition being that the revelers "refrain from using sirens and horns when passing the hospital."

The organizers had even scrambled to find a band for the parade. After scouring the town for musicians and finding none available, someone remembered that a Cowboy band was playing at the Rhythm Inn, and they were recruited on the spot to provide the music!

The train arrived around 2 a.m. and all was dark. The team disembarked the train and suddenly all the lights came on and more than 1,000 townspeople in over 210 cars burst into cheers. It was to be a sleepless night for the ball team!

With the fire truck leading the way, the cavalcade left the station, quieted down when they passed the hospital in respectful silence, then resumed the noisy celebration filing down over Canada Hill, across the bridge, down Avenue A, 7th Street and L Street, up to Crocker Avenue,

and back downtown to gather under the arc light in front of McCarthy's the Clothier on the Avenue.

Burke was called on to give a speech, but finding few words, he decided to start the crowd singing the "Alma Mater" of TFHS, while many of the players dried their eyes. It was reported that Lorden called himself the "luckiest man in New England" that night. Others noted this was the most spontaneous celebration locally since the Armistice in 1918 that ended WWI.

Turners fans swarmed the field, but that celebration was dwarfed by the welcome the team received back in Powertown.

One sport swag, who clearly had his eye on the ball, wrote: "many styles of ladies' pajamas were noted on the streets of Turners even as late as 4 a.m. Some had coats over the gaily-colored print material, and some did not bother to cover up the attractive material and chas-sis." End quote!

That was then, 70 years ago.

So last Friday, the 8th of June, seven surviving members of the team got together for lunch, as they do every five years, at Frank Prondecki's French King Restaurant. Attending were George Bush, Mike Milewski, Ted Mucha, Paul Whiteman, Gump Zukowski, and Walter Kostanski. Teammates Jack Bassett and John Togneri were unable to attend. George Richason, the assistant coach of the '42 team and still teaching chemistry at UMass, proved to be the elder, at 93!

Also present was Joel Lorden, son of Coach Earle Lorden. Kostanski remarked he could see a lot of the elder Lorden in the son. "Same gestures and shoulder shrugs as the Coach," chuckled Walt.

Brian Miner, currently working on a book dedicated to the '42 team, presented the group with an inscribed brick from Fenway, with words to commemorate the team: "State Champs June 20th, 1942. The Boys of Summer."

In the Dwight Evans section of the field, a similar plaque is placed to recall the Turners 1942 victory, a legendary game for the ages.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Doing "Pennants" for Our Park

TURNERS FALLS – The Great Falls Farmers Market and RiverCulture are organizing a community craft project in support of the opening of the weekly market in Peskeomskut Park, Wednesday, June 3.

The "Pennant Project" asks the community to create 8" wide by 9" high triangular pennants, which

will be sewn together to mark the perimeter of the park and to direct safe, one-way pedestrian traffic through the farmers market.

Besides serving an important health and safety purpose, the pennants will offer a platform for communication, connection, and encouragement as we deal with the COVID-19 virus together. Artistic

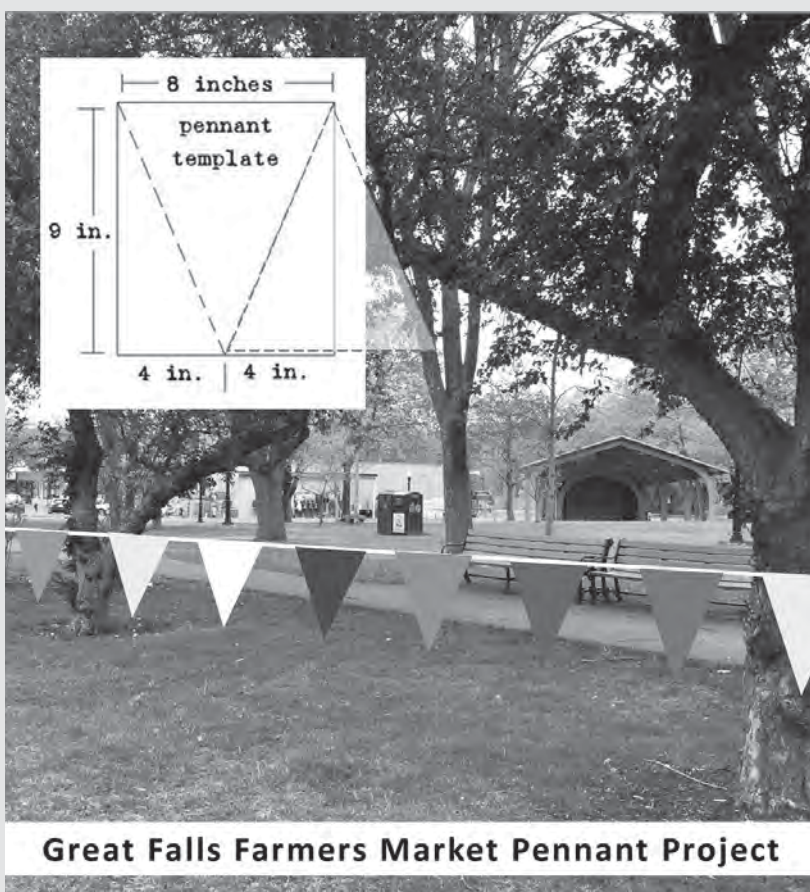
expression and messages of hope are strongly encouraged. In the spirit of inclusivity, please refrain from political messaging.

The pennants should be constructed from fabric or a durable fabric-like material like oil cloth. The pennant banner will be set up weekly, rain or shine, so all painted or sewn embellishments should be waterproof and durable, as well.

Pennants can be dropped off at Montague Town Hall, 1 Avenue A, inside the front doors: Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and Wednesdays from 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Town Hall is closed on Fridays.

To make other arrangements for drop off, call the director of RiverCulture Suzanne LoManto at (413) 835-1390. Details about pennant size, recommended materials, and obtaining craft supplies are on the RiverCulture website, www.turnersfallsriverculture.org.

The Great Falls Farmers Market is held every Wednesday, June through October, at Peskeomskut Park, 200 Avenue A, from 2 to 6 p.m. Vendors may change weekly, and include local seasonal produce, plants, maple syrup, meat, honey, flowers, and baked goods. The Great Falls Farmers Market accepts SNAP, and includes multiple HIP vendors.



Great Falls Farmers Market Pennant Project

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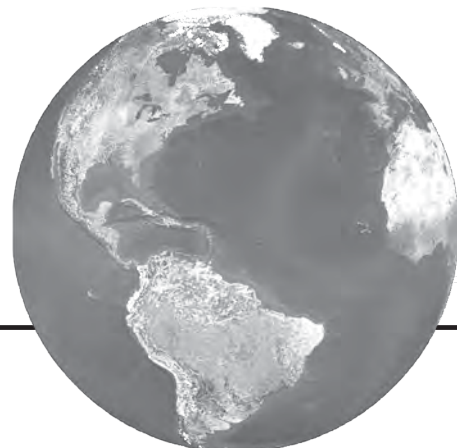
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Aquí se habla español

Esta es la nueva página en español del Montague Reporter. Aquí podrá encontrar cuestiones acerca de la comunidad hispana en el área, eventos de interés, curiosidades, y noticias mundiales en español. Si quiere participar o compartir alguna sugerencia, envíenos un correo electrónico a: spanish@montaguereporter.org.



La pandemia del COVID-19 en los países hispanicos

Por VICTORIA MAÍLLO DE AGUILERA

El mes pasado dediqué uno de los artículos la página en español a la situación en España durante la pandemia. Este mes voy a dedicar este artículo a la situación en otros países latinos y lo que se sabe sobre la repercusión del COVID-19 en ellos. Todos los datos son de fecha 11 de mayo de 2020. (Fuente: Agencia Reuters)

Argentina: El número de infectados es de 6.036, con un número total de fallecidos de 305. Las provincias con mayor número de casos registrados son Buenos Aires, Córdoba, Santa Fe y Chaco. La cuarentena se ha decretado hasta el 24 de mayo, y entre otras medidas tomadas se suspendieron las clases presenciales en escuelas y universidades. Una de las medidas más controvertidas fue la decisión de que los presos que habían salido de permiso no volvieran a las cárceles y permanecieran en arresto domiciliario el resto de la cuarentena.

Bolivia: Presenta un total de 2.165 infectados y 118 fallecidos. El gobierno boliviano está preocupado por el uso de productos que no están refrendados por la OMS para hacer frente al virus, especialmente sobre el uso de ivermectina por algunos individuos como vacuna.

Chile: En Chile los infectados por COVID-19 arrojan una cifra de 30.023 con 323 fallecidos según los datos facilitados por el gobierno. Las principales ciudades están en cuarentena y las clases presenciales se han suspendido, así como otros servicios como bibliotecas, museos, bares y restaurantes. Solamente el 35% de los ciudadanos respalda la gestión del presidente Piñera en la crisis del Corona virus. Algunas ciudades se han adelantado a cancelar las fiestas del 18 de septiembre, Día Nacional de Chile, ante la incertidumbre sobre la situación en el futuro.

Cuba: 1.784 casos confirmados y 77 muertes. El país caribeño se encuentra en tendencia a la baja y se han cerrado las fronteras, así como centros comerciales y las aulas.

Ecuador: Hay 29.509 casos confirmados por COVID-19 y 2.145 fallecidos. Ecuador está siendo uno de los países más afectados por la situación y la actuación del gobierno está siendo muy criticada por la falta de atención médica a los enfermos y por la falta de previsión para enterrar a los fallecidos por el virus. Una de las organizaciones que ha presentado su malestar ante la gestión del presidente Moreno es la CONAIE (Confederación de las Nacionalidades Indígenas del Amazonas) por lo que consideran un abandono total de la población en dichas áreas rurales. Las asociaciones indígenas están haciendo

presión juntos con las de estudiantes que han visto recortados los fondos para las universidades públicas.

El Salvador: Hay una cifra de unos 1.000 casos de infectados y 18 fallecidos. La cuarentena está prevista hasta el 21 de mayo, pero el gobierno se reserva el derecho de alargarla en el tiempo. Solamente están abiertas las farmacias y el transporte público no funciona a no ser que sea para atender circunstancias médicas.

Guatemala: La cifra de infectados es de 1.052 y la de fallecidos en Guatemala es de 26. El gobierno ha decretado el estado de calamidad hasta el día 5 de junio. Las quejas se centran sobre el Ministerio de Sanidad que no está aportando material de protección para los sanitarios. Las asociaciones de derechos humanos han denunciado que muchos de los casos de infectados por el virus son guatemaltecos deportados desde los Estados Unidos cuando ya tenían síntomas de la enfermedad.

México: Tiene 35.022 contagiados y 3.465 muertos. Al principio el presidente AMLO no se tomó en serio la crisis e incluso incitó a la población a salir a bares y restaurantes. Más tarde el presidente López Obrador tuvo que retractarse y ahora mismo el país se encuentra en cuarentena con los establecimientos no esenciales cerrados. Los médicos se quejan de la falta de respiradores en los hospitales y las asociaciones no gubernamentales advierten de una grave crisis económica que puede llevar a una extrema pobreza a las clases sociales ya desfavorecidas.

Puerto Rico: Hay 2.032 casos confirmados y una cifra de 102 fallecidos en la isla del encanto. El territorio está a la espera de recibir 12.800 millones de dólares en fondos federales prometidos para paliar una crisis que ya venía de antes y se ha acrecentado con los últimos acontecimientos.

Reseña literaria: La madre de Frankenstein

Por VICTORIA MAÍLLO DE AGUILERA

Durante estos meses de autoconfinamiento la lectura ha sido una de las formas de evadirme dentro de las paredes de mi apartamento. Otra ha sido aprender a coser con una máquina electrónica que me regalaron hace años y tenía olvidada en el almacén, aunque esta será otra historia. Normalmente tengo que leer artículos, ensayos o libros para mi trabajo, pero no tengo mucho tiempo para la lectura por placer.

Llevaba tiempo esperando la última obra de una de mis novelistas contemporáneas favoritas, Almudena Grandes. *La madre de Frankenstein* pertenece a la serie "Episodios de una guerra interminable" dedicada a la Guerra Civil española y a la posguerra. El proyecto literario de Grandes consta de seis novelas que forman parte de una serie, pero se pueden leer de forma independiente, y empiezan en el año 1939 con la victoria en la Guerra Civil española de los nacionales capitaneados por Franco. La primera de ellas es la increíblemente bien escrita *Inés y la alegría*.

La quinta es la publicada este año, *La madre de Frankenstein*, que se encuadra en los años 50. En esos años de la posguerra, en los que la dictadura de Franco fue mucho más férrea y vengativa con la ayuda del ejército y de la iglesia católica, y en los que el hambre, la miseria y la falta de sueños de futuro configuraban el panorama nacional. Como todas las novelas pertenecientes a esta serie están basadas en hechos históricos y per-

Ficha técnica

Título: La madre de Frankenstein.
Autora: Almudena Grandes
Editorial: Tusquets, Colección Andanzas
Año: 2020
Precio: \$ 21,50

sonas reales.

La madre de Frankenstein gira en torno a Aurora Rodríguez Carballeira ingresada en el manicomio de mujeres de Ciempozuelos después de asesinar a su hija Hildegart. Aurora Rodríguez fue una mujer nacida en 1879 que no tuvo oportunidad de ir a la universidad, pero aprovechó al máximo la gran biblioteca de su padre que era un convencido socialista y liberal. Aurora creía en el eugenismo, una corriente muy popular a finales del siglo XIX y principios del XX basada en el darwinismo que

cree en la selección artificial de la especie humana. Influenciada por esta teoría y por el feminismo decidió tener un hijo sola. Eligió para ello a un sacerdote que así no sería posible que este reclamase la paternidad en el futuro y se quedó embarazada. Su plan tuvo éxito y dio a luz a una niña a la que llamó Hildegart en 1914.

Aurora educó a su hija con gran disciplina académica, de tal manera que Hildegart era capaz de leer con solamente dos años y se convirtió en la abogada más joven de España. Escribía regularmente en revistas y publicó más de 15 libros sobre política, anarquismo, socialismo y sexología. En 1933, cuando Hildegart tenía 18 años, su madre entró en la habitación y le disparó cuatro tiros: 3 en la cabeza y uno en el corazón.

Aurora nunca dio una explicación lógica acerca de la razón de asesinar a su hija, aunque se cree Hildegart quería irse a vivir a Inglaterra y Aurora no pudo resistirlo. Aurora había intentado crear una persona ideal y cuando no salió como ella esperaba, acabó con su vida. Su crimen fue diagnosticado como enfermedad mental y murió de cáncer en el hospital psiquiátrico de Ciempozuelos en 1955.

Basad en la vida de esta enigmática mujer, Almudena Grandes crea un personaje ficticio, Germán Velázquez, un psiquiatra que vuelve de su exilio en Suiza a un país que no reconoce. Los conocimientos psiquiátricos del Dr. Velázquez chocan con los procedimientos que se llevaban a cabo en la España franquista. Aquí aparecen otros dos personajes reales, los

doctores Vallejo-Nájera y López Ibor, conocidos por creer en que era posible "extirpar el gen rojo" el primero y por terapias de choque eléctrico para curar a homosexuales. Entremezclados con la trama de Aurora y su tratamiento aparecen otras basadas en hechos reales como el robo de niños de madres solteras para darlos a familias "nacional cristianas," o la red furtiva de resistencia a la dictadura.

Una novela, como todas las de la serie de "Episodios de una guerra interminable," muy recomendable para conocer mejor los oscuros años después del triunfo del franquismo y un canto a todos esos españoles que creían en la libertad y en la democracia y que fueron abandonados a su suerte por la comunidad internacional más interesada en cerrar el bloque capitalista en plena guerra fría que en los derechos humanos.



Foto de Hildegart Rodríguez.

Tablón de anuncios

• Center for New Americans presenta su evento anual **Voces Inmigrantes: Una celebración de las artes**. Este año debido a las excepcionales circunstancias la celebración es virtual el domingo 31 de mayo a las 7.30 p.m. El espectáculo incluye actuaciones artísticas llevadas a cabo por estudiantes del centro, exestudiantes y aliados de los nuevos ciudadanos estadounidenses para celebrar la diversidad y las distintas culturas que enriquecen nuestra región.

Este será el quinto año que se celebre el evento en colaboración con Shea Theater y este año será un espectáculo para festejar la resiliencia y la esperanza. Aunque practicando la distancia social, será una forma de unión con la comunidad a través de la música, el baile y la poesía. ¡Únanse a este evento para festejar la diversidad! Los tickets se pueden comprar a través de esta página web: www.cnam.org/immigrant-voices

• **Greenfield Community College** ofrece este verano la clase online *Spanish for Health Professions*.

Esta clase va dirigida a profesionales de la salud o estudiantes del campo que quieran conocer estrategias lingüísticas y culturales relacionadas con el español para el uso en su profesión. Si usted desea mayor información, consulte la página web de GCC: www.gcc.mass.edu

• **Food Bank de Massachusetts** sigue ofreciendo alimentos gratis cada tercer miércoles de mes en el parking del Senior Center en Turners Falls cuya dirección es 62 5th Street. La próxima distribución de comida será el miércoles 20 de mayo de 1:30 a 2:30 p.m. Por favor, asegúrense de traer sus propias bolsas, así como mascarillas. Este programa se realiza en alianza con FCCMP y Montague COA. Si tienen preguntas, contacten con The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts en el teléfono (413) 247-9738.



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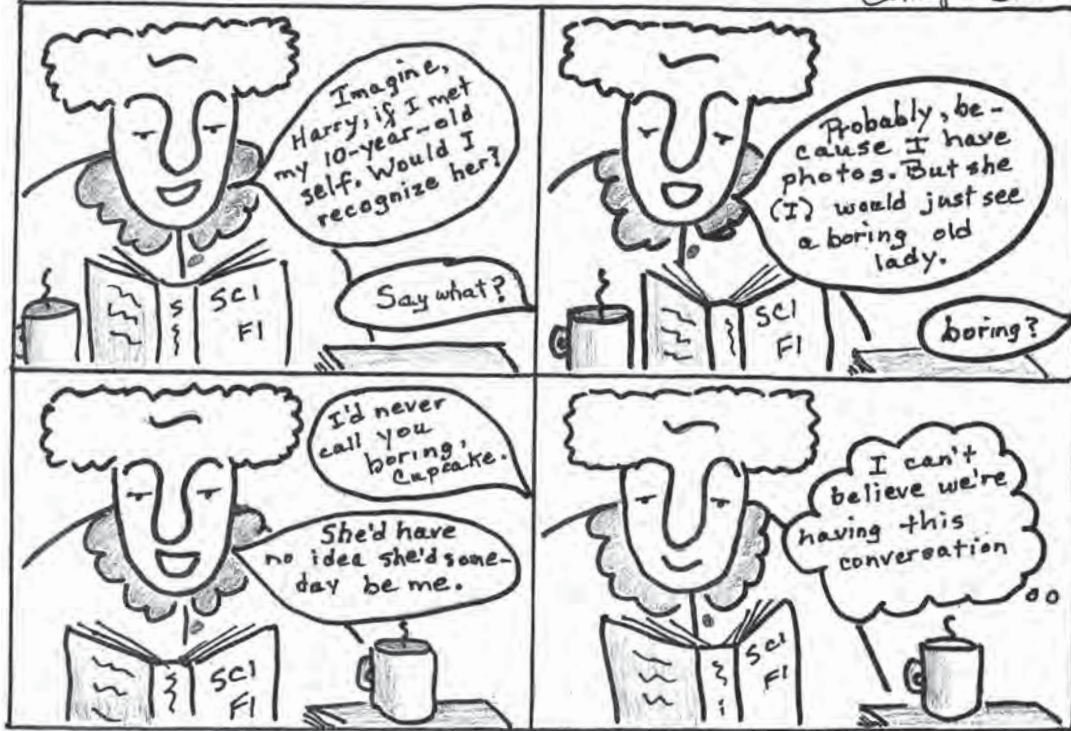
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★ ★ Update for Subscribers ★ ★

Though the future is unknown, the *Montague Reporter* continues to roll with the... situation. Our small staff is feeling quite encouraged by our loyal community readership over the last two months. We are buoyed each time a renewal check arrives, whether from a reader or an advertiser, and we are discovering many kind notes enclosed, which are having their intended effect.

At this time we would like to announce we are moving into "Phase III" of our safety response to the pandemic. For four weeks, we were a digital-only publication; that was Phase I. We have been back in print another four weeks, while continuing to make each edition available online for free – free as in jazz, free as in love, etc. This has been Phase II. If you find yourself reading this digitally and aren't a paying subscriber, please consider signing up, or else contributing at this link: www.montaguereporter.org/donate/

We are also on a limited number of newsstands during Phase II, and crucially, we have encouraged subscribers who can get along fine with the digital edition to do so. No worry if you're the type who, for whatever reason, wants a print copy! And thanks to those of you who have kicked in for the extra postage.

It's the extra work, as it turns out, rather than the extra postage that's really starting to wear. After four weeks, 24% of our subscribers have opted out of the mailing. If you'd like to opt out, drop us a line at info@montaguereporter.org

montaguereporter.org; we'll send you a link to each new edition when it comes out.

Phase III, which we're thinking will last another 4 to 6 weeks, introduces a new third option: **subscriber pickup** at key locations. Some of you live in downtown Turners Falls, mere blocks from our office, and have mentioned that it's funny we've been mailing you the paper. Right. Well, starting next week, local subscribers who want to help us out can sign up, again at info@montaguereporter.org, to pick up their weekly edition at one of these locations:

Turners Falls: at or near the *Reporter* office
Montague Center: Red Fire North
Leverett: Leverett Village Co-Op
Wendell: Wendell Country Store
Gill: Upingil Farm Store

We're grateful to these establishments for doing us a favor. All four stores also carry the *Reporter* for sale to non-subscribers, as do, currently, Food City in Turners Falls and Green Fields Market in Greenfield. We'll slowly and carefully expand our reach over the coming weeks. If all goes well, we'll be back to regular home delivery in all six towns this summer. In the meantime, we're still free online, so it's a good time to share us with friends!

Mike Jackson, Managing Editor

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