

The Montague Reporter

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also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

JULY 23, 2020

Working Around the Virus: Summer Business Roundup



Businesses are opening and closing downtown as the pandemic drags on.

By KAREN GUILLETTE

TURNERS FALLS – The arrival of COVID-19 in early March brought about many changes in the Turners Falls business landscape. Not surprisingly, many businesses have been challenged by the new realities of the pandemic and the ways in which state-mandated protocols have impacted operations. While there have been some painful closings and losses of several popular enterprises, the downtown also has seen new business emerge in the midst of these unusual social and economic times. As we enter Phase Three of the state’s plan for reopening the economy, here are some updates.

It seems Turners may soon be a go-to destination for those interested in purchasing affordable vintage fabric and clothing. In addition to the reopening of the popular Salvation Army store and Survival Center thrift shop, there are several other new and soon-to-be-available sources here in town for recycled clothing and slightly

or never-used vintage textiles.

The **Buckingham Rabbits** vintage clothing business had a grand opening at 42A Canal Road only a year ago. An exciting move to 102 Avenue A took place this past February, but it was followed shortly by COVID-19 and a mandatory closure of the enterprise in March. To add to the challenges of running a business, including finding childcare and following virus prevention protocols, the store experienced some major flooding during the closure. According to shop owner Alex McGuigan, most things on the sales floor escaped unscathed, but some of their most personal and treasured items in the basement were destroyed.

Although it is not certain when the store will reopen, in the meantime there will be outdoor sales, as well as virtual sales on Instagram. Check online at www.buckingham-rabbits.com.

With vintage store **Two Birds** leaving its nest at 106 Avenue A, a new business is about to open in see **BUSINESS** page A6

Evictions Delayed Until October As Crisis Looms

By ISABEL KOYAMA

FRANKLIN COUNTY – With federal assistance and protections provided under the CARES Act scheduled to expire at the end of next month, extended from an original end date of July 24, experts in economics and housing are warning of a national surge in eviction filings. Massachusetts’ 120-day moratorium on “non-essential” evictions and foreclosures was also due to end on August 18, allowing evictions to proceed after that date. However, news from the state house Tuesday announced a 60-day extension to the ban, until midnight on October 17. “The extension I am declaring

today will provide residents of the Commonwealth with continued housing security as businesses cautiously re-open, more people return to work, and we collectively move toward a ‘new normal,’” governor Charlie Baker announced this week. Baker also pledged to “work closely with colleagues in the judicial branch to ensure that when eviction proceedings resume there are programs in place to help tenants pay their rent and avoid eviction.”

Out of the Frying Pan

Emily Benfer, chair of the American Bar Association’s Task Force Committee on Eviction, told CNBC

see **EVICTIONS** page A7

New Owner Takes Reins At Montague Village Store



Kathy Lynch has been running the store since the retirement of her father Dennis.

By LEE WICKS

MONTAGUE CENTER – The grocery business isn’t easy. Long hours, small profit margins, and the need to please a fickle public would turn many away, but not Kathleen Lynch, who lives in Montague Center with her husband, Dean Garvin, and their three daughters. She became the official new owner of the Montague Village Store on June 1, taking over from her father Dennis Lynch, who has retired.

The store is now open from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays, and from noon to 7 p.m. Sundays.

Undaunted by a pandemic that is threatening countless businesses, Lynch sees an opportunity. “A community store that is responsive to people’s preferences,” she said, “can

help those who don’t have transportation, or those who would rather not go into a big store at this time.”

Masked, and requiring anyone who enters the store to wear one as well, Lynch has taken additional steps to keep her customers safe. There is hand sanitizer near the door, and she cleans and wipes surfaces frequently.

“We moved just about every piece of inventory around to create a more spacious and open space,” Lynch says. “It’s definitely easier to social distance – and find products.”

Lynch is sensitive to individual needs, saying, “There may be legitimate reasons to not wear [a mask], so we will accommodate anyone who doesn’t have one by serving them on the porch, but they may not enter the store without one.”

see **STORE** page A7

“Turners Falls” Weighed

By MIKE JACKSON

At its July 13 meeting, the Montague selectboard responded to rival online petitions requesting that the town change the name of Turners Falls to Great Falls, and that it not.

“This is not a very typical situation,” town administrator Steve Ellis warned the board. Ellis had asked the town’s attorneys to do some initial research on the issue, and it is not entirely clear what legal standing the village name has in the first place.

see **NAME** page A9

G-M SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Board Discusses Reopening, and Inequity Among G-M Schools

By MIKE JACKSON

The Gill-Montague school committee met last week with new superintendent Brian Beck and other district staff to discuss the schools’ plan for the fall.

“Until people declare that this virus is gone, there’s always going to be an update,” Beck said. Massachusetts is limiting gatherings to 25 in a room, or 8 in a 1,000-square-foot space. The state commissioner of education has hinted a school year of less than 180 days may be possible.

The district’s “pandemic response advisory committee” is reviewing draft plans from other communities. Students will be asked to bring masks, but the schools will have “tons of masks on hand,” Beck said, and are studying ventilation and windows. The district has distributed Chromebooks to all students to enable remote learning, and can install hotspots for families without internet.

“What prerogatives will teachers have?” Montague member Michael Langknecht asked. “We’re hearing about sports reopening, and people are given the option of opting out without being penalized. There’s been little if any talk about how that’s going to shake out with teachers.”

The committee considered going back to meeting in person.

“If we open the schools, or any aspect of the school in the public form, I think it’s required of us to then follow suit,” said Gill member see **GMRSD** page A4

Erving Holds A Successful Town Meeting Despite Ants

By KATIE NOLAN

On Saturday, July 11, approximately 70 masked people, spaced at 6-foot distances, met and deliberated under a tent on the Erving Elementary School grounds. Erving’s annual town meeting approved a \$12 million FY’21 budget, including \$5.2 million for education (with \$3.3 million for Erving Elementary School), \$2 million for employee benefits, \$250,000 for the capital stabilization fund, and \$273,000 for general stabilization.

Voters unanimously and enthusiastically approved changing the name of the “Board of Selectmen” to the “Select Board.”

Six proposed bylaws – creating of a revolving fund for electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, reducing the town meeting quorum, establishing an electronic posting location, allowing the town clerk to increase fees, amending the driveways and curb cuts bylaw, and changing the dates for the annual town meeting and town election – were all approved.

The day was hot and cloudy, but a steady breeze kept the temperature

see **ERVING** page A9

Forest Commission Bill May Die In Committee

By JEFF SINGLETON

BOSTON – A bill that would have established a commission to review state forest management practices in Massachusetts has stalled in the Rules Committee of the state House of Representatives, and appears to be dead for this year. Representative Susannah Whipps of Athol, a lead sponsor of the bill, told the *Reporter* that she is inclined to let H.4415 die in committee because she believes that the commission proscribed in the legislation would not have broad enough representation, including critics of logging in state-managed forests.

Whipps specifically mentioned the Wendell State Forest Alliance

(WSFA), which organized a grassroots, multi-year campaign to stop logging in a portion of the state forest in Wendell. The effort was unsuccessful, but the WSFA is “still going strong,” one member told the *Reporter*.

The commission bill grew out of several other measures introduced in the state legislature at the beginning of this year in response to concerns that logging in forests reduced carbon storage and thus undermined the state’s policy to address climate change. One of these, H.897, would have banned almost all logging in state-managed forests.

H.897 was supported by a number of forest advocacy groups see **FOREST** page A6

Tree Plantings On Hold

By JEFF SINGLETON

MONTAGUE – The town of Montague has been inundated with trees to plant, an embarrassment of riches that has somewhat taxed the local tree-planting capacity. Last year the town received a state grant to plant approximately 800, primarily on so-called “tree belts,” the grassy areas between streets and sidewalks. In addition 30 trees were planted in Millers Falls recently, also funded by a state grant, and more still were donated by the nursery at

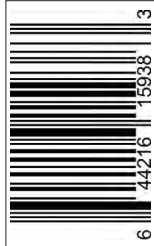
Franklin County Technical School.

Even in normal times, this plethora of trees would challenge the Department of Public Works, which is responsible for planting, and tree warden Mark Stevens, who is also a DPW employee. The process does not just involve planting but also choosing sites, reviewing requests from property owners, and selecting appropriate trees. But the department’s work has been slowed by the COVID-19 epidemic, and Stevens is recovering from see **TREES** page A3

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The Montague Reporter

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THE CATARACT

With a few strokes of a pen, Massachusetts governor Charlie Baker added 60 days to the clock on a ticking time bomb. Anyone who knows a lot of landlords, or anyone who knows a lot of tenants, knows that there has been a moratorium on evictions in Massachusetts since April, and when that moratorium expires, there will be a major reckoning.

Next Thursday, when the US Department of Commerce releases the GDP estimate for the second quarter of 2020, we’ll know for sure just how deep a mess we’re in. The economy contracted by nearly 5% in the *first* quarter of the year, even though shutdowns didn’t take effect until mid-March.

An unprecedentedly high unemployment rate has been offset by a generous federal bump in aid to those who have lost work due to the shutdown, but as of press time, that is still set to expire next week – and if that happens, Republicans in Congress will be responsible for the single largest overnight reduction in income in world history.

And even despite the aid, 32% of US households didn’t make their housing payment, rent or mortgage, for July. Employers, tenants, landlords, and the banks – or employers, homeowners, and banks – are right now dominoes leaning warily against each other.

Perhaps something wonderful will happen and coronavirus will simply go away as we head into fall, despite schools reopening. Business owners will rehire their staff and get back to business as usual, and everyone can brush themselves off, shake hands, and agree to gradual payment plans for debts accrued during the disaster. Perhaps state and federal legislatures will even figure out how to bridge us from here to that scenario with new, well-targeted bailout packages.

If that doesn’t happen, a hell of a backlog is going to hit housing court, in terms of foreclosures and evictions.

What would that look like locally? Currently, many working-class landlords – those who collect rent but spend most of it immediately on mortgages – are feeling a special squeeze. Well-to-do landlords might also prefer to see the returns on their investments start to flow again.

On a national level, it seems impossible that 28 million people could simply lose their housing in one terrible shot. Would all the empty units just be filled in a vastly traumatic game of musical chairs? In a place like Franklin County,

however, evicting people in 2020 and 2021 might actually be a profitable enterprise.

Last week there were *zero* coronavirus cases counted in Montague and Greenfield combined. We’re out of the way, and we’ve done a good job. But for exactly that reason, the new arrivals are showing up already. Northampton is teeming with New York plates.

Job losses, expanded possibilities of remote work for white-collar professionals, and the perception that the epidemiological risk of urban density outweighs the benefits of more accessible health-care and services are certain to send a wave of migrants, many of whom were only recently gentrifying our cities, crashing through rural New England.

And so towns like Turners Falls, already struggling to socially integrate the newcomers of the post-2008 economy, are staring at a formula for actual displacement.

How should we respond to this challenge? Everyone claims to value *community*, and community can only grow when people put down roots and build relationships with one another. If you expect to live next door to someone for 30 years, you have a much better reason to figure out how to agree to disagree, and you might even end up feeling fond of each other.

It should be a priority to prevent our neighbors from being forced to move away by bad luck and a worst-in-the-world government response to a viral pandemic. In the face of a great depression, those who claim to hold progressive values should be *particularly* motivated to be working across differences to offer mutual aid.

Tenants and small-time landlords do not need to be pitted against each other; they have a shared stake in more mortgage relief and more housing aid. These are factors of *community stabilization*.

And in light of that, maybe it’s not the best time for those who claim to hold progressive values to prioritize a cultural clash. Yes, this town was named for a perpetrator of genocide, and yes, this is stolen land, and yes, maybe down the road everyone will agree to come up with a better name.

But you’re not *decolonizing* anything by simply altering your speech. In 2020, this town is facing *gentrification and displacement*, and if you’re not willing to delay your own cultural gratification to build the relationships that can resist it, then like it or not, you have already picked a side.



Twenty-year-old Leverett residents Brandon Benoit and Kate Spillane hoist a canoe into Leverett Pond for a paddle on their day off last Tuesday, a perfect July day.

Letters to the Editors

Consider Renaming Everything

I support the idea of renaming Turners Falls. I also recognize that this is a divisive issue. I don’t want to trade old resentments for new resentments. That is not progress.

Witnessing the removal of the Turners Falls “Indian” mascot, in my opinion, the process was hurtful, damaging, and poorly-managed. At the time, I recall one of our townspeople saying to me that “pain is part of the process,” but whose pain, and at what expense?

In the case of TFHS, the issue was politicized, weaponized, and it seems to me that it was the students who suffered, and the morale of the high school that was damaged.

To my mind, this is also the entirely wrong moment to take action on this idea – when people are call-

ing for equality, equity, and safety from police violence. Changing the name of the village of Turners Falls seems to me to be a form of *white liberal racism*, as if that would make them feel better. True equity would be giving the land back to the native American people, and paying retribution for 400 years of oppression.

At last week’s selectboard meeting, two petitions were received, one to change the name of Turners and one to keep it, each with over 1,000 signatories. In these two petitions, in this identity crisis, I see that we have an opportunity to reshape ourselves in the form of our highest ideals – to which I would like to add, the possibility of renaming the village of Millers Falls and

the Town of Montague itself. Could we also consider an emblem for our town that was neither a badge nor a pentagon?

To the selectboard, and to townspeople on both sides of this issue, I would like to offer a suggestion: 1, create a town-wide commission; 2, begin a deliberate, multi-year, open, thoughtfully-managed process; 3, instead of a political fight, support a community-wide conversation; 4, with a goal of *unity* and *consensus*.

One final note: it is a big thing for a sovereign government – a nation, state, town, or village – to admit error. Not so many places in the world would do it.

Richard Widmer
Millers Falls

Turners Falls: Not Named After Turner?

I would like to offer some additional pertinent history in relation to an article recently penned in another local paper, “Great Falls or Turners Falls.”

The towns of Gill and Montague did not exist in 1676. There was no Riverside (Gill) or Turners Falls (Montague). The area of the current Turners Falls dam (the “Falls”) was wilderness, and was seasonally occupied by indigenous people from various parts of the Northeast.

The incursion with the seasonal population that took place at the “Falls” during a period of King Philip’s War happened on the north side of the river; presently the enclave of Riverside in the Town of Gill. During this time only a small gathering of indigenous people occupied the south bank, presently the Turners Falls side of the river.

Edward Hitchcock (1793-1864) did not give the name “Turners Falls” to the village: the village did not exist. In 1823 Hitchcock, then Principal at Deerfield Academy, was on a geological trip in the area and visited the “Falls” on the Connecticut River. Aware of what took place there in 1676, Hitchcock termed the “Falls” “Turners Falls,” remembering William Turner, who led the largely civilian group that engaged the recurrent population at the north bank, now Riverside, Gill.

The village name “Turners Falls” is consequential from Alvah Crocker’s industrial development of the

“Falls” and subsequent power canal. This began in 1864 when Crocker (1801-1874) first visited this area. Officially, Turners Falls – the village – was conceived in 1868 as a planned industrial community.

Turners Falls is not specifically named for Capt. William Turner. The village name is a derivative of the “Falls” and its potential hydro-power recognized by Crocker.

The “Falls” happened to be named Turners Falls.

Ed Gregory
Montague Historical Society
Greenfield

Into Glyph Yarn

Gary Sanderson’s column about the petroglyph found along the river [July 25, *Valley View*] was probably the most interesting and enjoyable of all I have read in your paper. The whole story, from the discovery to the detective work to the revelation, was fascinating. Thank you.

Nancy Bent
Montague

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Compiled by NINA ROSSI

The United Personnel **Virtual Job Fair for Yankee Candle** started on Wednesday and closes at noon this Friday, July 24. You can go to www.masshirefhcareers.org/job-fairs-recruitment-events/ to apply for open positions on all shifts. Machine operators, candlemakers, order fillers, and warehouse workers are all needed at the giant candle company.

The **Garden Cinema in Greenfield** announces that they have booked the children’s cartoon feature *SamSam* for Friday, July 24 and the thriller *What We Found* for July 31. “We understand and respect that not everyone feels comfortable coming out to the theater right now” says co-owner Angela Mass, “so we wanted them to be able to get the same new releases at home as in the theater.” Therefore, the virtual cinema section of www.gardencinemas.net will have these films, as well as others, available to purchase and stream.

SamSam is based on the French television program about the smallest superhero and his search for a superpower. *What We Found*, starring Elizabeth Mitchell, is about a trio of high schoolers whose friend vanishes. When the police cannot solve the mystery, they begin their own search.

Not everything in the theater will be available online. The Russell Crowe film *Unhinged*, scheduled for July 31 will, only be available in the theater. “We are super excited about *Unhinged*,” says Isaac Mass. “It reminds me of the 1994 classic *Falling Down* with Michael Douglas.” The couple reports that although their theaters are each currently allowed to hold 25 people, there have typical-

ly been much smaller audiences.

The LAVA Center in Greenfield will host a four-week **Short Course in Short Plays** starting next Tuesday, July 28. The focus will be on developing theater pieces with climate change themes. Taught by Jan Mahar, the online, four-week evening course is open to all who are interested in exploring writing one-minute, five-minute, and ten-minute plays.

No previous writing or playwrighting experience is required, and it is free, thanks in large part to a grant from Greening Greenfield. Pre-register through the event link on the group’s Facebook page, www.facebook.com/thelavacenter. For more information about online literary programming, contact Jan Maher at jan@localaccess.org.

Lindy Whiton and Em Langevin also have photography on view at the **LAVA gallery**, at 324 Main Street in Greenfield, through August. The physical space has reopened with restrictions. Langevin, of Picture PLURfict Photography, will be there meeting viewers on Thursdays at the gallery. Picture PLURfict joins Lindy Whiton’s My Franklin County photographic display.

A **call for art on the theme of community** (“What does it mean to you?”) has been sent out by Whiton, who will curate a show at the LAVA center in September. Submissions are due by August 1. Send up to three .jpg images to lindy.whiton@gmail.com. For more information, email Lindy or visit the show’s Facebook page at www.facebook.com/submitplease.

The Montague Cultural Council, meanwhile, is soliciting art that addresses the **COVID-19 crisis, racial injustice, and social inequity**.

Artists must be Montague residents or work in the town of Montague. All media are accepted. Submit an application with your name, contact information, and up to three .jpg images to montaguelcc@gmail.com by August 1. Chosen artists will receive \$250, and their work will be shared with the community in whatever format is appropriate – a newspaper, MCTV, physical display in restaurants and storefronts, etc.

The Nolumbeka Project has announced on their website that **there will not be a Pocumtuck Homelands Festival** at Unity Park in Turners Falls this August. This annual celebration of native American music and culture would have been held for the seventh year, but organizers decided to hold off due to the ongoing pandemic.

Instead, they are organizing a **round-trip paddle on August 1**, starting out from the Gill public boat launch. The Wampanoag Aquinnah crew will join up, paddling their traditional dug-out mi-shoon in a celebratory procession up the Connecticut River.

Bring your own lunch and snacks, and prepare to practice social distancing guidelines by keeping boats at least six feet apart and wearing masks. Group size is limited, so pre-register at www.nolumbekaproject.org.

Greenfield Community College announces the **Mountain Scholars Program**, designed to increase academic success for students of color. The program is available to all African American/Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Cape Verdean, Chicano/Latinx/Hispanic, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, or multi-racial descent students.

Students in the Mountain Scholars’ first-year seminar class will develop college success strategies, learn about connection and community, explore a field of study, and make an academic plan. Specialized advising and orientation programs are designed to help students adjust to college, with a customized first-year schedule. The program is also open to current

GCC students of color. For more information, contact Leo Hwang at hwangl@gcc.mass.edu.

Another chance to take a **Zoom tour of the old Field Mill in Leverett** will happen on August 7, starting at 7 p.m. Join the Leverett Historical Commission for this virtual visit, part of its ongoing project “A Sense of Where You Are, Conversations about Leverett’s historic industrial landscape and community.”

Commission members and historian Pleun Bouricius will explore the mill and interpret the site, with a discussion following the “visit.” Registration required at bit.ly/FieldMill. Any questions can be emailed to leverethistoryinfo@gmail.com.

A **Drive-by Sun Bath Quilt Tour** in Easthampton promises to be an unusual way to spend the day in that town. On August 8, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., community quilt artists will hang out their art on buildings, porches, and fences for people to view from their cars (or bikes). The self-guided tour of addresses may include relevant quilt stories, as well. If you have a quilt you made, and can secure a place to hang it in Easthampton, submissions are being taken until August 1. Contact tour coordinator Audrey Hyvonen at (413) 230-0771 or audrey@bigtopquilts.com with any questions. Quilts will only be displayed for one day.

Ready to hear live music again? You could head out to one of **MASS MoCA’s Thursday evening concerts** in North Adams. Held in the courtyard at the museum, these evening concerts will enable you to hear free, live, local music every week.

Make a reservation at massmoca.org/event/thursday-nights/ for your own six-foot outdoor space (four people maximum). Wear masks, bring your own chairs, and be willing to be herded around. Music starts at 8:30 p.m., with doors at 7, and box meals are available from the museum café. Through August.

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Another Letter to the Editors

When it comes to health care access, I used to think of Massachusetts as progressive. We pioneered health care reform in 2006, are home to some of the nation’s top health care and public health organizations, and pride ourselves on our Commonwealth’s work on health equity.

Yet we remain embarrassingly behind when it comes to abortion access. Medically unnecessary restrictions here in Massachusetts force young people to go to court or leave the state for access to care. That burden disproportionately harms young people of color – the result of the racist policy that created barriers to care.

That’s why the ROE Act, proactive legislation to improve access to care and remove these barriers, must pass before July 31.

On June 29, the Supreme Court of the United States struck down a medically unnecessary, politically motivated abortion restriction in Louisiana. I used to think that I didn’t need to worry about things like that in my state and if I needed an abortion, I would be able to get one. Now I know that’s not always true.

If you’re like I was and think our access is safe here – know that far too many people in Massachusetts already don’t have access to abortion because state law still enforces unjust, racist restrictions to abortion.

So while abortion may be safe and legal here, it’s not fully accessible – and it never has been. Abortion is health care and until abortion is truly accessible to all, I can’t consider our state to be progressive when it comes to health care access.

**Sophie Howard
Turners Falls**

TREES from page A1

a battle with pancreatic cancer.

Fortunately, both the process and the planting have been assisted by the town tree committee, a relatively new organization with a good deal of commitment and passion for trees. One of its members is Michael Marcotrigiano, a retired biologist and director of the botanic garden at Smith College who is an expert on tree species.

In an interview with the *Reporter*, Stevens said he is hopefully on the mend from an operation and a tough round of chemotherapy. At this point, he is hopeful to return to the department in September, though he is unsure about the prospect of planting more trees this fall. Marcotrigiano said the DPW has planted approximately 180 trees under the state grant so far, and he believed that some would be planted this fall, but “we’re trying to take it easy on the DPW” in Stevens’ absence.

As far as the process is concerned, Marcotrigiano said he had a list of acceptable trees “derived from Chicago and New York, because of tolerance to street conditions. We also have a list of trees that are suitable for under the power lines because they don’t get as tall. But that’s the last part of the plan. Now we’d rather get trees that fit in big spaces.”

Marcotrigiano said that while residents have requested and received trees – you can see lawn signs documenting this – the trees must “benefit the public” and be near the street. The trees, which are planted by the town, become the property of private owners. Montague residents who wish to receive trees can contact the town planner or the DPW.

The town is nearing the halfway mark of the three-year grant that funds the 800 trees. The Landscape



Stevens (right) plants a tree in the Patch with coworker Connor Johnson in May 2019.

Scale Restoration Grant, funded by the United States Forest Service in partnership with the state Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), actually funds trees in three localities, which are Greenfield, North Adams and Montague. Marcotrigiano says Montague may need to file for an extension, which would likely be the work of the Franklin County Land Trust in Shelburne Falls, the agency overseeing the program.

Stevens told us to give a “big thank you” for all the help the tree committee has given him over the past few years, and during his illness.



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GMRSD from page A1

Bill Tomb. “I’m sure that the teachers are very concerned about all this discussion of sending kids back to school.”

Cassie Damkoehler of Montague agreed. “It’s ironic, if families are concerned about coming back together, and we stay remote,” she said.

But other members expressed concerns about family members’ health vulnerabilities – and their own. “We’re prioritizing in-person school as being more important than opening bars, or retail stores,” Montague member Haley Anderson argued. “We can support the opening of schools by the rest of us still staying sheltered.”

The committee agreed to revisit the subject.

Jen Lively said she hoped there would be a way to restore public participation, suspended since meetings went remote.

Technology director Tina Mahaney said members of the public can arrange in advance to call in with statements. Committee members authorized her to pursue the plan.

Budgets and Inequities

The district is operating on a “1/12” monthly budget. Montague’s town meeting approved its assess-

ment, but Gill’s has not been held, and the state budget has yet to pass.

“When we get to September, that’s a problem,” said business director Joanne Blier. “Until the town of Gill schedules a meeting, even if the state aid number comes out, we’re still living under the 1/12 budget.... We’re working with the best information we have, which is not pretty.”

Blier said the administration is reviewing the budget in case of a “worst-case scenario” for state aid.

The committee discussed subcommittees. Lively pointed out that a volunteer group set up last year to focus on equity and injustice in the schools dissolved after the Collaborative for Educational Services left the process. She suggested forming a subcommittee to get the work on track.

Pupil services director Dianne Ellis, who served on the original equity committee, said its members were still interested in continuing the work but had been derailed by the pandemic. School committee chair Jane Oakes suggested an “ad hoc” committee, and the group agreed to revisit the subject.

Langknecht and Anderson presented new drafts of a proposed anti-racism statement. “I think it’s important to use the specific phrase ‘white privilege’,” Anderson said.

“It doesn’t mean that you haven’t had disadvantages or hardships....”

Langknecht proposed alternate wording, with a historical explanation of racism emerging to serve exploitation. “Mostly, it’s about avoiding some of the conflict between people who otherwise agree completely that something that needs to be done,” he said.

“In this area especially, I think there’s many different types of privilege, and I think that we’re only hitting on one of them,” Damkoehler said. “Maybe that’s equity work we need to do in the future.”

After a circuitous discussion, the committee agreed it was important to publish the statement without more delay. Langknecht endorsed Anderson’s revision, and it was approved unanimously.

The next topic was inequities between the district’s schools. “There’s an underserved population that really misses out due to the inequity amongst our elementary schools,” Damkoehler said. She added that Sheffield had no representation on the pandemic advisory committee.

Members discussed the number of Montague students the district buses to Gill Elementary. “School choice is, in many ways, an issue of privilege,” said Oakes, of Gill. “Peo-

ple choosing their children are exercising a certain amount of privilege that other people don’t have.”

“But we prioritize intra-district school choice,” said Damkoehler. “We’re essentially encouraging that privilege to continue.”

“This past year, the kindergarten class at Gill accepted a lot of kids from Montague, and in my opinion the class was pretty large,” said Lively. “It takes away from our other schools to let so many kids go over there.”

“As one of the persons who was here when those decisions was made,” Langknecht said, “one of the priorities was keeping the Gill school open.” The committee agreed to revisit the subject.

Other Business

The committee unanimously approved the hire of Dr. Dean Singer of Baystate Franklin Medical Center to serve as the school physician.

Dean’s Beans Organic Coffee Company has made a third \$4,000 donation toward the school’s meal program, which continues through the end of August.

The Turners Falls High School graduation will be held this Friday, July 24 on the school’s football field; if this rain persists, it will be held in cars instead.

GUEST EDITORIAL

Racism and the Bomb: 75 Years Later

By ANNA GYORGY

WENDELL – Anniversaries are times to reflect and remember. They also help us relate the past to the present.

This August 6 to 9 is the 75th anniversary of the only use of atomic weapons in war. Two bombs of previously unimaginable power destroyed two Japanese cities, killing around 200,000 people. The devastation then, and the arms race since, are remembered each year in calls to abolish nuclear weapons.

This is a year of racial awareness, movement and action, and hopefully major social, economic, and political change. Black Lives Matter.

It is also the 400th anniversary of the start of settler colonialism in our state and region. The suppression, eviction, and near extermination of native peoples are being examined anew.

So it is fitting and important to look at the atomic bombings through the lens of race.

It isn’t hard.

First, we see the racist objectification of the enemy. Filipino academic and activist Waldon Bello writes: “The war in Europe waged by the US during the Second World War was promoted among the American public as a war to save democracy. This was not the case in the Pacific theater, where all the racist impulses of American society were explicitly harnessed to render the Japanese subhuman. This racial side to the Pacific War gave it an intense exterminationist quality.”

And at home, Americans of Japanese descent were put in prison camps, “unthinkable when it came to Americans of German or Italian descent, though Germany and Italy were also enemy states,” writes Bello.

“But perhaps,” he continues, “the most radical expression of the racial exterminationist streak of the American war against Japan was the nuclear incineration of Nagasaki and Hiroshima in August 1945, an act that would never have been entertained when it came to fellows of

the white race like the Germans.”

The racist attitudes against Japanese, expressed in the media and echoed widely, were keenly felt and opposed by prominent African-American intellectuals and leaders, especially black writers, more so than by their liberal white counterparts.

Among the well-known African-American critics of the atomic bombings in 1945-46 were leading civil rights activist Bayard Rustin; the Reverend Adam Clayton Powell, also a Democratic congressman from Harlem; and writers Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston.

The most definitive history thus far is Vincent J. Intondi’s 2017 book *African Americans Against the Bomb: Nuclear Weapons, Colonialism, and the Black Freedom Movement*. Some of Intondi’s key points were summarized by Beyond Nuclear’s Linda Pentz Gunter in a widely published article titled “Why Japan? The racism of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings.”

She quotes Intondi: “Since 1945, black activists had made the case that nuclear weapons, colonialism, and the black freedom struggle were connected.” The use and continued testing of the atomic bomb “motivated many in the black community to continue to fight for peace and equality as part of a global struggle for human rights.”

Others against nuclear weapons included Martin Luther King, Jr., W.E.B. Du Bois, Paul Robeson, and Marian Anderson. “Yet it is rarely their faces,” writes Gunter, “that are evoked when there is discussion of the Ban the Bomb marches or, later, the rise of SANE/Freeze.”

Current Black opposition to the 1945 blasts showed in a May 2017 CBS news poll after President Obama visited Hiroshima in May 2017. “Americans are divided by gender, race, political affiliation, and age,” the network concluded. “Most white Americans, most men, and most Republicans approve of the US dropping atomic bombs on Japan in World War II, while more

From the *Uranium Atlas...*

The English version of the Uranium Atlas was released on July 16, the 75th anniversary of the first “Trinity” test of a nuclear bomb, in the New Mexican desert. Its North American distribution was sponsored by the Native initiative Honor the Earth.

Where was uranium mined? “[...]Almost exclusively on Indigenous lands; who was in harm’s way during atomic tests – almost exclusively communities of color; and where nuclear industries want to dump their waste – in the case of North America and Australia, once again on indigenous lands.”

The Atlas provides “a narrative of discrimination and colonial abuse; of people, their lands and their values.

“We learn that Indigenous peoples on different continents use similar prophetic imagery to warn against extracting uranium from the ground. In Australia it is the rainbow serpent, whose sleep

must remain undisturbed or forces will be unleashed with dire consequences.

“For the Diné (Navajo), it was a choice between the yellow dust of corn, or the yellow dust of uranium. Corn pollen would secure their life. The other yellow powder would endanger it and should be left in the ground.

“For the Dene of Canada it was a cautionary warning of sticks dug from the ground to be carried away by an iron bird who would rain death on others far away.

“For the Western Shoshone, it is the serpent swimming westward at Yucca Mountain, Nevada, where the end product of uranium’s use – high-level radioactive waste – could be dumped.

“The price for not leaving it in the ground is played out across the pages of the *Uranium Atlas*.”

Source: www.beyondnuclearinternational.org/2020/07/19/mapping-uranium/

non-white Americans, most women, and most Democrats disapprove. Americans under 45 are more likely to disapprove of the US’s actions, while older Americans 55 and up tend to approve.”

And we can turn to author-activist Winona LaDuke to hear about the extensive effects of nuclear weapons on indigenous peoples. In the new *Uranium Atlas 2020*, published on July 16, the 75th anniversary of the first atomic test, LaDuke writes:

“More than three thousand Diné, who are also called Navajo, worked in the uranium mines in the 1950s, without special work clothes or any kind of radiation protection. Covered in radioactive dust, they walked home to their families – and without knowing it, contaminated their loved ones. People are still dying in Dinétah, the land of the Navajo. The danger is not contained, since almost a thousand abandoned

mines still contaminate the region.”

The Atlas presents a readable and comprehensive look at the radioactive metal, and the dangers associated with it, from mining to storage. Dangers kept secret from workers considered both essential and disposable. “At least 70 percent of the uranium in circulation worldwide,” it reports, “is mined on the land of Indigenous communities and tribal peoples.” (See the sidebar on this page for more on the Atlas.)

The Traprock Center for Peace & Justice, FCCPR, Racial Justice Rising, and others plan 2020 commemoration events starting with a gathering at Peskeomskut Park on August 6 at 7:30 p.m.

Anna Gyorgy is a director of the Traprock Center for Peace & Justice. See traprock.org for a longer version of this editorial.

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NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Wendell May Hire Leverett’s Police Chief

By JOSH HEINEMANN

On July 8, in their first meeting of FY’21, the Wendell selectboard continued dealing with several issues, including problems of parking and overuse of Fiske Pond.

Laurie DiDonato, a selectboard member and neighbor of the pond, said that cars are still being parked in the entry to the parking lot, blocking emergency access to the beach. Some park in the tow zone along West Street on either side of the parking lot entrance. Only Ed Chase, the police chief, is allowed to call and have cars towed – at owners’ expense, as signs along the road state – and he has hesitated to do that.

The nearby state beach at Lake Wyola also has finite parking, and attendants there turn cars away when the lot is full. Parking is not allowed on the road near the lake, so some visitors park beyond the “no parking” signs and walk in. Some ride bicycles to Lake Wyola, but others try Fiske Pond, where no one oversees parking.

DiDonato said she thought a flier from a concerned neighbor might serve as a first warning to the owners of offending cars. Selectboard chair Dan Keller saw no problem with that, and board member Gillian Budine said a flier from the selectboard might carry more weight.

DiDonato suggested forwarding license plate numbers to Chase, and putting notices on the Fiske Pond kiosk and the town listserv.

Complaints continue to come in about vehicles speeding in town. License plate identification could help, but the vehicles are often moving too fast for citizens to read the plate numbers.

DiDonato suggested trying to locate the worst places for speeders and provide the information to the road commission. Wendell could drop the speed limit in especially problematic places, as Shutesbury

did at Lake Wyola, though it would involve “a process.”

The Wendell police succession committee, together with Leverett’s committee, has made a plan to create a partnership between the two towns to share Leverett’s police chief, Scott Minckler. Minckler has come to succession meetings and provided his salary requirement, and Keller reported that it is not far from what Wendell is already spending.

Minckler has said he needs to know what training the police officers in Wendell already have, and decide what he would want them to have under his leadership, and how good a fit he would make with Wendell.

Budine suggested starting him on a one-year contract, renewable but also able to be canceled.

The succession committee is concerned about public response to a new chief, whose approach would likely be different from Chase’s, and they plan an outreach effort. Chase is ready to retire, so the need to act is pressing, though not yet dire.

Library Update

Wendell’s new librarian, Anna Lawrence, Zoomed in to meet the selectboard and was welcomed with congratulations. Hired by the library trustees, she has been working with retiring librarian Rosie Heidkamp during a short transition period, with the library closed by COVID concerns.

Lawrence told board members that the library is now partially open. On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 9 a.m. to noon, citizens can order books and materials for curbside pickup at 15-minute intervals. She recommended that now is a good time for parents to exchange any children’s picture books that have been trapped in the house since the start of the shutdown and have passed beyond the time they are interesting.

Lawrence said that while the governor’s phased reopening plan allows Wendell to open its library, any library that opens before those in surrounding towns might become overcrowded, so local libraries will open together. She added that she will not change an institution that is working well, and will start by working on the teen collection.

When asked about selectboard connection to the library, Keller told her it “is mostly hands off.”

Marijuana Sector

Advice from attorney Tom Lesser is that Wendell does not have to act on a proposed host community agreement with Appleguy Flowers LLC, which hopes to grow cannabis on West Street, until the company has a purchase and sale agreement, which they do not yet have. Citizen Deb Tyler said the seller has raised the asking price of the property Appleguy Flowers is looking at.

The board did not take any action. Keller suggested a “go low” approach until the company provides a purchase and sale, and until the state attorney general approves or disapproves the moratorium Wendell voters approved last month at town meeting.

Meetinghouse Transfer

The selectboard is continuing to work with Friends of the Wendell Meetinghouse to create a plan in which the Friends can open the restored building for public use, which would require a source of water and a connection to the town septic system. The septic system would benefit from the additional flow.

If the town owns the building, however, the Friends will not be allowed to offer alcoholic beverages, a restriction that is likely to move weddings and similar gatherings elsewhere. If the Friends own the building, its connection to the town’s water and septic systems is

a legal and ethical problem.

When the town systems were built, private homes around the common were deliberately not connected, to avoid creating a combination municipal/private system. Connecting a privately owned structure now would conflict with that decision.

One plan floated in recent meetings was for the town to grant the Friends a 99-year lease, but at this meeting, Keller pointed out that the arrangement would leave the town indefinitely liable for maintenance.

A new idea was floated for a town meeting vote that would allow Wendell to both sell the building and grounds to the Friends and allow them to connect the meetinghouse to the water and septic systems.

Other Business

The library trustees asked Wendell’s lawnmowing contractor, Gerry’s Landscaping, to expand what he mows to behind the basketball court. That area requires additional handwork, which Gerry said would raise the cost \$30 to a total of \$430 per mowing. The board approved the change.

After interviewing three interested people at a special meeting July 6, the selectboard hired Eric Shufelt as Wendell’s next custodian.

They considered holding their July 22 meeting in person and outdoors. Meetings start at 7 p.m., as the evening is progressing and mosquito pressure increases. Since eastern equine encephalitis has been found in both Orange and Wendell, board members decided against it.

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LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here’s the way it was July 22, 2010: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Water Gate Plugged
At Northfield Mountain

Northfield Mountain’s quarter mile long intake tunnel is plugged with silt, according to three employees at the pumped hydro storage facility who wish to remain anonymous to protect their jobs.

FirstLight Power Enterprises has been working around the clock to clear the intake tunnel at the 1,080-megawatt hydroelectric pumped storage facility since a scheduled three-and-a-half week outage that began May 1 went awry.

The hydro plant has been shut down since, along with the recreational trails on Northfield Mountain, and the stoppage has been extended indefinitely while workers come in from around the country to assist with the ongoing effort to clear the silt clogged tunnel and restart the massive generators.

Tax Breaks & Commercial
Gravel Cause an Uproar

A brouhaha erupted at the Leverett selectboard meeting on July 13, as 18 or more people piled into

the room to discuss the lease of commercial gravel rights to Richie Roberts and Ed Stone on five acres of land owned by Roberta Bryant on 470 Long Plain Road.

All agreed that at least four acres of the land – if not all five – have been held under Chapter 61-B protection for more than a decade. Chapter 61-B grants a property tax break in return for the owner agreeing to forego commercial activity and keeping the land reserved for recreational use or open space.

Leverett assessors’ administrative assistant Steve Schmidt said Bryant has had most of her land – about 39 acres – in Chapter 61-B since 1997, and that in 2010 she received a \$1,191 deduction on a tax bill of \$7,508 for the parcel in question, which includes the farmhouse and outbuildings. Schmidt said five acres around the two house lots were excluded from protection, as required by statute, but the excluded land is not in the vicinity of the gravel pit, which borders Roberts’ landscaping business on the northwest corner of Bryant’s lot.

Bryant insisted she had held an additional acre of her land out of protection when she originally entered the program, and claimed this acre was the site of the recent gravel excavation by Roberts.



NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Leverett May Use Amherst’s Water

By GEORGE BRACE

At their July 21 meeting, the Leverett selectboard addressed a stumbling block in moving forward with the proposed Teawaddle Road water line project by deciding to draft a letter on the matter to the Amherst town council. The board also approved dog-leash signage for Old Long Plain Road, and heard from the highway department that a section of North Leverett Road will be paved this summer.

Board members reported that they are ready to put a project to connect a water line to Amherst’s water supply at the end of Teawaddle Road out to bid and get the project rolling, but have been unable to do so until they receive approval from the town of Amherst. The project, approved by town meeting in 2019, would solve a problem of groundwater contaminated by a town-owned landfill.

Board chair Peter d’Errico said he wasn’t sure why Amherst had not yet responded to a previous informal request, but had been told that officials in Amherst were not aware it was a high priority. D’Errico said that he didn’t know of any negative

feelings in Amherst regarding the project, and didn’t want to create any, but liked the suggestion to draft a formal letter to the Amherst town council, reasoning that an official request from one governing body to another would clarify the matter and hopefully move things forward.

The board approved the placement of unofficial signs at each end of Old Long Plain Road asking residents to leash their dogs along the roadway. Issues involving unleashed dogs running towards both walkers and dogs on leashes have been reported by multiple residents, prompting the request. Highway superintendent Matt Boucher and police chief Scott Minckler took part in the discussion, and will be part of a group tasked with coming up with economical signage.

Boucher reported that his department has returned to normal summer hours, and planned to pave a section of North Leverett Road.

The board approved the annual slate of appointments to town positions, and reviewed positions that were at present unfilled. D’Errico suggested that the best way to get seats on boards and committees filled was for present members to

seek out volunteers. Town clerk Lisa Stratford noted that the town had received several applications for the library director position.

An announcement regarding the formation of a social justice committee, and how to participate, will be sent out on the town’s CodeRED communication system in the near future.

No new COVID-related matters were reported, but members of the board noted that Lisa Stratford, like other town hall workers across the country, was in overdrive working on changes to election procedures in response to the virus. It was suggested that something be included in the town newsletter explaining the challenges involved.

Over the weekend, the town approved a debt exclusion to purchase an excavator by a vote of 80 to 6.

The board voted to appoint Julie Shively as its new chair. D’Errico, who had served as chair for approximately 10 years, said he would continue with regular selectboard work, but felt he needed to spend more time on other matters, and that it would be best if he was no longer carrying the extra weight and responsibilities of being the chair.

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BUSINESS from page A1

that location this August. **Swanson’s Fabrics** is a textile store with a difference... a big difference!

On her website www.swansonsfabrics.com, owner Katherine Greenwood Swanson describes her mission “to encourage a more sustainable American life, by making sewing affordable, and by saving languishing fabric stashes from the landfill.” The vintage fabrics she sells are gathered and donated from stashes of fabric stored in the closets, attics, and basements of current and retired sewers and other fabric artists. According to Swanson, these fabrics are by far nicer, and more often made of natural fibers, than newer ones.

Swanson comes from a large family of fiber artists, from aunts and cousins to her mom, a costume designer for a community theater in the DC area. During high school she received a donation of fabrics and began to make her own clothes, and she hasn’t looked back! Swanson aims to teach and support all people in learning textile crafts. Sewing and fiber supplies and materials will be offered in trade for help in the shop. Be sure to check out her website, and keep your eye out for the store opening in August.

Does your infant or young child need a bonnet? **Sweet As April**, a new custom bonnet business com-

ing to Avenue A, began as a blog for Carrie Keefe, a young mom in search of a new direction. She began by making a few custom bonnets in her dining room in the spring of 2016. The business has sold 10,000 bonnets in two years, and will soon be operating from a space in the Shanahan Construction Company building at 298 Avenue A.

Keefe is another young mom who wants to transform the fashion industry and see how many textiles can be saved from the waste stream, one bonnet at a time: *#one-bonnetatatime*. With the help of her mother, her husband, a skilled seamstress, and other talented women, she has created a variety of bonnets from upcycled material, from curtains and men’s shirts to donated fabric, vintage linens, and clothes from her own closet. Her mission is “to battle this world of fast fashion” that is both wasteful and harmful to the environment.

You can join the textile revolution by shopping at sweetasapril.com.

Sadly, by the end of July, Turners will officially be losing a unique and popular business: **Mystic Pinball**. Many might not realize that pinball was once considered gambling and, therefore, illegal in New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago. According to co-owner Mark Hankowski, pinball is a game of skill, not chance. Fre-

quented by many local individuals and families, Mystic Pinball drew customers from all around New England as it offered a wide variety of specialized and vintage machines suited to serious competition.

According to Hankowski, there were a variety of coronavirus-related reasons for the closing of Mystic Pinball. Restrictions from the state regarding social distancing would have limited customers to only eight at any one time. Although arcades were originally scheduled for Phase Three reopening, the Governor moved them to Phase Four, requiring that a vaccine be available before they may reopen. This was too great a delay.

Hankowski also thinks that the virus has resulted in a lot of folks discovering ways to entertain themselves at home! As a result, Mystic Pinball machines are going into storage until further notice. Both Hankowski and co-owner Danny Levine noted that they very much enjoyed being in Turners Falls and working with others in the business community here. They will be missed.

One of the first of several new businesses to open on Avenue A in the last decade, the **Charon Arts Tattoo** studio was created by Leah Caldieri in 2014. When COVID-19 happened, Caldieri re-evaluated her situation and, ultimately, decided to



Signage at Buckingham Rabbits Vintage.

sell it to Mackenzie Creedon, one of the tattoo artists at Charon.

Caldieri herself has since moved and relocated her tattoo business closer to home at 49 Main Street, Williamsburg. She is renovating the space there and will be reopening in August. Check out her website, www.charonart.com, for more information.

The **Thorntail Arts Collective** at 107 Avenue A, second floor, officially opened on Tuesday, July 21. New owner Mackenzie Creedon has completely renovated the tattoo studio and is implementing all the necessary safety protocols for tattoo business in the age of COVID-19.

Creedon has had four years tattooing experience at Charon Arts, and has hired a variety of experienced tattoo artists as part of the collective. Each tattoo artist will start booking at their own times, and tattoos should start happening by the end of this week. Since walk-ins won’t be allowed for a while, you can call to book at Thorntail Tattoo on their Facebook page, www.facebook.com/thorntailtattoo. Also, check out the site to see photos of their newly renovated space, as well as information about the artists.

Down by the canal, new business **Sadie’s Bikes** has reportedly been busy, with many more people seeking outdoor recreation on two

wheels, but the **Local Yoga Joint** in the adjacent space has closed. Attempts to reach Jocelyn O’Shea for comment on her studio’s closure were unsuccessful.

As for restaurants, fans of the **Five Eyed Fox** will be happy to learn that the restaurant will again be providing outdoor dining and takeout beginning this Wednesday, July 22. According to owner Ashley Arthur, due to an uptick in COVID-19 cases nationwide, the restaurant had briefly closed again in an abundance of caution, hoping to help halt the spread of the virus. Now she has re-opened with vigilance and safety protocols well in place. Order and reservation information: www.fiveeyedfox.com.

Several other downtown restaurants have been able to add outdoor seating or reconfigure their business around pickup orders. The Rendezvous, Shady Glen, Country Cree-mee, Upper Bend, and Riff’s North all have outside dining options in place. The Black Cow Burger Bar and Turners Falls Pizza House are takeout only, as well as the Great Falls Harvest and Market; many others are available by delivery or pickup.

Check with your favorite business to see what they are offering, because this list is far from complete.



Turners Falls Pizza House has instituted a separate phone number for customers picking up orders.

FOREST from page A1

statewide, and sponsored by representatives in the Franklin County region such as Whipps, representative Natalie Blais, and senator Joanne Comerford. It was opposed by logging interests, but also by many foresters trained in current forest management practices.

The Wendell selectboard in Wendell sent a letter to Whipps in opposition to H.897 last December, which led to a contentious discussion at a board meeting the following month.

Last February H.897, along with several other bills addressing state forest management policy, was folded into the commission bill by the legislature’s Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture.

Under the new bill, the proposed commission would be charged with “the study and investigation of the extent and adequacy of the management of state-owned and privately-owned forest land in the commonwealth, the study of the ecological soundness of different approaches to timber cutting, and policies as they relate to climate change, the role of biomass as a renewable or alternative energy source, the economic impact of the forestry industry, and chapter 132 of the General Laws, known as the forest cutting law.”

The 12-member commission was to be composed of two state senators, two members of the House (one from each party), representatives of four departments or cabinet

agencies, and four members appointed by the Governor. The latter were to include a licensed private forester, a representative of a land trust, a person “with experience in the management of forest land,” and a person from a community with “more than 30% of state forest within its boundaries.”

The bill passed the joint committee in February, and appeared to have the support of Whipps, along with Blais, Comerford, and a number of anti-logging advocates. It landed in the House Rules committee on March 9 – and there it sat. According to a veteran state house lobbyist, who asked not to be identified, the Rules committee tends to be a “sorting committee,” where bills tend to be prioritized in consultation with the House leadership.

He also noted that in an election year, the legislature will try to finish its business by the end of July, although this year it may need to return after a recess to finalize the state budget.

Reached by telephone, representative Smitty Pignatelli of Lenox, co-chair of the joint committee on natural resources which passed H.4415, said he relied on bill sponsors to shepherd legislation once it leaves his committee.

Whipps recently told the *Reporter* she was unhappy with the composition of the proposed commission, in part because it would

not include opponents of forest cutting. The commission also does not appear to include a representative of the logging industry.

Janet Sinclair of Shelburne Falls, an opponent of logging on state land who helped write H.897, also supported H.4415 when it came out of the natural resources committee. Sinclair and other advocates are now circulating an online petition calling for a moratorium on on all logging while the commission meets.

Michael Kellett of Restore the North Woods, which is circulating the petition on its website, told the *Reporter* that representative Whipps “deserves a special thanks for taking the lead and listening to the concerns of her constituents, as well as the rest of us. We have about 5,000 signatures on our moratorium petition.”

Speaking for the Wendell State Forest Alliance, Miriam Kurland said that “while we preferred the bill that prohibited commercial logging, we are OK with this bill if the logging ceases while a truly ethical commission made primarily up of climate scientists who have no financial biases study the advantages of leaving our public lands wild for the well being of continued life on earth during this climate and health emergency.”

Chris Egan of the Massachusetts Forest Alliance, a group that supports state forest management that includes some logging, told the *Reporter* that “[i]t would seem un-

likely that H.4415 would go anywhere, with the session ending shortly. In addition, putting together a commission and asking them to meet four times and issue legislative recommendations by January 1 is impossible at this point.”

Egan also said he was “puzzled” as to why a bill to reform licensing requirements for foresters and timber harvesters was folded into 4415. The bill would have made the time frame of licenses consistent with continuing education requirements.

Department of Conservation and Recreation spokesperson Troy Wall told the *Reporter* that his agency does not comment on “pending legislation.” However, he said DCR has commenced “internal discussions” on updating its forest management guidelines for parks and forests issued in 2012.

Wall also pointed to a 200-page draft “Forest State Action Plan Update” that can be reviewed on the DCR website.

The update, which Wall said is “expected to be completed later this year,” contains a lengthy discussion of forest management and climate change carbon sequestration, including a ten-page analysis of research on carbon storage in forests of different compositions and ages. The draft report argues that DCR’s forest management practices increase resilience to climate change.

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STORE from page A1

Her position on this is so firm that she lost a bread vendor who refused to wear a mask and dropped her as a client.

Since she rearranged all the shelves and eliminated some of the cases, the store is much airier and inviting. Putting the ice cream case at the very front of the store is a nice touch. So is the dairy case offering Sidehill Farm yogurt, Real Pickles products, and three kinds of eggs, including organic eggs from the free range chickens at Frog Hill Farm just down the road.

Lynch also stocks plenty of whipped cream after learning, to her surprise, that it’s one of the most demanded items in the store.

With an eye to the future, Lynch said, “A full point-of-sale system will track customer rewards and feed the online store for our coming website. Customers will be able to order and pay from home for a curbside pickup, and we are considering delivery in the near future.” She added, “We will expand our grocery offerings by adding more culturally diverse foods and healthier snacks for young children, and we are always taking feedback and requests.”

Lynch said she likes to support local businesses with good marketing positions in the store, including micro-brews, local coffee roasters, dairy, and processed farm products. And that’s not all. Lynch is installing a very

small commercial kitchen to offer fresh homemade foods like sandwiches, salads, and Korean foods.

In keeping to her commitment to community, Lynch has been informally networking with neighbors and community members, offering open air space for pop-up shops. A few weeks ago, bolts of fabric were piled on tables near the flowerbeds and an assortment of new and vintage fabric was on sale, all for \$2.50 a yard. Mask-makers and people developing new hobbies responded enthusiastically. “It’s a personal opportunity for me to use my limited resources to lift up others and support the community,” said Lynch.

She is also working in conjunction with other organizations to produce a multi-performance Shakespeare Festival and a metal sculpture installation next summer, if the situation with the COVID virus has changed. The rolling fields behind her house in Montague provide a wonderful setting for concerts and festivals.

Ideas abound amongst day-to-day activities. With customers and vendors visiting the store in a steady stream, it’s hard to have an uninterrupted conversation with Lynch, who appears to have boundless energy. She may soon hire some part-time help, but says she’s not quite there yet. Business is up since she took over, and she hopes that it will continue to grow as more people learn of the new offerings and services at their local market.



MORE NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Lines Painted, Curves Flattened

By JEFF SINGLETON

Montague police chief Chris Williams took a break from COVID-19 and Black Lives Matter protests to update the town selectboard Monday on recent efforts to encourage “traffic calming” on Main Street in Montague Center.

Last year, following multiple incidents in the village when cars sped off Main Street onto residents’ properties, a number of residents sent a letter to town officials stating that their frequent complaints about speeding traffic over many years had been ignored. At a packed selectboard meeting in September, some suggested it was “only a matter of time” before someone was seriously injured or killed.

Town officials responded by narrowing Main Street just north of the post office and adding crosswalk signage. This past spring, new sidewalks were installed along the most dangerous curve, where Main Street heads north toward Turners Falls, as part of a state-funded Complete Streets project. The town has also painted yellow lines on the north and south sides of the town common, in theory to reduce confusion for drivers entering or leaving Main Street.

Williams reported that his officers “have been instructed to run extra radar” in the village, which had been limited by COVID-19 challenges. Williams also said he had purchased two portable electronic speed monitoring signs, which not only display passing cars’ speed, but “take in all the data” to create an ongoing record of average vehicle miles per hour.

Town administrator Steve Ellis said that local residents were curious why no white lines had been painted to “better define the traffic flow.” He noted the yellow lines at both ends of the common were for this purpose, and said that the Department of Public Works would be installing “curbing” along the north side of the common.

The town would need to wait for white lines, however, because “we are at the mercy of the line company,” Ellis explained. “There are only two companies that bid on these jobs that cover most of New England.”

Montague Center resident Chris Wise, whose home is just north of

the most dangerous portion of Center Street, told this reporter that he had heard “nothing but positive” feedback about the work that the town had done in response to local concerns. Wise said he had not noticed a reduction in vehicle speed, but that residents “definitely feel safer” as a result of the newly-installed sidewalks.

Pandemic Response

The board held its weekly joint meeting with the town board of health to review the latest public health data, and any changes in state policy. Health director Daniel Wasiuk said the cumulative number of reported COVID-19 cases in town had remained stable at 29, with no new deaths reported. “I thinks it’s a favorable direction we’re heading in, in terms of reopening efforts,” he said.

Ellis reported on the reopening of town hall with restrictions, which he reported has been a success, and said the library would continue curbside pickup.

A number of events planned for the summer and fall have been canceled, including Montague Center’s Barbès in the Woods, the Great Falls Harvest Festival (formerly Pumpkinfest), and the Soap Box Derby.

Lew Collins, owner of the sports bar and music club “Between the Uprights,” came before the board to discuss the possibility of rebates on 2020 license fees for bars and restaurants which have been unable to open. He said the situation was different from “me just closing on my own,” because the financial challenges to his business were due to the governor’s order.

Collins asked whether it would be possible for businesses unable to use their licenses for much of this year to get “some sort of credit toward 2021.” He also asked whether businesses forced to go under, could recoup some of the fees already paid.

Selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz said executive assistant Wendy Bogusz had informed him that Montague’s total annual fee revenue from restaurants and taverns was \$26,745. Selectboard members indicated they would consider the possibility of granting rebates on next year’s fees.

Ellis said state law specifically

prohibited returning fees to businesses that failed, so “there would need to be some state-level reform” for that to happen. He also noted that offering different rebates to different businesses might essentially “create new classes of licenses,” which might not be legal.

The board agreed to continue the discussion in the coming weeks.

Other Business

Mike Naughton, a Montague representative on the six-town “regional planning committee” investigating a potential consolidation of the Gill-Montague and Pioneer Valley school districts, reported to the board on that committee’s progress.

He said the committee had officially formed a planning board and a number of subcommittees, and had hired consultants to produce a report evaluating the financial and educational benefits and costs of consolidation. He said the committee had not yet seen the reports, and the consultants had “asked for more time.”

The selectboard officially appointed Suzanne LoManto to serve as assistant town planner. The position was created at the recent annual town meeting held last June. LoManto will also continue to serve as RiverCulture coordinator.

The board approved a request from the Traprock Center For Peace and Justice for an event commemorating the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. The event, which will take place on August 6 at 7:30 p.m., will begin at Peskeompskut Park, continue down Avenue A, and end on the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge with a candlelight vigil.

The board approved a memorandum of understanding with the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District for hauling and disposal of trash from the transfer station.

Ellis reported that the committee to recommend members to two advisory groups on the police department was not yet ready to make recommendations, but hoped to do so at the next selectboard meeting.

The board then adjourned to an executive session to discuss the purchase of real property. The next selectboard meeting will be on July 27.

LEGAL NOTICE of PUBLIC HEARING
LEVERETT CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Leverett Conservation Commission, in accordance with the Wetlands Protection Act (MGL c.131 §40), will hold a public hearing on Monday August 3, 2020 through a remote meeting beginning at 7 p.m. to review a Notice of Intent (File # 200-0193) for a studio building located within the Riverfront Area at 83 North Leverett Road. The hearing will also review the Request for Determination of Applicability for an electrical conduit in the Buffer Zone at 23 Cider Mill Road.

To obtain the link to the remote meeting contact the Conservation Commission (concom@leverett.ma.us). The applications are on file and are available for public inspection in the Conservation Commission Office by appointment at (413) 548-1022 ext. 3.

EVICTIIONS from page A1

two weeks ago that her research indicates between 20 and 28 million people will face eviction nationwide between now and September. This would amount to more than twice the number of people who were displaced from their homes following the foreclosure crisis in 2008.

According to a national survey by Apartment List, as many as 32% of American households did not make a full payment on housing, whether mortgage or rent, in July.

Although the state-level moratorium on evictions has been extended, other forms of government assistance are due to expire soon. This includes the Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation, which has boosted unemployment checks by \$600 for the past three months and will end on July 31.

With the official unemployment rate in Massachusetts breaking records back-to-back in May and June, at 16.5% and 17.5%, respectively, the end of this crucial benefit could leave more residents unable to pay their bills.

Citing a June 2020 report by Boston tenants’ rights group City Life/Vida Urbana, the *Boston Globe* reported that if and when eviction proceedings will be allowed to move forward, they will disproportionately affect neighborhoods with more people of color. “We are facing what could be dramatic levels of homelessness, and neighborhood and city-wide instability,” City Life executive director Lisa Owens told the *Globe*.

The statewide moratorium has also given homeowners the option of forbearance on their mortgage payments, effectively delaying payments due during the pandemic until the end of their mortgage term. Denise Coyne, chief operations officer at Greenfield Savings Bank, says 549 borrowers have taken advantage of this offer at their bank alone.

“What we ask is that people call us, and whatever they’re experiencing, we’ll try to work with them,” Coyne told the *Reporter*. “We need to make sure we can help them with their payments so that they can concentrate on themselves and their families.”

Coyne added that GSB is also focusing on making sure the 636 businesses they helped obtain Payroll Protection Program loans now get their loans forgiven. “We’re very proud that we have both these programs in place,” she said.

While the US House of Representatives passed a bill in March that would allocate \$100 billion to rental assistance and ban evictions for a year, sources say this bill has lost momentum in the Republican-controlled Senate.

At the state level, the Baker-Polito administration has made some options for financial assistance available to renters and homeowners in Massachusetts. In addition to the state’s Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) program, which has provided some as-

sistance to families that are homeless or at risk of being homeless since 2005, a new Emergency Rental and Mortgage Assistance (ERMA) program will respond more directly to the impact of COVID-19.

ERMA provides eligible low-income households with direct funding for housing payments. A press release from the governor’s office last week said that the program “will expand eligibility for rental and mortgage assistance to more low-income households.”

Into the Legislature

Pamela Schwartz, director of the Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness, praised the extension of the eviction moratorium in an interview with the *Reporter* this week.

“It’s an excellent move, it’s good,” Schwartz said. “It allows us to pass laws.”

Schwartz pointed to two bills in the current state legislative session, which ends July 31: “An Act to Guarantee Housing Stability During the COVID-19 Emergency and Recovery” (HD.5166/S.2831) and “An Act to Ensure Equal Counsel in Eviction Proceedings” (H.1358/S.913).

“There is no doubt that there is still much work to be done to support those most in need as we continue to address the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic,” Natalie Blais, who represents the 1st Franklin District in the House, told the *Reporter*.

“While I am grateful to the Governor for recognizing the severe financial struggles that many residents of the Commonwealth are facing,” Blais said, “there are many aspects of HD.5166 that still need consideration. I have heard from a number of property owners who are struggling to make ends meet during the moratorium, and I look forward to a discussion on how we can best help them financially through a COVID-19 Housing Stability and Recovery Fund.”

“July 31 is a drop-dead date for these bills to pass,” Schwartz said. “These bills are urgent priorities.... It goes without saying that the economic impact of COVID-19 has really just begun. It’s going to be huge, and devastating.”

Schwartz said that at a recent regional meeting of housing advocates, “there were observations, shared across every community, that there were more faces, and new faces. There’s a waiting list for shelters [in Greenfield].... The anecdotal reporting, from people working close to the ground in their communities, suggests a meaningful uptick in the number of people” seeking emergency housing.

“The good news,” Schwartz said, “is we have leaders that recognize this threat and are prepared to respond to this threat.... All eyes, for these next ten days, are on doing what we need to do to get the legislature to pass these laws.”



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Each year, Greenfield Community College educates approximately 75 emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and 25-30 paramedics who quickly become the most sought after emergency medical services (EMS) professionals in the area.

For many, GCC is really the only choice for their training. "Every paramedic that I spoke to about the possibility of upgrading to paramedic certification advised GCC as the best way to go," says current student Keyanu Alvarado.

GCC offers two EMS tracks: a course for EMTs and a certificate program for paramedics, as well as continuing education classes. The EMT program is a one-semester, six-credit class (with a non-credit option) that prepares students to work for private or fire-based ambulance services or volunteer-based emergency services. The paramedic training is a 17-24 month program covering all aspects of advanced life support care and prepares graduates for any EMS setting.

GCC's EMS programs have earned their reputation by providing a rigorous and holistic education with faculty-practitioners who are at the top of their field. EMS students train to a national standard and they are expected to maintain an 80% grade average. To enter the paramedic program, students must have at least 75 patient contacts as EMTs. During their training they will complete 300 hours in a hospital setting and another 300 hours as part of a paramedic crew.

The emphasis on professional behaviors, such as integrity, empathy, verbal communication skills, teamwork, and respect, also makes the GCC programs stand out, as does their focus on critical thinking. Additionally, the coursework requires students to deepen their sensitivity to diversity, especially to cultural and linguistic differences.

The GCC EMS faculty is the most important factor in the quality of the program.

In addition to teaching, all faculty members work in the field and stay up to date on paramedicine. "We're constantly reevaluating the needs of our students and what challenges they will face in the field, and that's what shapes the program," says instructor Adam Hart, a decorated firefighter/paramedic in Wilbraham. Student Gianna Driscoll agrees: "The program does a great job of showing how far paramedicine has come and how far it's really moving in the future."

The college's technology keeps GCC students on the cutting edge of paramedicine. They are trained in simulation labs that allow them to truly replicate the experience of being out in the field. This includes the use of simulation mannequins that can mimic many aspects of human physiology to make the experience as real as possible, allowing students to learn from their mistakes without endangering any lives.

GCC has been able to maintain their level of training excellence even through the Coronavirus quarantine, when it has been crucial to prepare more front-line responders. With careful safety procedures in place, EMS students have been one of the only groups of students allowed on campus to learn the hands-on skills they need.

The quality of the GCC programs are clear in the results they get. Nearly all students pass their certification exams, which is well above the national average. Further, nearly all graduates have jobs when they complete the program, often with the ambulance services with which they train. The key to their success is summed up by Associate Professor Monty Ruff: "Our goal is to instruct students to be academically successful while developing as individuals who will be positive role models and members of the communities they serve. Learning to be a paramedic is only the beginning of their lifelong growth as human beings and as EMS providers."

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bearable under the tent. The one irritant at the outdoor location was a horde of tiny ants that crawled onto people’s legs. Several people moved their chairs to avoid anthills. After one citizen complained about the ants, moderator Richard Peabody said that if people heard pounding, it was him kicking the podium to shoo ants away.

All 29 items on the warrant passed, most of them unanimously. There were longer discussions of the Erving Elementary School (EES) budget, the fund for EV charging stations, official posting places, park maintenance, surplus property designations, and fee-setting.

School Planning

Voters asked whether the elementary school budget was sufficient to cover extra costs associated with safety precautions for COVID-19.

Union #28 superintendent Jennifer Culkeen said that the school will have additional costs in personal protective equipment (PPE), school nurse hours, and the technology budget.

Principal Lisa Candito said that the school might return to a town meeting to ask for additional funding, and would be applying for available reimbursements. The four schools in Union #28 are buying PPE in bulk to save money. She also said that class sizes would be smaller. “Because of the generosity of the town, we are in good shape as far as technology,” she added.

Culkeen said that as Union #28 makes plans, its staff is waiting for the state to pass its budget, so they will know the amount of state aid. “We are being as fiscally responsible and creative as possible,” she said.

Town administrator Bryan Smith said that school budget is based on “what we know now,” and that after the state sets its budget, changes can be taken up at a special town meeting.

Asked about school re-opening plans, Culkeen said the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education provided three models: in-school learning with social dis-

tancing; a hybrid of in-school and remote learning; and full remote learning. She said that “all are being worked on” for Union #28.

Electric Cars

Article 20 added a revolving fund for EV charging stations to the town bylaws. One resident asked, “Why are taxpayers in Erving putting in an EV charging station?” Another asked why, if she pays for gas for her vehicle, the town would subsidize EV charging. A third asked why the stations were considered “a municipal function, rather than a private function.”

Selectboard chair Jacob Smith said that one EV charging station was installed at the new library building as part of the Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design (LEED) certification, which resulted in extra state reimbursement for the building. He said the town is also applying for a grant to install three more stations in Erving Center, and that money paid for using them would pay for the cost of the electricity and an added administrative fee for the town.

Town counsel Donna MacNicol clarified that the article concerned setting up a separate account for charging station fees, not whether or not to install the stations. The motion passed unanimously.

Official Notices

Articles 22 and 23 eliminated the bulletin boards in Farley and Millers Falls as official posting places for town elections and meetings, and established the board at Town Hall and the town website as the official posting places. Town clerk Richard Newton explained that few people look at the Farley and Millers Falls boards.

An amendment to the motion would have added a requirement for the town to send a copy of town meeting warrants to each resident. MacNicol called that an “onerous responsibility,” because it would mean that if one resident did not receive a warrant by mail, the legality of the subsequent town meeting would be in question. This amendment was defeated.



Erving, like many neighboring towns, held its annual town meeting outdoors this year due to the coronavirus pandemic.

A second amendment added the entrance to the new Erving Public Library as an official posting place. When it was noted that there was no good, accessible location for posting at the new library building, library trustee Mackensy Bailey said the trustees would make sure one was created. This amendment, and the motion to establish Town Hall and the website as posting places, passed by a majority.

Odds and Ends

The meeting voted to accept a section of Massachusetts General Laws that allows town boards and officers to set fees for services, rather than having fees set by town meeting.

Several residents questioned why they should allow fees to be raised without citizen input. MacNicol argued that citizens would still have input, by voting elected officials out of office if they set unpopular fees. She said that state law requires that fees can only reflect costs to the town, so it is unlikely that fees would be set too high.

The relevant section of Massachusetts General Laws was accepted by a majority vote.

One voter questioned funding for

renovations at the Park Street Park, when other parks, such as Veterans’ Memorial Field, also needed work. Bryan Smith answered that the recreation commission had developed a multi-year plan for park renovation and maintenance, and that work was planned for Veterans’ Memorial Field in the future.

Another resident asked whether

the town could post a list of surplus property so residents could bid on it. Bryan Smith replied that any surplus property that had value was listed on the town website or the Around Town newsletter.

The motion to allow the selectboard to dispose of surplus property passed unanimously.



NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Keeping House

By KATIE NOLAN

At an Erving selectboard meeting held both before and after the annual town meeting on July 11, the board awarded the contract for work on River, Warner and Strachan streets to Jack Gonsalves and Sons of Ludlow, for \$484,820.

The board authorized town administrator Bryan Smith to hire a surveyor to produce a subdivision plan for Riverfront Park, and establish the boundaries of the municipal parking lot at Arch and West Main streets.

The former mill building and

one acre of land at the park were not intended to be part of the area permanently protected as parkland. According to Smith, the boundaries of the parking lot must be established before an electric vehicle charging station can be installed.

The selectboard and finance committee agreed to support a request from the library trustees for an increase in their annual stipend at the annual town meeting.

After the town meeting ended, the selectboard reconvened and approved the previously negotiated structured tax agreement with French King Solar LLC.

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federal level – the matter should be decided by town meeting, which could petition the state for special legislation to change the name.

A townwide referendum, Ellis said, may not be used to petition for special legislation, though a non-binding one could be held to “advise” on the matter. In a May 2017 non-binding resolution, Montague voters said they disagreed with the Gill-Montague school committee’s recent decision to eliminate the “Indians” nickname at Turners Falls High School by a vote of 1,233 to 432, with another 238 leaving the question blank after a call by supporters of the change to boycott it.

The planned industrial community was named in the 1860s after an adjacent waterfall, which was named in the 1820s in honor of Captain William Turner, who led an armed colonial massacre of Native people at the far side of the same waterfall in the 1670s and died later the same day.

A quorum of the historical commission was present at the meeting. Chair Ed Gregory said the commission held a neutral position on the proposal, and member David Brule suggested that they could “perhaps help mediate” a public discussion.

“I felt very strongly that to have a debate over the name ‘Turners Falls,’ on top of the whole police, Black Lives Matter thing, is more than this town should be asked to handle,” said member Jeff Singleton, referring to a special inquiry the selectboard is initiating over issues of policing.

The petitioners to change the town name did not speak at the meeting, but Denise Milkey, who started a rival online petition in support of not changing it, was in attendance.

“I felt that it was important that something like this go to the voters, and not just be decid-

ed by committee,” Milkey said. “How much is it going to cost? There’s a lot of factors, other than the emotional feelings that people have, simply regarding a name.”

“We need to take long, thoughtful, careful approaches to things like this,” Kuklewicz said.

The selectboard asked the historical commission to begin researching the topic, and Kuklewicz said the discussion might continue in a few weeks.

Policing

The selectboard discussed its police special inquiry. The plan has been for a screening committee to review and recommend applicants to two advisory committees, one on police community engagement and the other on equity and the use of force. It was not going as quickly as hoped.

Ellis said that 19 members of the public had sent in letters of interest to serve on the committees, but only 11 had completed an application.

Elliot Ezcurra and Laura Heisig both commented that the application seemed inaccessible. “I don’t have access to a printer at this time, and it’s a PDF,” Heisig said. “I’ve called the local library, and they’re doing some printing of forms.”

Ezcurra suggested “the two very specific topics that you all decided to advertise the groups as being about may have been narrower than people were hoping these discussions would be.”

Kuklewicz said the process could evolve, but the board wanted to “start making some progress, and not have something that took years to happen.”

Ellis clarified that the role of Dr. Paula Green, a consultant that the town has hired, will be “very circumscribed,” and that she would not be “setting the agenda or defining the topics.”

Singleton said that Green’s institute, the Karu-

na Center for Peacebuilding, “supported a lot of elements of the ideology of the Black Lives Matter movement, which I have very serious questions about,” and that he hoped the process would be open to other points of view.

Ellis said the advisory groups were a “starting point for public engagement,” and did not have to agree on recommendations to the selectboard.

The board extended the application deadline to June 20, and appointed a screening committee consisting of Kuklewicz, Ellis, Ezcurra, Ariel Elan, and Denise Aiken.

Other Business

The board appointed Max Pellerin to the airport commission for three years.

It voted to disburse \$4,662.66 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) grant funding to Aqua-Turf Irrigation LLC for work on Rutters’ Park in Lake Pleasant. Brian McHugh of the county housing authority, which administers the CDBG grants for the town, said it was the company’s final payment, and the town has received a certificate of final completion.

Kwamane Harris, the new executive director at the Brick House, introduced himself. Harris, who has a criminal justice degree and has been working in family and youth development, is moving to the area from Utah, and has offered to participate in the town’s inquiry on the police.

Michael Nelson, member of both the selectboard and board of health, was absent from the meeting. Kuklewicz publicly congratulated him and his wife on the recent birth of a son.

(For coverage of the board’s subsequent meeting on July 20, see page A7.)



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NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

Campus Checkpoint Prolonged

By JERRI HIGGINS

Representatives from Northfield Mount Hermon School (NMH) called into Gill’s selectboard meeting Monday night seeking an extension of the closure of Mount Hermon Road. Approval of Gill’s August budget, a report from the committee studying a six-town school district, and the disposal of old surplus equipment disposal were also on Monday night’s agenda.

NMH head of school Brian Hargrove, associate head Charles Tierney, and chief operating and financial officer Mary McEneany joined the conference call to address community concerns about the school’s request to continue the closure of the public road leading onto campus.

In a July 16 letter to the selectboard, McEneany and her colleagues pursued an extension of the Mount Hermon Road closure through June 2021, but the NMH representatives ultimately agreed with the selectboard approving its extension through December 2020, at which time the closure will be reviewed.

“I think the students’ safety is the main concern, but I do question the length [of the closure] going all the way to June 2021,” said selectboard member Greg Snedeker. “I think when the season changes, and we have weather issues, it might be good to revisit it at that time.”

“My concern,” said selectboard chair Randy Crochier, “is with the traffic pattern being changed, so that employees and visitors don’t go through Gill as often to get to the campus.”

“We have a great relationship, and we enjoy you as neighbors, but I don’t want to lose that [Main Road route],” said Crochier. “Your only entrance, at this point, is in the town of Northfield – which is concerning to me, but not something we can’t work around.”

“I want to echo the sentiment

about having a good, healthy, partnership with Gill,” said Hargrove. “I also want to be very clear that we want no diminution in [Gill’s] businesses. Frankly, I will drive a lot longer for Walker’s food – and that is candid,” said Hargrove, referring to Walker Widner, owner and chef at the Gill Tavern.

Snedeker and Crochier expressed worry that the road closure might create long-term driving habits leading people going to NMH to permanently bypass Main Road in Gill, which could cause a loss of business for Gill along Route 2 as well. “Temporarily, I have no concern,” said Crochier. “Long term is what my concern is.”

Snedeker acknowledged the importance of having a single point of entrance to the campus for contact tracing purposes in case of an outbreak of COVID-19.

“I think it’s important that [the gate check-in] is not just protecting the students, but the community at large,” he said. “The more tracing we have, and the more control we have over that – especially with so much traffic coming in and out of Gill for the purpose of NMH – it makes a lot of sense to have a centralized location... so we don’t have multiple entrances to NMH where we don’t know who’s coming and going.”

“Yes,” affirmed Crochier. “And, as the [regional] health agent: contact tracing is huge, and keeping people off campus is huge. Long term, I still have concerns that, inadvertently, it has a negative effect on Gill, and we need to be thinking about that.”

The NMH letter also addressed Mount Hermon Road residents’ concerns, with Hargrove stating it was only one resident of the road who took issue with its closure.

At the July 6 selectboard meeting, Mount Hermon Road resident Megan Bathory-Peeler described several non-NMH employees residing on the road who she said had

expressed their dissatisfaction with rerouted work commutes, and with having to sign in at the installed gate to return home every time anyone leaves campus. Bathory-Peeler also lamented being “cut off” from the larger Gill community in a way no other town residents are experiencing during this pandemic.

The NMH letter restated the reasons for the measures taken to create safety for NMH students and staff upon the school’s reopening, slated for August 24, while acknowledging the difficulty and inconvenience those safety protocols have caused.

Schools Reopening

Gill-Montague school reopening plans are not finished currently, Crochier said, but he expects those plans to be available soon.

Snedeker, who is a teacher at Stoneleigh-Burnham School in Greenfield, reported that his school is planning on a fully remote learning program to begin with.

“I know from speaking with other parents that there are mixed feelings,” he said. “Fully remote is not great to teach, it’s not great to learn, but it’s better than nothing, and I think there are a lot of parents that are hoping for some sort of hybrid program. We’re in a holding pattern, because a lot of schools haven’t announced [plans] yet.”

Crochier agreed that the school opening question is “all over the place.” He said that as a regional health agent who serves 11 towns with multiple school districts, he has heard concerns from many people.

“I’ll take a call from someone who cannot understand why the schools wouldn’t open,” said Crochier, “followed shortly thereafter by a call with someone who cannot understand why schools *would* open – and everything in between.”

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gating the formation of a larger regional school district out of the six towns in the current Pioneer Valley and Gill-Montague districts was not granted an expected extension on a state grant that ended June 30, due to the coronavirus pandemic. Snedeker said the representatives would likely “ask towns for a fairly small sum of money to help keep the planning board moving forward.”

The original proposal, which included Leyden, Bernardston, Northfield, Warwick, Gill, and Montague, has been further thrown into question after Warwick’s vote at their annual town meeting to leave Pioneer Valley.

Snedeker said the grant was used to examine “the financials, the logistics, the transportation, the programming, and all of the other things that come into the purview of combining two [regional] districts,” which he believed has never taken place in Massachusetts. A consultant group was then hired through the grant to project those findings for each district, combined and non-combined, over a five- to six-year period. The results should be available “in the coming months,” he said.

A public meeting will be scheduled once the planning board has considered the consultants’ findings.

Other Business

Asked by Crochier for an estimate on holding the annual town

meeting, town administrator Ray Purington said he thought it might be able to happen in late August or early September. Without an annual budget approved, Gill is operating on a monthly “one-twelfth” system.

Purington reported an increase to Gill’s August 2020 budget. A Council on Aging invoice of \$6,662, representing Gill’s 20% share of the Gill-Montague senior center director’s salary for August, brought the total monthly Gill budget to \$119,530.

A fire department surplus equipment declaration was approved, allowing the department to dispose of 1,900 feet of four-inch rubber hosing, which must be replaced after 20 years. Fire chief Gene Beaubien told the board that the department had 11,000 further feet of hose, and that he would know its status as soon as the department gets the full report on recent testing.

A \$225.02 sewer abatement was approved for water used to fill a swimming pool.

Purington said an announcement will be posted on the Gill website regarding a regional micro-enterprise assistance program for small businesses that have had negative impacts due to COVID-19. A \$690,000 federal Community Development Block Grant has been awarded to Greenfield, in collaboration with 24 other Franklin County municipalities, for the purpose.

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WEST ALONG THE RIVER

THE ZEN OF PORCH REPAIR

*It is good to have an end to journey towards;
but it is the journey that matters, in the end.*

— Ursula Le Guin

By DAVID BRULE

ERVINGSIDE – The back porch, which has served as my outdoor office, workshop, and observation post, has undergone its most recent and likely final transformation.

I jotted down this entry in the house journal, just the other morning:

After a long month of waiting, there's tremendous change here at the old house. The old porch has been removed, carted off, and rebuilt solidly enough to last another fifty years...

Indeed, there have been several incarnations of deck, the first being hammered into place by Monique and me back in the early '70s when we arrived at the homestead fresh from France and wanting a high and dry place just outside the back kitchen door. To sit in the sun and out of reach of the heavy morning dew that falls down here along the river, or the dampness that drifts in during the early evening.

Later the back porch deck was rebuilt in the '80s by the Old Boys and me. My father Art and his boyhood chum and lifelong next door neighbor Babe cloned a new deck into place and it lasted 40 years until just last week, when Renaissance Builders took it down. They carted away the old and embarrassed boards, punky wood and questionable undersides exposed now to the sun, off to the dumpster.

The Renaissance carpenters built a masterpiece of a deck. It took two weeks in blistering heat and tropical downpour, but now it's done and will outlive us all!

I often wrote about the zen approach to piecemeal repairing of the old porch, replacing rotting boards, hammering down stubborn nails, and getting back in touch

with the two gents, now long gone. In 2011 I wrote:

The current edition of the back porch, which some would call a deck, although our version doesn't quite aspire to that designation, was the work and creation of my father, his pal Babe and me, back in the '80s. Babe was a man of few words, dry wisecracks, and an early riser. If we mentioned a project to him, he'd be at the front door at 5:30 a.m. to get started. So, tampering with his work done years ago, even repairing his handiwork, had to be approached with respect.

I had always had a quiet fascination with this man Babe. I knew from snatches of conversation that he had been on the second wave onto the beach on D-Day. He had fought all the way to Paris and beyond. I once found a clipping from *Stars and Stripes* in my father's wartime foot locker that described neighbor Babe during the door-to-door street fighting in Paris.

It was reported that he had been part of the fight to drive the Germans out of the Montmartre neighborhood. As he was firing and reloading from a café doorway, the bartender reached out from behind him and handed him a glass of beer. Believe it or not, Babe turned it down and said: "*Nah, gimme a glass of water instead!*"

He gulped it down and was off down the street, on his way to get caught up in the Battle of the Bulge.

Babe made it back home to Turners Falls in spite of it all, with nary a scratch. But there were other wounds that you couldn't see. I do remember him next door, up late into the night, chain-smoking. He once confided in me that he couldn't sleep. Over and over again, German soldiers kept coming for him, and he kept firing, and firing...

He'd flick another cigarette

see WEST ALONG page B4



Ruby-throated hummingbird (Archilochus colubris).

The Brattleboro Museum Reopens with Seven Exhibits

By NINA ROSSI

BRATTLEBORO – I was eager to visit the new round of exhibits at the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center, but also nervous about sharing indoor space with strangers. The more I thought about it, though, and compared the probabilities of transmission of the virus at the museum with the risks of shopping at local supermarkets, the safer it seemed. Less people, no touching and taking things, and a larger space.

This vibrant space has been dormant due to the

ROSSI PHOTO



*Portrait by Steven Kinder of Carmen (2018).
Acrylic pastel, pencil on canvas.*

virus pandemic until just recently. Starting on June 18, visitors have been allowed on a pay-what-you-can basis, with attendance limited to 40 people at one time. While online reservations are encouraged, the odds are that you may walk in on any given day and find plenty of room to wander.

When I arrived at 10 a.m. last Friday the person at the desk said that attendance has not been anywhere near the 40-person capacity, and that compared to pre-virus data, the number of visitors was pretty much the same. Events may draw large crowds, but day-to-day traffic is low during the week at the museum, which sits at the southern end of Main Street across from Brattleboro's food coop.

The BMAC has a long history of mounting thought-provoking exhibits that reflect and embrace a wide swath of human experience. Issues of both global and local import are presented by artists featured in their galleries, and speakers, discussions, and activities are usually scheduled to engage the community.

Sometimes, of course, the gallery show is a purely aesthetic immersion – a concert from Yellow Barn music school, or a gallery full of Emily Mason's paintings – or there will be events aimed at bringing kids within the Museum's reach, such as the annual Lego building contest or the project where glass artists make sculptures based on kids' drawings.

One of the last shows I saw there featured portraits of people in the recovery community in Brattleboro, paired with narratives about their journeys into and out of addiction, mostly to opioids. Stories of cycling in and out of periods of being clean and using drugs can very quickly feel overwhelming, but having the portraits of these people, sharing space with them and their partners, pets, and children, elicited much empathy and hope for them. And always, the unsettling knowledge

see MUSEUM page B2

THE AUTHORS' CORNER: MAURENE GOO

By IZZY VACHULA-CURTIS

TURNERS FALLS – Happy July! Today I'm going to be reviewing *I Believe in a Thing Called Love* and interviewing the author, Maurene Goo. Enjoy!

I Believe in a Thing Called Love is about a girl named Desi who is very successful. She's the student body president, she plays varsity soccer, and she's planning on going to Stanford. Desi has succeeded at basically everything in her life, minus the romantic portion. Desi is a senior, and she's never had a boyfriend. Her friends always tease her about how terrible she is at all things love, including flirting.

Then Desi falls in love with a new student in their class, Luca Drakos. She decides that to win at love, she needs to make a plan. In Korean dramas, Desi observes that the girl in the movie always ends up with her true love. (Korean Dramas, or K-Dramas, are TV shows made in South Korea. They are popular all around the world because of how well known Korean culture is.) Desi creates a series of steps to follow to make Luca fall in love with her, and she gets help from K-Dramas.

This book is so so amazing! I finished it in one day, because it was so quick, fun to read, and uplifting. *I Believe in a Thing Called Love* reminded me a lot of *Somewhere Only we Know*, also written by Maurene Goo; *To All the Boys I've Loved Before*, written by Jenny Han; *10 Blind Dates*, written by Ashley Elston; *A Match Made in Mehendi*, written by Nandini Bajpai; and *When the Stars Lead to You*, written by Ronni Davis, all of which I have reviewed before.



This week our correspondent caught up with Maurene Goo, author of four young adult novels.

This book was so fun, and it was really exciting to read because it was so fast-paced and quick-moving. I would recommend *I Believe in a Thing Called Love* to teenagers or young adults who like romance novels, or just a quick fun read during the summer! I would also recommend this book to anyone who read and enjoyed any of the novels I thought were similar.

Now I'm going to be interviewing Maurene Goo!

see AUTHORS page B3

Pets of the Week



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Senior Center Activities JULY 27 TO AUGUST 7

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-betters@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 Senior Health Rides program is also suspended until advisories change. For more information, 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.

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MUSEUM from page B1

that, but for a twist of fate, the hard story might quite easily be your own.

Focus on Homelessness

Such is the feeling I got from looking at the main gallery exhibit at BMAC on Friday, which features portraits Steven Kinder painted of homeless people called *552,830*. The title refers to the number of Americans experiencing homelessness in 2018. Kinder has worked with this population for years, meeting with them and arranging to do their portraits, if they are willing, in exchange for the compensation he offers them.

The large, unstretched canvases hang from the ceiling and fill the left side of the gallery so that we need to walk among them, looking up. Painted in chromatic greys and browns on unprimed canvas, the eight-foot-long and six-foot-wide portraits present these rough sleepers in a way that we cannot distance ourselves from. There are no signs, tents, or other signifiers of homelessness and street life. We cannot look down on them, avoid their eyes, or cross the street.

The various characters also seem like familiar, recognisable personalities: the poses they strike, the expressions they wear, strike kindred notes and resonate with our shared humanity. Their hands fall at eye level to the viewer. Many are bundled in many layers of jackets, sweaters, and coats, and the zipper teeth, so carefully painted, seem to emphasize the importance of these barriers to the cold. Without a home, clothing shelters and protects.

There is something metallic about the paint, making the steel greys shimmer as we move around and between them. We can also see the lightly pencilled grid used by Kinder to enlarge the image from his reference material, adding to the frankness of these pieces.

Companion Exhibit, Bridge

On the platform between Kinder's show and a companion exhibit in a smaller rear gallery is a large cross made from cardboard signs held by rough sleepers and street people. These hand-lettered signs are asking for money, food, and shelter, while also expressing gratitude and blessings for any alms, and were assembled by Kinder into this cross.

Outer abstracts of far more intimate stories, they form the perfect bridge between Kinder's outer representations in *552,830* and the *Coffee and Conversation: Stories of Homelessness* exhibit in the Ticket Gallery behind it.

Coffee and Conversation is a multimedia project that started in Brattleboro in 2015. Artist Liz LaVorgna and filmmaker Wyatt Andrews brought together people who have stable housing with unhoused people over a cup of coffee, and filmed the conversations. Stills from the project are mounted on the walls along with QR codes which can be scanned with a mobile device to hear the recordings.

The project was updated by LaVorgna in 2019 and 2020 with follow-ups to the original stories, as well as new ones. Many of the original respondents had gained stable housing since their interview. A list of names memorializing those who died in the meantime was a somber note to these success stories.

Support for the project was provided by the Groundworks Collaborative in Brattleboro, a nonprofit providing shelter, food, and support



ROSSI PHOTO

A listening station in Roger Clark Miller's *Transmuting the Prosaic* exhibit.

services to families and individuals.

And More...

There are five more exhibits to enjoy at the BMAC that are quite different than these two on the homeless. I wish I could write about them all, but I will just give an impression of each instead.

In *Transmuting the Prosaic*, Roger Clark Miller, co-founder of the art punk band Mission of Burma, has created unique vinyl records based on unusual permutations: alphabetizing the lyrics of a song and assembling the chopped track into a new recording, penning the list of words on a record in white ink; scratching a few bars of a Bach fugue onto the surface of a blank record and then recording the results when played; soundtracking a short film of a Somerville intersection with the appearance of pedestrians, cars, and bikes triggering different sections of an orchestra.

And more. Record players line the walls so that you may play the recordings yourself.

For/While (2020.01) recreates artist Steven Rose's experience of a 2011 earthquake on the east coast. "I sat, transfixed by the sight above me – a ceiling full of eight-foot fluorescent light fixtures all swaying in concert, end-to-end, in the most orderly manner," writes Rose. "This sublime unfolding of chaos into order by nature has had a lasting impact on me ..."

Sit on a bench in the small gallery room, and zone out to the swaying fixtures overhead.

Silvestris, Wild and Untamed illuminates the process by which glass worker Wesley Fleming makes the detailed and lifelike botanical and insect sculptures that are displayed in a short hallway by the museum bathrooms.

Grit and Grace, Women at Work fills the large gallery room beyond the hallway with images of women working in rural areas around the world, taken by Alison Wright. According to information provided with the exhibit, women are 40% of the global agricultural workforce, yet own less than 20% of the land. These photo prints on aluminum show women working in some surprisingly challenging conditions,

from garment factories in Tunisia and Bangladesh to Nepalese motorcycle mechanics, to brickmaking in Rwanda – over two dozen fascinating scenes from around the world.

The exhibit catalogue tells the background story about each woman's job, how much they make, and a little bit of their situation. Many of these women are working to pay for school for their children. Many, like the motorcycle mechanic in Nepal, have managed to get training and microloans that boosted them into more skilled work, or provided capital for them to develop their own small businesses.

Postcards to Brattleboro, 40 Years of Mail Art is so absorbing that I sort of wish I had walked past everything else in order to ponder it first in the far-off South Gallery beyond Wright's show. Mail art by Stuart Copans ("Schmuel") and Chuck Welch ("Crackerjack Kid"), as well as other notable artist correspondents, are displayed in this large collection of intricate postcards and other mailable ephemera.

Decorated with rubber stamps, doodles, paintings, drawings, all these mailings are weird and beautiful. It's all culled from Copans' collection of over 25,000 artifacts. Lots to explore here!

Jazz are window treatments outside the museum created by Valley artist John Gibson, which transform the building into a hidey-hole for giant billiard balls. Gibson is known for his paintings of balls decorated with dots or stripes, and he's been doing them for 30 years. The black, red, and white balls in the windows of the museum are prints enlarged from a series of small paintings he did at the invitation of BMAC director Danny Lichtenfeld.

Check the BMAC website for several livestream events related to the current exhibits, which are up until October 12. The museum is open Wednesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Make an appointment to visit by going online at www.brattleboromuseum.org. The recommended admission price of \$10 is waived during the pandemic, in recognition of the financial hardship this has imposed on many, so the price is adjusted to pay-what-you-can.



MPD from page B3

district manager requesting an officer due to an employee who was terminated and then caused a disturbance. Store is now locked down and former employee is pacing in the parking lot. Situation mediated; employee has left. 3:13 p.m. Report of an intoxicated male falling over at Third and L streets, wearing a heavy jacket, shorts, and sneakers and carrying a red duffel bag. Officer spoke with involved male, who seems coherent and stated he was tired. 5:30 p.m. Report of party on Fifth Street yelling and screaming about people not giving him money. Unable to locate. 10:25 p.m. Caller from West Main Street reporting that her motorcycle was stolen out of the garage sometime between 5 p.m. yesterday and now; states two hel-

mets and a riding jacket are also missing. Officers on scene. Caller will check to see if the motorcycle may have been repossessed. **Saturday, 7/18** 3:47 p.m. Report of very loud party with over 100 people on Randall Road. Caller states people are talking on speakers with bands playing and multiple cars blocking the road. Officer reports noise is not excessive. Caller requesting to speak with officer re: their response to the call. Officer called reporting party back. 7:39 p.m. Report of a party where people are standing on the side of the street across from Element Brewing with a sign. Units advised. **Sunday, 7/19** 4:38 p.m. Report of a highly intoxicated male harassing pedestrians on East Main Street by screaming

obscenities at them. Officer advises incident not exactly as reported, but parties have agreed to get along for the night. 8:18 p.m. Second call about an intoxicated male on East Main Street who is sitting outside the caller's window screaming obscenities at him. Advised caller not to escalate situation. Officer reports all parties were advised at length to quiet down and separate into their own apartments. Nothing criminal at this time. **Monday, 7/20** 12:20 a.m. Party into station states that she just flipped her car on Hatchery Road after swerving to avoid an animal that ran out in front of her. Party walked to the station because she does not have a phone on her. AMR *en route*. Officer states vehicle is deep into the woods. Tow requested.



WEST ALONG from page B1

away from where he sat, and light up the next one in the pack, the tip burning red in the dark of 4 a.m....

But now that edition of the porch the old guys built is showing its age too, replacing a board here and there won't be too hard. I do have to rummage around for the tools however, since tools like to get up and change places on you when you're not looking. I've only got hand tools to use, that's all I really want. They are all hand-me-downs and require no electricity, need no nuclear-generated energy. Having no need to rush, neither to work fast, I can appreciate and enjoy direct contact with the wood, the direct contact with my work. I hear no shrill whine of an electric skillsaw, no mechanical repetitive firing of a compressor-driven hammer. I locate the handsaw, salvaged from the Old Camp on the Connecticut, before we closed it up and sold it... The back and forth, scree and scraw is music and rhythm, it produces fragrant perfume out of the sawdust. Besides, I can pause to hear the catbird in the lilacs, watch the yellowthroat in the flowers without my ears ringing with the scream of steel in wood. The hammer that pounded generations of nails for the generations of house dwellers here, a Millers Falls Tool Co. level and tape measure, a square and a number 2 pencil, they all came with the house. That's how it is when you live in the family homestead. One time I needed an adjustable wrench, and something led me to a toolbox lurking in a corner of the dirt floor cellar. Inside was the wrench I needed, left there 50 Christmases ago by an uncle who abruptly left us on a winter's night in darkest December, never to come back. That wrench did its job, called up from somewhere in the far reaches of faint memory, and after doing the

task it was meant to do, back to its spot it went, waiting for the next call to use... I move around the job, contemplating the angles, savoring the thrust of the saw, feeling accomplishment at the driving of a beautiful nail into a new pressure-treated 2 x 6. There were three of us, back in the '80s. But Babe and my father are gone now. I finish up this restoration alone. But this repair job brings us back full circle: to me replacing boards, getting in touch with the Old Guys and their workingman's wisecracks, bringing them forth in the silence between the blows of the hammer on nail, in the pause between the thrust and draw of the ancient handsaw.

Perhaps I could be sad about one more link disappearing, one more link connecting me to one or two generations that came before. But even the love of old things has at some point to give way to the practical, pragmatic and in many ways, the promise of future pleasure and comfort. For sure this newer version of my observation deck that will open out onto a sea of green, with hummingbirds in the bee balm in summer or a blanket of whiteness in winter, is enhanced by the fact that we'll no longer be breaking through weakening old floorboards or trip on stubborn nails that raise up their heads, needing to be hammered back down. The old guys that helped me build the old porch were far more practical and less sentimental than me. They'd love this new version of porch for sure, and would likely enjoy finally kicking back in one of these Adirondack chairs they built together and savoring an ice cold beer when the job was done, and well done. Yep, we'd all three of us do that. That is, except for Babe, who never drank.



Historical Quotations Corner

“Three miles above Turner’s Falls, Miller’s river empties into the Connecticut; and near its mouth is a fall of considerable height. Here also is another dam across the Connecticut, about 10 feet high. I apprehend these falls have been confounded with Turner’s; and hence the latter are sometimes called Miller’s Falls. They cannot, however, be said to have as yet any well established name. “For a reason which will be mentioned below, I ventured some eight or ten years ago, in a geological account which I published of the Connecticut valley, to denominate these falls, Turner’s Falls; and Gen. Hoyt, in his *History of the Indian Wars*, has given them the same designation. I am aware, however, how very difficult it is to make popular and prevalent, a new name for any natural object; although in the present case, I doubt not, that every man acquainted with the history of this spot, would say that to prefix the name of Capt. Turner to this cataract, is appropriate and just. “About 160 years ago, a party of Philip’s Indians, having joined those living in the vicinity, resorted to

these falls to take fish. On the 17th of May, Capt. Turner, from Boston, marched from Hatfield, with 150 men, and came by surprise upon the Indian camp the next morning at day light. The Indians being totally unprepared for an attack, fled in every direction: some springing into their canoes without paddles, were precipitated over the falls and dashed in pieces. Three hundred Indians, and but one white man, were killed. “Yet the Indians who escaped, being joined by others, fell upon Turner’s party as they were returning, and made a dreadful slaughter among them, killing 37, among whom was Capt. Turner. Will not the public do the justice to this brave but unfortunate officer, to send down his name to posterity, associated with that of the spot where he conquered and fell! “During high water, the roar of Turner’s falls may be heard from 6 to 10 miles. The magnificence of the cataract is greatly heightened at such a season.” — Edward Hitchcock, *Report on the Geology, Mineralogy, Botany, and Zoology of Massachusetts* (1833)

CONCERT REVIEW

Green River Festival 2020

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – The show must go on – and it appears the Green River Festival agreed with that thought. They decided to have what was called the Green River Festival on-air from July 10 to 12, with previously recorded live sets of performers that had played the festival before. It featured a huge amount of performers like they usually have on those days on the radio. The whole title of it was “Green River Festival on the Air: A Dream River Fantasy Festival.” The Northampton radio station 93.9 The River had it on the air. I listened to find out if it was any good, in terms of the festival that would have happened if not for the Coronavirus, which has postponed the live event until 2021. Because the Festival is a huge event in Greenfield, I thought it was a very cool topic to cover for an article. NRBQ is an interesting name to say the least for a band. The first song I heard sounded like pop

music to me, and the one after it sounded a little like a ballad, with some guitar playing. The third one I heard had better guitar playing, which made me think of “Jailhouse Rock” by Elvis. Charles Bradley has a good singing voice, which sounded good together with couple of backup singers and a guitarist. At one point he sang a ballad very well – his singing made it sound like blues music, which he continued to sound like throughout his performance. I liked him better than NBRQ. People seem to enjoy him from what I heard on this recording. He even did what I think was a love song at one point. Ladama sounded like a group I would see at the Wendell Reggae Fest launch party I covered. They sang a song not in English, and there was also a conga drum played. They said that their music was out of some South American locations they were from. It certainly had a unique sounding voice to it and sound too. Mavis Staples sounded like jazz to me. The singing was good too! I

believe they had an electric guitar being played. I believe I got confirmation that this wasn’t jazz because Muddy Waters was mentioned, and I think he was a blues performer. But the crowd listening to them loved them – they may have been one of the people’s favorites at a previous festival. Toots & the Maytals was a group with a keyboard player in it, which did sound good; however, I found the singing voices not to be impressive. Although they did sound unique – that’s one reason people might enjoy the group. That’s what I gathered from their applauding. I didn’t really care for them, though; I just couldn’t find much I liked about them. I decided to rank this special Green River Festival in order of who I liked the best from the first day of it: Mavis Staples was the best, and Charles Bradley was next. What made me like Mavis the best is that I liked her singing voice better than Charles’s. NRBQ wasn’t boring. I would call Ladama unique, and liked Toots & the Maytals the least.

MOVIE REVIEW

Becky (2020)


By SEAMUS TURNER-GLENNON

CHARLEMONT – The comic-actor to serious-actor switch is a career move which the biggest stars of Hollywood comedies have tried to make, to varying degrees of success, over the years. Jim Carrey famously made it work with films like *The Cable Guy*, *The Truman Show*, and *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*. Last year, Adam Sandler pulled it off in *Uncut Gems*. The latest actor to attempt this, however, is Kevin James, star of the sitcom *The King of Queens* and franchises like *Paul Blart: Mall Cop*. James takes on the role of the escaped convict and neo-nazi Dominick in the newly released thriller film *Becky*. That Sandler and James, both stars of *I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry*, are taking on serious dramatic roles in the span of about one year means more than that they simply tried to reinvent themselves as serious actors. It also gives us a look into the very nature of how comedic talent translates into the dramatic. Sandler, known for his loud, neurotic, hyperactive (read: annoying) style of comedy, plays Howard Ratner in *Gems*: a neurotic, obsessive, self-absorbed jeweler/gambler. Comedically, Kevin James is the polar opposite of Sandler: large portions of *King of Queens* feel like watching white noise on a low volume. James looks and speaks like the human equivalent of a nice but inexpensive cardigan one might pick up at an outlet store. As Dominick, though, his natural proclivity towards the mellow and calm only adds to the menace of his character. *Becky’s* plot isn’t really anything especially innovative on the part of its screenwriters. We follow the titular Becky (whose mother has recently died) and her father on a trip to their cabin in the woods, where they meet up with her father Jeff’s fiancée Kayla and her young son, Ty.



At the same time, however, white supremacist gang leader Dominick and his pack of cronies – none of whom seem nearly as committed to the whole “master race” thing as he does – escape from jail and break into the cabin, holding the family hostage in order to try and acquire a key hidden there which Dominick is convinced will unlock some amount of power allowing him to bring about the Fourth Reich of his dreams. Becky, having left the cabin in rage over her father’s engagement, is entered into a cat-and-mouse game with Dominick and his crew, which escalates when Dominick kills her father in front of her. Even though it’s a pretty standard home-invasion-thriller narrative, there’s something rather enticing about *Becky*. The performances from just about all the main cast members are engaging and well done. The narrative shows a pretty impressive amount of attention to detail (of all the criminals, Dominick is the only one to nearly never use profanity, seemingly out of some sort of fascist self-discipline routine). Some of the dialogue can read as clichéd and unrealistic, but ultimately not in a way that gets in the way of enjoying the actual film. At the end of the day, *Becky* is clichéd, and it’s not especially inventive – but it is a very enjoyable little chunk of modern genre filmmaking that doesn’t overstay its welcome and is quite honestly a blast to watch.

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Interview by J. BURKETT

TURNERS FALLS – We have been working on this interview with Id M Theft Able for a little while now. He is a really unique artist/musician from the Portland, Maine area who plays out here pretty often...

Trying to come up with an introduction to this interview was hard, so we found some words on his website (*kraag.org*) that seem to do a better job of describing than we could:

“Known for his insubordinate and virtuosic improvisational approach to electroacoustic music, Id M Theft Able’s performances consist of stream-of-consciousness vocal technique, performative manipulations and gestures with collected objects, as well as the use of an amplified wire and wood sculpture that amasses echoes, shrieks, crashes, and creaks.... He performs within and without the realms of noise, avant-improvisation, sound poetry, performance, etc. using voice, found objects, electronics, and whatever else is available. He has given hundreds of performances across four continents in various settings.”

Go check him out!

MMM: What are your earliest music playing/listening memories?

IMTA: The memory that feels like my earliest musical memory is getting babysat by my two aunts and watching them dance to that Steve Miller song “Abracadabra” on the radio. I had one of those handheld mini-arcade Ms. Pac Man games on my lap, and I remember thinking their dancing was funny.

In terms of music playing, I know my first instrument was a yellow Pianosaurus, though I have no clear memory of playing it. Later I had a little Casio keyboard that I wrote a couple of songs on. This would have been when I was around 7 or so. The first song I wrote was called “P.D.,” as in police department. It was meant to be the soundtrack to a cop car just driving around doing nothing.

MMM: Were you in school bands growing up?

IMTA: I joined the school band very, very late, but I was, yes. I turned up the first day of 11th grade. They asked me what I wanted to play, and I told them I’d learn to play whatever they wanted me to play. They handed me a tuba, probably because I’m large and can actually hold the thing.

MMM: Do your dreams ever influence your art?

IMTA: I once had a dream

where I had Shea Mowat “work with a basketball on stage,” which sounded great, so I made that dream come true. A lot of times when I’m performing in dreams, the lines blur and the media gets mixed.

I recall one dream where I lifted my left hand up and everything in the room was suddenly red. Not the red you’d get if you shined a red light on something, but everything was actually suddenly red, people and all. I wish I could pull that off.

MMM: Have any other musicians inspired your solo music?

IMTA: Oh, goodness, so many. It’d be impossible to narrow it down to a small pool. As much as by musicians, my music has been inspired by all kinds of other things too. Birds, baseball players, piles of garbage, weird pieces of wood... It all finds its way in there in one sense or another.

MMM: When you collaborate, is that a very different process from playing solo?

IMTA: It’s very different, yes. Almost all of my collaborations have been completely agenda-free with no preconceptions, almost strictly improv. I try not to have any ideas at all before we start playing.

Performing solo, there’s still a lot of improvisation, especially on stage; most of my live sets are probably at least 70 percent improv. But sometimes I’ll bring specific ideas, notions, arcs, or dare I say compositions on stage to try out. I always leave myself free to abandon those structures at any time if they’re not feeling right or somehow don’t have room to blossom because of the nature of the show.

I’d be open to doing more specifically structured or planned things with collaborators, but it hasn’t happened in years at this point.

MMM: Do you think that growing up in Maine has influenced you?

IMTA: Certainly. On top of growing up in the country where what few neighbors we had were elderly and there were no kids to play with, I was also shy on top of that, so outside of my cousins, I didn’t really have any close, regular friendships until high school. This left me with an inordinate amount of time to wonder and explore.

By the time I was actually making friends and doing social things with kids from school, I’d already started making weird tapes full of weird sounds – I was already well down the path.

There are also a lot of natural

themes that recur again and again. There I am banging on the branches of a dead tree again. There I am incorporating the river again. Here come the frogs.

With age I also recognize the sort of working-class Mainer aspect of what I do, a stubbornly DIY no matter what tendency in conjunction with extreme thrift – my equipment is generally very cheap, and quite often literal garbage – with a healthy dose of “leave me the fuck alone.” I also can’t help but notice that I grew up spending most of my time alone, and I also seem to be alone up there on stage most of the time...

MMM: What do you like most about West Mass?

IMTA: Of course, since I’ve been paying attention, there’s been a seemingly endless succession of performers from Western Mass that I admire. I love that it isn’t centered around a city (though it’d be cool to somehow see Springfield and Holyoke more involved.... surely there are folks doing excellent work there too?).

It’s nice to know you can go to a show out in the sticks and that it’ll almost certainly be well attended. There just always seems to be a lot going on out there. I wish it were ever slightly more closer, so I could visit more often than I already do.

MMM: Fave venues, spots, people?

IMTA: If I make a list of people I admire out there, I’m bound to leave people I love off. There’s just too many.

I have a lot of reverence for Cold Spring Hollow, which I strongly feel should be declared a national monument until it collapses. (Probably in 2025. That taxidermied cat will emerge safely from the rubble, though.)

MMM: Do you like any acoustic music?

IMTA: Tons! But do you mean some specific kind of acoustic music? The Folkways and Explorer Series sections of my record collection are large. Tons of classical music, too. I also record tons and tons of acoustic music of my own, as I think about it...

MMM: Is there a focus to the music you keep at home?

IMTA: Not really, no. I feel like my collection here doesn’t even fully reflect the spectrum of everything I like. I’ve sold off a lot of the valuable stuff, and as such my once-extensive hip hop cassette collection has dwindled down to nothing.

I still have a lot of the cassettes I had as a kid, which means there’s a lot of metal and classic rock still floating around. Lots of records and cassettes from other countries. Lots of experimental stuff, of course.

MMM: You have one solo vinyl LP, right? From a label overseas?

IMTA: Yeah, *Babb’s Bridge* was released by four different Belgian labels pooling their resources in 2009. I still love that record.

Nobody’s offered to do another once since, and I’m too poor to be financing an LP on my own. This is fine, though: I’m content to self-release stuff online, via CD-R, or on recycled cassettes.

MMM: So you still like metal and hip hop, then?

IMTA: Metal was the first music I fully and truly loved as a kid. My older brother was a metal head, and

my stoner uncles were all huge into Sabbath. I still love it to this day.

And when I say metal, I don’t just mean Slayer or Iron Maiden, but also Mötley Crüe, Warrant, things like that. I never stopped liking hair metal when you were supposed to, I just kept expanding my palette rather than rejecting my past (which felt, perhaps delusionally, rebellious as a ‘90s teen).

Whereas my metal fandom really probably only extends from the late ‘60s into the early ‘90s, my love of hip hop encompasses quite a lot of what’s happened so far. I like at least something from every era of hip hop to date.

MMM: What about Neil Young?

IMTA: I fucking love Neil. I’ll tell you a Neil story.

About ten years ago I was on a tour in the middle of the country, and I was massively depressed. I had just seen my longtime but now semi-estranged girlfriend for what I was certain would be the last time (it was) and it didn’t go well. I left and got a fantastically expensive speeding ticket trying to get the hell out of that particular state. I’d had several nights of either sleeping in the car or not sleeping well at all with my mind spinning endlessly. I called home to hear that my parents’ dog was dying and almost certainly wouldn’t be around when I got back.

Of course, being in a car by yourself for hours on end lends itself to, if you’re so inclined, tearing yourself apart. What am I doing here? What the hell am I even doing with my life? Does anyone really care about this music I’m playing anyway? This is also one of the first times I can remember feeling old (which, ten years on, seems a rather quaint notion).

In short, I was massively depressed, driving on exotically flat Midwestern highways, feeling like I was an alien that nobody cared about on an alien planet. One of the recurring symptoms of my depressive waves is that I tend to listen to an album over and over and over and over again. In this case, Neil’s *Harvest* was in the tape deck, and for the better part of a week almost never came out. I recall trying to listen to other things, but I’d just go back to *Harvest*.

At some point, growing increasingly disgusted with myself and my inability to appreciate (as I usually do) the glory and beauty of being privileged enough to actually being able to travel around and share my music, I gave myself a sort of pep talk, deciding I really needed to snap out of the haze, and that the first step of doing that would be to pop that friggin’ *Harvest* cassette out of the tape deck and never fucking listen to it again. The music didn’t even sound good to me anymore – the repeated listenings had sort of rubbed me raw – but it was as

though I didn’t think I deserved any other sensation.

I’d made the decision to pop the tape out during “A Man Needs A Maid,” but decided that I would listen to “Heart of Gold” one last pitiful time, then eject the tape. (Because I’ve really never enjoyed “Are You Ready for the Country?” Apparently I’m not.) I limped through “Heart of Gold,” not really particularly enjoying or even hearing it, then popped the tape out.

As it does, the radio automatically kicked on. There was a moment of silence, and then “Heart of Gold” started again, this time playing from whatever Midwestern radio station frequency the radio happened to be tuned to.

Something about this coincidence was just too much. It was like a defibrillator paddle shock to the brain. I remember sitting there agape, in my tired, raw, altered state, feeling like the universe was demanding that I *actually* listen to this song despite having heard it probably 30 times in the last several days. It was the first time I ever actually really paid attention to the lyrics and, in my altered state, it seemed to be explaining to me what, exactly, I was doing at that moment. It felt like an answer to the rather cruel questions I’d been beating myself up with for days. “I want to live, I want to give / I’ve been a miner for a heart of gold....”

I instantly started crying, and instantly felt better. It sounds ridiculous, but that moment felt like a personal epochal shift. I continued on with the tour and with life still sad but newly determined and focused, looking forward. Maybe I would have come to that point anyway, but that coincidence accelerated the process.

Impromptu, without thinking about it too much, Neil top ten: Will To Love. Tired Eyes. Albuquerque. Lotta Love (*Live Rust* version). Touch the Night. Transformer Man. Like a Hurricane. Everybody’s Alone. Only Love Can Break Your Heart. Shots.

After the Gold Rush is probably my favorite record.

MMM: Any specific music plans for the future?

IMTA: I have a never-ending avalanche of music and art ambitions. I heard Björk say in some interview once that this sensation was like trying to push an ocean through a straw, and I thought that was an absolutely perfect way of describing the sensation. The struggle is picking one project, or at least narrowing it down to ten to work on.

So many albums I need to finish. So much to do. Whenever I die (and I’m hoping that’s a very, very long time from now), I will definitely be obsessing over the projects I didn’t finish and the ideas I never realized. So it goes.

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Aquí se habla español

Esta es la página en español del periódico **The Montague Reporter**.

Aquí podrán encontrar cuestiones acerca de la comunidad hispana, eventos de interés, curiosidades, y noticias en español. Si quiere colaborar o compartir alguna sugerencia, envíenos un correo electrónico a: spanish@montaguereporter.org. Esperamos su participación.



Educación en Tiempos de Pandemia

Por **VICTORIA MAÍLLO DE AGUILERA**

TURNERS FALLS – Durante estos tiempos de pandemia uno de los temas más preocupantes para los ciudadanos de pie es y sigue siendo el tema de la vuelta a las aulas. En el momento de escribir estas líneas nada parece todavía decidido respecto a nuestras escuelas públicas ya que hay muchos factores en juego.

La situación en cuanto a las cifras de contagiados por el virus no ha mejorado respecto al 15 de marzo cuando el gobernador Baker decidió cerrar temporalmente las escuelas por tres semanas en Massachussets¹. En este momento todavía no se saben exactamente cuáles son exactamente las formas de transmisión del virus, la capacidad de contagiar a otros de los pacientes asintomáticos y las consecuencias de la enfermedad en niños y adultos. Lo que sí sabemos es que la vacuna todavía está lejos de estar lista para ser administrada a la población en general.

Las escuelas públicas todavía no han tomado una decisión final acerca de cómo va a ser la situación en los edificios escolares. Administraciones, maestros y familias están de acuerdo en que los niños deben volver a clase, pero la pregunta es cómo puede hacerse sin poner en peligro la salud de estudiantes y maestros.

¿Qué se va a hacer si un estudiante o un familiar cercano da positivo en COVID-19? ¿Y qué va a ocurrir si es un maestro el que recibe el positivo?, ¿tendrá que utilizar sus días de enfermedad para la cuarentena? Hay muchas preguntas como estas que están todavía en el aire.

Nos puede dar una pista sobre la posible situación el que Deborah Davis, presidenta de MASC² y Robert Baldwin, presidente de MASS³ emitieran una carta conjunta el viernes 10 de julio en la que anunciaban la cancelación debido a COVID-19 de su conferencia anual de superintendentes y comités escolares que debía celebrarse del 4 al 7 de noviembre de 2020 y que será sustituida por talleres online.



La biblioteca de GCC antes de la pandemia.

Lo único que por ahora sabemos segura es la información facilitada por Jeffrey Riley, Comisario de Educación Primaria y Secundaria del estado de Massachusetts, que envió una carta abierta el 25 de junio anunciando la apertura de las escuelas siempre siguiendo una normativa de salud. En esta carta se dice que los posibles escenarios podrán variar de aquí a agosto y por ello se contemplan tres opciones: las escuelas podrán abrir completamente, de una forma híbrida o en el peor de los casos continuar con la enseñanza online.

La normativa se irá adaptando durante el verano para acondicionarla a las circunstancias.

En la última comunicación de la conserjería de educación no hay instrucciones acerca del transporte escolar, ni acerca de las actividades deportivas extraescolares. Si se especifican algunas normas, entre ellas las que enumero a continuación:

- Los estudiantes a partir del segundo grado⁴ deberán llevar una mascarilla dentro del edificio de la escuela y dicha mascarilla debe ser comprada por los padres o guardi-

anes. Los estudiantes que estén en cursos inferiores no deben usarla obligatoriamente, pero se les ruega que lo hagan si fuera posible. Se deben usar mascarillas transparentes si hay estudiantes que tengan problemas de audición. Es posible también usar escudos protectores si por alguna razón de salud los estudiantes no pudieran llevar mascarilla.

- No será necesario tomar cada día la temperatura a los estudiantes, aunque los familias o guardianes deberán ser responsables de hacerlo, y no deberían enviar niños enfermos a clase.

- Las personas dentro del edificio de la escuela deberán mantener una distancia de seguridad de entre 3 a 6 pies por lo que la cafetería, el comedor o el gimnasio podrían ser usados para otras actividades académicas si fuera necesario para mantener la distancia de seguridad.

Las escuelas rurales de Massachusetts llevan peleando con la administración durante años para recibir más fondos del estado de Massachusetts, y también del gobierno federal. La crisis económica derivada de COVID- 19 no parece

que vaya a solucionar ese problema institucional y habiendo enseñado en una de esas escuelas sé que el presupuesto para material escolar, actividades, y libros es muy limitado.

Si el presupuesto ha sido siempre limitado para este tipo de gastos, ¿De dónde se van a obtener los fondos para mascarillas, guantes o geles hidroalcohólicos? ¿Cómo se va a reducir el número de estudiantes por aula si los fondos del estado han hecho que se produzcan cortes en la contratación de maestros? Muchas de las aulas en nuestras escuelas ni siquiera tienen ventanas y los conductos de ventilación están anticuados y no funcionan correctamente. Algunos de los especialistas que tienen que trabajar con estudiantes individualmente no tienen un espacio y deben trabajar en una especie de armarios.

Y, por último, y no menos importante las normas dictadas por la conserjería de educación de Massachusetts mencionan siempre el hipotético caso de que un estudiante enferme o tenga un condicionamiento de salud previo que no le permita estar en el aula de clase, pero no menciona en ningún momento a los miembros de la facultad o consejeros que puedan pasar por la misma situación.

La Asociación de Maestros de Massachusetts (MTA) y otros dos grandes sindicatos de Massachusetts enviaron el 15 de julio una carta al Departamento de Escuelas Elementales y de Secundaria de Massachusetts (DESE) en la que dicen que la vuelta a las escuelas públicas debe aprovechar la vuelta a las aulas como una nueva oportunidad para adaptarnos a una nueva realidad. En la carta expresan su preocupación

especialmente por el estado de los edificios, las nuevas habilidades que van a necesitar los maestros y la preparación ante el trauma de estudiantes y maestros.

En la propuesta se habla de cuatro fases de reapertura, la necesidad de materiales de protección higiénica, y la supresión de los MCAS.

En cuanto a las universidades, Greenfield Community College informó a su plantilla que la mayoría de las instalaciones permanecerán cerradas durante el otoño de 2020 y los programas de estudios se llevarán a cabo de forma no presencial en todos los casos en que sea posible. La instrucción puede ser asincrónica o sincrónica, en línea o híbrida en función de la materia. Durante el verano todos los miembros de la facultad hemos recibido talleres en línea voluntarios y obligatorios para poder ejercer la docencia de forma no presencial.

La decisión fue adoptada por GCC durante la primavera y al ser una universidad no residencial, es decir, los estudiantes no viven en el campus, hace menos complicada tomar esa determinación.

UMass-Amherst ha anunciado a través de su Canciller, Kumble R. Subbaswamy, que la mayoría de las clases serán enseñadas a distancia y apuesta por un cambio en el calendario en el que el curso escolar empezará antes de las fechas normales cada año, trasladándose el inicio del curso escolar al 24 de agosto, y finalizará durante las vacaciones de Acción de Gracias. Los exámenes finales se realizarán a distancia durante ese período, y por ello los estudiantes no tendrán que volver al campus después de noviembre.

Los estudiantes de primer año, y los que se hayan transferido de otra institución serán especialmente bienvenidos a residir en el campus bajo unas estrictas medidas de salud pública e higiene. Estas mismas medidas serán puestas en práctica en el caso de que los estudiantes elijan vivir en apartamentos fuera del campus de UMass.

Para complicar aún más la situación en las universidades, el 8 de julio el presidente Trump anunció que los estudiantes internacionales que estuvieran tomando clases en instituciones académicas que fueran a llevar a cabo sus programas completamente online no podrían recibir un visado para entrar en territorio estadounidense y tampoco podrían permanecer en el país en el caso de que encontrasen ya aquí.

Harvard University y MIT denunciaron a la administración Trump puesto que consideraban esta medida como una forma de presión para forzar a abrir sus aulas. El 14 de julio debido a la presión ejercida la administración Trump ha decidido dar marcha atrás a esa decisión y no la llevará a cabo.

• **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 19 de agosto de 1:30 pm a 2:30 pm.

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, y sirope de arce. Se puede pagar con SNAP, P-EBT, tarjeta y efectivo. A partir de esta semana se puede pedir antes 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 en la página de Facebook (www.facebook.com/GreatFallsFarmersMarket) donde también pueden acceder a su Google Doc.

• **Community Action** ofrece ayuda para pagar facturas, renta y alquiler, alimentos, utilidades, Internet y solicitudes de SNAP. Llame al (413) 475-1570 para concertar una cita o

en su página web: www.communityaction.us

• **Brick House Community Center** quiere expandir el acceso a alimentos en estos tiempos de incertidumbre a la comunidad de Turners Falls y sus alrededores. No es necesario presentar pruebas de ingresos o residencia. Si usted o alguien que usted conoce necesita alimentos preparados, o semillas de alimentos para sembrar, comuníquese con el correo electrónico: foodresourcesbrickhouse@gmail.com o llame al (413) 800-2208. Su información es confidencial y solo se comparte con el personal necesario o voluntarios que entregan los alimentos.

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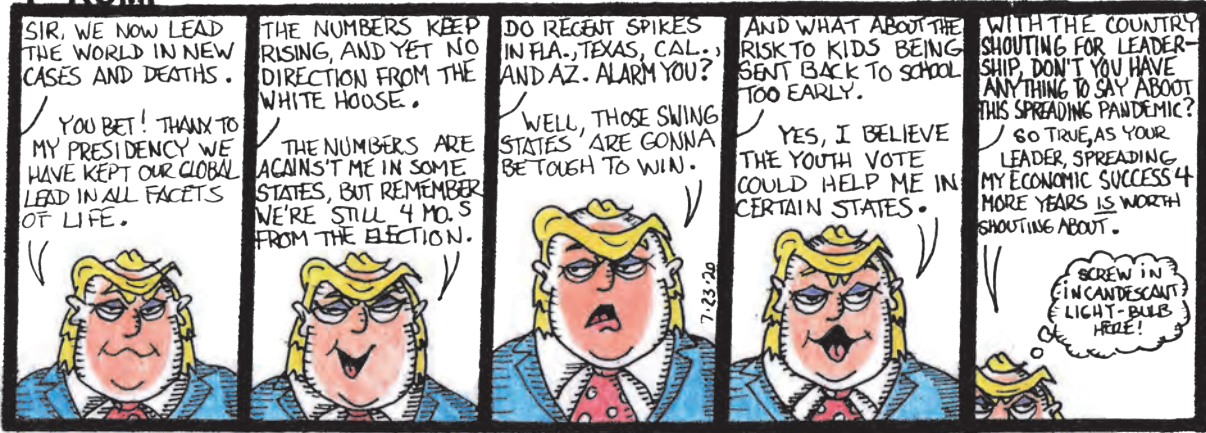
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♥ NOTES FROM THE HEARTFELT CAFE ♥
♥ BY TROUBLE MANDESON ♥

GREENFIELD – Let’s talk about berries for a moment.

Everyone seems to have their favorite. Some are lovers of summer’s earliest, the jewel-toned, sweet and juicy strawberry; others wait for the day the first blueberries, raspberries, and blackberries appear, plump, ripe, and ready for picking.

Whether topped with a quivering mound of vanilla-tinged whipped cream or served as a glistening sliver of jam pried from those ubiquitous plastic rectangles found on every table in every diner in America, berries are one fruit whose harvest we eagerly await year after year.

I grew up in Los Angeles, as did my grandmother and my father, who were raised not far from the Baldwin Hills Crenshaw mall, built in 1947, the precursor to shopping malls across America. In the mall near my childhood home, anchored at each end by a Sears and Roebuck and a JC Penney, was a small shop where pies were sold either whole or in slices. The shop was called Marie Callender’s – this was years before the grossly excessive restaurants of the same name popped up in – you guessed it – malls.

My mother, a prodigious cookie baker, had no pie skills (a disappointing trait I have apparently inherited), and I would go with her to buy our holiday pies. I loved to press my nose against the glass, surveying the rounds and triangles of pumpkin (my favorite), lemon meringue, blue-black-straw-or-boysenberry* and, totally unappealing to everyone but my mother, strawberry-rhubarb. None of us appreciated the pairing of sweet strawberries with the earthy, too-tart flavor of rhubarb, but to my mother it was a

* The boysenberry was a hybrid berry created in the 1920s in California by a farmer named Boysen who combined a blackberry, a red raspberry, and a loganberry. He gave his last six wilted plants to a man named Knott whose country restaurant began serving biscuits and boysenberry jam. It grew into Knott’s Berry Farm, now a large amusement park rivaling nearby Disneyland.

reminder of her childhood in Michigan.

Now, as a transplanted New Englander, I not only grow rhubarb in my yard, but I cook with it in a variety of ways, including strawberry-rhubarb compote for yogurt or ice cream, rhubarb chutney to complement roast chicken or pork, and even adding it to sautéed savory greens for a citrusy flavor.

Out here in July, the strawberries are gone, unless you froze, dried, or canned some, and maybe you’ve got some second-growth rhubarb still left out in the garden.

But blueberries, raspberries, and blackberries are here. Across the Pioneer Valley, farm stands, stores and pick-your-own fields are bursting with the ripening fruit – watch those thorns! – and our kitchens are filled with the sweet smell of jam simmering on the stove and crumbles, cobblers, and crisps browning in the oven. Parents are filling baby snack cups up to the top with sweet ripe berries in the morning and then muddling some for their own cocktails in the evening. And we will somehow find a way to consume the large quantities of berries we felt compelled to pick.

As a kid, I once went blueberry picking in Oregon with my family and another; between the 12 of us we managed to pick



A colander full of fresh blueberries and raspberries.

a huge quantity of berries, which we consumed in various ways for so many days that I recall absolutely nothing else of that visit except for what I call “The Blueberry Incident.” I’ve never been very fond of

blueberries since then.

With so many berries in season, I thought I’d share some of my favorite recipes with you. I’m most fond of crumbles because no matter the fruit, they are quick, easy, and incredibly delicious; a dish of hot, bubbling, caramelized fruit topped with oats, brown sugar, and butter. It will be tough to find anyone who won’t devour this dish, especially when paired with whipped cream, plain yogurt or sour cream.

There’re so many ways to enjoy berries: by the handful, over cereal or oatmeal, whipped in shakes and smoothies, made into popsicles and sorbets, and served in fruit salads – the many ways to enjoy these delectable fruits are endless. I hope you enjoy these recipes, and create some of your own.

Trouble Mandeson is a West Coast transplant who lives with wifey and cat in Greenfield. She is a talker, writer, artist, and all-around mensch. Find her at trouble-mandesoncopyediting.com for your grant writing and copy editing needs.

BERRY CRUMBLE

I use about 2 to 3 cups of any type or combination of washed, de-stemmed, whole **berries**. Other than strawberries, I don’t tend to slice or cut the berries, but put them into the greased baking dish whole. Sprinkle the berries with 2 to 3 tablespoons of **sugar** (or your choice of sweetener), more if you like it sweeter or if the berries are tart. Mix up equal parts **oats**, **flour**, and **brown sugar**. Add in ¼ to ½ cup of cold cubed **butter**, using a fork or pastry cutter or your fingers to make a crumbly mix. Cover fruit with mix and bake at 375° for 30 minutes or until fruit is bubbling up through the crust. Eat hot or cold with any topping you enjoy.

BERRY SORBET

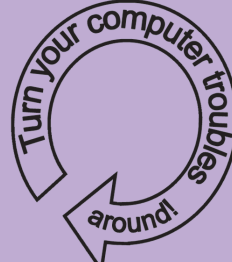
In a food processor or blender, pulse 5 cups of **berries** and 1 cup of **water** to a smooth consistency. Press berries through a fine mesh sieve over a bowl to remove the seeds or skins. Add 1 cup of **sugar**, 1 teaspoon of **vanilla extract**, and ½ tablespoon of fresh **lime juice** to the bowl, and whisk until sugar is dissolved. Freeze and you can either eat as is, or churn in your ice cream maker.

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