

The Montague Reporter

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

JUNE 11, 2020

No Charges For Gunman After Racist Threat Video

By SARAH ROBERTSON

HAWLEY – Hours after a threatening and racist video posted online by a Buckland man resulted in the suspension of his firearms license, the man reported that he felt suicidal, then engaged in an armed standoff with state police, which ended safely. No charges have been filed against the man, though the incident is under investigation by multiple agencies.

The Snapchat video, circulated widely online last Wednesday and Thursday, depicted the 19-year-old man in the cab of a vehicle, holding a rifle, making explicit racist threats, and drinking beer from a can. The man, who the *Montague Reporter* is not identifying by name due to his self-reported mental health emergency, used a racial slur against black people to address viewers.

“What are you going to f—ing do? You ain’t gonna do s—,” he said. “We’re here, law-abiding citizens, Second Amendment. I have my federal license.... Come pull up. Come pull up and see what happens.”

A number of area residents say they brought the video to the attention of police departments last Wednesday and Thursday.

“I contacted the Buckland chief because I was concerned about the see **THREAT** page A8

NEWS ANALYSIS

Franklin County: Most Unequal Pot Policing In the Nation?

By ISABEL KOYAMA

FRANKLIN COUNTY – A recent report from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) examining racial disparities in marijuana possession arrests featured a statistic many local residents may find surprising.

In 2018, according to the report, “Black people were more than 100 times more likely to be arrested for marijuana possession than white people” in Franklin County, Massachusetts. This ratio places Franklin County at the very top of a table of the nation’s “Top 20 Counties for Racial Disparities in Marijuana Possession,” above Pickens County, Georgia, DeKalb County, Alabama, and Tazewell County, Illinois.

How and why did Franklin County end up at the top of this table?

The April 20 report, entitled *A Tale of Two Countries: Racially Targeted Arrests in the Era of Marijuana Reform*, is a follow-up to a 2013 ACLU report which analyzed data on marijuana possession arrests in all 50 states between 2001 and 2010. Looking at millions of arrests, that report found that across the board, black people were much more likely to be arrested for possession of marijuana than white

see **UNEQUAL** page A7

Protest Wave Hits Local Towns



A crowd of between 1,500 and 2,000 marched from downtown Greenfield to the police station on High Street Saturday.

By MIKE JACKSON

FRANKLIN COUNTY – By the twelfth day after the death of George Floyd at the hands of four Minneapolis police officers, protests had spread through all of the country’s major cities and were beginning to bubble up in small towns. The violence and unrest that had marked the movement’s first week was cooling off, as many police departments discovered that a more tolerant, hands-off approach tended to allow for more peaceful rallies. America found itself debating whether the best way to achieve police reform was simply to reduce police funding.

In Greenfield, established activist groups held small vigils Saturday morning – just as they had the week before. But after noon, a crowd began to gather that would eclipse anything in memory.

A young white woman from Orange, the mother of black children, had called on Facebook for a rally, and the interest was unexpected and overwhelming. Planning moved quickly, and in a matter of days a march with medics, marshals, legal observers, water stations, and a vocal and visible group of local black residents at its helm had a permit to march in the streets all the way from downtown to the Greenfield police station on High Street.

“Today is for people of color,” Greenfield resident Brianna Arsenault told the gathering crowd on Main Street. “It’s important to know how to be a white ally.... Use your body and your privilege to create a distance between people of color and the police. The police are less likely to harm you – that’s the sad truth.”

Another woman read a statement prepared by Turn-

ers Falls native Dan McCormack, who could not attend the rally. “We are winning this fight,” she read. “Much to the dismay of the white power structure, the amount of destruction and looting has been trending sharply downward, night by night.”

The crowd, which swelled to between 1,500 and 2,000 protesters, most of them white, marched up Federal Street, turned onto Beacon Street and then High, and congealed in front of the police station, which appeared empty. Greenfield police helped re-direct traffic around the march, and the day was free of confrontation.

“We are here today, not for revenge, but for equality,” Arsenault announced, before reading a set of demands devised by the event’s organizers: defunding police; removing the school resource officer from Greenfield High School and reallocating funding to youth programming; equal sentencing for police and civilians; and annual deescalation and social justice training for officers.

For eight minutes and 46 seconds – the length of time Minneapolis officer Derek Chauvin knelt on George Floyd’s neck, killing him – protesters knelt or lay face down, while organizers took turns reading Floyd’s last pleading words. The atmosphere was charged with grief and anger.

The emcee read a long list of victims of police brutality, and after each name the audience responded: *Rest in Power*. The microphone was then offered to residents of color to sound off about their own experiences with local police.

Though the crowd began to shrink in the 85-degree see **PROTESTS** page A4



On Monday afternoon, protesters lined both sides of Main Street in Montague Center, holding signs for passing motorists.

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Town Opens Skate Park, Allows Dining Outdoors

By JEFF SINGLETON

The Montague selectboard, at a joint meeting Monday night with the board of health and finance committee, made significant progress toward opening up the local economy by approving four license modifications to allow outdoor seating at four restaurants. The board also approved opening the weekly farmers market at Peskeompskut Park, and the skate park at Unity Park.

But the selectboard and health board continued to struggle with policies for reopening the town’s parks and playgrounds, failing to adopt a proposal by parks and recreation director Jon Dobosz to open nearly all facilities under his department’s control on June 9.

The boards reviewed COVID-19 trends in Montague, which have been the same for four weeks, a total of 25 confirmed cases. “They’re see **MONTAGUE** page A7

G-M SCHOOL COMMITTEE

School Year Draws to an Uneasy Close

By MIKE JACKSON

GILL-MONTAGUE – “This crazy year is coming to a close,” outgoing superintendent Michael Sullivan told the regional school committee Tuesday night. Students end classes this Friday. There will be cupcakes for graduating fifth-graders at Sheffield, as well as a rolling pickup of items they left in school before the pandemic; a virtual celebration recognizing eighth-graders at Gill-Montague Middle School the same day, and a graduation at Gill Elementary. The Turners Falls High School graduation is still scheduled for mid-July.

Business manager Joanne Blier reported that the district will continue offering grab-and-go meals through the summer, expanding its reach as Franklin County Tech School and Erving Elementary end their meal programs. Distribution will switch from buses to vans.

The committee approved a new \$4,000 donation from Dean’s Beans Organic Coffee, which has been contributing to a number of local school meals programs during the pandemic.

Summer school will be held four mornings a week, for five weeks – June 13 through August 14 – and it will be held remotely. “I don’t know of any school district that’s planning to do in-person summer school,” Sullivan said, describing the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) guidelines for COVID-safe onsite programming as “incredibly cumbersome.” DESE has also told schools that it will be issuing guidelines for next year in the coming weeks, but Sullivan argued that the district can’t wait for their publication to begin planning, as it needs to order protective equipment and technology

see **GMRSD** page A4

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The Montague Reporter

"The Voice of the Villages"

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Redirection

As nationwide protests against police brutality enter their third week, their impact on American politics is obviously large, but also hard to predict. A new front line opened up on Wednesday as the Minneapolis police department announced that it was pulling out of negotiations with the police union, the Minneapolis Police Federation.

Police unions are powerful institutions – some of the most powerful unions remaining in the country – and among other functions they often serve to shield officers for disciplinary action. It is natural that they are in the public spotlight now.

Though they are a traditional base of political power, particularly in urban arenas, they face challenges from both the left, which views them as inherently different from normal unions, and the right, which may find it strategic to throw them under the bus as a concession in a time of crisis – especially because of the ways they *are* like other unions, namely public-sector ones.

The debate over “defunding” police – shifting public money toward other mechanisms of social safety and welfare – happens, after all, to have reached the TV talk shows and editorial pages of legacy weeklies just as we teeter on the brink of a general fiscal crisis. The impact of the recession triggered by the coronavirus shutdown, and by a plainly insufficient stimulus response that both parties seem to accept, will hit tax coffers over the coming year and will likely crater FY’22 budgets up and down the ladder.

Though some activists in the mix earnestly want to abolish the police outright, “defunding” is more often a relative suggestion: if there is a certain amount in a city or town budget, the progressive line goes, we could always stand to shift some more of it away from policing and toward programming that prevents violent crime indirectly.

But by this time next year, we may well see a wave of defunding with no such redirection. What does it really look like for police services to weaken, or withdraw from, a given area?

Yesterday, the owner of an empty former Sheraton hotel in Minneapolis who had experimentally allowed protesters to use it as a temporary shelter for houseless residents changed his mind after one suffered a drug overdose. The hotel is down the street from the Third Precinct station abandoned during the riots, and some residents vow to disobey the eviction order.

And in Seattle’s Capitol Hill neighborhood, where police withdrew from a station after a week of intense neighborhood rioting, barricades have gone up in the streets and protesters have declared an “autonomous zone,” attracting the fury of no less than Donald Trump, who threatened to “take back” Seattle himself, then tweeted simply, ominously, “LAW & ORDER!”


Purposefully “defunding” the police as a public safety measure may seem misguided or quixotic to some. But in the face of public-sector austerity, we often do need to decide whether to allocate resources directly toward public goods – shelter, food, education, healthcare, youth centers – or toward the police who will be tasked with enforcing order where those very goods have come up short.

This is an entirely different issue than the behavior of good or bad police, or whether they can be successfully trained to overcome racial bias on the job.


Political dominoes are toppling this year: the failure of the Sanders wing of the Democratic party; the pandemic; the protests against police. We know a fourth will fall this summer when pandemic unemployment aid abruptly ends and evictions begin.

We may soon look back at this months’ unrest as a dress rehearsal.

NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION



Tabby Martinelli holds a bolt of Kona cotton at the Textile Company in Greenfield, where she has worked for 21 years. Wednesday was the store's second day back in business since the shutdown, with limited hours between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday.

Letters to  the Editors

Annual Bonfire Canceled

One more tradition has been canceled due to COVID-19.

For over 50 years, the Montague Center Fire Department has sponsored the “Night Before the 4th” Bonfire. But this year, with the health and well-being of the village participants in mind, the department has voted to cancel the event, keeping with statewide recommendations to maintain safe distancing with no large crowd gatherings.

With this decision comes another much larger concern. For the past several years many residents of this village have used the bonfire area as a brush/demo pile. This practice seems to have recently increased, and the pile is quite large.

This practice has to stop. The land used for the Bonfire belongs to the Town of Montague, and falls under the direction of the Park and Rec Department. Director Jon Dobosz graciously allows the yearly bonfire, but certainly cannot be responsible for the unsightly pile of debris that accumulates all year long as residents bring in their unwanted material knowing the fire department will burn it.

Residents should contact the Montague DPW to determine the best way to dispose of such debris.

The Commonwealth of Mass allows for residents to safely burn brush with an issued permit, but only during a specific timeline: starting in January, ending in May, and only when weather conditions allow.

The fire department would like to express their appreciation for the support folks have given the bonfire in previous years, and hope they will understand the reason for cancellation and will adhere to the request to stop using this area as a local drop-off site.

Ann Fisk
Montague Center Firefighters Association

Three Tips For Allies

Dear Fellow White Gentiles,

Amidst George Floyd’s murder, cities burning, and a global pandemic/economic collapse, three things trip us up as allies:

1. Being “good”: If we’re worried whether we’re doing it right, we’re focused on ourselves. We’re not present and cannot attend to the situation at hand. Instead, notice your significance. Assume that your attention and caring matter. Shift the focus onto the influence you can have.
2. Being passive: Uncertainty, timidity, or hesitation as allies equates with “freeze,” which is one of the hard-wired responses to fear, along with fight/flight. It’s a survival response found in many species. Notice if this is your response and if so, remove...
3. Blame. It is not your fault if you react this way, and it is still your responsibility to act. Even if it feels awkward, you aren’t ready, or you aren’t sure what to do. Removing blame does not remove responsibility. It promotes it. Blameless, yet responsible. Try it and see.

If fight, flight and freeze are equally distributed in a population, 1/3 will freeze, while 1/3 tries to kill (fight) the other 1/3 (flight). The 1/3 who are inclined to freeze can tip the balance.

How? Openly show people you care. All people. Including white people. (We’re not actually as good at this as we think; practice with each other!) Also show black, brown, indigenous, immigrant or Jewish people. Check in. Ask how their week was. Listen. Don’t advise. Don’t try to fix it. Be with them.

Denounce injustice. Tell your neighbors. Write Facebook posts. Write your representatives. Not to feel good. Not to check a box for being a good ally. But because your presence, your attention, your engagement, actually alters the equation. It’s the first step of many, but none others are possible without it.

Betsy L. Ames
Northampton

CORRECTION:

An error on the Wendell town website led to an error in our own coverage of that town’s election last week. April C. Thompson won the open two-year seat on the school committee with 196 votes. Though write-in candidate Miriam Warner secured 80 votes, she did not win the position. Thanks to town clerk Gretchen Smith for setting the record straight!

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Compiled by NINA ROSSI

Register at noncredit.gcc.mass.edu.

Volunteers are needed at the **Wissatinnewag circle gardens** for weeding and planting this Saturday, June 13 and on Wednesday, July 8, according to an email sent out from the Nolumbeka Project.

They are growing tobacco, sage, corn, squash, beans, and sweetgrass on part of the 4-acre parcel that was once a section of the Mackin property in Greenfield. The site was targeted for a Walmart store at one time. The land was bought by the Friends of Wissatinnewag in 2001 and is now protected from commercial and industrial development.

Call Brent Pitcher for details if you are able to volunteer on either of those mornings: (413) 773-3193.

Signature Sounds offers live performances via their online **Parlor Room Home Sessions**. You pay the performers through a virtual tip jar; the organization has paid out over \$80,000 this way to musicians who have performed during the pandemic on their online platform.

The coming lineup includes Charlie Hunter, Patty Larkin, and Joe Pernice giving live evening performances. Lots of past Home Sessions from the weeks of this pandemic are archived for your viewing pleasure as well. See www.signaturesounds.com.

Greenfield Community College is offering **Virtual STEAM Summer Camps** for kids ages 8 to 14. They've teamed up with technology education company Black Rocket to offer these opportunities for youngsters to learn topics such as coding, game design, e-sports, virtual reality, and more.

Taught live by teachers with expertise in technology, science, mathematics, and the arts, the on-line camps will run for 12 weeks, beginning this Monday, June 8 and ending on Friday, August 28. Each week-long session is divided by age groups into two three-hour sections.

The Phelps-Hatheway Summer House in Suffield, CT begins a **series of lectures on the American Revolution in the Connecticut River Valley** on Thursday, June 18. The press release admits that "[a]lthough most accounts of the quest for independence focus on the lives and experiences of individuals living in eastern Massachusetts, the summons was heard by many living just outside of the turbulent cities and towns surrounding Boston." Be prepared to "Gain insight into political allegiance, patriot and Tory ideology, local history, and social relations among New England colonists."

The initial lecture on Thursday, June 18 at 7 p.m. is presented by Jonathan Beagle, professor of history and director of the Center for Teaching & Learning at Western New England University. Beagle's lecture, titled "How Boston Became a Hotbed of Revolution," will explain how the town earned that moniker and consider how the seaport came into alliance with distant interior communities including Suffield.

The lectures are free, but you must register at ct-valley-lecture-series.eventbrite.com.

The Augusta Savage Gallery at UMass-Amherst announces a call for entries for a **juried digital art exhibition entitled "Breathing While Black."** The online exhibit will run from September 1 through November 30. Deadline for submissions is July 15. All artists are encouraged to apply.

The exhibition aims to create a response to the recent deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor and subsequent protests and unrest. Augusta Savage Gallery hopes that through their work, artists might serve to highlight perspectives, question assumptions, and encourage action. For full details and to apply, visit www.fineartscenter.com/asgcall20.

Silverthorne Theater Company will present a **virtual live performance of comedy** with *An Evening with Ruth Draper* on Friday, June 26, at 7 p.m. A press release from the LAVA Center, which is hosting the show online, describes Draper as "an inspired social satirist of the 1920s and beyond... with her one-woman monologues, often poking fun at the foibles of the *bon vivant*."

Northfield actor Penney Hulten will inhabit Draper's world in two of her most delightful comedic monologues, "The Italian Lesson" and "Doctors and Diets."

As well as the live broadcast, the evening's performance will be filmed and available on the Silverthorne website, silverthornetheater.org. For more information about Silverthorne Theater or this performance, please call Lucinda Kidder at (413) 768-7514 or email silverthornetheater@gmail.com.

MassHire Franklin Hampshire Career Center announces a **new job searching network group for professionals** called Excellent Position, or XP. This team approach for professionals seeking employment is centered around groups of eight to ten individuals who meet weekly to share progress, receive support, and share knowledge. To become a member of the team you will need to make a commitment to at least 20 hours a week of job search activity.

XP is free and open to all professional customers of the MassHire Center. An initial team will be selected for the launch of this program soon. Find out more at www.masshirefhcareers.org.

Salmon Falls Gallery in Shelburne Falls is hosting an **exhibit by two clay artists called *Transitional Structures***, now through August. Last week Trish Crapo covered a concurrent exhibit by Kate Whittaker called *Visual Poems: Prints*.

The clay exhibit features the work of New Hampshire artists Chris Archer and David Ernster, who both use the form of clay vessels to realize their unique artistic visions. The gallery is offering to open by appointment for visitors, and you may also visit online at www.salmonfallsgallery.com. Call (413) 625-9833 for an appointment.

The Shelburne Arts Cooperative

has installed a **slide show window display at their gallery** on Bridge Street in Shelburne Falls, where you may view from the sidewalk many of the items inside the gallery, which remains closed during this time, by calling (413) 625-9324. They will also soon debut an online store featuring work by the membership: www.shelburneartscoop.com.

I have belonged to the gallery for many years, and the cooperative has been going strong for over twenty years now, which is quite an accomplishment in the art world where galleries come and go in quick succession. Working as a cooperative, in which no single owner has to squeeze out a living from the enterprise, has been a winning formula – at least until the pandemic.

Also, another item from out in the West County: the **Three Sisters Sanctuary** is open again. This special sculpture garden, created by Richard Richardson, merges art from many local sculptors with nature. It is located in Goshen on Route 112 South, about 40 minutes' drive from the Montague area.

Although picnicking is not allowed, visitors are welcome to wander the paths along the grounds, keeping appropriate social distance with masks on. The grounds are open every day of the week from 8 a.m. until dusk, with a \$10 entrance fee. Richardson suggests folks visit during the weekdays to avoid possible overcrowding on the weekends.

Slate Roof Press announces their annual poetry chapbook contest. The winner of the 2020 Elyse Wolf Prize receives publication and \$500, and becomes an active member of the member-run, not-for-profit, collaborative press.

Winners commit to approximately 10 hours a month during their three-year term, including monthly meetings, and share work responsibilities for many aspects of publishing. The group is currently meeting online, but the winner should be prepared to join meetings in Greenfield in person when they resume.

For contest guidelines, visit www.slateroofpress.com. Submissions will be accepted until July 31.

Got news? Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

OBITUARY

Mark Alan Bander

5/22/1954 – 6/1/2020

School in 1972 and joined the Navy, where he served as a fasotragulant aboard the USS Saratoga aircraft carrier. While stationed on the island of Crete, he met a fellow serviceman from Quincy, Jon Milkowski. The two became life-long best friends and were best men at each other's weddings.

Mark worked in many fields, including human services, but was best known as a car mechanic, specializing in imported cars. He always felt his first big break in that career came in 1984, when he joined the Belchertown worker cooperative Pelham Auto. He met co-worker Nina Rossi there in 1986; they were married from 1987 to 2005.

Mark had many friends and he liked to help keep their cars running well, even outside of his work hours. He was a diligent and creative mechanic who wasn't beyond tasting a leak as part of his diagnostic procedure. When Mark eventually left the cooperative, he wielded his wrench at a wide variety of Valley garages: Ren's Mobil, Midas Muffler, William's Garage,

LaBelle & Leitner, Mohawk Motors, Pan Am Railways, Western Auto, and his own service station in Sunderland, Mark's Sunoco. He also drove delivery trucks for Squash Trucking and AirGas, and worked for Yankee Candle.

Mark truly enjoyed helping others. In Turners Falls he helped create the first community garden, and served as a Montague town meeting and zoning board member for many years. He was a league bowler and pool player. He liked growing and preserving vegetables, and cooking dishes from various cuisines. Camping with family and friends at the Barton Cove campground was one of his favorite activities.

Mark was predeceased by his parents, William and Faye Bander, his unofficial adoptive parents, Robert and Cynthia Baker, and their sons, Ronnie and Ricky Baker. He is survived by his ex-wife, Nina Rossi of Turners Falls, and his two sons, William Bander, 30, of Catawba, South Carolina and Jon Bander, 25, of Turners Falls.

A memorial service will be held at a later date.



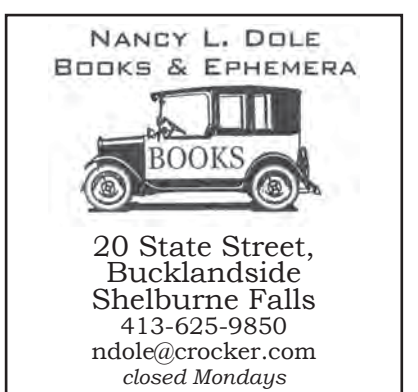
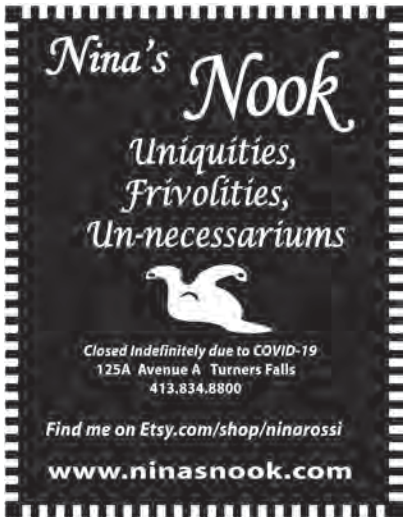
Mark Alan Bander, 66, formerly of Turners Falls, died unexpectedly at his home in Nashua, New Hampshire on Monday, June 1.

Mark was born on May 22, 1954 in Norfolk, VA and was part of two families while growing up. His first parents, William and Faye Bander of Winchester, MA, loved and cared for him until he was 13. After a series of tragedies, Robert and Cynthia Baker of Quincy, MA welcomed Mark into their family and raised him along with their own two sons.

Mark graduated from North Quincy High



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PROTESTS from page A1

heat, it was still sizable as it returned to the common.

From This Point On

“I feel very proud,” Tatyana Torres, one of the march’s organizers, told the *Reporter*. “We have a lot of people who aren’t of color here supporting us. It means so much – coming from a woman of color who has been through so much, even police brutality here in this town. I honestly have no words.”

It was not the first large street protest Jason Hutchinson, who recently moved to Deerfield, had experienced. “I’m from Charlottesville [Virginia], so I was there when they hit them with the truck,” he said.

Hutchinson had also been at a rally in Amherst the previous week. “I like this one better,” he said. “It’s a lot more articulate, more people – it feels like more community.”

Donna Williams said that she was initially “kind of scared and worried” about the rally. Williams, a longtime Greenfield resident who works in Springfield, said she had seen police in that city staging riot equipment for protests, and had heard rumors of white supremacists traveling to disrupt protests. But the video of Floyd’s murder stirred her to action.

“The one thing I thought about it was, that could have been my son,” she said. “I can’t understand what his family has been through.”

“I hope that, from this point on, that everyone will realize that we have to change our system,” Williams said. “We have to. Otherwise this is going to continue, like it has for generations.”

Greenfield police sergeant Todd Dodge, watching the march pass by, had praise for the protest. “We get it – emotions are high,” he said. “We definitely were gearing up for any eventuality, but so far so good.”

Back on the town common, Arsenault and

Autumn Upham, who had first issued the call for the rally, reflected on a successful day. “I was thinking that maybe 20, 30, 40 people would come gather here,” Upham said.

“A lot of people, because of the reputation that this town has, were afraid to come forward,” Arsenault explained. “Some of them said they weren’t even going to come, because of the reputation that this town has – because of the experiences I’ve had, of people being so racist toward me, in the school system, in public. People of color were not confident that the white people in this town were going to support them and protect them.”

She and her fellow organizers spread the word that white protesters had pledged to follow their lead and help guarantee safety.

“I think now, people of color in this town are going to feel a little bit differently,” she added.

Small Towns Debate

Two days later, a more modest crowd of 85 lined Main Street in Montague Center.

Laurie Davidson, painting signs on her front lawn to hand out, said she had found the Greenfield protest “exquisitely organized – so impactful, and so beautiful and so peaceful.” She and a few neighbors decided to pull Monday’s rally together quickly rather than spend weeks planning.

“There’s a Leonard Cohen line that’s put to music: ‘Forget your perfect offering / just ring the bells that you can ring.’” Davidson said.

“I’m proud of my generation for stepping up,” said Ashirah Devi-Dalomba, who came up from Leverett with her father. “I never thought I’d see anything like this, this young.”

Some motorists drove through in pointed, stony-faced silence, but many others honked in support and waved. Devi-Dalomba and a number of others in attendance on the tree-lined village common said they were interest-

ed in seeing police defunding.

“Ideally, they’d be like social workers,” Peter Hudyma mused. “Maybe have a couple guns locked up for special occasions. But most things, in Montague, take somebody that can listen and settle disputes.”

On Wednesday morning, Montague police chief Chris Williams posted a letter to the department’s Facebook page outlining training and professional development Montague officers receive, and disclosing statistics including arrests and use of force.

Since the beginning of 2017, Williams wrote, “the percentage of non-white people arrested [in Montague] is 9.8%... I believe our statistics show we do not abuse our authority, power, force or people. The Montague Police Department condemns the ac-

tions of any police officer that does.”

Williams told the *Reporter* he decided to publish the letter because his department had been fielding inquiries. “Because something nationally is going wrong with police, doesn’t necessarily reflect our department,” he said.

The organizers of last Saturday’s rally in Greenfield, some of whom live in Montague, have announced a follow-up rally in Turners Falls this Sunday, June 14. As of press time, the plan is to meet at noon at Peskeomskut Park, and march down Avenue A to town hall.

And this Saturday, June 13 at 1 p.m., a Black Lives Matter march is planned from the Wendell common to the Wendell Country Store and back. In an announcement on the town listserv it is described as a “kid-organized, kid-friendly protest.”



Protesters rallied at the Greenfield police station. (For more photos, see page B5.)

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GMRSD from page A1

that would support “hybrid” onsite and at-home classes.

“What can reasonably be expected,” the superintendent warned, “includes things like kids and adults wearing face coverings, needing social distancing, perhaps not having [onsite] class sizes of more than ten.”

At his suggestion, four members – Haley Anderson, Cassie Damkoehler, and Michael Langknecht of Montague, and Jane Oakes of Gill – volunteered to serve with other stakeholders on an “advisory committee” on reopening.

Since no Montague residents submitted papers for two seats opening up in the June 22 election, this raised some concern that the volunteers on the advisory committee could represent a quorum of the school committee this summer.

Damkoehler, who had previously announced she would not be running, told the *Reporter* that if no one steps forward, she would accept another term as a write-in candidate. “I do not want to see two open Montague seats as we welcome in a new super, and with the current climate, so I will accept the position,” she explained.

Lisa Desjarlais, the newly hired Gill Elementary School principal, joined the meeting. She said she had been meeting with outgoing principal Conor Driscoll, and that both were working toward a “seamless transition.”

Desjarlais said her last decade as the principal at Pelham Elementary, another one-class-per-grade school, gave her experience “having to build capacity and work within your means.”

Dr. Dennis Rosen, who has served for 25 years as the district physician, has tendered his resignation. The committee, which is responsible for hiring for the position, discussed increasing the current stipend of \$5,000 per year, for an esti-

mated 50 hours of work.

“I was wondering, given the current uncertainty of things, if offering an hourly fee would be more attractive,” Anderson said. They agreed to appoint a screening committee, which could report back if it seemed as if doctors were looking for more money these days.

“We’re in a bit of a holding pattern right now,” Sullivan reported of the FY’21 state budget, upon which the school budget will depend. “Even the Ways and Means committees have not said anything publicly. As far as we know, the only news has been not good news in terms of tax revenues for the past month.”

At the end of the meeting, Haley Anderson shared a statement she had prepared in response to current nationwide protests against police violence and racism, suggesting that the committee consider endorsing it. (The statement appears in a sidebar on this page.)

“This is my own best attempt at expressing what I see as incumbent priorities for the school board,” Anderson said. “I encourage the white members of our community, and our group to consider if they’re doing enough.”

Though her fellow members expressed their agreement, several said they would need more time to read and weigh the statement before voting on it.

Langknecht commented that the equity steering committee, appointed last spring to address problems related to discrimination and oppression within the district but suspended earlier this year, had been a “disappointing experience” for him.

“It’s our responsibility to learn, and our responsibility to be involved,” Damkoehler said. “We do have to take an active role in supporting [equity] in our community.”

“I would be concerned about the followup to it, and whether we

could live up to all of the expectations that underlie your theme,” Gill member Bill Tomb told Anderson. “But I would support that statement 100%, any day of the year.”

“It’s really important to get that out, and to reaffirm that our district thinks that this is important work,” Montague member Jen Lively added, “and we’re not done working on it.”

The statement will be considered at the school committee’s next meeting, which will be held June 23.

Proposed GMRSC Statement

The GMRSD school committee stands in solidarity with protesters across the world to decry the brutal and unfair treatment of Black people at the hands of the police and the criminal justice system.

We recognize that we live in a nation founded on white privilege. Systemic racism pervades our society. Black, Indigenous, and People of Color experience racism every day, and the Gill-Montague community and our schools are not exempt from this problem.

Sitting on this committee, we have heard families’ accounts of incidents of racism in our schools. While we have made efforts to address and resolve these incidents, it is clear today that we must redouble our efforts.

Our district mission statement is: “Challenging and supporting every student to succeed through strong leadership, excellent teaching, and community engagement.” In order to fulfill that mission, we need to commit our energy to dismantling the system that presents extraordinary barriers to happiness, health, and success for so many of our students of color.

As the governing body of this school district, we promise to:

- Actively seek out anti-racism

professional development opportunities;

- Recognize and actively challenge unconscious and implicit bias in ourselves and our colleagues;
- Closely examine our policies, curriculum, discipline, hiring practices, and student assessments with a lens for equity;
- Cultivate an inclusive space for non-white staff, students, and families;
- Represent diversity of skin tone and perspectives in our resources classroom materials;
- Talk in an age-appropriate, open, and honest way about race and racism with our students;
- Provide venues for staff and administration to engage in dialogue about race, racism, and privilege.

We encourage community participation – actually, we implore it, as we do this work.

As we have heard many times from community members in our meetings, pretty words are not enough. It is up to us to take these ideals and translate them into meaningful action. What we do is more important than what we say. This process will not be easy, it will not be comfortable. But it must be done.



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BOSTON – In recognition of the heightened strain put on family relationships during the pandemic, the Massachusetts Bar Association is holding a special Domestic Relations Dial-A-Lawyer program on Wednesday, June 17, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Volunteer lawyers will answer legal questions from Massachusetts callers about family law/ domestic relations topics, such as abuse prevention, adoption, child support, custody, divorce, parental rights, and paternity. The legal advice is provided at no charge as a public service of the MBA.

To use Dial-A-Lawyer, call (617) 338-0610 or (877) 686-0711 between 5:30 and 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 17.

This special June 17 Dial-A-Lawyer is limited to legal questions related to domestic relations. For those seeking legal advice on additional areas, mark your calendars for the next monthly Dial-A-Lawyer, Wednesday, July 1, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

The Dial-A-Lawyer program was created in order to assist the people of Massachusetts who have fallen through the cracks of the legal and criminal justice system.

Struggling to Make Sense of Bus Attack

By MIKE JACKSON

GREENFIELD – “Hopefully we can all figure out a way to make sure this never happens to anyone else again,” Erik Rudder said on Wednesday. “We’re way too good a community to have shit like this come up between us.”

The Turners Falls resident is still shaking off a bizarre and frightening incident that took place last Thursday afternoon after a FRTA bus ride from Stop & Shop to downtown Greenfield. Rudder said he and his two sons, ages 12 and 13, were the last riders, and were disembarking in front of the library when the driver started to yell at him.

“I heard, ‘Run, get the fuck off the bus, get the fuck off the bus,’” Rudder told the *Reporter*. “I figured he was just having a bad day or whatever... He hadn’t said anything to us, I wasn’t aware that there was an issue. We started walking down Main Street... Fifty yards later, there’s a bus coming at us!”

According to witnesses, the driver, Steven Connell of Gill, drove the bus onto the sidewalk and toward Rudder and his sons, striking a retaining wall in front of Greenfield Savings Bank.

“He didn’t get out right away,”

Rudder recalled. “Luckily, somebody saw it and called it in.” As first responders arrived at the scene, according to a police statement, Connell got off the bus and charged at Rudder. Fire chief Robert Strahan managed to physically intervene.

Connell said he believed Rudder, who was unarmed, had a gun. He was taken to the hospital for evaluation, where police said he kicked a hospital employee. He was arraigned in district court on Friday, pleading not guilty to a raft of charges: a marked lanes violation, negligent operation of a motor vehicle, assault with a dangerous weapon, assault with intent to murder while armed, assault on ambulance personnel – and a civil rights violation.

Connell is white, and Rudder and his sons are black.

The incident comes amid heightened racial tensions nationwide, as protests against a police murder of a black man in Minneapolis spread nationwide and into small cities and towns. The state legislative delegation issued a statement of support for Rudder, pledging to “redouble our efforts to dismantle racist structures and ideologies that create or perpetuate hatred and violence.”

Rudder said he and his family

have received strong support over the last week. A former coworker set up an online fundraiser at www.gofundme.com/f/support-erik-rudder; as of press time, over \$22,000 in donations had come in.

“It’s less and less of a weight that I’m carrying,” Rudder said. “I’ve been amazed at all the people who’ve reached out and donated, or just reached out to me personally, to share their love and support for me and the boys.”

Rudder, who grew up in New York City, first moved to Franklin County in the mid-’90s, moved away for a decade, and has been back in the area again for four or five years.

“The general attitude toward me has always been love and friendship up here,” he said. “There’s always going to be those people who are going to talk behind your back, hiding in the corners, but that’s kind of everywhere.”

Rudder said he is still figuring out what to think about the attack. Connell, who is being held without bail, has lost his job with FRTA. He has been a Gill firefighter since 2002, and an online petition is calling for his removal from that department.

“We’re aware of the incident,” said Gill town administrator Ray Purington. “It’s town policy to not



Erik Rudder

comment on personnel matters.”

Rudder said he had seen comments online from friends and neighbors who could not believe Connell could be capable of the attack he stands accused of.

“Part of me is definitely still sore,” he said. “And part of me is kind of wondering also, along the same lines – this guy, something happened. What happened? If you guys are friends with this guy, how come you hadn’t caught it sooner?”

“Stay in contact, keep in touch,” he added. “The way things are going now – you definitely want to keep in touch with your friends, just to make sure they’re safe and not going off and doing something like this.”

NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Uncertain Times; Taking Action

By JERRI HIGGINS

Tuesday night’s Leverett selectboard meeting addressed the town’s budget uncertainty for Fiscal Year 2021, and discussed a selectboard and community-wide response to racial injustice in the wake of the May 25 murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police, among several other agenda items.

Town administrator Marjorie McGinnis shared a hypothetical FY’21 budget which assumes 50% reductions in state Chapter 70, Chapter 90, and lottery funding. The resulting operating budget of \$6,261,432 would represent 1.7% growth over FY’20.

“As everyone is aware, these are uncertain times,” began fin com member Ann Delano, who presented the operating budget details to the selectboard.

The fin com used Leverett’s FY’20 budget and “rolled that forward,” said Delano, “adding all the known obligations,” such as any new contracts and cost-of-living adjustments, to present at the June 20 annual town meeting. “It doesn’t mean that we can’t make adjustments later on in the year if we need to,” she added.

About 10% of the town’s revenue comes from state Chapter 70 and Chapter 90 aid, which is currently indeterminate due to the COVID-19 shutdowns.

Fin com member Phil Carter told the board that two main issues discussed at the fin com’s Monday night meeting was increasing town salaries by 2%, and “also the elementary school budget.” “We are increasing that by 2.1%, which is what the school committee asked for,” he said, “a 2% increase over last year’s budget line item.”

Carter also noted that a \$33,000 special article supplementing the Le-

verett Elementary School budget last year is not in this year’s costs, “so the actual increase is less than 1%.”

School committee member Craig Cohen said that Leverett Elementary principal Rhonda Cohen’s priority for an extra warrant item was an upgrade to the school phone system, which was questioned by selectboard members, as air conditioning for the computer server room and a new gas stove had also been requested. Principal Cohen could not be reached prior to the meeting for clarification.

McGinnis said Leverett’s most recent tax rate projection is \$21.85 per thousand, adding that “there are so many unknowns here: I do not know what the state is going to do, and I do not know what our tax assessments are going to do.”

“Generally, it ends up going up some,” she added. “However, this year, it may not.”

Racism and Policing

Leverett police chief Scott Minckler stated that his department will likely have training on social and racial justice and bias issues in the coming months in answer to the call for reforms in policing since George Floyd was murdered by Minneapolis police officers on May 25. While the Leverett department has not been accused of police brutality, the department itself was the recipient of a racist attack on one of their officers of Asian descent several years ago.

Selectboard member Tom Hankinson said that he and several residents he has met with want Leverett to not only put out a statement for racial justice, but also engage in action.

Hankinson said he would like education and training action steps that the town administrator and the selectboard could take “to reflect the town’s commitment to solving race issues and racism, whether it is obvi-

ous or not. Clear action steps would prove that the town of Leverett is taking this seriously.”

Board chair Peter d’Errico said that while he agreed with points about systemic violence built into our system of governance and policing, “I guess what we would differ on, if anything, is that the need for widespread, searching public discussion is not met by hiring a consultant to come in and talk with a handful of police officers and three town officials.”

“I think this is something that the Leverett police commission could spearhead – a town-wide discussion,” added board member Julie Shively. “And also, we encourage discussion of the roots of systemic violence, but it’s more than violence. It’s the systematic looting of black lives that I would like to see in that discussion as well, expanding it beyond police violence.”

A proposal to form a discussion group around race and racism in Leverett will be added to Leverett’s statement about racial justice.

Other Business

Two weeks earlier, the selectboard had held a dog hearing and ruled that two dogs owned by Daniel Mendelsohn and Stephanie Hucker should be euthanized. Attorneys for Miriam and John Jenkins of Juggler Meadow Road, victims of a recent attack by the dogs, were present on Tuesday’s call when attorneys for Mendelsohn and Hucker presented their request for a new dog hearing.

The selectboard denied the request, and the matter will go to court to resolve.

McGinnis said the annual town meeting will proceed outdoors as planned on June 20. She recommended participants bring their own pens or pencils to the meeting in case there is ballot voting so there is no

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sharing of writing instruments, and bug repellent due to concerns about ticks and other biting insects.

The Leverett library plans to offer curbside service for library materials starting next week. The town hall will post a one-way traffic pattern going in one door to enter, and exiting through the other, as well as create socially distant spacing protocols within the building.

McGinnis informed the board

that the city of Greenfield invited all smaller towns in the county to join in a regional Community Development Block Grant application for micro-enterprises, which are limited to businesses with five employees or fewer. The board agreed to sign on to the application, which would make recovery or assistance grants available to small businesses which have had trouble operating due to COVID-19.

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NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Sticker Shock Over Sludge Dryer

By KATIE NOLAN

On Monday night, Erving selectboard chair Jacob Smith announced that the annual town meeting will be held on Saturday, July 11 at 10 a.m., outdoors at Erving Elementary School. Town moderator Richard Peabody, using his emergency authority, postponed the meeting from its previously scheduled date of June 17.

Logistics for holding the meeting will be decided at the June 22 selectboard meeting. The town meeting warrant will be mailed to residents this week.

The board approved a \$1.7 million spending plan for July 2020, the first month in FY’21. Under state emergency legislation, a town’s delaying its annual town meeting beyond June 30 is authorized to develop a month-by-month spending plan until the meeting can be held.

Erving’s July plan includes “onethwelfth” expenditures (8.35% of the amount approved for FY’20) for most line items, but higher percentages for insurance payments, school assessments, health agent and veteran’s agent assessments, and retirement system funding, which are typically paid quarterly or in full at the beginning of each fiscal year.

The spending plan must be approved by the state Division of Local Services.

Drying Sludge

Erving Industries president Morris Housen presented a plan for drying sludge from POTW #2, the town-owned wastewater treatment plant operated by ERSECO, a subsidiary of Erving Paper Mill. The plant treats a portion of the town’s residential and commercial wastes and all of the Erving Paper Mill wastewater.

Housen told the board that treatment plant sludge may be applied to land as fertilizer, incinerated, or landfilled. However, he said that land application is “the only option,” because both incineration and landfill disposal are costly, and incinerators and landfills are “maxed out.”

Housen said that the sludge currently produced at the plant is classified as “Type 2,” but that drying it by 90% will result in “Type 1” sludge that is more widely eligible for land application.

Housen told the board that ERSECO has engaged consultant Tighe & Bond to analyze drying technologies and develop a preliminary design for the drying process. In order to test the feasibility of drying their unique sludge, the paper mill will lease a rotary drying unit for several weeks. He said that an early estimate of the cost for constructing a permanent drying unit at the plant was \$5 to \$6 million, but that Tighe & Bond recently updated the estimate to \$13 million., which resulted in “sticker shock.”

He said that ERSECO would “take a hard look at the numbers – are they for real?” and work to reduce costs.

Housen told the selectboard that long-term, low-interest construction loans are available from the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust, a state

agency. However, because the town is the owner of POTW #2, the town would need to apply for the loan.

Town administrator Bryan Smith said the loan’s repayment would be the subject of a structured agreement between the town and ERSECO.

“The sustainability of the treatment plant, as well as the paper mill, requires cooperation between the town and the mill,” Housen said.

Selectboard chair Jacob Smith said there is a long history of private-public partnership regarding POTW #2. The plant was built in 1977, primarily with federal and state grants secured by the town. The town paid 1% of the \$480,000 in local costs, while Erving Industries paid the other 99%, and has paid ongoing operating expenses and capital costs.

Selectboard member William Bembury said he was in favor of “whatever can benefit the town and community and ERSECO.” The board instructed administrator Bryan Smith and planning assistant Mariah Kurtz to continue working with the company’s team on the sludge dryer construction project.

Former IP Mill

Bryan Smith announced that the cleanup of asbestos-containing materials at the former International Paper Mill on Papermill Road is nearly complete, leaving the buildings at the property “fairly clean” but “not fully abated.”

He asked the board for guidance on how to find a development project for the former mill. He recommended a two-pronged approach, simultaneously applying for grants for selective demolition, an access road, and water and sewer retrofitting while simultaneously soliciting developers using a request for proposals (RFP) process.

Smith said the town should consider several issues: a deed restriction to protect the town’s interests in the future, subdivision of the property, and potential “mill district” zoning. A deed restriction, Smith explained, would protect the town from deterioration of the property if a developer is not able to carry out a development plan.

The mill closed abruptly in 2000. In 2005, a real estate company bought the property, but it remained undeveloped and abandoned, and the buildings were stripped of all copper pipes and wires. When Erving acquired the property in 2014 for back taxes, the buildings were in poor condition.

“I have no problem with the two-pronged process,” Bembury said, “but the RFP process will probably fail. It’s just a tear down – it’s just a demo and major rebuild.”

“The cost of doing that is astronomical,” he added.

“My fear is that the successful direction is to clear the lot,” said Jacob Smith. “I don’t want to limit the RFP. It should be as open as possible to get creative ideas.”

The board asked Bryan Smith and Kurtz to proceed with both seeking grants and creating an RFP.

Car Charging Stations

Kurtz told the board that National Grid provides incentives for in-

NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

Police Coverage to Increase

By GEORGE BRACE

At their June 8 meeting, the Gill selectboard continued working through changes to the town’s normal functioning due to the COVID-19 situation. The board approved another temporary increase in police coverage, appointed poll workers and increased their pay for town elections on June 22, and approved outdoor dining at the Gill Tavern. A decision on when to hold town meeting was postponed.

The meeting was again held by conference call.

Police chief Christopher Redmond requested a temporary increase in shift coverage of 20 hours per week, “for the next week or two, hopefully not longer,” to begin immediately. Subsequent to the meeting, the chief said there has been no increase in police calls in Gill, but there has been an uptick in mutual aid calls from other towns, which Gill officers respond to, and also in calls to aid despondent people at the French King Bridge.

The chief said that Gill and several other area towns only have one officer on duty at a time, and need to have flexibility in order to provide coverage when officers are called to another town. He said officer safety was also a concern in requesting the additional patrol time, because while a single officer can handle most calls, such as accidents, other calls, such as domestic violence reports, require additional responding officers for the safety of both officers and residents.

The chief also commented that it was a “trying time for a lot of us.” He told the *Reporter* that he and other officers got into police work to help people, and the members of the Gill police department were “disgusted” by the police brutality in Minnesota.

Town Elections, Meeting

The board appointed Megan and Ella Bathory-Peeler as election workers through June 30, and approved a request from town clerk Doreen Stevens for her to be able to appoint other election workers as needed for the June 22 election. Many poll workers are older, and Stevens said some of the regulars will be on hand, but others have said they don’t feel comfortable about it due to the coronavirus situation.

stalling public electric vehicle (EV) charging stations. The incentives are available until June 30.

Using these incentives, which pay up to 75% of the cost of installation, the town could install EV charging stations at the municipal lot near Arch Street for approximately \$2,500 per station. The incentives are for “Level 2” charging stations, which fully charge a vehicle in one to three hours.

No incentives are currently available for the more expensive DC Fast Chargers, which fully charge a vehicle in a half hour, and cost \$40,000 to \$60,000 for installation.

Observing that the availability of charging stations might encourage drivers to frequent Erving businesses while their vehicles charge, Jacob Smith said that the stations would be “a good draw for a low-cost investment.”

Stevens said the state is encouraging towns to recruit younger people as poll workers in response to the virus, and noted that the minimum age for such work is 16.

The board also approved a raise in pay for election workers from \$8.31 per hour to the minimum wage, \$12.75 an hour. Stevens said most poll workers do it as a service to the community, not the money, but she would like to show appreciation in difficult times, and hoped the increase might help in recruiting younger folks to take part.

Members of the board said they were “shocked,” “embarrassed,” and “mortified” to learn how little poll workers were paid, and in addition to the increase for the election, voted to re-examine pay rates before the next election.

Town administrator Ray Purington said his crystal ball was no better than anyone else’s, but recommended “late July at the soonest” for an annual town meeting date.

There was a brief discussion of the town budget, with Purington pointing out that payments come due at different times, and they couldn’t approve a monthly budget just by dividing a yearly budget by 12.

Outdoor Seating

The board approved a request from Walker Widner of the Gill Tavern to amend the restaurant’s liquor license to allow for more outside seating through November 1. Purington said that the state has temporarily streamlined the application process for changes of this type due to the COVID-19 situation, allowing the board to skip a number of steps in the process and approve the request more quickly than usual.

John Ward recused himself from the vote, explaining that he had a “temporary, very small” financial interest in the Tavern, but after the vote, he brought up the related subject of traffic in the center of town.

Board members and Widner discussed ways in which diner and traffic safety could be improved in the center of town, such as putting out orange cones, and Widner putting up concrete Jersey barriers.

Board member Randy Crochier said that “traffic calming” measures in the area were a good idea, and Widner and the board said they were going to look into various ideas fur-

ther, but a suggestion to paint Jersey barriers to look like cows was described as “utterly ridiculous.”

Highway Department

Bruce Dobias resigned from the highway department, effective June 15. Dobias is moving on to a job in the private sector. The board thanked him and wished him well.

The board approved three paving projects presented by highway superintendent John Miner: repaving the fire department driveway, estimated at \$30,600, to come from previously approved town funds; “chip-sealing” a 1.25-mile stretch of River Road using \$63,000 from state Chapter 90 funding; and milling and paving 1.3 miles of Main Road with \$181,000 in Chapter 90 funds.

Ward raised questions about the environmental impact of milling and reusing pavement as fill on other roads. Miner said he did not have the answers Ward was looking for, but that it was done in other towns.

Ward ended up voting “no” on that project, saying he wanted to research it before agreeing, but added that if he had been a swing vote, he would not have held the project up for that reason.

Other Business

The selectboard approved a \$3,305 purchase order from the fire department to have its hoses tested in accordance with National Fire Protection Association standards. The board approved the purchase of a wheel assembly for the highway department’s road sweeper for \$1,931.57, and the replacement of rear springs on the department’s dump truck for \$3,055.25.

The board exercised a right of first refusal on an electric car the town had donated to the Riverside water district, by being the first to refuse to take the vehicle.

A sewer abatement request of \$511.84, for an excessive reading due to broken water pipes, was approved. It was noted that the form was dated after the due date, and that in the past such requests have been denied on that basis, but the lateness was attributed to an email issue, and the resident had in fact started the process in a timely way. It was also noted that many other due dates had been extended due to the coronavirus.



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MONTAGUE from page A1

very good numbers,” health director Daniel Wasiuk said. “We should be very happy with that.”

Town administrator Steve Ellis reviewed the governor’s decision to move to the beginning of Phase 2 of the state reopening plan, and its potential impact on the town.

The board approved the use of Peskeomskut Park for Wednesday afternoon farmers’ markets from June through October. Annie Levine, chief organizer of the market, said it had actually opened the previous Wednesday. “It was great,” she reported. “People sold out of stuff.”

The board approved the permit even though the application did not show measures to limit customers and achieve social distancing. “We did all of that,” said RiverCulture director Suzanne LoManto, noting the market had marked an entrance and exit, provided a hand-washing station, and required masks. Levine said the market was initiating free ordering and delivery through the RiverCulture website.

The discussion of outdoor restaurant seating and liquor license extensions began with the selectboard approving a “foundational policy” document outlining the town’s criteria for approving such licenses. According to Ellis, the policy is a separate document from the application that the town approved the previous week, used by the four establishments granted licenses on Monday. He said that the broader policy document was constructed the previous week with new guidance from the governor’s office and legislation in process in the state legislature.

The guidelines include the need for restaurants with outdoor seating to complete a lengthy safety checklist, issued by the state Department of Public Health and monitored by the local health board. Health board chair Al Cummings said the checklist had been sent out in a “mass mailing” the previous week, but the health board officially voted to approve it on Monday.

The selectboard then approved outdoor licenses for four establishments: Riff’s North on Avenue A in Turners Falls, the Rendezvous on Third Street, Element Brewing Company in Millers Falls, and the Alvah Stone restaurant in Montague Center.

Each restaurant presented a map of their outdoor seating proposal, with measures for social distancing. The licenses extend to the end of November, though the governor’s executive order for outdoor seating ends November 1.

The board then voted to grant Ellis the authority to approve future outdoor seating applications.

The discussion of the parks, playgrounds, and related facilities began with parks and recreation director Dobosz presenting a plan to reopen nearly all facilities under his control the next day. He said that groups could not exceed 10 people in the skate park and basketball courts, and that users would be required to wear masks if they could not achieve the proper social distancing.

His plan, sent in a memo to the board earlier in the day, asked for “guidance” for group size on playgrounds, and noted that regular cleaning of play structures would require “supplementary funding.”

A lengthy discussion of cleaning playgrounds ensued. Wasiuk, who approved Dobosz’s plan, argued that play structures could be cleaned once a day with a “spray wand or pressure wash.” He said that there were a variety of factors involved in determining how long the COVID virus could remain alive on a structure, so “that is why no certain frequency [for cleaning] has been dictated [by the state].”

The board approved outdoor licenses for Riff’s North, the Rendezvous, Element Brewing Company, and the Alvah Stone.

Turners Falls resident David Harmon said that cleaning the play structures is something “we should step up and do,” and asked about possibilities for funding additional staff for the purpose.

Ellis said the town might be able to apply for emergency federal money, or use funds in the upcoming budget, to pay for additional staff time. “I feel we could make an effort to clean them some of the time, and that would be better than not cleaning them at all,” he said. “Where there is a will, there is a way. But we would not be able to tell parents we can guarantee the cleanliness or the safety of the structure.”

Fin com chair Jen Audley, not speaking as a fin com member, said she was concerned about the cancellation of summer camps, which Dobosz indicated was a real possibility. Audley said the town should explore reallocating funds to hire playground monitors.

Emergency management director John Zellman said he was “ner-

vous” about reopening the basketball courts, and later said that Dobosz’s plan should go before the emergency management committee.

In the end, a motion by selectboard member Michael Nelson to endorse Dobosz’s plan failed to attract a second. A second motion to open the skate park the next day, and send the broader plan to the emergency management committee, passed unanimously.

A third motion, which authorized Dobosz to close the skate park “if things don’t work out,” also passed unanimously.

FY’21 Budget

The selectboard and fin com discussed the need to develop and approve a so-called “1/12 budget” in case the upcoming town meeting does not achieve a quorum, or rejects the proposed budget. The month-by-month plan, when approved by the selectboard, will be sent to the state Department of Revenue.

Ellis called the 1/12 budget, which is being developed by town accountant Carolyn Olsen “not a literal 1/12 budget,” explaining that “it does not mean you have 1/12 of the annual budget to spend in the month of July – there are significant expenses, such as school assessments and pensions, that are paid on a quarterly or semi-annual basis.”

The downside of such a budget, Ellis said, is that projects not funded the previous year or by special articles on the town meeting warrant, such as highway department equipment, cannot be funded.

In response to a question from Nelson, Ellis said the selectboard would need to approve the 1/12 budget as soon as possible in order to submit it to the state. He said town staff planned to have it ready for next Monday’s meeting, which will fall after the annual town meeting this Saturday, June 13.

Other Business

At the request of town planner Walter Ramsey, the board approved a joint application with the town of Orange for federal Community Development Block Grant Funds, increased during the current COVID emergency, to expand Meals on Wheels delivery for the elderly in the two towns. The program is administered by the agency LifePath.

The board approved an amendment to a state MassWorks grant extending the timeframe and scope of a project to reconstruct the Fifth Street pedestrian bridge. The grant will be extended to June 30, 2021, and the bridge will be moved to the southwest side of the state vehicular

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Sunday, June 21, 1 to 3 p.m.
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bridge next to it.

The amendment also allows for the extension of utilities across the bridge to the access road next to the former Southworth paper mill.

The board voted to execute a tax agreement with the Kearsarge Energy LLC, which is building a solar array on top of the old town burn dump on Sandy Lane. While the tax agreement produces limited revenue for the town, Kearsarge will be paying the cost of capping the burn dump as required by the state, which Ellis said could save Montague an estimated \$2.4 million.

At Ellis’s request, the board executed an agreement with the state for a \$20,000 Community Compact grant to review town financial policies, and a \$15,000 grant for technical assistance in producing a five-year financial forecast. The board then executed a \$35,000 agreement with the University of Massachusetts Collins Center to assist the town in this planning and related professional development.

Ellis gave the board an update

on the reconstruction of the General Pierce Bridge, currently open to only one lane of traffic, between Montague and Greenfield. Bids for the project will be opened on June 15. Ellis said the state had responded to “thoughtful and passionate” commentary on the bridge from local citizens at a public hearing last fall. A request to extend the scope of the project to include the upper portion of the bridge was not being considered, but improved lighting on the upper portion is a possibility.

Ellis reviewed outreach efforts to encourage a quorum at this Saturday’s town meeting. He said that two-thirds of the fewer than 20 town town meeting members who responded to a survey indicated that they will attend. The town will follow up with “targeted phone calls” to those that did not respond. The quorum required for the meeting to do business is just over 60 members.

The next scheduled board meeting will be held on Monday, June 15.



UNEQUAL from page A1

people, despite the demographics having virtually the same usage rate.

This year’s report includes a discussion of states that have legalized recreational marijuana, where the overall number of possession arrests tends to have decreased. Its findings reveal that, “disturbingly, too much has remained unchanged in the past decade despite several states having reformed marijuana policy.”

Massachusetts passed a ballot initiative to legalize marijuana and regulate its sales in November 2016. Marijuana has been legal in Massachusetts ever since, although the first retail cannabis stores didn’t open until November 2018.

The data that shows Franklin County’s high disparity was calculated using 2018 crime data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, and comparing it against the United States Census’ annual county population estimates and demographic breakdown.

That year in Franklin County, the researchers estimate, black residents were arrested for marijuana possession at a rate of 489.94 per 100,000 people, compared with a rate of 4.21 arrests per 100,000 white residents.

This 116-to-1 ratio was much higher than the 7-to-1 disparity the ACLU had calculated in the county for 2010, which earned Franklin County a second distinction in the report – the highest apparent *jump* in racial disparity over that time period.

This does not mean the county had a high arrest rate for marijuana possession. Pickens County, Georgia led the country for the overall rate of black residents arrested for possession: 31,243 per 100,000, or nearly one in three black residents of that county.

According to Census estimates for July 2018, Franklin County’s total population was 70,963, of whom 66,577 (or 93.8%) were white, and 1,143 (or 1.6%) were black. This data does not include individuals who were identified as two or more races.

Using these figures, the rates listed in the ACLU’s table would correlate with a total of 5.6 black residents, and 2.8 white residents, arrested for marijuana possession that year.

It is unclear whether this is accurate. A spokesperson from the Northwest District Attorney’s Office agreed to look into the issue, but was unable to provide local arrest data as of press time.

The Greenfield police department did share records upon request. In 2018, according to a report tabulating “arrests on view & based on incident /warrants by race, sex, and age,” a total of nine arrests involving marijuana were made in that city. The arrestees included seven white men, one white woman, and one black man.

“I can confirm from looking at the database that the one arrest/charge involving a black male was in April 2018 and the charge was possession with intent to distribute,” Greenfield police records clerk Gillian Halkett told the *Reporter*.

Massachusetts has the lowest marijuana possession arrest rate overall, according to the ACLU report, but nationally, marijuana possession arrests are still widespread; in 17 states, they even increased between 2010 and 2018. And the report shows clearly that racial disparities also persist, even in legalized and decriminalized states where marijuana possession arrests have decreased overall. “Much of this country has yet to start on the road toward equitable, smart, reparative marijuana policy,” the organization highlights.

Nevertheless, it is not entirely clear whether Franklin County’s ranking as the most unequal county in the country in the April report reflects ongoing disparity, or a statistical anomaly. The *Reporter* has reached out this week to the ACLU’s Western Massachusetts office to discuss the report further, and will follow up in a future edition.

Additional reporting was contributed by Mike Jackson.



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THREAT from page A1

comments he was making, and endangering himself and his family,” Erving police chief Christopher Blair told the *Reporter*. “I was disturbed by the comments, and disturbed by the video.”

Blair said Erving police had become aware of the video after Erving Industries, the man’s former employer, started receiving phone calls demanding he be fired. “I spoke with him on the phone, and he hadn’t worked at Erving Paper for a bunch of months,” Blair said. “I asked to remove Erving Paper Mill from his social media.”

After Buckland police chief James Hicks viewed the video last Wednesday, he took steps to suspend the man’s federal firearms license. When officers visited his house the next day to serve the suspension, he was not there.

“We suspended his FID card Thursday afternoon,” Hicks said. “Then we made an attempt to collect it on that day... but he wasn’t home. Then, the next thing I knew, the Hawley incident was going on.”

Hicks said state police had known about the threatening video on Wednesday. “I believe they were made aware of it the same time I was made aware,” he said. “A bunch of other departments had seen it.”

On Thursday, the man apparently called the state police barracks at Shelburne Falls. According to a press release from state police media director Dave Procopio, the barracks received a call at 4:39 p.m. from a

19-year-old man who was “suicidal, armed with multiple guns, and intoxicated,” who then hung up and did not respond to attempts to reach him.

After an hour searching the area with a state police helicopter, K9 units, and a Special Tactical Operations team, authorities found the man parked in a field near Labelle Road in Hawley. No Buckland police officers were present at the standoff that ensued Thursday evening, Hicks said.

“At one point Troopers observed the young man holding the rifle inside the truck,” the state police statement read. “State Police crisis negotiators also responded and were able to gather information about the young man and establish phone contact with him.”

Over six hours later, at 12:12 a.m. on Friday, state police reportedly persuaded the man to exit the vehicle. He was taken into custody with no injuries to himself or the responding officers, and transported to Berkshire Medical Center in Pittsfield for evaluation.

Tense Atmosphere

The incident took place just days before a scheduled protest for racial equality in Greenfield.

Dashaun Andino, a Greenfield resident and person of color, said he had reported the video to the Buckland police, saying it made him feel unsafe.

“The video made me feel uneasy. The man is clearly under the influence, claiming his ‘rights,’ waving a

gun to shoot and kill people of color,” Andino told the *Reporter*. “It’s a sick act that a man, or anyone [for that] matter, would do or think that.”

“I feel like there is a lot of racism harassment because of the area I live in,” Andino added.

“More and more people are coming out racist ever since the protests started happening, people I didn’t expect,” said Courtney Marie, a woman from Orange who shared the SnapChat video publicly on her Facebook page. “[P]eople like him are the reasons that African-Americans are so angry, and I don’t blame them whatsoever.”

The Buckland police department employs two full-time staff members and ten part-time officers. Hawley is overseen by Charlemont police and state authorities, as the town does not have its own police department.

The incident in Hawley was unrelated to a car chase Friday morning from Shelburne to Greenfield, which ended with a state trooper shooting the driver of the allegedly stolen vehicle. As word of that incident spread on social media Friday morning, some local residents mistakenly assumed the driver was the subject of the previous night’s helicopter search.

The Charlemont police department sought to address the confusion with a Facebook post on Friday, which has since been deleted. “It has been brought to our Department’s attention that there has been misinformation being spread about



a situation that was NOT in Charlemont, but took place in a neighboring town,” the post read. “[A]t no point was there an armed individual on the loose in our town. The Massachusetts State Police handled and completely contained the situation from start to finish.”

The *Greenfield Recorder* reported on Monday that the police chief of Charlemont and Hawley, Jared Bellows, was “unaware of any such threats prior to being contacted by the *Recorder*,” but later issued a correction saying Bellows had seen the video, and had misunderstood the reporter’s question.

“As a community member witnessing injustice I ask myself: what’s my role in holding my local officers and town officials accountable? What’s my motivation for staying silent, or speaking up?”

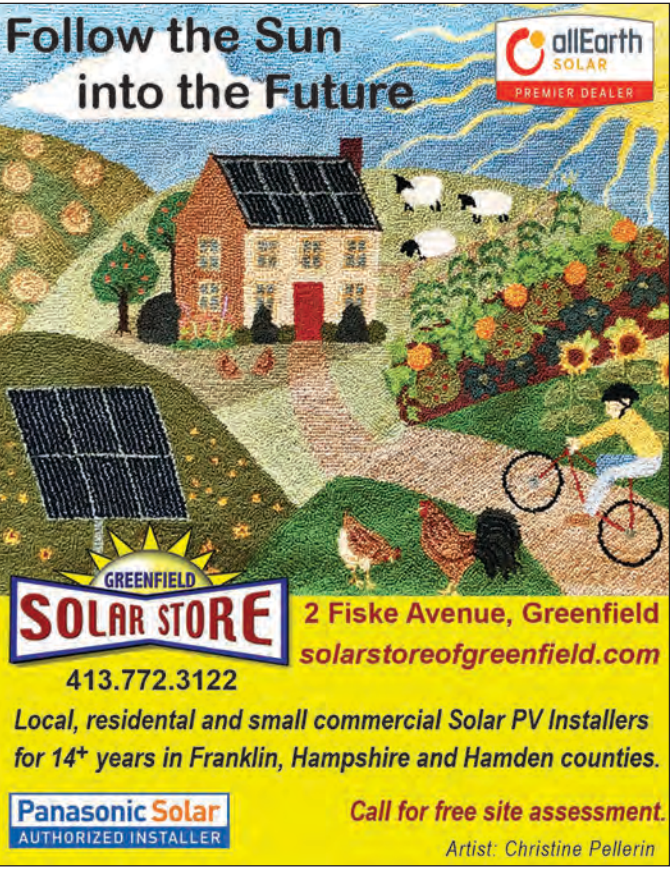
said Amanda Kingsley, a life coach based in Franklin County, who commented about the video in response to the Charlemont police statement. “How does my action or inaction contribute to community safety?”

Mary Carey, a spokesperson for the Northwestern District Attorney’s office, said her office could not comment on the ongoing investigation. No charges have yet been filed against the man, and the matter remains under investigation by multiple law enforcement agencies.

“I hope this man is at least charged with disorderly conduct, driving under the influence and charges about wielding a firearm while intoxicated,” Dashaun Andino told the *Reporter*. “I don’t feel incidents like this get the necessary responses, which is really discouraging.”

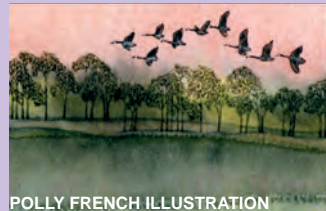


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NINA FOSSI PHOTO



POLLY FRENCH ILLUSTRATION

WEST ALONG THE RIVER

WALKING THROUGH THE VILLAGE AT SUMMER DUSK

By DAVID BRULE

MILLERS FALLS – We step out the front door at 8 p.m. I’m intending to avoid the bear by going out early, but the dog is actually hoping to see the bear, so he pushes me to get a move on. We oftentimes work at cross purposes, but Nick is always up for a walk, no matter what the reason I might have in mind.

We head out along purposefully up off The Flat. I’m trailing Nick, the plume of his snowdog tail held high, pointed ears alert, sometimes his nose to the ground, sometimes sniffing the air distant in a neighbor’s yard. We’re both keeping all our senses turned up and on high.

We go past the shuttered Tool Shop, where long ago on summer evenings like this the workmen would sit at the open factory windows trying to catch any random breeze off the river. Sometimes they would call out to my grandfather Abe and me as we followed his beagle, straining at the leash, drawing a reprimand from Grandfather. The guys in the windows would give Abe a good-natured hard time as workmen do, since he was one of the lucky ones, his work day done at 5, while they had the long hot night shift ahead of them.

Abe passed away almost 50 years now; the factory’s been boarded up for almost as long.

Now it’s just me and Nick walking past the brick walls, no more men at the windows. And I’m the same age as grandfather was when we walked his dog together. I’ve gone and done the same thing as he did. Didn’t work at the factory, though: I spent my time as a schoolteacher instead.

I retrace our steps, and before long, he shows up.

When you’re living in the same

place as the last four generations of family, it’s pretty hard to go very far alone, especially on an evening walk. Some of those old ones come along to walk with you for awhile. Just because they’d dead, it doesn’t mean they’re not there. I don’t mind the company. Keeps things interesting.

Seems like almost every time, somebody joins me as we cross the bridge that leads up the street to the village. Some of them, of course, go back to the days when the way up to town was over the covered bridge. Not me – that bridge was burned and torn down long before I appeared on the scene. It’s been replaced two or three times, two incarnations of which I can personally remember.

Just across into Millers Falls, at the foot of Bridge Street, Abe’s father comes down from upstreet, jaunty bowler hat tipped at a roguish angle. He’s high up there in the wagon seat, holding the reins of Old Dan, and looking straight out of that old photograph, pretty satisfied with himself. We exchange niceties, of course. Abe tips his cap to the man he calls the Old Gent, who gives the reins a shake, and the creaky wagon goes back across the bridge on the way home to our barn, which isn’t there any more.

Maybe it’s just my memory of a few old pictures stowed away in the cluttered north room of our house, but this evening I can see right back to the 1890s, when Judah sat for the Howes Brothers of Ashfield right here on muddy Bridge Street. Of course, Bridge Street is paved now, and the brook that used to run down the middle is channeled off underground to empty into the river. It only whispers its secret name once more before it plunges into the swift current of the Millers.

see **WEST ALONG** page B4



JJ AUDUBON ILLUSTRATION

American Swift, chaetura pelagica.

Melo Re

Above: Wild iris blossom on the small island at Barton Cove.

THE AUTHORS’ CORNER: NIC STONE

By IZZY VACHULA-CURTIS

TURNERS FALLS – Happy June! Last week, I read *Dear Martin* by Nic Stone. My mom taught this book to her English class for the past three years and recommended it to me.

At first, I was hesitant to read it, because I cry easily, and she said that it was really sad, but really important to read. So I read *Dear Martin* and absolutely loved it!

So today I’m going to be interviewing Nic Stone, and reviewing *Dear Martin*.

Dear Martin is about a Black eighteen-year-old boy named Justyce McAllister. Justyce is super smart, and he goes to an expensive boarding school with a bunch of other intelligent students and is planning on going to Yale next year.

Early in the story, Justyce is trying to help Melo, his drunk ex-girlfriend, and prevent her from driving. He ends up handcuffed and mistreated by a white male police officer, who assumes that Justyce is trying to assault or kidnap Melo instead of helping her. Justyce had handcuffs put around his wrists and waited for multiple hours while the police officers and his friend’s lawyer mom tried to sort out the situation.

Once Justyce is released, he starts writing letters to Dr. Martin Luther King, in need of guidance during this time. He hopes that his letters will help him figure out



PHOTO COURTESY IZZY V-C

Our correspondent interviewed the author of *Dear Martin*.

how to handle his anger at being accused of trying to hurt Melo, when really he was trying to help and she was the one doing something wrong.

Melo is biracial but appears white, and Justyce was

see **AUTHORS** page B4



By MISHEL IXCHEL

TURNERS FALLS – I don’t feel like I have much to contribute to the conversations that sorely need to be had at this point in time. I’m a light-skinned latina who has been spared most of the oppression and injustice that brown and black people face on the daily. I feel like the color of my skin immediately places me alongside white protestors, and

Mama, You Have Been Summoned

as such, asks that I stand quietly aside so that black leaders’ voices can be amplified.

And I have been.

I’ve shown up to three different protests in Western Mass over the last week. Every time I catch wind of one, I show up. Sign in hand. Ready to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with others in solidarity, and to listen.

What I see around me is humanity waking up. What I see is my fellow human beings standing up and saying ENOUGH. More potent still is seeing others around the world stand with us. Our desire to show

up and support our black brothers and sisters is far greater than any fear we may have about the virulent virus that surrounds us, or fear of the violent administration that we are up against.

Therefore, supporting the Black Lives Matter movement has gone hand-in-hand with searching within and attempting to understand my own privilege, if only to better understand my role in the vast systemic racist grid we are all part of.

I’ve spent some time deconstructing my own light-skinned

see **INDIE MAMA** page B2

cedar and rose: insights from naturopathic practice

Lyme Disease and COVID-19

By DR. NITYA EISENHEIM

WENDELL – These are some typical questions I get asked in my private practice.

Q. What do I do if I get a tick bite?
A. Here’s some tips from my tick bite protocol:

1. Remove the tick as soon as possible with tweezers or a tick spoon. Pull the tick slightly up, then pull gently and swiftly in a direction along the skin. Do not irritate the tick by applying Vaseline, lighting the tick on fire prior to removal, or

putting pressure on it. You may apply some antibacterial ointment or salve to the area after removal.

2. Send the tick in for testing through UMass at www.tickreport.com. The tick does not have to be alive. Testing a tick is far more accurate than testing human blood for Lyme disease and coinfections.

3. While waiting for the results, I often suggest my clients start on an herbal protocol. I typically suggest they take herbs for six months, as a preventative measure. While I can’t go into the details of the exact herbal protocols I would advise for you

in this type of a forum, I can tell you that Stephen Buhner’s basic Lyme herbal cocktail, with Andrographis, Cat’s claw, and Japanese knotweed, is a good place to start.

It is best to work with an herbalist or health care practitioner to get individualized guidance, instead of a one-size-fits-all approach. This is very important for safety, especially if you have a medical condition or are taking medications.

4. If you do start having symptoms, such as a fever, rash (does not have to be a bull’s eye to count), see **CEDAR & ROSE** page B8

Pet of the Week



“OREO”

Oreo is a friendly, energetic young lady! She has a lot of energy and love to give – when she drools, she’s happy. Oreo may do well with a mellow cat as long as she has a proper slow introduction. If she meets another cat too quickly she will hide and become fearful. Her favorite toy is a wand toy or a feather and she loves treats! If she sounds like a perfect fit for you

give Dakin a call!

In response to COVID-19, animals at Dakin are available for adoption by appointment only. Please call (413) 781-4000, or see www.dakin-humane.org, for more information.



Senior Center Activities JUNE 15 THROUGH 19

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 further notice:

“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 at (413) 423-3649 or paula-bettters@erv-ing-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		

INDIE MAMA from page B1 latina-ness. I feel twice uprooted from my heritage and culture: firstly, as Melissa Lozada-Olivira puts it so perfectly, because “colonialism made sure that I would never understand my history,” and second, because as a child, I left my country of origin and moved to the United States, which we all understood to be “the land of opportunity.”

To New York City, the capital of the world. And more specifically, to the Upper East Side of Manhattan, where it wouldn’t be long before I figured out that whiteness prevails above all else.

I lived there with my mother, in a tiny apartment between First Avenue and Avenue A, while she hustled with at least four different part-time jobs to pay the bills. While she hustled to work, I desperately hustled to fit in. I was tormented and bullied at that time for being the immigrant kid, the one who didn’t speak any English. I then figured that if I emulated the cool kids, the white kids, then my otherness would be forgotten and left alone.

And to some degree, it worked. I thought I had figured it out, but little did I realize that by disowning my Hispanic-ness, I was disowning a big part of my identity. I traded who I was so that I could experience the harvests of white privilege. I was able to discard my roots simply because of the lightness of my skin.

I succeeded in learning to blend into the background. And over the years, depending where I found myself geographically or socially, I learned how to be a chameleon of sorts. How to fit in different settings just enough to be ignored.

And when I say ignored, I mean not targeted. Not bullied, nor discriminated against.

My guilt of my light skin has led me to disassociate from it; instead I have leaned into my New York City roots as the reason for all the advantages I’ve been afforded. As if a place is the reason why so many doors opened for me.

I’m still struggling with what it means to be a light-skinned latina amidst this greater social movement. I crave to find my place in all of this. More specifically, I seek to know how to support this global uprising.

When George Floyd called for his mama, to me that single word summoned the Goddess herself. In the words of writer Mary Helen Kennerly: “He called Mama... White mamas, mamas with privilege, you have been summoned... It’s a cry that can’t go unanswered anymore.”

My heart feels like it’s been set ablaze. The rage and horror I felt when first hearing about families being separated at the border came flooding back. The infinite frustration and powerlessness I feel for the healing of Mother Earth pulsed through my veins.

For those of us who’ve been privileged enough to have a home to shelter in during the pandemic, with some kind of income to allow for rest or even boredom, it’s now up to us to show up and, in some way, shape or form, ask how we can be of service.

Ecuadorian-born and New York City bred, Mishel Ixchel is mama to a toddler, and currently resides in Turners Falls where she practices and teaches the art of sacred self-care. You can find her on Instagram @indiemamadiaries.



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PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Pre-Order at the Farmers Market!



TURNERS FALLS – The Great Falls Farmers Market is open for business! Thank you to our customers and vendors for a successful first week!

We are also excited to announce that for the first time ever, the Great Falls Farmers Market will be offering online pre-orders for curbside pick-up or delivery within the town of Montague. We understand that not everyone can or wants to shop in public right now, and we want to make sure that as many people have access to fresh and local food as possible.

Here’s how it works:

1. Download the order form, available as a Google Doc, on the market’s Facebook, Instagram, or on the “Farmers Market” page of the Riverculture website here (www.turnersfallsriverculture.org).
2. Fill out the order form, typing item amounts in the gray column.
3. Submit the form by Tuesday at 9 a.m. You can share it via Google Docs, or send it to us at gffmorders@gmail.com.
4. An invoice will be sent to you via Paypal on Tuesday evening. Pay by Wednesday at noon.

5. Delivery will take place around 3 p.m. on Wednesday. Curbside pick-up will be any time the market is open, from 2 to 6 p.m.

Please note that some supplies are limited, and we will try to fill your order as completely as possible.

We are not currently able to process SNAP remotely, but orders can still be placed and paid for using SNAP at pick-up.

Lastly, a reminder that while our market takes place in an open park, COVID-19 guidelines state that there must be one entrance, and one-way flow through the market. We ask customers to use the entrance by the corner of Seventh Street and Avenue A. Customers must wear masks – we have free masks to give away to those who need one – and respect social distancing. Customers are also not allowed to touch the produce or items for sale.

We appreciate everyone’s cooperation in adjusting to these new rules designed to help keep our fellow neighbors safe during a pandemic.

Got any questions? Leave a comment or email us at gffmorders@gmail.com. See you (or not!) Wednesday!

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PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Montague Absentee Ballots Available

MONTAGUE – Absentee ballots are now available for the June 22 annual town election. The deadline to apply for an absentee ballot is Thursday, June 18.

All absentee ballots must be returned to the Town Clerk’s office by the close of the polls on June 22. The polls will be open from noon to 7 p.m. during COVID 19.

An absentee ballot application can be obtained in four ways:

1. Download a form at www.montague-ma.gov inside the red alert box.
2. Visit the town hall front vestibule, where there are forms available to fill out, and then insert it into the drop slot located inside the vestibule.
3. Scan a signed absentee ballot application and email it to town-clerk@montague-ma.gov, and a ballot will be mailed to you.
4. Call the Clerk’s office at 863-3200, ext. 203 to request an application be sent to you.

For more information call 863-3200, ext. 203 or email townclerk@montague-ma.gov.



CHARACTER STUDY

Aquaman and Mera



By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – I first saw Jason Momoa’s Aquaman in *Justice League* (2017) in theaters. He was one of the members who formed the League in the movie. Mera, the Atlantean from the comics who is his wife, made a cameo appearance in the movie, played by Amber Heard. As in the comics, he’s part Atlantean, too, which is why he’s Aquaman. His character is named Arthur Curry. Atlanteans are part of this because they are guarding against Steppenwolf, the main bad guy of the movie, stealing a prized item of his. When Steppenwolf tries to grab it from them, we see Mera’s ability to manipulate water.

I saw the two again in the *Aquaman* (2018) movie in theaters. Jason Momoa starred in it, and Amber Heard was in it too. I loved this movie and saw it twice in theaters.

Let me give you a movie spoiler. Mera’s ability to manipulate water comes in handy, and Arthur kind of owes her one. Arthur, I believe like in the comics, can communicate with sea creatures in the movie. One particular scene showed that being very helpful, as Aquaman finds himself trying to get a prized item of his own. The scene where that happens is actually very cool, and leads to him making a helpful ally.

After that scene, we even see him in the Aquaman outfit, with a trident straight out of the comics. As in the comics, he’s ruler of the seven seas – or least, he becomes that during this movie.

The only other time I saw these two characters on the screen was in *Smallville*, a Superman prequel TV series that I watched quite a lot. First, I saw an episode called “Aqua.” There Aquaman is a muscular college student named A.C.,

studying marine biology and defending the seas from something happening in the episode. He does incredible feats in the water, like Aquaman is supposed to.

Obviously A.C. is supposed to be another version of the name “Arthur Curry.”

In *Smallville*’s last season, in an episode called “Patriot,” A.C. returns with a wife named Mera. They are both incredible in the water. Mera even has an ability to manipulate water, which comes in handy when A.C. is in a life-threatening spot.

In a Season 6 episode called “Justice,” A.C. becomes part of the show’s version of the Justice League, and continues to be a member during Season 10. In a Season 10 episode there is a scene where A.C. seems to be communicating with dolphins, so that particular aspect of this character seems to be still present in the package with this show’s Aquaman. In both episodes, A.C. wore regular clothes.

I would call both portrayals of the character good – they are both what you may call “badass” when portraying this character. This works very well when the audience sees this character in the movie and TV show. The same goes for both portrayal of his wife by Heard and by Elena Satine, who plays her on the TV show.

But I thought the movie was way better, and cooler in how they made those characters be on screen. In the movie, Mera had a cool outfit of her own, and the effects for the water manipulation she does were way better looking.

I understand this movie was probably supposed to be a big deal blockbuster, which I believe they accomplished very well, and A.C. was just on a popular, long-running TV series. But the film outdid itself, beyond my wildest dreams.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Mother Invades Private Space; Injured Bear Flees; Chickens Seem Cramped; Loud Noises Annoy

Monday, 6/1
9:59 a.m. Officer off for unwanted person at Ed’s Barber Shop. Male was having problems using his phone. Moved along; officer tried to assist party.
11:50 a.m. Two calls reporting low-hanging wire on Montague Street; motorcyclist reported the wire almost struck him in the head/neck when he rode through. TFFD advises communication wire, low enough to be a hazard; road will likely have to be closed until utility responds. Eversouce and Verizon en route. Wire remedied; road reopened.
3:33 p.m. Caller would like it on record that cars drive very fast on Federal Street, and it is becoming an ongoing issue. Officer advised.
4:03 p.m. Amherst PD advising that they currently have a rig in Montague Center headed to Baystate Franklin Medical Center and that a family member of the patient is tailgating the ambulance; requesting officer meet them to help deal with the family member. Referred to Greenfield PD.
4:31 p.m. Caller reporting two or three teenage boys on the roof of Hillcrest Elementary School; states this is an ongoing issue. Officer reports that parties have been moved along; they were sitting on the lower roof on the playground side off Griswold Street.
4:52 p.m. Officer conducting stop of a vehicle pulled over on a dangerous section of Unity Street. Operator stated he was all set and moved along. Officer ran plate; operator came back suspended. Officer pulled vehicle over in MPD parking lot. Officer later staging in area of Laurel Lane due to statements operator made about being scared for his life due to speaking with an officer. Operator given permission to leave vehicle in MPD lot while he is at work. Officer offered to bring party to work, but party declined, and stated he will walk. Criminal complaint for operating after suspension issued. At 5:45 p.m., the party returned to his vehicle and drove; video footage recorded by MPD cameras. Officer served second citation in hand.

Tuesday, 6/2
5:38 p.m. Caller states that there is a 2-by-4 with a license plate attached to it in the roadway on the General Pierce Bridge. Officer went to registered owner’s residence in Montague Center; owner following him to bridge to retrieve it.
5:54 p.m. Caller states that an elderly woman she helps out is being scammed

right now. Scammers sent a taxi to her home and took her to get several hundred dollars’ worth of gift cards. Officer spoke to involved female and advised her of options.
6:36 p.m. Caller states that her mother is following her around, invading her private space. Ongoing issue. Mediated for now.

Wednesday, 6/3
8:06 a.m. Caller reporting that two days ago her methadone was stolen while she was spending the night at her aunt’s residence in Turners Falls. Report taken.
9:14 a.m. Report of bear near residential backyards in South Prospect Street area. Unable to locate.
12:38 p.m. Third-party report that an elderly couple in a vehicle with New Hampshire plates were driving on the bike path when a bystander advised them that it was not a road. Operator backed up and hit another vehicle. Couple is now sitting at a nearby table but did not make an effort to locate the other owner. Caller advises minor damage to vehicle that was struck. All parties spoken with; verbal warning issued for failure to use care in backing. Report taken.
1:21 p.m. 911 misdial; motorist was driving and put her phone in the cup holder, and it dialed 911.
2:06 p.m. 911 caller from Vladish Avenue reporting loud explosion, possibly from direction of TFHS. Simultaneously, officer reported hearing what may have been a blown trans-former in the same general area. Circuit found blown at Turners Falls Road and Vladish Avenue; TFFD advising Emond Avenue is without power. Eversource advised; estimate tentative restoration within two hours.
7:28 p.m. Chief Williams advising that some people are using the closed-down skatepark. Parties moved along without incident.
8:15 p.m. Caller states that

she witnessed a male carrying a hammer go behind Montague Machine and try smashing out a window. Male was with a female. Parties moved along; no damage to building.
9:14 p.m. Reports of fireworks and other loud noises from Spring Street and Davis Street. Area checked; nothing found.

Thursday, 6/4
10:12 a.m. Caller from Chester Street believes that someone may have stolen a single piece of siding from the back of the house. Advised of options.
8:33 p.m. Report of black bear in yard on Hillside Road.

Friday, 6/5
6:02 a.m. Caller from Dry Hill Road states he had a bear in his backyard last night and it is still there. Caller states he looked at it with binoculars and it appears to have broken legs and a severely injured ear. Caller states there are some weird tracks in his yard and believes the bear might have been hit on Route 63, but it definitely looks to be severely injured. Contacted Environmental Police; they will track someone down. When officer arrived on scene, bear had started walking off into the woods with a broken back leg. EPO on scene; bear appears to be gone. Caller given direct number for EPO dispatch.
11:43 a.m. Caller states there is a green Honda Accord with no plates sitting in the Third Street parking lot; it has been there for several days. Vehicle towed.
5:55 p.m. Caller from Sherman Drive states that her neighbor has 25 chickens in an extremely small pen with little to no shade. Referred to animal control officer, who is off duty but requested that an officer go to the location to confirm the caller’s account. Officer reports that chickens are a little cramped; advised

owner that ACO may be stopping by at some point.
10:55 p.m. Multiple 911 callers reporting fully involved garage fire on O Street. TFFD and Shelburne Control advised.

Saturday, 6/6
5:06 a.m. Walk-in party states he hit a deer somewhere on I-91 North and his car is pretty smashed up. Officer advised party to contact state police to discuss accident report.
12:39 p.m. Report from Ripley Road of a resident who has put 2-by-4s across the road in an attempt to slow traffic. Caller advises she drove over the wood at a slow rate of speed, but the resident proceeded to yell and swear at her. Resident who put 2-by-4s across road called 911 admitting to same and reporting several cars speeding due to detour on North Leverett Road. Advised caller of hazard that was created; advised to remove wood if she can safely do so, to call MPD regarding speeding vehicles in the future, and not to put anything in the roadway for safety and liability reasons. Officer clear; situation mediated.
9:13 p.m. Shelburne Control advising that a house on Main Street has a large bonfire burning and that pallets and gasoline are being put on it. Officer reports that fire has died down and homeowners have already spoken with MCFD.
9:43 p.m. Complaint from Marshall Street that a house on High Street has music playing so loud that surrounding houses are shaking. Officer spoke with homeowners, who agreed to turn music down for the night.

Sunday, 6/7
7:30 p.m. Caller states that she just rescued a baby bunny from a cat and believes its back legs/hips are injured. Made contact with ACO, who will pick the rabbit up in the morning. Caller advised.

Montague Community Television News

We’ll Edit Your Videos!

By MICHAEL SMITH

Along with most businesses, MCTV encourages people to stay at home and limit visits to the station. Keep an eye on our Facebook page for updated station hours.

One way to connect with your community from the confines of your quarantine is to make videos! It’s easy to film a tutorial, a public service announcement, a story or a hike by using your phone, computer or one of MCTV’s cameras that are sanitized and available for pickup. Any editing

can be done by MCTV staff editors, or you can try it at home!

Residents of Montague can find MCTV on Channel 17, and the MCTV Vimeo page is available online. Email hannahbrookman@gmail.com for editing assistance or filmmaking questions.

Something going on you think others would like to see? If you get in touch, we can show you how easy it is to use a camera and capture the moment.

Contact us at (413) 863-9200 or infomontaguetv@gmail.com between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. We’d love to work with you!

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WEST ALONG from page B1

We head down Newton Street to check out the new riverfront path. We pass by the portrait of Abe’s brother, my Uncle Doug Smith, pictured in Fenway Park that one hot day in July 1912. He got his one shot at fame and immortality then, more than 100 years ago. The Red Sox found out about his mixed-race background, his dark-skinned aunt and cousins, and that put an end to his big league chances.

His mural under the railroad bridge is already peeling, fading like the fleeting chance he once had at getting out of this one-horse mill town.

I’ve taken to walking up the long slow hill beyond the new river path, and up to the top of the village. It brings me to the railroad tracks that come from Lake Pleasant way and lead off to the trestle across the river. There’s always something timeless and lonesome about railroad tracks. A lot of your senses are alerted to the simple sight of the lines that lead your eyes off into infinity’s vanishing point, or maybe just along the plain old track to Boston or Montréal. The smell of the creosote ties, sparse weeds sticking up anywhere they can get a foothold, sidetracked rails that come to an abrupt stop in the woods: when did they last hold a boxcar?

We’re right here at a junction east-west, north-south where diesels still haul freight off into the night. I can still remember the one look I had at a steam locomotive that came right here over the tracks, when a gang of us kids were playing in the empty lot behind the Vet’s Block. Puffing white clouds, chugging and tooting along these very tracks.

This summer, Obear’s crews are renovating that derelict block. It’s starting to look pretty good again.

One memorable day more than a hundred years ago, this very spot

was a brief whistle-stop for Teddy Roosevelt in 1902 during his campaign in the upcoming 1904 elections. Roosevelt had just become president the year before, when McKinley was assassinated in 1901. Uncle Doug Smith himself, among most of the villagers living here at the time, turned out to hear Roosevelt speak from the back platform of his campaign car. Then he was gone, as quickly as he had come, on his way to get elected in 1904.

None of that scene lingers here, of course, just those scraggly weeds, the old tracks, a few photographs of the hundreds of people, and the fragrance of faint cigar smoke in my mind.

I like to stand at this crossing at dusk and watch the chimney swifts streak over the village, screaming and chattering in their precised joy of flight. Watch just a minute or two and you’ll see them dropping down into the chimneys profiled up against the western sky. It’s good to know they’ve managed to maintain their wild coursing over the village in the dusk ever since the first chimney went up here in the early 1800s. I may be the only one in town who lifts up eyes to see them in their flight these days. Always reminds me of Early, Lost America.

Nick tugs on the leash, the tether that keeps us together, him on the ground, me flying with the swifts. He wants to keep moving, he has some favorite spots back down on Bridge Street that need checking for messages. He has to leave his own.

I have yet to see a living person on the streets. The Whistle Stop Café is still closed up tight, just like Equi’s, now known as the Millers Pub. Coffee drinkers, beer drinkers are left to shift for themselves, no choice but to partake somewhere else, kitchen table, back porch or back yard. The Element’s pub is dark. You can always get some

of their brews to go, but the room where the lads and I always played our music on Friday nights is dark.

With the time-traveling mind I have, I can still hear a fiddle tune on the evening air.

Back down the street to The Flat again. Some of my invisible friends cross the bridge with me as always, but they fade away like wisps of smoke by the time I get back near the old factory. Dog and erstwhile boy head down the street to our secluded haven at the edge of the woods.

We’re almost home, just one door away, when a big black shape suddenly lunges out of Bob Miner’s front yard. He moves across the street right in front of us, faster than I thought possible. We can hear those big heavy leathery paws slapping the pavement as Brother Bear barrels away under the street light into the shadows in the Stafford’s yard. He’s got the dark woods on his mind for sure, but I do see him turn a bit to look at us.

Bears don’t like dogs, and they’re cautious of humans. Luckily this one hasn’t gotten over his distrust of either humans or canines. Nick wants to go see a little bit closer, but I’m pulling in the opposite direction, heading for the front door. I win the tug of war. Dog and human inside, bear shrugs and lumbers off into the woods, headed for the river.

The early-walk-in-the-dusk strategy almost worked. Only thing was, the bear had his own schedule, and showed up just the same. Nick is disappointed he couldn’t get closer, but I’m glad the bear skedaddled. Better for him to not get too familiar with us, even though we may somehow be ancient kindred spirits.

Visit riverstoriesdavidbrule.com for regular journal entries.



President Theodore Roosevelt at Millers Falls, 1902.
Photo courtesy Montague Historical Society.

LOOKING BACK:
10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here’s the way it was June 10, 2010: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Turners Heads to Western Mass Finals

Turners Falls (18-4) heads to the Western Mass Division III softball finals at UMass this Saturday following a rain-soaked 5-3 victory over the Granby Rams (16-6) at Elms College in Chicopee on Wednesday.

“We played very well defensively,” said Coach Gary Mullins.

“We got a couple of key pick-off plays. Kelsey Waldron made some nice plays at second. But offensively, we could stand to improve.”

Turners pitcher Emily Mailloux helped her team with six strikeouts, gave up only one walk, and allowed six hits.

Montague Votes Down G-M Budget Request

In an even tempered, five and a half hour town meeting on Saturday, June 5, Montague’s elected precinct representatives wrestled with the competing needs of the town and school district budgets in a year marked by decreased state aid and the threat of further cutbacks to come.

Montague was asked to contribute \$7,616,878 for its FY’11 assessment for the Gill Montague Regional School District (GMRSD).

Although Gill-Montague superintendent Carl Ladd made a strong plea for town meeting to approve the district’s level funded, \$16,408,162 FY’11 operating budget, saying the GMRSD had already cut \$817,491 and 18 staff positions to come in with level funding, town meeting ultimately turned the budget down on a majority voice vote.

Finance committee member Mike Naughton pointed out that funding the town’s share of the

budget would require spending about \$400,000 more than would be available from taxation.

“Starting with the amount of money the town has available to fund various departments, \$7,230,327 is the amount of money we believe we as a town can afford,” Naughton said.

The finance committee’s recommended \$7,230,327 assessment figure was then approved, 47 to 28.

The Gill-Montague regional school committee will wait until after Gill holds annual town meeting on June 21 to take another look at their proposed operating budget for the district schools.

Tall Grass at Cemetery Leads to Complaints

“We tried to make a buck stretch this year,” Gill cemetery commissioner Ann Marie Klein told the selectboard on Monday, in response to accusations the grass at the Gill Center cemetery had grown too long in the days leading up to Memorial Day. “We apologize.”

North Cross Road resident Dorothy Day and four other local citizens came before the selectboard on Monday afternoon to complain about the state of upkeep at the cemetery next to the Slate Library, across from the town common.

One lady said she had found the grass “up to her knees,” on Thursday, May 27, and Day compared the state of affairs after William Cardaropoli mowed the cemetery later that evening, but left the raking for later, to “a hayfield.”

Commission chair Connie Stevens said the commission had instructed Cardaropoli to space the mowing to once every three weeks this year, rather than every two weeks, in order to conserve finances. “Who knew the grass would grow eighteen inches in that time? It’s been raining a lot,” Stevens admitted. “We’re going back to every two weeks.”



AUTHORS from page B1

accused of trying to assault her. This is a stereotype, and the assumption made by the police officer was that Justyce, a Black man, was the one doing something illegal.

I don’t want to give too much away, but reading *Dear Martin* was so inspiring and important. One of the main themes in this story is about stereotyping and making assumptions.

This book is so incredibly important to read, especially with the recent murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery. Reading *Dear Martin* has inspired me to speak up to people I know who are saying privileged or racist things.

Reading this book also made me cry a lot. Part of the reason this book is so sad is because something awful happens to one of the characters, but the reason it made me feel extra sad is because the book was so realistic, and it broke my heart that things like this actually happen.

Dear Martin is a quick book to read during the quarantine, and it is so impactful and illuminating. I usually recommend the books I review to specific readers, but I think everyone could benefit from reading this book, because of how eye-opening it is. And I think it’s especially important to read this book during these times, where racism is still a big issue.

Along with my review, I’m going to be interviewing Nic Stone, who is the author of *Dear Martin*!

Izzy V-C: What was your inspiration to write this book? What made you want to write it?

Nic Stone: I have two sons, and after the tragic shooting deaths of a number of black teenagers (like Jordan Davis and Michael Brown) between 2012 and 2014, I knew I wanted to write a book exploring the life of a young man trying to figure out why he’s sometimes treated with contempt. It was a change to explore some of the topics that were bothering me: namely racism, systemic inequity, and police misconduct.

IVC: Were any of the characters in the story based on real people?

NS: Manny’s character is loosely based on a guy I went to high school with who was the only black person in his neighborhood, and Doc is loosely based on my favorite teacher in high school, but everyone else is a combination of traits from people I know and things I made up for the sake of the story.

IVC: Why do you think it’s important for people to read *Dear Martin*?

NS: I just want people to SEE other people. Recognize that each person we come across is more than we can understand from a glance. *Dear Martin* is a chance to slip into the shoes of a boy like the ones many in society deem threatening before even speaking to them. I just want us all to see each

other as fully human.

IVC: Dear Martin is kind of a hard book to read, because of how realistic it is, and how much it connects to the real world. Were there any parts of this book that were especially hard to write?

NS: Hardest scene was the funeral. To this day, I can’t even read it.

IVC: Have you heard from any readers that have read this book, and now have different opinions or views on racism?

NS: I have! Many! And it’s always very refreshing. People of all backgrounds are able to connect with Justyce and grow to like him, and that means the world to me.

IVC: Do you have any plans on making *Dear Martin* into a movie? And if so, what would be your dream cast?


NS: Oh how I wish I had the power and money to make my books into films and TV shows at will! Would love to see it happen. Casting, though? I’ll enjoy the surprise if it does!

Thank you so, so much to Nic Stone for answering my questions, and for being so kind and sweet! Also, thank you to her publisher for helping me set up this interview.

I hope everyone is staying safe if you are protesting, and practicing social distancing.



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FACES & PLACES



MIKE JACKSON PHOTOS



Above and at right: Protesters at the Greenfield police station last Saturday.

Bottom right: Ashirah Devi-Dalomba and Manou Africa attended Monday's rally in Montague Center. "It's time for this to change," Africa said. "We are tired. When we drive, we are thinking what can happen to us. It's good now, our allies are helping to fight this fight with us. It's not just the police — it's higher than that. We have to know who we elect as a mayor, as a board of selectmen: anybody we put there, we have to know what is inside of them."

"I'm proud of my generation for stepping up," said Devi-Dalomba, his daughter. "I never thought I'd see anything like this, this young. But it makes me have hope, and I hope that it doesn't just happen for a couple weeks — that people come out and protest, hold their signs, and then it stops." Devi-Dalomba said she thought the police should be defunded, or trained differently. "I was reading a bunch of articles and it said something about how police have hundreds of hours of training, and only a very small percentage of that is focused on how to deal with people. And then hair salons, people who do hair and makeup, do thousands of hours. So that doesn't make any sense to me!"

Bottom left: Another scene at the Greenfield police department on Saturday.

Left: "I thought about 'defund the police,' but I felt 'defund' looked too close to 'defend,' so I sucked it up and went with 'abolish,' Matt Lord said of the plywood sign he held at the Montague Center rally on Monday.



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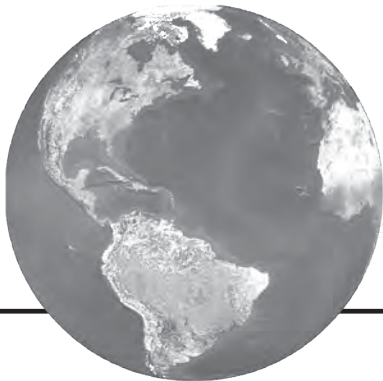
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Aquí se habla español

Esta es la página mensual 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.



Voces Inmigrantes: Una celebración (digital) de las artes en los tiempos del COVID-19

Por VICTORIA MAÍLLO DE AGUILERA

TURNERS FALLS – El domingo 31 de mayo se celebró por quinto año consecutivo el festival organizado por *Center for New Americans*, en esta ocasión a través de Zoom para respetar la distancia social. El reto era complicado debido a las circunstancias, pero fue ampliamente superado. La organización corrió a cargo del Shea Theater con Emma Ayres al frente. Los diferentes artistas habían grabado previamente sus presentaciones, excepto la gran final protagonizada por Marilyn Sylla que nos hizo bailar a través de nuestras pantallas.

Los artistas que pudimos ver fueron muy variados tanto en artes escénicas como en países de origen. La presentadora virtual, como en las anteriores ocasiones, ya casi una profesional, Biani Salas, presentó el espectáculo desde su computadora. La primera fue **Delmiz Funes** de Honduras que recitó el poema “Himno a la madre” de Augusto Coello. Es un poema dedicado a las madres que Delmiz leyó en español y con confianza frente a la cámara. Una de las estrofas decía así:

En el nombre de madre se encierra la más alta expresión del amor porque no puede haber en la tierra una imagen más clara de una madre.

Le siguió **Washington Costa** de Brasil que cantó en inglés “Skyline Pigeon” de Elton John. Washington lo hizo desde su habitación, con un cuadro de árboles como fondo y con muy buena entonación y pronunciación en inglés.

El grupo formado por **Agape Haguna, Rosette Atosha, y Josaphat Asante**, originarios de la República Democrática del Congo, bailaron en primer lugar una rumba y luego una danza original de su lugar de origen llamada *mbutalikasu*. Ella llevaba una falda de colores que movía al compás de la música mientras interactuaba con su pequeño.

A continuación, apareció en nuestras pantallas **Almarys Benítez** de Puerto Rico que recitó el poema “*I Am Poem*” escrito por ella misma y que decía así:

*Soy amable y decente
Me pregunto si voy a ser millonaria
Escucho los ángeles
Veo un jinete
Quiero un auto nuevo
Soy amable y decente
Finjo ser una cantante
Siento que puedo volar
Toco el cielo
Me preocupo por el tema de las drogas
Lloro por mis hijos
Soy amable y decente
Entiendo que la gente está loca
Digo que voy a ser millonaria
Sueño con comprar una casa grande
Trato de ser la mejor madre
Espero que mis hijos sean buenas personas
Cuando sean adultos
Soy amable y decente*

El grupo siguiente fue un viejo conocido de este espectáculo, el **Grupo Folclórico Tradicionales**, compuesto por Blanca Osorio Castillo, Giselle González Vendrell, Martha Toro, Marta Guevara y Alicia López. Su actuación estaba grabada en el escenario de un teatro y llevaban sus habituales trajes regionales con faldas en color rojo, azul y blanco y flores en el pelo. Interpretaron una cumbia que es el baile tradicional de Colombia. Su coreografía lleva muchas horas de ensayo detrás, una gran energía y mucho ritmo. En conclusión, casi profesionales.

La transmisión contó también con un anuncio invitando a colaborar con el censo en que actores en diferentes lenguas invitan a realizarlo con el lema: “Yo cuento.”

Rose Coquillon de Haití fue la siguiente, pero no apareció sola. Su actuación grabada en Zoom contaba con numerosos amigos desde sus propios hogares. Interpretó una canción haitiana llamada “Gueris ton peuple,” que en español significa “Cura a tu pueblo,” compuesta por Maggie Blanchard. Impresionante escuchar las diferentes voces unidas por la tecnología. La canción pide a Dios la reconstrucción del país y el cambio de la vida sus gentes.

Carlos López de El Salvador cantó un himno religioso titulado “Jesús es mi pastor” desde el jardín de su casa. El joven mexicano **Justo Cortés** frente a una mesa con libros leyó el poema “Los amorosos” de Jaime Sabines en español. Justo recitó el poema con una perfecta dicción. Una de las estrofas del poema decía así:

*Los amorosos callan.
El amor es el silencio más fino,
El más tembloroso, el más insoportable.
Los amorosos buscan,
Los amorosos son los que abandonan,
Son los que cambian, los que olvidan
Su corazón les dice que nunca han de encontrar,
No encuentran, buscan.*

A continuación, vino la actuación de otro grupo que repetía, **Las Guadalupeñas**, formado por Evan, Citali, Melissa, María, y Gabriela. Habían grabado su actuación en exteriores y el viento movía sus faldas de los colores de la bandera de México: verde, rojo, y blanco. Bailaron una típica canción mexicana llamada “Morenita.”

Audi González de Guatemala cantó “Un día a la vez.” Después la clase de nivel intermedio alto de Amherst leyó una versión adaptada del poema “Things We Carry on the Sea” escrito por Wang Ping. Con una bandera estadounidense detrás, los diferentes miembros de la clase: **Agape, Javier, Steven, Ernest, Kwot, Moses, April, Fatemeh, Segunda, y Sofía**. Recitaron cada uno un verso diferente en una interpretación sincera y coordinada.

Cerrando el espectáculo, **Marilyn Sylla** con su marido tocando los tambores y su hijo bailaron y nos hicieron bailar a todos, esta vez no virtualmente, sino que podíamos ver a todos los asistentes siguiendo el ritmo con las manos y la cabeza. Una vez más, Center for New Americans: ¡reto conseguido!

Si quieren recibir información o efectuar una donación, pueden visitar la página web: www.cnam.org.



Las Guadalupeñas. Captura de ordenador.

Tablón de anuncios

• **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 17 de junio 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.



• **Great Falls Farmers Market** ha vuelto a Peskeomskut Park como el año pasado cada miércoles de 2 a 6 de la tarde. Allí podrán encontrar vegetales, plantas, sirope de

arce. Se puede pagar con SNAP, P-EBT, tarjeta y efectivo.

A partir de esta semana se puede pre-ordenar online y recoger los productos en el parque o se los pueden llevar a casa. Si quieren saber más acerca de este nuevo servicio y sobre los productos disponibles, consulten la página de Facebook: www.facebook.com/GreatFallsFarmersMarket/

OPINIÓN

¡Las vidas negras importan!

Por VICTORIA MAÍLLO DE AGUILERA

TURNERS FALLS – El 25 de mayo, en Minneapolis y a plena luz del día, un policía blanco asesinó por asfixia a un hombre afroamericano de 46 años que estaba esposado. Este hombre se llamaba George Floyd y el sargento de policía Chauvin apretó durante casi nueve minutos su rodilla contra el cuello de Floyd que gritaba que no podía respirar. Las cámaras existentes en la calle recogieron la escena y negaron la primera versión ofrecida por los policías.

Este ha sido uno de los últimos incidentes racistas en el país y ha provocado que la población irrumpiera en las calles de diferentes ciudades y pueblos de Estados Unidos y algunas partes de Europa gritando: *¡Las vidas negras importan!*

El asesinato de Floyd ha sacado a la luz el debate sobre la violencia policial y el racismo en los Estados Unidos. Han pasado más de 150 años desde la abolición de la esclavitud en este país, aunque la brecha racial sigue abierta, 50 años desde el final de la segregación y después de haber tenido un presidente afroamericano la situación no está mejor que nunca ni mucho menos.

Los blancos y los afroamericanos no ganan lo mismo, no disponen de las mismas herramientas para conseguir una vivienda, un trabajo o el acceso a la educación. Esto es un hecho probado. Además de todo esto, un hombre o mujer afroamericana tiene una posibilidad mayor de ser disparado por un policía que decida usar su arma sin esperar explicaciones. Si no son disparados, y llegan al sistema judicial tienen también más participaciones para acabar condenados que un hombre o una mujer blanca. Según las estadísticas un hombre negro tiene 10 más probabilidades de ser parado por la policía que una mujer negra y 20 veces más que un hombre de raza blanca.

saben que no pueden enfadarse como haría cualquier otra persona en alguna situación de estrés ya que se ganarían rápidamente el estereotipo de agresivas. Estas mismas amigas sufren cada noche hasta que sus hijos adolescentes llegan a casa, aunque vivan en el *pacífico* oeste de Massachusetts.

Las protestas se extendieron también por Europa donde ha habido marchas en París, Londres, Bruselas, Berlín, Varsovia e incluso en mi pequeña ciudad, Salamanca, en el que el lema de la manifestación fue: “En una sociedad racista, no basta con no ser racista, hay que ser antirracista”.

Las manifestaciones a favor de “*Las vidas negras importan*” han recibido también la contraposición de ataques de una extrema derecha en Europa que cada vez se esconde menos y que llena las calles haciendo uso de las banderas de su país, como si fueran de exclusiva propiedad de ellos. El caldo de cultivo del resurgir de la extrema derecha en los países de Europa es la ignorancia, la pobreza, y el desempleo a los que se ha añadido la crisis económica añadido por el COVID-19.

En Estados Unidos, unido a todo lo anterior se encuentra un racismo estructural que forma parte intrínseca del sistema. Y la violencia se agita desde arriba dictando el mantra que te incita a comprarte un arma para defenderte de tu vecino, del que no es como tú.


Y la debida reacción del comandante en jefe, si lo fuera, debería ser que esta es una pelea de todos, que todos deberíamos combatir esta situación. Los blancos debemos de ser conscientes de nuestro privilegio, no importa la clase social de la que vengamos, educarnos para luchar contra el racismo y pelear en el nivel que podamos: leyendo, donando, marchando, escuchando y mirando. Y por supuesto, gritando: *¡Las vidas negras importan!*

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"THIS IS A GREAT DAY FOR GEORGE FLOYD"

OVER THE HILL

Carolyn Clark

I can't believe the size of the crowds at the protests, Harry.

The murder on camera of one more black man was the final straw.


It's spreading. There are protests in lots of other countries, too, Harry.

Our World, Thelma, is struggling through the Dark Night of the Soul.

THREE DEGREES OF WARMING

BY JANICE ROWAN

LOWEST IN METHANE



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Suzette

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CEDAR & ROSE from page B1

confusion, or brain fog, then go to your primary care doctor or urgent care for a Doxycycline prescription. The International Lyme and Associated Diseases Society suggests six weeks of antibiotics.

5. If you are taking antibiotics, they will be most effective and tolerated by you if you completely avoid sugar and all sweeteners, eat a minimal amount of whole grains and dairy, and consume large amounts of cooked and fermented vegetables. Take a probiotic – at least 50 billion with 14 strains – twice a day two to three hours away from when you take the antibiotic; this will prevent any bacterial or fungal overgrowth and unpleasant symptoms such as gas, bloating, diarrhea, or constipation.

6. It is recommended to get tested with a Western blot test four to six weeks after a tick bite. If you have been on antibiotics previously the test could be falsely negative, meaning that you could still very well have Lyme disease even if the test says that you do not.

Q. Can having post-Lyme syndrome or chronic Lyme disease make me more susceptible to getting COVID-19?

A. It depends, and it's not clear yet.

Because Lyme disease is an infectious disease that can attack any system of the body, it really depends on where the illness has weakened the tissues the most. One thing that I've seen in my practice is that anyone who has been on long-term antibiotics with current digestive symptoms, or anyone who has chronic digestive disorders, is more susceptible to the virus. We know that the virus attaches to the receptors in the small intestine, in addition to the lungs, and can cause unpleasant digestive symptoms, such as diarrhea.

Of course, if someone has Lyme disease and is not getting proper treatment, this weakens the immune system, and makes one more vulner-

able to catching viruses in general.

Q. How can I tell if I have COVID-19 or acute Lyme?

A. There are some similarities between acute Lyme and COVID-19 symptoms, such as flu-like symptoms: fever, chills, fatigue, muscle aches. COVID-19 almost always will have respiratory symptoms such as cough, shortness of breath and/or sore throat.

Unique to COVID-19 is the loss of taste and smell, which doesn't typically occur with Lyme. Diarrhea also doesn't typically occur with acute Lyme disease – it can be a side effect of treatment – but does occur with COVID.

Symptoms unique to Lyme are joint and neck pain, and particular rashes, such as a bull's eye rash or a red patch that expands; sometimes there are multiple patches or bull's eye rashes. Recall, though, that only about 30% of people will get a rash.

There are five types of rashes associated with COVID. One is red, itchy, and painful on the toes, also known as "COVID toes." Another is a blister-y rash, mostly on the abdomen and back. A third rash is a hive-like rash that is associated with more severe cases. A fourth type consists of small reddish bumps on a flat, reddish patch of skin and is associated with more severe cases.

The last is a type of necrosis, characterized by purplish skin with a lace-like pattern. This is mostly seen in older patients with more severe symptoms.

Dr. Nitya Jessica Eisenheim, ND is a Naturopathic doctor and herbalist, specializing in Lyme Disease, chronic digestive concerns, and autoimmune disease. She lives in Wendell, practices in Greenfield and virtually, and is founder of cedarroseheals.com.

You can email her at cedarroseheals@gmail.com about your experiences with Lyme disease, or if you have other questions you would like to see answered in this column.

Distribution Update:

Next week, June 18, after four digital-only issues and eight issues which the *Montague Reporter* has mailed to most subscribers, we will return to regular home delivery!

If there is a relapse in coronavirus transmission in Massachusetts, we may revert to mailing again.

If you've been enjoying our free digital versions and would like to become a digital subscriber, contact us at info@montaguereporter.org.

Please also bear in mind that after June 25, we will be publishing biweekly, as we always have in July and August. Thanks to all our readers for your support and patience!

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