

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 18 – NO. 40

also serving Erving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

SEPTEMBER 10, 2020

Second Yoga Studio Closes In Downtown Turners Falls

By SARAH ROBERTSON

TURNERS FALLS – A second yoga studio in town has closed its doors for good, its owner citing financial woes and wariness over the lingering effects of the pandemic.

“I had the honor of meeting so many incredible people through this space,” Great Falls Yoga owner and instructor Elena Mamatas told the *Reporter*. “The studio was a beloved little hub of community connection, and I will miss it, and everyone who poured their magic into it, very much.”

Mamatas announced the closure of the Third Street studio in an email newsletter on Tuesday.

“We were hopeful about resuming our classes this month,” she wrote, “but given the current climate see **STUDIO** page A4

SUMMER'S LAST STRETCH



Reader Christina Trincherro shared this photo of sunflowers in bloom at a farm along Route 47 in Sunderland.

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD Selectboard Objects to Closure of Care Center

By JEFF SINGLETON

“Some of us were born in there years ago,” said Montague selectboard member Chris Boutwell during a discussion of the closing of the Farren Care Center on Montague City Road during the board’s meeting on Tuesday.

The Farren began as a traditional hospital administered by the Catholic Sisters of Providence. It became an acute care facility in the 1950s, and was transformed in the late 1980s to its current status as a unique facility for people with multiple mental health problems. The center is a major employer in Montague. Last month the Farren’s current owner, Trinity Health of New England Senior Communities, announced plans to move its residents to an underutilized facility in Holyoke which is being sold to a for-profit corporation named iCare Health Network.

The selectboard voted to oppose this plan after hearing an impassioned plea by David Roulston, a Greenfield lawyer who represents a number of residents at the Farren.

Roulston told the board that he believed that attempts to move Farren residents to Holyoke in the midst of the pandemic was “very cynical.” “Why are we doing this right now?” he asked, noting that there was no emergency that required the building’s immediate closure. He argued that residents and their families would have serious difficulty searching for alternative facilities under COVID-19 restrictions, and said that he had not been able to see several of his clients for months.

Roulston also noted that Farren see **MONTAGUE SB** page A7

GILL-MONTAGUE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

All-Remote Learning Extended At Least To October 12

By MIKE JACKSON

Classes at Hillcrest, Sheffield, and Gill elementary schools, Great Falls Middle School, and Turners Falls High School start on Monday, but they will start fully remotely, and remain that way until at least October 12.

Superintendent Brian Beck reported to the regional school committee on Tuesday that preparations to make the school buildings safer were moving slowly. A contractor was still assessing the buildings’ heating and ventilation systems, and had yet to start making improvements to their filters.

At Beck’s recommendation, the committee voted that “hybrid” learning will not begin on October 5.

The decision will be revisited every two weeks, and any vote to reopen school doors would be followed by a three-week preparation period that includes hiring more staff.

Though the district’s initial outline of a hybrid learning model included splitting most grades into a Monday/Tuesday group and a Thursday/Friday group, Beck said the pandemic advisory team which meets weekly has been considering models such as “quarter cohorts” and other ways to safely bring in “priority populations” for face-to-face instruction.

Gill-Montague Education Association president Karl Dziura read a statement on behalf of the union arguing that the benefit of hybrid learning will be minimal, as the

see **GMRSD** page A4



Sixth-grade math teacher Dan Caren, principal Joanne Menard, and vice principal Thomas Gaffigan distributed Chromebook computers on Wednesday to families of Great Falls Middle School students who “drove by” the school to pick them up.

Turners Water Customers May Be Protected From Shutoffs

By MIKE JACKSON

TURNERS FALLS – The recent announcement by the Turners Falls Water Department that it would soon begin shutting off water to nonpaying district customers prompted one *Montague Reporter* reader to call in to ask:

Can they do that?

The department, legally part of the Turners Falls Fire District rather than the town of Montague, bills customers semi-annually; the bills for water usage from last October through March went out on May 1, and were due within 30 days. Traditionally, the department attempts to collect late bills for three months, gives a final warning, and then – theoretically – shuts off service to those who have not paid.

A statewide moratorium issued by governor Charlie Baker in March, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, protected Massachusetts residents from most shutoffs of essential utilities – gas, electrical, and water.

“Until the state of emergency... is lifted or you receive further communication from the see **WATER** page A2

Quilting on Chestnut Hill

By DONNA PETERSEN

MONTAGUE – Driving up Chestnut Hill in Montague after going through Leverett, the green of the forest surrounds and soothes you. You approach Bob Walker’s driveway and to the right is a riot

of color; Bob raises day lilies and Asiatic lilies, and has plenty of other flowers to dazzle the eye. The unique post-and-beam house on land that Bob and his wife Muriel (better known as Boots) have lived on since 1964 is straight ahead, and you can see a light on in a corner of the living room. This is where Bob’s fabric magic show is created.

The Valley has many wonderful quilters, but at 87 years old, Bob is probably unique. A retired UMass professor and director of the environmental science program there, he now puts his time, energy, and creativity into his lily garden, his quilting, and also his beer brewing. He is helped with the garden and beer brewing by his friend and majordomo Wendy, and by his miniature schnauzer Hamish.

When Bob retired see **QUILTS** page A5



Bob Walker’s latest quilt, the first one he has completed using his new long-arm quilting machine.

Lil Fiske’s Quiet Legacy

By JERI MORAN

MONTAGUE – When Lillian Fiske, 97, passed away on August 29, Montague Center lost a good friend and a valuable resource of the history of the village and its citizens. And yet many people didn’t even know her. She had a low-key way about her, but what a storehouse of knowledge!

Her official obituary states that she was born on July 18, 1923, the daughter of Helen M. (Whitney) Eddy and Thomas H. Eddy. She lived almost all her life in Montague Center, and was educated here, graduating from Turners Falls High School in 1941 and the Burbank Hospital School of Nursing in Fitchburg in 1943.

What she did next is not in her official obituary, but Ann Fisk, Lillian’s friend and another very active citizen in Montague Center, tells me: “Lil was a US Cadet Nurse during WWII. This group of nurses addressed the nursing shortage during the war. Of note, this is the only uniformed corps members



Lillian Fiske.

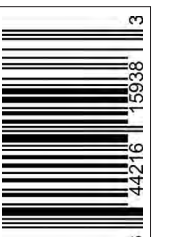
from WWII not to be recognized as veterans. There is currently a bill in Congress to correct this, but by the time the bill is passed, there won’t be anyone left! Lil certainly will be honored in May at the annual Memorial Day service on the Common.”

She married Allen Fiske in New York in 1946, and they moved back to Montague Center, where they had three children. Lillian worked as a registered nurse, and later as an office manager at UMass-Amherst.

see **FISKE** page A5

Skimpier Than Usual... Blame It On The Monday Holiday

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The Montague Reporter

"The Voice of the Villages"

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About Face Computing

Founded by

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August 2002

WATER from page A1

Department, whichever comes first, the Companies shall not shut off gas, electric, or water service to any of their customers for failure to pay a bill or any portion of a bill," Department of Public Utilities (DPU) chairman Matthew Nelson wrote to investor-owned utilities on March 24, adding that those companies can also not "threaten" to take the same action.

Though municipal utilities such as the Turners Falls Water Department were not directly covered by the DPU order, a "Frequently Asked Questions" page on the state website currently includes the following guidance:

"If you receive electric, gas, or water from a utility owned by your town or city, the utility is likely voluntarily complying with the moratorium on shut offs. If you experience any issues with shut offs with your town's or city's utility, please contact the AGO's Consumer Hotline at 617-727-8400."

On July 31, another DPU order extended the March moratorium until November 15, but only specifically for gas and electricity.

We reached out to Montague's state representative Natalie Blais for clarification, and she returned with more information.

The state legislature did, as it turns out, also address town services. On April 3, a provision was signed into law that

"a city or town shall not terminate an essential service of a resident, including, but not limited to, water, trash collection or electricity, for nonpayment of taxes or fees with a due date on or after March 10, 2020, made after its respective due date but before June 30, 2020, if the nonpayment resulted from a demonstrated inability to pay due to circumstances related to the outbreak of COVID-19 or the governor's March 10, 2020 declaration of a state of emergency; provided that the inability to pay shall include a demonstrated financial hardship of a resident, which may include, but not be limited to, loss of employment, serious illness of someone within the home or death of someone within the home..."

(Acts 2020, Ch. 53 § 11)

On June 5, that law was amended to specify that it covered any "city, town, or district".

An additional bill, H.4849, would effectively extend the end date of the protected billing period from June 30 to "within ninety days after" the state of emergency ends, but that bill has been sitting in the House Ways and Means Committee since July 9, according to Blais, who added that she had reached out

to the committee to ask about the bill's status, but had not received a response as of press time.

Turners Falls water superintendent Mike Brown said his department was not made aware of the April law.

"I never saw anything come out – at least not from the [Department of Environmental Protection], which we're regulated by," he told the *Reporter*. "If this came down they would notify us – any new regulation changes, we get notified by email and in writing."

In any case, Brown said, he does not anticipate seeing any residents' water get cut off. "It seems like people are paying their bills promptly," he said.

"Most people can afford their water, compared to things like gas and electric," Brown added. "If I really saw some kind of hardship... We've discussed it. We've looked at [cases] on an individual basis."

Water department clerk Suzanne Leh confirmed that the current billing cycle does not reflect an unusual amount of nonpayment. Of the district's roughly 2,200 customers, she said, she sent out 380 late notices in early June, and then only 70 warning letters on August 31. Due to the pandemic, the department decided not to begin assessing late fees until August.


"The payments came in much quicker than they ever have," Leh said. "We rarely shut people off – it rarely comes to that."

According to Leh, the department will post final warnings at residents' houses starting September 21. "We put a red tag on doors that the water could be shut off the following day," she said. We tend to see them either that day or the next day, when we open up."

In the event that the owner of a multi-unit building was on the list, Leh said, she would notify the town health department, but she could not remember that ever happening, and there are "none in this batch."

"This is all new to everyone," Brown reflected. "We're keeping a good eye on it, and seeing where this is going to go. Some aspects of the economy seem to be doing well, and others aren't."

Brown said the department staff worked in isolation during the local COVID-19 outbreak in the spring, and that he has been watching the data closely since then. "Things have been good lately, so we're able to go into homes if we have to, wearing masks," he said. "We work outdoors a lot, too, so that's good!"

Water bills can be paid online at turnersfallswater.com/p/4/Pay-Water-Bill. 



Jacob Smead scoops barramundi out of a large tank for transport to one of many customers who purchase live fish from Great Falls Aquaculture at the Turners Falls Industrial Park. It's a job that's pretty wet – he works in swim trunks and water shoes – but he has stuck with it for nine years so far.

Wrapping Paper Winners!

Back in August, we invited people to submit design proposals for a special Wrapping Paper Issue to be printed in November. This fundraiser for the *Montague Reporter* will feature full color designs printed on double pages of newsprint, meant to wrap presents in. Seven of these pages are going to feature the work of local artists chosen from the proposals we have received, with an in-house, MR-themed cover design as the outer cover page.

And now, we have our seven winners! Last week our jury examined the proposals of 28 artists, who sent in up to three ideas and samples each. Whew. It wasn't easy, especially because the jury wasn't able to meet in person, and there were so many really great proposals. Members of the jury didn't know the name, age, or other information about the artists, so judging was based solely on the strength of the images and ideas presented.

The seven selected winners are: **Lahri Bond** (Lake Pleasant); **Hannah Brookman** (Turners Falls); **Emma Kohlmann** (Northampton); **Cecely Ogren** (Turners Falls); **Peter O. Zierlein** (Northampton); **Steve Schmidt** (Amherst); and **Jeanne Weintraub** (Montague Center). The themes they proposed range from Christmas Chard to Holiday Botanicals to Grandma Moses does Turners Falls!

We are so excited to bring these wonderful designs to life in this special issue, which will go to press on Thanksgiving week.

We have asked each winning artist the same three questions, and we will run their answers separately in the coming weeks. This week, **Lahri Bond**, who proposed a design involving dinosaurs in spaceships, answers:

MR: What would you want your wrapping paper to say and feel like for the person it is being gifted to?

LB: My wrapping paper should serve as an omen that some lucky person is about to receive a unique, unusual, and perhaps, rare present. What else could come in such an outrageous covering?

MR: What gifts would you want to receive wrapped in your paper?

LB: I would love a rare hardcover volume of Ray Bradbury stories, since the wrapping paper was inspired by the fact that this year is the hundredth anniversary of his birth. His lifelong love of dinosaurs and rocket ships is legendary, as was his enthusiasm for life. Perhaps a box full of his gusto would also be a nice present to come wrapped in my paper.

MR: What other gifts have newspapers given you over the years?

LB: Newspapers have provided me with the gifts of joy and sorrow, news of social change, and the sometimes-disappointing reality of how humans behave. They have brought me announcements and reviews of some of my favorite books, movies, and music.

Local newspapers, especially, remind me that we are all part of a greater community, a larger tribe, and an extended family beyond our immediate circles.

Letter to the Editors

Shares Procedural Concerns

After watching the Montague Selectboard meeting of August 31, I agree with John Hanold's concerns about the selection process for the two *ad hoc* Police Advisory groups. Chris Boutwell's unwillingness, in the end, to endorse the selections deepened my concerns, although his reasoning was only cryptically explained, and did not seem related to the issues that John raised. I think for this exercise to work, there needs to be a good deal of public confidence, and we don't seem to be off to a particularly good start.

That said, given the tenor of the times, it's possible that no selection process would have satisfied everyone, and the selectboard has made its decision. Going forward, I think there will be ample opportunities for the two groups to gain the public's trust, and I think an important way to do that will be to make sure that their meetings are well-publicized and well-reported.

Depending on how much press coverage is available, members of the groups might periodically share their own thoughts and perceptions

of the work that they're doing, perhaps in this newspaper. I also hope that the meetings can be recorded (which, if they are happening over Zoom, should be straightforward), and made available for viewing (perhaps on the MCTV website).

As John Hanold noted, these are important and complicated issues, and they deserve as thorough and public an airing as possible.

Mike Naughton
Millers Falls

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By NINA ROSSI

The **Leverett Education Foundation** and Leverett PTO are joining up in a fundraiser called the “Many Safe Returns Fund,” with the goal of raising \$30,000 for Leverett Elementary School. The funds will help offset the increased cost of educating during this time of COVID-19 precautions. The school needs protective gear, supplies, money for training and increased staffing, and other things in order to provide educational opportunities this year.

Donations may be made at www.leveretteducationfoundation.org or by check to the Foundation at PO Box 235, Leverett, MA 01054.

This Friday, September 11 a commemorative “ruck” will be held at **Mount Wachusett** in honor of the people killed or injured on September 11, 2001. “Rucking” is a term often used in the military for a hike with a weighted rucksack, or backpack. Organized by the Easterseals Massachusetts Veterans Count program, the “9/11 Ruck to Remember” is free and open to the public.

Hike, ruck, walk, or drive to the summit, and at 11:30 a.m. Adam Costello, veteran and manager of the sponsoring program, will make remarks at a brief ceremony. To register, send an email to VeteransServices@eastersealsma.org.

The LAVA Center in Greenfield continues forward with more new ideas, such as a new **Saturday Salon Series** during September and October from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Described as an “eclectic offering of local art and shopping,” this pop-up art salon will feature their regu-

lar gallery space, new art and video installations, pre-recorded music, local vendors, and what have you. The first one is slated for this Saturday, September 12.

A photo booth will be the feature of the first Salon. Em Langevin of Picture PLURfict is hosting this fun “booth” with props and backdrops. Great for kids. The booth is not enclosed, by the way, and social distancing guidelines will be followed, including sanitizing hands and wearing masks at all times. The Peace & Rhythm band has provided the soundtrack for this first event.

Want to participate, curate, or contribute something at the Salon? Contact info@localaccess.org or call (413) 512-3063.

Saturday evening, the Shea Theater’s online concert series **Quarentunes continues with musician Kristen Ford** playing from 8 to 9 p.m. Tip the artist and the Shea to help keep music and performance alive during this time. Check out Kristen Ford at www.kristenfordmusic.com. Previous concerts are also available on the Facebook page for Quarentunes.

The public is invited to attend a Native Community Conversation Regarding **Mascots, Imagery, and Cultural Appropriation**, co-presented by the Ohketeau Cultural Center and Double Edge Theater. This event is part of the series “The Living Presence of Our History.”

There are seven bills in the Massachusetts legislature right now concerning Native identity and cultural appropriation, and a panel of ten Indigenous community members, leaders, and scholars will discuss

these bills and related issues affecting the Native community. The event will be held online from 1 to 3 p.m. this Sunday, September 13. Find “Ohketeau” on Facebook to join.

The **Mobile Food Bank** comes to the Gill-Montague Senior Center parking lot on the third Wednesday of every month. Come to the Center at 62 Fifth Street in Turners Falls to receive a pre-packed bag of food between 1:30 and 2:30 p.m. next Wednesday, September 16, and then on October 21, November 18, and December 16.

The **Museum of Our Industrial Heritage** in Greenfield sent us a link to their cool new merchandise, available through Silverscreen Designs. The museum has a great vintage-style color logo that can be printed on long- and short-sleeved t-shirts, hoodies, and canvas totes in a variety of colors. They also have Millers Falls Tool and Goodell-Pratt logos on an assortment of shirts and bags.

These items are sure to be a perfect holiday gift for those who have ties to those companies from “back in the day,” plus fans of the museum and local history buffs. Check it out at cart.silverscreendesign.com/industrial_heritage/shop/home. The sale of these items are, of course, a fundraiser for the museum, and help out Silverscreen during this slow period.

It wasn’t until July 25, 1919 that Massachusetts ratified the 19th Amendment, granting women the right to vote. An exhibit at the **Memorial Hall Museum** in Deerfield features art by and about ten women who never had the chance to vote. “Self-Supporting Women” features their fascinating lives, and the legacies they left that have shaped our communities and beyond.

Admission is free at the museum this year, in honor of its 150th anniversary, and they are open Tuesdays through Sundays from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The Friends of the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls have let us know that their **Coffee-house Series** of concerts will not be happening this year, and the Visitors Center remains closed as well. Currently, writes Dawn Marvin Ward, self-guided history and nature walking tours are being designed so folks can enjoy the Center’s outdoor space.

Consider giving to the Friends, or buying a membership to help support family programming at the Discovery Center, by sending a check to Friends of GFDC, 2 Avenue A, Turners Falls 01376.

The **Osher Life Long Learning Institute** at Berkshire Community College offers online, noncredit courses on a wide variety of subjects. Check out some of their fall offerings: “Art and Beauty,” “Outsider Art,” “King Lear,” “Constitutional Law in the Time of COVID-19.” No tests, no grades, and very affordable.

Classes run five to six weeks in 90-minute sessions and cost \$50, with a discount for multiple registrations and a sliding-scale fee if you can’t afford full price. There are related field trips, a Members Art Show, and other ways to connect with fellow lifelong learners. OLLI membership is a prerequisite, but only costs \$60 a year, also sliding scale.

I hadn’t heard of this resource before I found an announcement in my inbox, and it’s worth checking out when you are looking ahead to what this winter of COVID might entail.

Free online classes are also available from the **Sojourner Truth School for Social Change Leadership**. There are 48 class sessions offered from trainers, and you may sign up to take as many as you like. “Improvisation for Activists,” “Circle Practice to Mark the Equinox,” “Unpacking the Man Box,” and “Writing for Social Change” are some of the sessions offered. Find out more at truthschool.org.

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GUEST EDITORIAL A Pandemic Within the Pandemic

By H. PATRICIA HYNES

MONTAGUE – On March 23, 2020, as COVID-19 was overtaking the world, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres pleaded for peace: “To warring parties: Pull back from hostilities. silence the guns; stop the artillery; end the airstrikes... End the sickness of war and fight the disease that is ravaging our world. It starts by stopping the fighting everywhere. Now. That is what our human family needs, now more than ever.”

Two weeks later, horrified by the global surge in male violence against women, he again implored for peace: “Peace is not just the absence of war. Many women under lockdown for COVID-19 face violence where they should be safest: in their own homes. Today I appeal for peace in homes around the world. I urge all governments to put women’s safety first as they respond to the pandemic.”

In every region of the world, battery and sexual assault of women and girls isolated at home increased with the spread of the coronavirus. Reports from China’s Hubei province indicated that domestic violence tripled during February 2020 compared to February 2019. In France violence against women increased 30% after they initiated a March 17 lockdown; in Argentina, by 25%; and in Singapore, 33%.

The pandemic in sexual assault of women and girls followed the COVID-19 pandemic in what Executive Director of UN Women Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka called “a perfect storm for... violent behavior behind closed doors.” The UN reports that nearly 250 million women and girls

report suffering sexual or physical violence by an intimate partner each year, a far greater number than those infected by the virus.

“Stay Safe – Stay Home” is one of the essential public health measures in containing the COVID virus. Yet home is a most dangerous and unsafe place for those 1 in 3 women worldwide who are physically and/or sexually abused over their lifetime, most by a male relative or intimate partner at home. Further, their intimate partners commit one-half of femicides – the killing of women because they are women – throughout the world. School, the workplace outdoors, anywhere is safer than home for women and girls threatened with domestic violence.

What of the situation in the United States? Crime rates plunged in cities and counties across the US over the second half of March – with one exception, domestic violence – as mandatory stay-at-home orders drove millions of residents to stay inside their homes. Calls by victims of domestic violence surged between 10% and 30%, according to an analysis of crime data published by 53 law enforcement agencies in two dozen states.

Another, more nuanced, study found that the crimes that have dropped are more minor, younger peer group crimes such as vandalism, car theft and DUIs. The graver crimes of homicide and aggravated assault have remained the same. Only intimate partner violence has increased.

By mid-June 2020, after the first three months of “stay in place” practices in Massachusetts, 18 strangulations had been reported to the Domestic Violence High Risk Team in the Northwestern District Attorney’s Office. Very

likely the number is much higher.

Mary Kociela, director of the Domestic and Sexual Violence Projects for that office, points out the gravity of this felony crime: Research has shown that “a victim who is strangled by their intimate partner is seven times more likely to be killed by that partner.” Non-fatal strangulation carries the menacing message: “I can kill you.”

She urges those experiencing and at risk of physical and sexual violence to call: NELCWIT, 1 (413) 772-0806, in Franklin County; Safe Passage, (413) 586-5066, in Hampshire County; or Llamanos, a Spanish-language line, at (800) 223-5011.

But ending the Stay in Place order won’t end violence against women. On average, at least one in three women in the US is beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused by an intimate partner in the course of her lifetime. More than one in three women regularly fears being sexually assaulted, according to a new report from Gallup. Violence against women is the most common, but least punished, crime in the world, according to the UN; and it is a catastrophic obstacle for achieving women’s equality everywhere.

As with systemic racism, we must as a society excavate and eliminate the systemic roots of violence against women and girls: namely gender inequality, rape culture, and the failure to treat violence against women as a serious offense.

Peace on earth begins with peace at home.

Pat Hynes, retired Professor of Environmental Health, directs the Traprock Center for Peace and Justice.

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Congress: Ease Onerous SSI Asset Caps!

By MARIE GAUTHIER

FRANKLIN COUNTY – In June, approximately 8 million people in the United States received a monthly Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefit from the government. Elders, and adults and children with disabilities, all facing extreme poverty, depend on this essential safety net. Thanks to outdated, strict asset limits, they are in danger each month of losing that benefit.

We're asking for your support of a bill that would help.

SSI is a national needs-based public benefit program established in 1972 to provide assistance to people age 65 or older, and blind or disabled people of any age, who have limited income and resources. Funded through general tax revenues, not Social Security, the SSI program provides monthly cash benefits to recipients to meet basic needs for food, shelter, and clothing. In June 2020 the SSI program provided a maximum monthly cash benefit of \$683.70 to recipients, with a maximum additional \$151 contribution from the state. That brings the total possible monthly maximum benefit, as of June, to \$834.70.

SSI is meant to reduce extreme poverty among the elderly and people with disabilities, but its rules are complicated, and it limits eligibility for benefits on the basis not only of income, but of the assets of a family,

such as savings and other resources. The asset limits for savings are outdated, as low as \$2,000 for a single person or \$3,000 for a couple. These limits are entirely inadequate for our current reality, and hamper a family's preparedness for a medical emergency or unanticipated expense.

Two items that don't count towards a recipient's asset limit? Life insurance policies with a combined face value of \$1,500 or less, and burial funds, valued at \$1,500 or less. Not even in the eventuality of their death are SSI recipients allowed to maintain sufficient resources.

Furthermore, while asset limits are part of the SSI program by design, these limits have not been adjusted for inflation since 1989 – 31 years ago. Asset limits that were already severe in 1989 are positively draconian in 2020.

The Social Security Administration monitors these resources through periodic audits. In any month that an individual is deemed to have more than \$2,000 in total financial resources, they must pay back the entire SSI income for that month.

There are various ways an individual could go over the financial resource limit: saving money to pay for a move; saving money for a medical or disability-related expense that has a high co-pay; delays in processing checks or online bill payments. Some individuals also

have intellectual or mental health disabilities that make record-keeping tasks more challenging.

Whether the overage is five cents or five hundred dollars, the penalty is the same – 100% loss of SSI income for that month. What's more, audits can take place a year or more after a recipient has gone over their asset limit. All the while they've not even realized they've gone over that limit, which can result in several months of overages and additional penalties.

Any one of us would find it onerous to repay this amount of money, and yet somehow SSI recipients, who are by definition low-income, are expected to manage it with such restricted resources!

There is an answer. In February of this year, the ASSET Act (S.3276 in the Senate and H.R.5848 in the House of Representatives) was introduced in the U.S. Congress. S.3276 and H.R.5848 are bills "to eliminate asset limits employed by certain federally funded means-tested public assistance programs, and for other purposes," including SSI. The ASSET Act would raise SSI asset limits from \$2,000 to \$10,000 for an individual and \$3,000 to \$20,000 for a couple, and index those thresholds to inflation. The Act would also eliminate savings penalties, reducing administrative costs and resulting in a consistent policy across the country.

The ASSET Act isn't perfect – it doesn't address how to help people

who have outstanding penalties. These need to be forgiven if recipients are ever to get their heads above water, and therefore we'd urge an amendment to address this before passage of the bills.

But as it stands right now, nothing is happening with the bills at all. Since March, the ASSET Act has been languishing in the Senate Finance Committee. In the House, it's sitting with four committees, including Ways & Means, which is chaired by Massachusetts's own US Representative, Richard Neal.

The League of Women Voters of Franklin County encourages you to contact Rep. Neal, along with Rep. McGovern and Senators Markey and Warren, and urge them to add an amendment to the ASSET Act forgiving outstanding penalties, and then bring this important bill to a vote.

The ASSET Act doesn't raise taxes, and it doesn't raise the benefit dollars paid to recipients. It merely allows them to maintain resources at a more realistic limit, and by raising the asset limits, helps prevent their being burdened by repayment penalties for those resources.

Our fellow Americans need the relief the ASSET Act provides, now more than ever. Please act today.

Marie Gauthier is president of the League of Women Voters of Franklin County.

STUDIO from page A1

of uncertainty, it's neither a viable option for us to reopen at this time nor is it sustainable to continue stewarding the space."

"Great Falls Yoga was a wonderful tenant," said Alice Armen of Montague Center, who has co-owned the building since 1988. "They were quiet and responsible, it was a very well-run business... We're sorry to lose them, and are hoping for a bright future for all."

When Great Falls Yoga opened in 2017, it was the only dedicated yoga studio in Turners Falls. Two others have opened since, but as of this week, only one, Fire + Embers Hot Yoga, remains.

"Our mission was always to serve the community and to be a warm and welcoming place for those who were new to yoga," Mamatas said. "Our landlords were very generous and allowed us to go through the summer rent free, but now that fall is here, we simply can't afford to pay rent for an empty space."

Instructor and assistant manager Jackie Howard said she shared Mamatas' vision for cultivating an inclusive space at Great Falls Yoga. "We were always in conversation about how to make classes affordable and accessible for everyone who wished to practice," she said.

In addition to standard classes, Great Falls Yoga offered trauma-sensitive, prenatal, and 12-step recovery yoga classes. Just before the pandemic hit, the business had implemented a sliding-scale payment system, and instructors were discussing operating as a cooperative.

"The work near and dear to my heart is working with trauma survivors, so my plans moving forward are to offer trauma-sensitive yoga classes online, and once it becomes safe again, in person," Howard said, "hopefully in or near Turners Falls."

Another downtown yoga studio, Local Yoga Joint, closed for good this spring. Owner Jocelyn O'Shea said she shut the studio down one week after its first anniversary, and days before the state mandated all non-essential businesses be closed. With a baby at home, she wanted to be especially cautious.

"This is the longest stretch in my career that I have gone without teaching yoga," O'Shea said. "It has completely devastated my business."

O'Shea said adapting to teaching during the pandemic has been a challenge, and with a landlord unwilling to negotiate a rent break, she had no choice but to leave the space in the former housing

authority building at Canal Road.

"So much about yoga is about being in community," O'Shea said, "and being together and feeling other people's energy in the room, and we can't do that anymore."

Even with classes at less than half capacity, as required by state reopening guidelines, there is no guarantee the virus wouldn't spread inside an enclosed space. The instructors interviewed by the Reporter said that for them, it's not worth the risk. "Most people I know do not feel comfortable practicing yoga in a small indoor group setting, and I personally feel similarly," Mamatas said.

One local exception is Fire + Embers Hot Yoga, a Bikram studio that opened on Second Street in January. Fire + Embers, which has been holding virtual classes, plans to reopen in person next week, according to a Facebook post on Wednesday morning.

"[W]e've got our safety measures down (with yet more fancy, state-of-the-art equipment designed to kill viruses and bacteria on the way)," read the post. "Our classes are sold out. More classes will be available in October." Attempts to reach owner Mishel Ixchel were unsuccessful as of press time.

As the pandemic wears on, many instructors are looking for alternative ways to continue teaching, whether it be through private instruction, online classes, or outdoor events.

This week, O'Shea taught her first outdoor yoga class for students at the Academy at Charlemont. "I don't really have any answers," she said of the dilemma facing studio owners. "The rent has to be proportionate to the number of clients."

Local Yoga Joint emphasized the use of CBD, the non-psychoactive chemical in cannabis used for anxiety and pain relief, in yoga practice. Not knowing what the future holds, O'Shea hopes that cannabis is decriminalized on the federal level, and she is allowed to pursue a new business angle involving cannabis.

Adapting to remote teaching has been difficult for some. "COVID has made teaching yoga and similar modalities extremely difficult for me, and the industry in general," Howard said. "I realized early on I'm not an online yoga teacher!"

Howard and Mamatas said that the instructors at Great Falls Yoga are already looking for new ways to share yoga with the community. "Though our hub will no longer be this particular studio, we hope to continue to connect and practice with you around the Valley," read Mamatas's farewell email.

GMRSD from page A1

"educational content" would essentially be the same as under fully remote learning.

"Students at school will be in a Google Meet with their peers at home, and both groups will learn through the screen on their Chromebooks," he read. "Students' hybrid experience will not differ much from remote learning, except for the complications arising from assembling large numbers of people in an enclosed space during a pandemic."

Later in the meeting, Beck said the advisory group's feeling is that to properly provide education to "priority populations" of students with various special needs, the district should find a way to bring them into direct contact with teachers or support staff.

"There may be a perception out there that hybrid equals synchronous learning – the same as remote but you happen to be in the classroom," Montague member Haley Anderson summarized. "But I think we need to consider that it may just not be synchronous, and that the reality is that if we need to provide specialized instruction for small groups of students, to do that we need to go into hybrid – is that true?"

"Those are students who are going to benefit the most from being in touch with their teachers," Beck replied. "They're the ones most prone to regression over the period of time since March..."

"Anything that has a student learning in a combination of being at home and doing some work, or having some connections through their computer with their educators, and some time on campus that they're spending with their teachers or support staff – all of that falls into 'hybrid.'"

This week each school invited families to "drive by" and pick up Chromebooks for the students to learn with at home.

Business manager Joanne Blier said that meal delivery to the community will be able to continue, thanks to a USDA decision that it will be reimbursable to the districts. The town of Erving will deliver meals to students in that town, so Gill-Montague will focus on stops in Gill and Montague.

see GMRSD next page

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FISKE from page A1

She was a very active member at the First Congregational Church, and served as the church's unofficial historian.

"She would spend all year making handmade items for the church's holiday bazaar, such as aprons and small quilts to sell," Ann tells me. "The quilt show at Old Home Day was her idea, and she would line up quilters to fill the Sanctuary each year with beautiful handmade works of art. She would be so excited to find a new quilter willing to share their work."

Lillian was also a voracious reader of fiction, and you could run into her every week at the village library until, in her later 90s, when she physically couldn't make the trip, she sent her daughter to pick up books for her. She also loved walking and traveling.

She wrote histories of places and people in Montague Center that she thought needed to be captured before they were lost, including a short but very informative history of the Locust Hill Cemetery. She was president of the association at the time.

"I can attest to her love of history, as she wrote many stories for her writing club through the Senior Center," Ann says. "With her passing I feel I have lost the final member of the generation before me. Her mother was my mother's aunt, so Lillian was my gatekeeper of many family relatives and connections. She spent hours identifying old photographs of relatives. And, importantly, she kept her facts straight."

Lillian was particularly good at organizing events, and helping people research and understand the history of the town and families' histories. Peg Bridges, another friend and fellow church member, recalls spending hours with Lillian

and relatives of the Root family, who had owned the oldest house in Montague Center, the Root Tavern, the stage coach stop in the village's early years. Peg comments that "she knew just about everyone in town and, so, many times was called on to furnish information when family members were looking for information on relatives."

But Peg also wanted our readers to know that Lillian wasn't some stodgy person with her nose in a history book: "Lil frequently went to the Connecticut casinos on bus trips with the Senior Center, and many times would come home a winner."

Lillian's friends emphasize her longtime willingness to help out whenever an extra hand was needed. Of her decades of work with the Survival Center, Ann Fisk says: "I know she brought home many items to put through her washer or dishwasher so the Center could make a little extra money."

A perfect example of Lillian's quiet, sly humor and wonderful writing skills is her true story "A Shopkeeper's Tale," published in *As You Write It* by the Gill-Montague Senior Center Writers' Group, 2010. (The Montague Center Library owns a copy.) In this non-fiction "tale," she remembers working with another woman in town in the 1970s, Marion Lombard, who was a generation older than Lillian and known as being a compendium of Montague Center history herself. Together they identified the glass plates images from the Howe Brothers' early photographs of Montague houses. Lillian recorded a catalog of these, and captured a wonderful story about Marion's father.

Laura Rodley, who led the writers' group, says that Lillian also wrote about the strong women in her own family. "Lil was in our As

OBITUARY

Lillian Bertha Fiske

7/18/1923 – 8/29/2020

Lillian Bertha (Eddy) Fiske, 97, passed away on Saturday evening, August 29, 2020 at the Poet's Seat Health Care facility, Greenfield. She was born on July 18, 1923, the daughter of Helen M. (Whitney) Eddy and Thomas H. Eddy.

She was educated in Montague Public Schools, a graduate of Turners Falls High School in the Class of 1941. Lillian furthered her education by attending the Burbank Hospital School of Nursing, graduating as a Registered Nurse in the Class of 1943. She married Allen O. Fiske on April 6, 1946 in New York City. They resided in Montague Center, MA, and were blessed with three children, Betsy, Greg, and Gary.

Lillian worked for several years as a Registered Nurse, later working at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst as an office manager.

Lillian was a member of the First Congregational Church of Montague, where she was active in the Women's LBS (Lead by Spirit) Society for many years. She was a volunteer at the annual Old Home Days event, where she was the curator of the church's quilt display,



Carolina, Gregory and his wife Patricia of Great Barrington, MA, and Gary of Montague, MA. Additionally, she leaves three adorable grandchildren, Julianne Murphy Hawthorne (Ric), Colin Fiske (Beth), and Evan Fiske (Annie), as well as three great-grandchildren, Jackson, Eloise, and Theo Fiske, to remember her with affection. Lillian was predeceased by her siblings Francis and Clara, and will be remembered by several nieces, nephews, and grandnieces and nephews.

Services in celebration of Lillian's life and many gifts will be private in nature and at the convenience of her family with interment to take place in the Locust Hill Cemetery, Montague Center. Expressions of one's affection are suggested, in lieu of flowers, to the First Congregational Church of Montague, PO Box 65, Montague, MA 01351.

The McCarthy Funeral Homes of Greenfield and Turners Falls have been entrusted with the arrangements. Guest book and condolence messages are available at www.mccarthyfuneralhomes.com.

You Write group until she was 95," Laura says, "and every time I visited her afterwards, she said, 'I think I'll be coming back on Friday.'" Always the optimist.

But what her friends most emphasized about Lillian, and which I found most impressive about her, was her generosity to help, her low-key way of offering information. No ego involvement, no bom-

bast, but with incredible accuracy, enthusiasm, and a desire to help. "Lillian was a quiet, gentle soul," Ann says. "I don't think she ever had an enemy. She was a do-er, got things done without any fanfare."

Quite a legacy.
One thing I know Lillian would love to happen now, after her long position as president of the Montague Historical Society, is if some

enthusiastic person would consider running for president, and restore the series of monthly or quarterly historical presentations that used to be a standard for the Society. It is greatly missed.

Compiled by Jeri Moran, with thanks to Ann Fisk, Peg Bridges, Anna Greene, Roberta Potter, and Laura Rodley.



GMRSD from previous page

The one problem, she warned, was that the two- to three-day per week lunch delivery takes two hours, and does not correspond with the "lunchtime" scheduled in the schools' remote learning plans. "We're still working out the details," she said.

"As a school community, we'll have to be very creative," Beck said.

Blier also asked for a change to the district's transportation policy. Previously, students within a 1.5-mile radius of their schools were not eligible to ride the bus, with one exception: kindergartners have been eligible down to one-half mile.

School committee members pointed out that this was a longstanding rule, but heard Blier's argument: the district is not reimbursed for transporting the closer students, and it is difficult to pick up a kindergartner while denying a ride to a first-grader, sometimes in the same family.

The change was approved. "I wish the state would reimburse us for more transportation, not less," said Anderson, and all present seemed to agree.

The board also approved new policies regarding COVID safety and masks. Beck said that a handbook addendum would soon be necessary regarding discipline in the context of remote learning – if a student is excluded from class for being disruptive for more than one day, it will need to register as a suspension.

As the community prepares to support over 900 students attempting to learn from home, some families are pooling their resources. Beck reported that the district has asked the Franklin Regional Council of Governments for assistance in creating a "safe homes network"-type directory by which parents can provide their own contact information to each other.

"If we're going to go that route," said Montague member Jenifer Lively, "where we're encouraging and supporting families to do that work together, and come up with childcare plans, we're going to really need to be flexible and meet the kids where they are, and in what they need."

"We're only going to be able to provide information, as a district," Beck clarified. "We're not going to be able to provide coordination or encouragement in one way or another."

The committee's next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 22 at 6:30 p.m.



QUILTS from page A1

about 25 years ago with time on his hands, he helped his grandmother pick out the backgrounds for her hooked rugs. That sparked an interest in quilting, a craft that uses some of the same color and design sensibilities. He took a quilting class with Carol Barnes of the Textile Company in Greenfield – back then, it was Eastern Textiles – and bought his first sewing machine from Carol's husband Dave. And he has been quilting ever since.

When asked what were and are his inspirations for his quilt designs, Bob said, "my grandmother's rugs, my wife Boots' pottery, and the fine Oriental rugs that Boots dealt in." The garden that blooms outside the big bank of windows in the house also inspires him.

His early quilts were often described as being Amish-style creations. Over the years, Bob explored different designs and sewing and quilting styles, and he says "the scientist in me likes the precision that quilting requires." Some quilts had complex piecework with hundreds of pieces, and some had dark hues mixed with bold bright patterns.

One of this writer's favorites was the quilt Bob gave to his grandson Devin a few years ago. It was dark with bright colors, and the dark border all around the quilt contained a stitched message in Morse code. Bob refused to say what the message was – that's his and Devin's secret.

You may have seen Bob's quilts at the Leverett library a couple of years ago. Or, if you traveled to Bainbridge Island in Washington state two years ago, you would have seen a few of them hanging outside a former Montague resident's home during an outdoor quilt show on the island. The farthest afield that a quilt has gone is to France.

Bob estimates he has made over 100 quilts and they have all been gifted to friends, family, acquaintances, and charities. Some have been gifted to the healthcare workers who cared for Boots when she became ill four years ago, and also to Bob's own healthcare providers. When Boots passed away two years ago, she was wrapped in a quilt. Before that, the legendary Suzie Polucci was also shrouded in a quilt.

Bob shows no sign of slowing down his quilt work. He just bought a big long-arm quilting ma-

chine that is quite imposing, with laser-guided quilting functions. It looks to this writer like some kind of medical scanning device! With this new tool, Bob can easily and swiftly explore new techniques for the quilting of patterns.

In the last year, Bob found some fabric influenced by Indigenous Australian motifs, and finds the symbolic-looking figures very colorful and interesting. He is exploring and enjoying what looks like a new style path, wherein the colors and designs decide the quilt pattern, not the piecework. He has been very busy working on these quilts, and the sewing and quilting machines are always humming. Who knows what fabric or designs might be the next inspiration? And so soon, there will be more quilts to be given away and enjoyed. Bob wants them to be used and backs them with a cozy flannel so that they are comfy.

"If worse comes to worst, the quilts can be used as dog beds," he adds.

Fido should be so lucky!



The quilt Walker made for his grandson, with a secret message stitched in Morse code along its border.

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Cielito Lindo: La cocina de Chiapas en Gill

Por **VICTORIA MAÍLLO DE AGUILERA**

GILL – Desde hace una semana si usted pasa por la confluencia entre *Route 2* y el puente que une Turners Falls con Gill podrá ver un colorido camión de venta de comida llamado Cielito Lindo. Esta nueva adición al ambiente gastronómico de Franklin County se encuentra en el mismo lugar que ocupaba un camión especializado en comida polaca. Los cambios son visibles, nuevos y llamativos colores y el espacio de parking que lo rodea, lleno de coches.

Llegué allí alrededor del mediodía y había ya unas cuantas personas en las filas, todas con sus mascarillas y guardando la distancia de seguridad. Delante de mí había cuatro personas esperando para ordenar, pero la cola iba rápida. Mientras esperaba tuve tiempo de consultar el menú que está escrito a mano en una pizarra blanca. Me decidí por los tacos al chorizo y los tacos al pastor. Al llegar los tacos de chorizo se habían acabado, así que pedí tacos al pastor y de carne asada. Los precios son baratos, muy competitivos.

La comida se va haciendo al momento según los pedidos, así que después de esperar un poquito, recibí mi orden. Se puede comer en las mesas con sombrillas allí mismo o llevártelo a casa. Lo recojo para llevar en una bolsa de papel y los tacos en dos contenedores de comida separados. Cruzé el puente casi volando con ganas de llegar a casa para abrir los paquetes y compartirlos con mi marido. Al abrirlos veo que llegan con sus utensilios y servilletas y un contenedor con salsa fresca extra. Los tacos están hechos con tortillas frescas de maíz, hechas en casa, nada de industriales.

Los tacos al pastor consisten en una carne marinada en una sal-



El nuevo camión de comida Cielito Lindo.

sa de chiles, piña y otras especies. La carne se puede hacer en un asador vertical o cortarla en tiras después de marinarla. Se sirven con lechuga, piña cortada, rabinos, cebolla picada, mucho cilantro, lima y cebolleta asada. El sabor es una mezcla entre el dulce de la piña mezclado con el picante del chile. Me ha encantado la mezcla de sabores y la consistencia de la tortilla recién hecha.

Ahora vamos a probar los tacos de carne asada. Los tacos de carne asada son los más conocidos en los Estados Unidos. La carne asada es carne de res hecha en el grill o en la barbacoa. La carne primero hay que marinarla en jugo de limón, salsa de soja, ajo, cebolla y cilantro. El sabor es muy diferente a los anteriores, se nota el sabor a parrilla y a limón.

Vinieron también acompañados de lima, cilantro y cebollino asado. Están muy buenos, pero prefiero los tacos al pastor por ser un sabor más exótico y diferente.

Días después decidí volver para hacer una entrevista a la responsable del nuevo negocio después de haber probado la comida para saber un poco más sobre la historia de Cielito Lindo. Esta vez llegué antes de la hora de apertura para poder tener una conversación antes de que apareciesen los hambrientos clientes. Hablé con Neida Berdugo que es la manager del restaurante. Está muy contenta de la respuesta que ha tenido entre la clientela y las buenas críticas que han recibido.

La historia de Cielito Lindo es la historia del sueño de una familia de inmigrantes que llegaron a Turners

para trabajar en las granjas dejando atrás su familia, sus tradiciones, y su música en busca de una vida mejor, en busca de un sueño al norte. Esta es una de esas historias que te hace creer en una de las fortalezas de este país: nuestros inmigrantes.

Los tíos de Neida, Rogelio y Rubilio Gálvez, llegaron siendo muy jóvenes hace unos 30 años a Turners desde su Chiapas natal. Ellos fueron la primera familia de inmigrantes hispanos en el pueblo. Encontraron una casa en la calle quinta y allí empezaron una nueva vida sin conocer la lengua, con miedo de a ser señalados, pero trabajando muy duro cada día en los campos cultivando verduras y frutas para poder ayudar a sus familias.

Neida llegó a Turners cuando tenía siete años y nunca más ha vuelto a México. La idea de un restaurante llevaba tiempo rondando la cabeza de Neida a la que le encanta cocinar, pero debido a razones económicas o de estatus migratorio no la habían podido llevar a cabo.

Neida es muy joven y tiene una familia de cinco hijos, por lo tanto acostumbrada a cocinar para toda su familia o en fiestas señaladas, e incluso había trabajado anteriormente en un restaurante. Ella es la principal encargada de la cocina. El secreto de sus recetas ha pasado desde su abuela Aurelia, la madre de su padre, que sigue viviendo en Chiapas, pasando por sus tíos hasta llegar a ella. Aunque nunca ha estado en México conoce desde niña

los sabores típicos de una cocina que tiene mezcla de México y Guatemala. Neida representa la mezcla de culturas, y a veces como muchos de nosotros, los inmigrantes, nos sentimos ni de aquí, ni allá.

Uno de estos sabores representativos de la mezcla de México y Guatemala es el mole, que es una salsa que lleva chocolate y chiles en la que se pueden macerar diferentes carnes, desde pollo a cerdo y se acompaña normalmente de arroz y de tortillas de maíz. Las tortillas las hacen cada día en el mismo restaurante, con la misma receta que ha usado su familia por generaciones. Para beber horchata, una bebida hecha de arroz, canela y vainilla y todas las aguas de frutas que se hacen también allí. La recomendación de Neida son las enchiladas que llevan tortillas de maíz rellenas de carne de pollo o de queso, con crema y lechuga.

El único problema que Neida tiene actualmente es encontrar algunas materias primas que solamente se crían en su tierra. Muchos de los productos tienen que ser importados de otros estados haciendo que estos se encarezcan. La idea es dar a conocer la cocina de Chiapas a la población de Franklin County, intentando que los sabores puedan ser del gusto del gran público. Los cinco trabajadores de Cielito Lindo son todos familia y todos ellos son bilingües en inglés y español. A Neida y sus sobrinos les encanta que la gente local intente practicar español con ellos.

Le pregunto a Neida el porqué del nombre Cielito Lindo. Me cuenta que cuando trataban de encontrar un nombre querían algo que fuera parte de su cultura y pensaron en el título de una canción que la gente conociese en los Estados Unidos y así surgió Cielito Lindo que significa "Beautiful Little Sky" en inglés. Cielito Lindo es una canción popular entre las bandas de mariachis y que ha sido interpretada también por artistas hispanos famosos.

Neida para terminar me dice que al ser hispana hay algo que le dice que debe trabajar, que no se siente bien sin hacer nada. Nunca imaginó que en estos tiempos de pandemia las cosas iban a ir también. Su siguiente sueño si los clientes siguen acudiendo así es montar un restaurante y seguir dando a conocer la cocina de su tierra.

Les recomiendo a ustedes que visiten Cielito Lindo y aprovechen la oportunidad de comer cocina mexicana muy fresca y elaborada allí mismo a precios muy populares.

• **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 16 de septiembre 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.

• **Pioneer Valley Workers Center (Centro Obrero del Valle Pionero)** está buscando voluntarios



para sus líneas de teléfono de 24 horas, los siete días de la semana. Los voluntarios deben ser bilingües en inglés y en español. Los turnos pueden variar, pero es preferible que sea la misma franja de tiempo cada semana. Las líneas estarán conectadas a su propio celular y podrán contestarlas desde cualquier lugar en que se encuentre. Las llamadas servirán para tomar los datos de las personas que llamen y los responsables del centro puedan devolverles las llamadas.

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MONTAGUE SB from page A1 has been COVID-free, while the Holyoke facility has had a number of virus-related deaths during the pandemic.

Roulston went on to say that the state Department of Public Health and Governor Baker “have the power to stop this.... It isn’t a done deal.” Trinity has scheduled a required public hearing next Wednesday, September 16, and Roulston urged the selectboard to take a position against the Farren’s immediate closure at that hearing.

Boutwell immediately moved that town administrator Steve Ellis “start a letter to the Governor that we all sign.”

Selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz said that he would like to see the board “advocate for the redevelopment” of the facility, because it is a “major employer in town.” He also mentioned the “historical significance” of the Farren.

Member Mike Nelson agreed, saying the Farren is “an incredibly important asset to our community.”

Ellis said that the town had been “reaching out for years” to its representatives in the legislature and state agencies “urging that they make major investments... because the facility is quite antiquated. It needs a lot.” But, he also noted, the Farren “does not have a collapsing roof at the moment,” so there is no immediate emergency requiring closure. He added that Trinity should be responsible for a “redevelopment study” should the building close.

The board approved Ellis’ letter in advance of its next meeting, and agreed to let Kuklewicz sign it, due to the proximity of the September 16 hearing.

Reached for comment on the matter, Trinity spokesperson Christine Looby wrote: “We will be addressing the proposed plan for closure of Farren Care Center through our testimony in the Massachusetts Department of Public Health’s Public Hearing scheduled for Wednesday, September 16, 2020.”

Gravity Battled

The selectboard heard an update from public works superintendent Tom Bergeron on the embankment on Millers Falls Road which collapsed during recent rains, carrying with it a lengthy pipe which discharges runoff from nearby streets. The embankment and pipe configuration, which is primarily on land owned by FirstLight Power resources, was poorly documented in town records.

Bergeron said the DPW had been able to slide 726 tons of stone over the embankment that day,

despite having fewer trucks than planned, in an effort to stabilize the embankment. He said he hoped to have more trucks to deposit rock over the next few days “so we’re not fighting any rain.”

After the rock stabilizes the slope, Bergeron said, a plastic pipe will be laid on top to carry water down the embankment. A similar solution has been employed to stabilize another collapsed embankment further along Millers Falls Road.

Kuklewicz said he was concerned about curious residents entering the dangerous project area, to which Bergeron replied that FirstLight would probably require a fence similar to the one constructed after yet another embankment collapse off of Carlisle Avenue.

Review Boards Reviewed

The board finalized appointments to two committees that will evaluate police policies in response to Black Lives Matter protests. It then discussed the next steps in the process.

Kuklewicz said that the first meeting should be a joint meeting of the two groups – one tasked with reviewing police use of force and similar policies, the other looking into police community engagement more broadly – and that “trainings” in group dynamics would then be held, “possibly outside in person, if people are comfortable with that.” Paula Green of the Karuna Center for Peacebuilding is scheduled to facilitate the trainings.

Ariel Elan, who is a member of one of the committees, said she would prefer the training sessions not be held in public, because they “work better when people are more intimate and more relaxed.” The question of whether a non-public training format for the selectboard-appointed committees violated the state open meeting law has not been resolved.

Town meeting member John Hanold told the selectboard that he was concerned that Elan and several others of advising Kuklewicz on the committees’ makeup had chosen themselves to be on the committees. Hanold said it might have been better to publicize that would be a possibility at the outset.

“Well, it’s the first time we’ve done this,” said Kuklewicz, “The next time, I’ll note that, if I am in this position.”

Gap Anticipated

The selectboard held a preliminary discussion with members of the finance committee about the status of a projected gap in the FY’21 town budget. The discussion

focused on ways to address a potential revenue shortfall, to be presented at the special town meeting scheduled for October 13. Ellis and finance committee chair Jen Audley said the shortfall, which they estimated at just under \$179,000, could be addressed through reducing department budgets, without impacting services.

The current schedule has the board accepting warrant articles until this Thursday, and making recommendations next Monday for the meeting, to be held at the new highway garage on October 13.

Ellis expressed optimism about progress in completing the new garage, and its parking capacity, by that date.

Other Business

Meeting jointly with the board of health, the selectboard heard an update on the latest developments in the pandemic. Montague health director Daniel Wasiuk said there had been a “cluster of COVID cases in some surrounding communities” over the previous weekend, but did not identify the communities, or the magnitude of the cluster. He said the Montague health department was participating in an investigation of the cases, but that it was a “low-risk situation.”

Wasiuk also said that three states – Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming – had been added to the list of “low risk” states for reduced travel restrictions by the Governor.

At the request of water pollution control facility superintendent Chelsea Little, the board approved the appointment of Samuel Stevens as a full time laborer/operator.

The board approved a 28-month contract with Sprague Energy for natural gas for town use.

The board agreed to resubmit a proposal for a grant to the state Office on Disability that had been rejected the previous year but, according to Ellis, was viewed by state officials a strong candidate for funding this year.

The board executed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District (FCSWMD) for a participation in the annual hazardous waste collection on Saturday, September 26. Residents who wish to leave materials at the collection sites at Greenfield Community College or the Orange Transfer station should register with the FCSWMD in advance.

The board retired to an executive session to discuss real estate negotiations, and will next meet on Monday, September 14.



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**LOOKING BACK:
10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK**

Here’s the way it was September 2 and 9, 2010: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Montague Approves Airport MOU with Native Tribes

A unanimous selectboard joined a unanimous airport commission on September 7 in endorsing a memorandum of understanding to seek permanent protection for five culturally sensitive sites Native American tribes say are located on the property of the Turners Falls Airport.

The memo is an attempt to resolve the question of Native American access to and preservation of cultural and ceremonial sites that have been identified on the municipally owned airport property so that the town may have the tribes’ cooperation in order to complete, before winter, a \$5 million runway replacement and safety improvement project that has been stalled for months.

On August 30, members of the airport commission asked the selectboard to sign the memorandum regarding procedures for tribal access to the aircraft operating area, and for permanent preservation of sites in the flight path.

The memorandum commits the airport commission to place an article on the warrant of the 2011 annual town meeting seeking approval of a legal covenant, such as a conservation restriction, that would permanently protect the identified sites from development.

If approved, Montague would give up development rights in specific areas determined to be archeologically important or culturally sensitive to the interested federally recognized Native American tribes: the Narragansett Indians, the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah), and the Mashpee Wampanoags.

The selectboard’s vote is considered a nonbinding statement, because only the Montague annual town meeting has the authority to change land rights in town.

Peter Golrick, chair and secretary of the Turners Falls Airport Commission, said approval of the memorandum was critical to getting the airport improvement project completed.



The three federally recognized tribes interested in the sites have yet to sign off on the memorandum, which went through numerous revisions over the summer with the advice of town counsel. Neither has the Federal Aviation Administration.

WMECo Holds Meetings About Beaver Pond

On August 23, representatives of the Western Massachusetts Electric Company (WMECo) hosted the first of four planned community discussions about the fate of a 2500-foot long beaver pond that stretches across the border of Montague and Leverett on Richardson Road. The pond has submerged the base of five of WMECo’s large wooden utility pylons carrying power lines, and the utility is seeking an acceptable solution to the problem posed by the beaver pond to allow them to maintain the pylons and power lines.

At the Leverett Library meeting, Carl Tyburski, WMECO’s supervisor of transmission maintenance, described a serious, ongoing issue he called a “hot spot” at one of the poles in the pond. The hot spot affects the safety of the workers, Tyburski said, and the deep water of the beaver pond makes it difficult for workers to attend to routine maintenance on the five pylons in the beaver pond.

WMECO then presented three options for the public to consider. The first is to drain the pond entirely; the second would be to lower the pond by approximately two and a half feet; the third would leave the water level of the pond unchanged.

At the second community meeting on the topic, which was held on the 26th at the meeting room of the new police station in Montague, WMECO representative Ron Ford proposed to cancel the final two scheduled meetings, claiming a “sense of the meeting” had been arrived.

The company is in favor of lowering the level of the beaver pond by two feet or so, to allow utility vehicles to access the submerged pylons. The utility will install “beaver deceivers,” devices to reduce the water level, to accomplish the drawdown.

NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

A Short Meeting, Labor Day Week

By **KATIE NOLAN**

On Tuesday, the Erving selectboard approved an estimated \$33,615 in additional work for the road and sidewalk improvement project on River, Warner, and Strachan streets. The crosswalk will be leveled with the intersection, and the grade on River Street will be slightly changed. In a memo presented at the August 31 meeting, project engineer William Storti had informed the board that the grade on River Street needed to be changed to make the sidewalk safer.

The board approved \$792 in additional costs for installing electrical connections for door closure devices at the new library building. Although the connections were provided in the construction specifications, they were not included on the electrical drawings, and not

installed during construction.

Town administrator Bryan Smith said that funds controlled by the library trustees could be used to pay for the connections.

The board approved the design for new street signs. The signs will be blue with white lettering and will include the town seal. The board discussed using the new town logo, which has not received final approval yet. Selectboard member William Bembury said he preferred the seal as more “traditional.”

The first new signs will be installed at River, Warner and streets after the road and sidewalk project is completed. The board asked Smith and assistant planner Mariah Kurtz to provide an inventory of all the town’s street signs, and an estimate of the cost for replacing them, at a future meeting.

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NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Fire Department Seeks New Pond; Students Seek WiFi

By JOSH HEINEMANN

The Zoom connection for Wendell's September 2 selectboard meeting was less than ideal. Board chair Dan Keller was not at his computer and connected in by telephone. He gave the job of facilitating the meeting to board member Laurie DiDonato, because she could see other participants, and unmute them when needed. Late in the meeting, board member Gillian Budine's connection fell apart, and she was out of touch until she also called in on a telephone.

Citizen Ray DiDonato called in twice. In the first call he reported that the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) survey showing that the state owns 12 landlocked acres that were thought to be part of the Wendell town forest had cost DCR \$10,000. No one at the meeting thought the town should spend a similar amount to maybe get the same result.

Ray DiDonato discussed a possible land swap with DCR, but that would require coordinating a town meeting vote and a vote by the legislature, which might also be more trouble than it is worth. He thought that trails could be made through both Wendell's forest and state land, and connect to both Fiske Pond and the New England National Scenic Trail, formerly known as the Metacommet and Monadnock Trail.

The open space committee has not met since the DCR survey results were reported, but will meet and report back to the selectboard.

On his second call, DiDonato said that work on the dam holding back McAvoy Pond was underway and should be completed by September 4. Since the town shares dam ownership with an LLC, it is responsible for paying half the repair's cost, \$10,000. Authorization for that spending will be on the September 26 special town meeting warrant.

School Project

Bruce Turner, business manager for the Union 28 school dis-

trict, Zoomed in to report that the window and door replacement at Swift River School was nearly complete, and should save a serious amount of money on the cost of heat, and that the change looks good. "You should go take a look," he said.

When the project was approved, the plan was for Union 28 to borrow the money and assess the cost to Wendell and New Salem. That procedure is not allowed, so the towns have to share the expense outside of Union 28's budget and with each town's budget. The final bill will be made when the job is done.

The Massachusetts School Building Authority is paying 76% of the project's cost, leaving 24% for Wendell and New Salem to share. Turner estimated the cost to each town at \$150,000 or less. Wendell will need to borrow \$200,000 for a short-term note until July 15, and then arrange the long-term loan.

Internet Access

With Wendell's fiber-optic project still in progress, but still incomplete, people have been using wifi outside the library, senior center, and town office building. With colder weather, sitting outside or in a car becomes less attractive. Town coordinator Nancy Aldrich brought up a suggestion she received that town buildings be made available for wifi access, especially for students whose school work is now online.

Budine mentioned Swift River School, with adult supervision, as a possibility. Keller said he thought that would be a big job to organize.

DiDonato brought up space at Kemsley Academy, and suggested that Anna Lawrence at the library could allow a limited number of people inside, provided they keep a proper distance.

But, as former selectboard member Ted Lewis often said, "If one person gets something from the town then everyone should be allowed." Opening the buildings for one may be the start of a slippery slope.



Adam Kobl (left) and Laurie DiDonato (right) install a "Pollinator Habitat" sign outside the Wendell Free Library. The two are members of Wendell Pollinator Protectors, an ad hoc group encouraging the development of habitat in town for native pollinators. Kobl says he has seen various species of bumblebee, carpenter bees, moths, and a great black digger wasp at the library, where friendly plants such as spotted bee balm and partridge sensitive-pea are growing.

Dry Hydrant

Fire chief Joe Cuneo reported on two sites that the fire department is proposing for dry hydrants to replace the one at Bowen's Pond, off Wendell Depot Road, which will be lost when the dam that holds Bowen's Pond is taken down. That dam is on the state's short list for removal, and the property owner wants it gone.

One new site is just north of the MacAvoy Pond dam, and would require either an easement from the LLC that owns half of the dam, or the LLC's donation of the land – a more legally complicated option.

Keller said the town does not want to own more of that dam. Ray DiDonato said either choice would require a town meeting vote, and Keller said there is no need to decide immediately on which option the town should take.

The second location would be off Farley Road, west of Kemsley Academy. Cuneo said he had broached the prospect with the landowner. He suggested that the town DPW could do the excavating for either site.

Vehicular Mayhem

Eighty email surveys about vehicles going too fast came back to the town, and of the 80 respondents, 79 said they were concerned about speeders.

Solutions were less forthcoming, with 43% not wanting radar, 35% maybe okay with radar, 46% against more patrolling, and 22% in favor of more patrolling. Some said signs, and lower speed limits at special places, would be no help.

Keller suggested that a lower speed limit by Stone's Pond, at the intersection of Jennison Road and New Salem Road, would be a good place to start posting a lower speed limit. Citizen Chris Parker suggested speed cameras as the cheapest and most effective method to catch speeders, but Keller suggested that tickets would only make the speeders angrier.

No new "No Parking" signs are in place near the Fiske Pond parking lot, but with weather cooling, overuse of the beach has decreased. Laurie DiDonato, a neighbor of that pond, said that fliers about the

need for limited use were put on two illegally parked cars.

Other Business

A DCR gate proposed for Thompson Road, to restrict access by the sort of people who have started bonfires and left trash there, is on hold at least until the state has a budget. A homeowner beyond the proposed gate site wants the gate, but a person who goes there to study wildlife does not want it.

Aldrich reported that the state approved using the town's Green Communities grant money to install heat pumps in the library. As chair, Keller has to sign contracts for the work.

Laurie DiDonato said the energy committee is considering a battery backup for the solar array on the library roof for the next round of Green Communities grants.

Board members voted to place an article on the September 26 special town meeting warrant that would allow a farm exemption for excise tax on personal property.

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SEPTEMBER 10, 2020



WEST ALONG THE RIVER
THE STANDSTILL
BETWEEN TWO SEASONS

POLLY FRENCH ILLUSTRATION

By **DAVID BRULE**

BANKS of the MILLERS RIVER – There once was a wag who famously said you can’t stand in the same river twice. What about standing for a while in two flowing seasons? If you step out of doors, you’ll notice that we are precisely experiencing that ephemeral time of year where two distinct seasons exist simultaneously, but not for long.

I’ve been out here, most of the time, keeping an eye on things. I’ve been assigned to keep track of small details going on outside. I can report the now quiet movements of faded warblers moving through the trees, the falling of acorns banging on the metal roof of yonder shed, hummingbirds buzzing in a search for the last nectar in the bee balm, and so forth.

If you hadn’t noticed it, I can tell you that on the second day of September, a light rain began falling. That rain was as welcome as any April shower after a hard winter. Only on that day, the showers came after a long hard summer. Ninety days of ninety-degree daily heat. I was, on that early September day, not sad to say good-bye August!

Time was when I personally welcomed baking dry heat, frying and browning up in the 1960s on the beaches of Provincetown, or grilling on the sands of Agadir, Essouira, Tangiers.

But no more. We know too much about skin cancer, holes in the ozone, the wisdom of plastering on sunscreen or just plain staying indoors. I’ve found that as I notice aging skin is more sensi-

tive to the rays, I’ve taken the best advice the Spaniards have to offer on those 100-degree days of blistering sun: *siesta!*

Let the sun do its worst, baking lawn grass to shredded wheat, shriveling my tomatoes and pumpkins to pitiful mockeries of an excuse for a garden. I definitely don’t have a green thumb, so be warned; never leave me in charge of your kitchen garden!

I did note there did seem to be a change after August 15, a pivotal summer date in some lands near the sea, when great tides arrive around the time of the Catholic Feast of the Assumption.

Although here we are far from the shore, no moon-driven seas reach our back porch; instead, the tide of an early nighthawk migration wave surged down from the north, sweeping the evening skies, southern bound. Hundreds of feet up, kettles of hundreds of these birds circled and dove, getting an early start on the season that may threaten an early frost. They cannot be caught lingering in the wrong latitudes.

Time was when these magical boomerang-shaped birds meant high summer, calling all night long over Turners and Greenfield, where they nested on the flat gravel roofs of downtown buildings. Many environmental factors have erased them from our summer night-time experience. They now spend the summers farther north and only pass over here coming or going with the changes in the seasons. The horde this evening drifted south, then changed their

see **WEST ALONG** page B2

Above: Autumn, in the form of butternut squash, lurks just beneath the surface of this Montague Center field.

With A Little Encouragement

By **LEE WICKS**

MONTAGUE CENTER – This has been a wistful time for many, as spring and then summer and fall plans melted away along with beloved seasonal celebrations. Yet the quiet isolation has had some rewards, especially for Sheree Bloomberg and Caroline Wampole, who both live in Montague Center. Using Zoom for lessons when it was cold and masked socially-distant meetings later, Sheree began painting with Caroline as her teacher and coach. I say “coach” because Caroline says, “More often than not, emerging artists need encouragement and confidence more than a set of pre-planned lessons.”

On a beautiful afternoon in Sheree’s garden, which inspires much of her work, both women talked to me

about art, friendship, and most of all the creative process, a semi-meditative state that plugs into the unconscious, temporarily stops time, and opens a portal to the imagination.

Sheree spent years wanting to paint. She had a studio set up in her attic and an assortment of supplies, but work (before retiring, she and her husband Paul owned the Northampton store 25 Central), travel, and entertaining got in the way, along with a lack of confidence. “I made many attempts over the years and knew I needed some help getting over my anxieties,” she says. “Caroline encourages me to take chances and try new things.”

Caroline adds, “It is deeply rewarding for me to watch someone connect back to their love of making art, which may have been hidden or suppressed for years or even

see **ENCOURAGEMENT** page B4



WICKS PHOTO

Sheree Bloomberg (left) learned to paint only recently with the help of her neighbor, Caroline Wampole (right).



LOUIS AGASSIZ FUERTES ILLUSTRATION

Common nighthawk (Chordeilis minor).

NOTES FROM THE HEARTFELT CAFE
BY TROUBLE MANDESON

GREENFIELD – “Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers” and – according to Google – that’s about a quarter of a bushel of peppers, or two gallons. While I’m not sure where Peter found his peppers already pickled, I could tell you how to pickle your own two gallons of peppers, or cucumbers, or green beans, or even fiddlehead ferns.

But it wasn’t always so.

Growing up, my experience with peppers and chilis was that peppers came in one variety only, bell-shaped and green, with a sharp pungent scent that set me on edge and made me loudly complain whenever anyone cooked with them or tried to sneak them into a salad.

Chilis were named “Ortega ®” and were forked, dripping with slime, from a can. Once, as a kid, just to prove a point, I made myself vomit after being made to eat a casserole of those awful canned chilis layered with tomato sauce and cheese. It may have been over the top, but I was determined to make sure this never happened again.

I managed to avoid peppers and chilis for the next 40 or so years. I would refuse all offers of salsa on Mexican food, and the thought of using Tabasco or any other

see **HEARTFELT** page B6



MANDESON PHOTO

Serving suggestion for chiles rellenos, Baja style.

Pet of the Week



“MOSSENBERG”

Say hello to Mossenberg! This friendly, affectionate little guy gets along with everyone. He enjoys being with kids as well as adults, and playing with cats and dogs. He likes all sorts of toys, and plays gently. Unlike most kitties, he enjoys belly rubs; he must have learned that from the resident dog.

This cutie was a stray and was taken in by a nice person, but unfortunately the landlord threatened eviction if she didn't get rid of him. So, Mossenberg is ready to begin a

new chapter in his life. Maybe you'll be the one to write the first page.

Contact the adoption staff to learn more about Mossenberg. Animals at Dakin are available for adoption by appointment only, and only at Springfield currently. Call (413) 781-4000, or see www.dakinhumane.org, for more information.



Senior Center Activities SEPTEMBER 14 THROUGH 18

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 (413) 423-3649 or paula-betters@erving-ma.gov.

LEVERETT

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

WENDELL

Wendell senior activities have been canceled. The Wendell Senior Center is closed. The 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

WEST ALONG from page B1

minds and headed back north over us again, toying with the seasons, playing with our frame of mind.

For a second day in a row, gentle rains edged us into the feel of a distant October promise of an Indian Summer. This has been a September pause between seasons. We still have a few days left on the human calendar before we reach the Autumnal Equinox.

The local rose-breasted grosbeak in eclipse plumage shelters on the railing under the tangle of wisteria and trumpet vines at the edge of the porch. The wren bathes briskly under channeled rain running down the center of a morning glory leaf.

Now by Labor Day, bright, crisp mornings have already arrived. Air is sharp and clear, eyes focus better after suffering through an inner haze left over from yesterday's long summer afternoon... or maybe it was the chilled glasses of white wine before bedtime?

On days like this, I've got nothing better to do than wait for the morning glories to flower. They're full of promise, but no sign of a bloom.

Different calls come from the woods now. What a difference even a week makes.

The wood thrush is more muted; no longer do tremolo and vibrato emanate from his hushed presence in

the dark evening woods. We hear just an occasional autumnal *thwak, thwak* call, seeming to project an annoyance with the fleeting summer season, or maybe just an alarm raised about some creature lurking below.

Out there beyond the frontier of the somewhat-civilized excuse for a lawn, all manner of green leafy beings have managed their annual encroachment on the patch of land the family has kept clear for the last 150 years. If I let the green armies of vegetation advance, the house would soon disappear under a jungle of vines and trees, lost like some Mayan ruins waiting for a young archaeologist to cut through the green cover with her machete.

Soon it will be consistently cool enough for me to push back a bit against the green wall. But no rush. Let's wait for the brilliant days of October and leafless November to reclaim this patch of earth for our family of human beings.

In the meantime, I'll note down in my journal, like some poets try to do, the small September details: the special slant of gentle golden sunlight filtering through the trees, the pirouette of the catbird harvesting bright red chokeberries hanging on magenta stems, that bright green black-throated warbler moving purposefully through the dogwood, heading south, branch by branch.

OUT OF THE PARK SEPTEMBER 2020

By JON DOBOSZ

UNITY PARK – Hello everyone! We at Montague Parks and Recreation hope that you are all doing well, and that you have had a great summer. It was certainly a hot one, and despite the challenges we are all facing, I think it was rewarding. We will continue to serve the community in as many of our traditional ways as possible. Beyond that, we ask for your continued patience.

This fall we will be offering **Squirt Soccer** for children in grades K through 2, as well as a combined Junior and Senior program for kids in grades 3 through 6. We will be following strict guidelines due to COVID-19, and all players are required to bring a mask as they will need to be worn from time to time. Please also note that non-residents will be placed on a waiting list to allow Montague residents first dibs. Pre-registration is required for all levels.

Our Squirt Soccer follows the Start Smart© curriculum, which focuses on the individual skills of each child to get them ready for sports through a step-by-step



learning approach. This program is held Saturday mornings from September 19 to October 17. Shin guards are required, but no cleats, please. Fees are \$25 for Montague residents and \$30 for non-residents. Participation is limited, and is dependent upon the number of parents who help volunteer coach.

We will also have an in-house, combined **Junior/Senior Youth Soccer Program** this year, where play will be structured around kids in our program only. There will be no league play, but that doesn't mean we can't have fun and broaden our skills! This program is also held Saturday mornings, and runs from September 19 to October 31 at Highland Park in Millers Falls. Fees are \$40 for Montague residents and \$45 for

non-residents. Shin guards are required, and cleats are recommended.

Finally, MPRD has gotten into the **e-gaming** industry. Our "Fall 1" League will include online video game leagues for a variety of gaming consoles. Gamers can join our Montague Parks and Recreation organization and register for leagues at missioncontrol.gg/play. Games include NBA 2K, NHL 20, Madden NFL 20, MLB The Show, FIFA Soccer 20, Rocket League, Super Smash Bros., and Mario Kart. We will be adding even more games and leagues in the coming weeks as our vendor makes them available. Gamers must own the specific games to play. Help spread the word!

That's about it from here. If you wish to receive additional information on these and other programs, feel free to contact us at (413) 863-3216, log onto montague-ma.gov, or view our Facebook page. Enjoy the start of fall, and keep a lookout for more activities and programs down the road!

Jon Dobosz is the director of Montague's parks and recreation department.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Annual Hazardous Waste Collection Day

The Franklin County Solid Waste District is planning to hold the 2020 household hazardous waste collection on Saturday, September 26 at GCC's Main Campus and the Orange Transfer Station.

Residents and businesses must pre-register by September 18. Online pre-registrations may be submitted at www.franklincountywastedistrict.org/hazwasteday.html. Mail-in registration forms are available at participating town transfer stations, while supplies last, and at some town halls.

(Please note that due to a technical error, online registrations submitted between August 11 and 17 were deleted, and must be resubmitted.)

Due to COVID-19, safety protocols and waste restrictions will be in place. Participants will be required to wear a mask, remain in their vehicle, and place all waste in the trunk, rear cargo area, or truck bed.

Materials that will not be collected this year include all types of batteries, thermometers, and thermostats. These items can be brought to most town transfer stations year-round; ask transfer station attendant where to place these items.

Fluorescent bulbs will not be accepted at this collection. These bulbs, including compact fluorescent lights (CFLs), are accepted at all municipal transfer stations in Franklin County. In addition, fluorescent light bulbs are accepted at Lowe's Stores (all types), and Home Depot (CFLs only).

Space is limited. Participants will be assigned an

appointment time to bring wastes to the collection; an appointment time and instructions will be provided by mail after registration is processed.

The collection is free for residents of most participating towns: Athol, Bernardston, Buckland, Charlemont, Colrain, Conway, Deerfield, Erving, Gill, Hawley, Heath, Leverett, Montague, New Salem, Northfield, Orange, Petersham, Phillipston, Rowe, Royalston, Shelburne, Warwick, Wendell, and Whately.

Barre and Sunderland residents must pay to participate. Greenfield and Leyden residents are not eligible, and should call Greenfield DPW for info on disposal: (413) 772-1528. Businesses located in any of the 26 participating towns may participate, but must pay for disposal costs. For business registration information, call (413) 772-2438.

This collection provides an opportunity to dispose of hazardous items that should not be put in the trash, such as leftover oil-based paints, stains, thinners, household cleaners, pesticides, herbicides, pool chemicals, motor oil, antifreeze, and other household chemicals. A more complete list of acceptable items is at www.franklincountywastedistrict.org/hazwasteday.html.

For more information, contact the District at info@franklincountywastedistrict.org, (413) 772-2438 or visit franklincountywastedistrict.org.

MA Relay for the hearing impaired: 711 or 1(800)439-2370 (TTY/TDD). The District is an equal opportunity provider.

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Montague Reporter ArtBeat columnist Trish Crapo has an online exhibit through the Hampden Gallery at UMass-Amherst called The Presence of Absence. "Through photographs, video, and spoken word created at a remote shack in the wild dunes of the Cape Cod National Seashore, Crapo explores whether wind, a clothesline, and a white nightgown can summon someone from the other side," reads the press release.

Next Thursday, September 17, Crapo leads a synchronous online visual poetry event from 12 to 12:30 p.m. Register for the event at fac.umass.edu. The show runs September 15 through October 7.



MOVIE PREVIEW

Fatima: A Real Life Miracle?

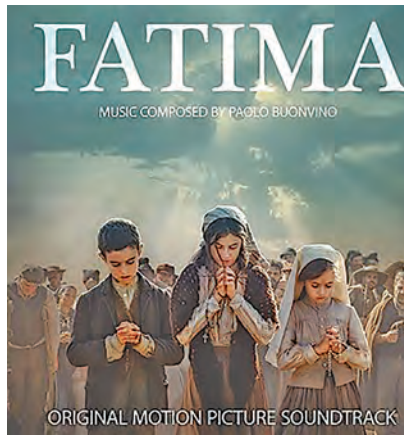
By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – I heard they had recently made a movie, which they decided to call Fatima, about a miracle that was reported in Fátima, Portugal in 1917 involving three small children and apparent visions of the Virgin Mary.

I know of the story. I first heard about it on a segment of Unsolved Mysteries, a TV show that occasionally focuses on things like that. People didn't at first believe these children had actually experienced this, including religious and secular authorities. One such individual was a provincial administrator who believed what they were saying was a political act, intended as a means of opposition to the government. This individual attempted to end this whole affair by jailing them, threatening and interrogating them.

But the children did not waver in their story, which I find very impressive. Anyone would under those circumstances, whether you are religious or not, or thought there was some political agenda connected to this, like the administrator did. That individual tried to stop them before they returned to a location called Cova De Iria where they were told this miracle would eventually happen again. It did – on October 13, 1917, with the children and a huge crowd that involved reporters and photographers present. By that point, I assume what had been going on with the children had become widespread news.

While not all who were there said they had seen something, others claimed that the sun "appeared as an opaque, spinning disc in the sky," and "then careened towards



the Earth before zig-zagging back to its normal position," according to Wikipedia. This became known as "the Miracle of the Sun."

Based on this account of what happened, it must have been one extraordinary sight to see, if you were there. Despite the deep controversy that the children's account of their experience caused, the Church considered the visions be known as "worthy of belief" in 1930 after a canonical inquiry.

The new movie I mentioned, which got me interested in writing about this, was not the first movie made about this event. One, called The Miracle of Our Lady of Fatima, was made in 1952. People must think of it as an extraordinary story to hear.

I feel I should say that this situation got to the point where the "sun dances" – no matter what occurred – through something that feels to me like sheer determination by these kids. I don't think many would disagree with my thought about this. It's not a boring story to hear, to say the least.

I hope that this latest version of the story is good. I hope that I somehow get to see the movie!

IPAD/IPHONE NEEDED!

Help us expand access to HIP in Turners Falls!

The Great Falls Farmers Market is looking for a donation of a new or used iPad or iPhone so we can upgrade our SNAP system in order to process Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) benefits. Device must run iOS 11 or higher.

Email us! greatfallsfarmersmarkettturners@gmail.com

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Parties At Lake Pleasant, Behind Sheffield School; Unfounded Suspicions; Dumping; Harassment

Sunday, 8/23

3 p.m. Woman at the station with a complaint re: a juvenile who harasses her every day when she is walking her dog. Described as a thin white male with short brown hair and big lips, usually on a BMX bike. Advised of options.
7:52 p.m. Complaint of something burning on the second floor on J Street. Caller states when she opens her door she is hit with "this god-awful smell." Party says it wouldn't surprise her if they were cooking drugs or something. Area investigated, nothing found.

Friday, 8/28

6:39 a.m. Caller complained of loud construction noise before 7 a.m. Officer advised it was likely the DPW taking care of a downed tree from the day before.
8:21 a.m. Caller on Main Street in Montague Center complained about big construction trucks speeding through the village. States the trucks say "Greg's" and "Warner" on the side. Referred to an officer.

3:51 p.m. Report of a turkey hit by a car, injured and suffering, in the area of Turners Falls Road. Turkey vulture dispatched, DPW notified to remove bird.
6:38 p.m. Report of a male stealing items at Walgreens on Avenue A. Reporting party says he took multiple items, ran out and stashed them in his trunk, then drove away and parked at Family Dollar. Office investigating, will follow up with video surveillance.

9:01 p.m. Reporting party says there is a walker in front of his building on Avenue A and that his "Spidey sense" is tingling that something is wrong. He thinks it may belong to a woman who lives off the Third Street alley. Referred to an officer.
Saturday, 8/29
12:18 a.m. Caller states a group of guys behind a Third Street address are being loud and slamming skateboards. Area search negative.
12:49 a.m. Report of a male party walking down Unity Street yelling "help," maybe five times. Officer made contact with a group of four people walking who said they were talking across the road to each other, but nobody was saying "help."
1:22 a.m. Report of a female yelling on Fosters Road, and a possible gunshot or motor vehicle accident. Nothing found.
1:31 a.m. Caller states they are at a park in a campsite at "Arbuckle Mountain," near the cabins, and there is a large gathering with 15 people yelling and causing a disturbance after curfew. No Arbuckle

Mountain, or campsites, in town. Called back and left a message that she might be in a different state, or if not, to call back with a better description of where they are camping.
6:13 p.m. Food City employee stating a highly intoxicated male just left the store and drove away. Plate number expired; units advised; vehicle found on Millers Falls Road, towed and courtesy transport provided.
9:45 p.m. Anonymous call about neighbors having loud parties on Turner Street in Lake Pleasant. Contacted homeowners and requested they quiet down.
11:22 p.m. Multiple calls about partying situation on Turner Street from several different neighbors. Reports of confrontations and arguments; parties punched in the chest and threatened; hooting and hollering and drinking in the middle of the road. Officer advised to move inside for the night. Followed by a report of possible domestic abuse inside at one address. Officer sent, but did not hear anything at that time. Will continue to patrol throughout the night.

Sunday, 8/30
10:31 a.m. Assisted Greenfield PD at Seventh Street address for report of a stolen motorcycle.
3:19 p.m. Suspicious person at the skatepark. Male party drinking beer and acting strange to the kids. Black pants, no shirt, chest tattoo. Officer had him pour out his beer, and moved him along.
5:39 p.m. Loud noise disturbance on Fosters Road. Possible explosion, also caller states someone has been doing target practice for over an hour there. Officer advised.
5:48 p.m. Caller states someone left a gas can on her lawn Friday, and she is not certain of the contents and of how to dispose of it. TFFD advised and responding.
7:02 p.m. Single car accident at Cumberland

Farms, car vs. pole. 82-year-old female involved, motor vehicle with fluids leaking. TFFD contacted; Rau's will tow.
7:21 p.m. Animal complaint on H Street. Neighbor's dog was let off the leash and was nipping at the caller and her dog. Ongoing issue. Referred to an officer.
9:13 p.m. Walk-in complaint about threatening and harassing behavior around a custody issue they would like on record. No services necessary.

Monday, 8/31
8:41 a.m. Caller reports illegal dumping on L Street: female depositing several bags of trash in different dumpsters. Officer located and spoke to female, who stated she works for the owner of the dumpsters, and has permission to use them.
10:04 a.m. Report of illegal dumping at the end of I Street in the woods. Caller observed a male and female drive up and unload, and then found paint cans, furniture, and other items in the woods. Officer checked, could not find the attached vehicle, notified FirstLight.
Tuesday, 9/1
8:08 a.m. Safety hazard at Couture Bros warehouse on Avenue A. Officer disposed of needle.
9:12 a.m. Vehicle parked overnight on East Main Street in Millers Falls was broken into and ransacked. Nothing missing.
12:24 p.m. Safety hazard on Dell Street. Needle disposed of by officer.
12:40 p.m. Conference with Greenfield PD about safety hazard on Route 2 at Adams Road where a female is riding slowly on a mobility scooter in the middle of the road.
1:21 p.m. Caller reports that a male made an inappropriate gesture to her at Food City today. Advised of options.
1:26 p.m. Chief Williams and two officers checking behind Discovery Center, after a report was taken about finding vandalism and 20 bags of heroin to [redacted].

2:08 p.m. Another call about construction trucks that say "Greg's" on the side speeding in Montague Center. Caller says she did see a cruiser monitoring traffic at one time, but trucks did not come through then and she can't say if they are more prevalent at one time or another. Referred to an officer.
4:10 p.m. Report of a vehicle heavily vandalised on Keith Street. Officer observed rear tail light damage.
10:43 p.m. Caller complained that a large truck has been idling on Dry Hill Road for an hour. Area checked, no vehicles found.
11:13 p.m. Previous caller called back to say he could see a truck parked just past the train tracks on Dry Hill Road on his security camera remotely from work. Officer advised. Caller then called to say he saw the truck leave two minutes before the cruiser came by. Clear.
11:56 p.m. Officer found a group of people behind Sheffield School. Parties moved along, one female inebriated, all over 21.

Wednesday, 9/2
2:10 a.m. Message left by owner leaving a disabled car parked at Aubuchon lot. Flat tire, will deal with later.
8:17 a.m. Call about large construction trucks speeding and loudly braking through Montague Center.
8:27 a.m. Female caller from previous report continues to be harassed by same male in the vicinity of Food City. Investigated.
9:38 a.m. Animal complaint on Montague City Road of a small dog that barks for hours outside. Referred to ACO.
10:45 a.m. 911 call about an oven fire on J Street. TFFD responding.
1:04 p.m. Report of a phone scam. Someone claiming to be Comcast obtained caller's credit card and bank account information from her, but the caller has decided to freeze these accounts. Advised to call back if any money has been stolen.

Montague Community Television News

We'll Edit Your Videos!

By MICHAEL SMITH

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

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

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

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

Something going on you think others would like to see? If you get in touch, we can show you how easy it is to use a camera and capture the moment. Contact us at (413) 863-9200 or infomontaguetv@gmail.com between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. We'd love to work with you!

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ENCOURAGEMENT from page B1

decades. It is magic to see their eyes sparkle as they witness a painting come alive under their brush."

Over months of teaching and learning, Caroline and Sheree have become friends. They sometimes finish each other's sentences, and when one speaks the other actively listens, nods, and encourages, like players in a string ensemble. Caroline, who started painting when she was 35, says she is keenly aware of what it's like to be an adult learner. What makes it hard for adults to learn something entirely new, she explains, is that you have to be open to feeling like a beginner again.

Sheree seems enlivened by that humble position. In fact, before she started painting, she devoted herself to the study of color using adult coloring books filled with intricate patterns. Caroline says Sheree came to painting with a remarkable grasp of color, hue, and value. Sheree quickly adds, "Watching [Caroline] paint is like seeing magic, an amazing painting just appears. She helps me see line, shadow, values, and the empty space that surrounds and visually defines the subject."

If this process seems like second nature to Caroline, it's because she's had a lifetime of creativity as a musician, a painter, and a writer. For Sheree – who worked long hours in retail – her garden has been her primary avenue for expression. She plans it every year much as one might plan a painting, considering colors and contrast, size, height, and blooming schedules. The end result is a neighborhood gift that pleases passersby from early spring until the hard frost of fall.

Her first paintings were inspired by that garden, which she photographs extensively. Sheree says, "Sometimes I think the photographs are actually better."

Caroline immediately disagrees: "The paintings are an interpretation of the photographs. They offer so much more."

Adult Learners

Caroline is attuned to the self-doubt that plagues adult learners. "The first thing many adults say to me is, 'I can't draw,'" she says. "When I hear that, I wince. Because so often



"Gathering Forces," painting by Caroline Wampole.

behind that remark is someone who desperately wants to express themselves through art, but somewhere along the way, someone told them they were no good, or not good enough. And they've internalized that judgment, and used it to silence their own expression."

It makes her indignant. She says, "No one would ever go to their first drivers ed class and say, 'I can't drive,' in an ashamed tone, as if they had no natural talent, and were thus permanently excluded from the act of driving. None of us knew how to drive before we learned to drive, and there was no shame about it!"

Sheree chuckles at that, because though she knows how to drive, she doesn't like it very much and sometimes feels frustrated by her inability to hit the road and to go anywhere anytime. Perhaps painting will give her highway courage, with Caroline's encouragement. There's such optimism in her approach; she believes in limitless possibility, rule-breaking, and self-expression.

Sheree, who likes the Andy Warhol quote, "Art is what you can get away with," says, "Caroline has taught me to have fun with art."

"Sheree understands technical theory but is learning that you can break the rules at any time, and with the right medium, there are second chances," says Caroline. "Watercolors are hard to alter afterwards; acrylics and oils can be painted over, as can gouache, which is a form of opaque watercolor, meaning you can add back in the white."

Caroline freely uses everything to express her own vision. "My palette often depends on whether I'm painting on canvas or on paper," she says. "My canvases in recent years have leaned heavily on a more limited palette of greens and blues and blacks, while my works on paper have included a wider variety of colors. There's no particular rhyme or reason for this – it's what I'm drawn to, and what seems to work in the moment of painting."

The Art of Seeing

Both Sheree and Caroline are training their eyes on the natural landscape of home, where there are infinite things to see. As a teacher, Caroline says that's one of the hardest lessons, just making students pay attention and look. Sheree's paintings of her garden demonstrate that. Up close, a pink iris looks like a ruffled ballerina; from a distance, it stands tall and acts as a background for other blooms. On any given day, Sheree might be on her hands and knees weeding or looking at her garden upside down or spotting a shiny beetle. Recently she moved down the block to paint the Mill House, and even there she hasn't found one single image but many, from different angles at different times of day.

Caroline says she has been inspired by the local landscape since she moved to Western Mass in 2016. "A lot of my inspiration has been around the natural landscape here: trees and rocks and bodies of water," she says. "I've been told that some of my paintings resemble glaciers or oceans. Climate change, or change in general, is often on my mind, and it



Painting of pink irises by Sheree Bloomberg.

seems to seep into what I'm painting whether I'm aware of it or not. I am grateful to be in a place where I feel at home. Also, the seasons here in the Pioneer Valley make it feel like I am traveling – each season makes this an entirely different place. And I love that."

When the pandemic is over, Caroline will continue to write and paint, and she is longing to visit more museums. She recently went to The Mount and felt like it was a mini-vacation in France. (She once lived there, and became a rock'n'roll star with a platinum record, but that's another story.)

Sheree will definitely resume her travels, but the immersion in art during this strange time will be with her always. She plans to travel with a sketchbook and colored pencils, take photographs that might later be reinterpreted on canvas, and observe her surroundings more deeply. "This solitude and painting," she says, "have become a part of me forever."

Sheree has not yet thought about ways to share her paintings, but if you want to see more, send an email to shereepaul@aol.com. Someday, when it's safe to do so, it would be fun to have a community art show at the Common Hall!

Caroline has a Facebook page, and you can follow her on Instagram @wampoline and her website, www.carolinewampole.com.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Virtual Festival to Raise Funds for the Leverett Village Co-Op

Streaming live from the Leverett Village Co-op on Friday, September 25, the first ever Rattlesnake Gutter Festival will be a fundraising telethon for the grocery store and café featuring a silent auction, local entertainment, virtual tours, and a membership drive.

The volunteer-driven festival will be a celebration of local arts, culture, and sustainability, with all proceeds going towards the Co-op's revitalization.

"The activities committee was planning a party to celebrate our members, donors and volunteers keeping the Co-op open while slowly paying down our debts, but then the pandemic hit and the event was cancelled," said festival organizer and board member Karen Traub.

"When we got an anonymous challenge pledge of \$7,500, a live-streamed event seemed like the perfect cross between a festival and a

telethon. And voilà, the Rattlesnake Gutter Festival was born."

This virtual event will feature live blues music by the **Wildcat O'Halloran Band**, **Boys of the Landfill**, the **Wendell Warriors** drum circle, flutist **Laura Botkin**, and a performance by the belly dancing group **Crescent Dancers**. Special guests will join us throughout the day including **Dean Cycon** of the fair-trade coffee company **Dean's Beans**, and local documentary filmmaker **Steve Alves**, who will talk about building healthy local economies and what makes Franklin County special.

"The Leverett Village Co-op, like food coops across the country, are of critical importance – now more than ever," Alves said. "Our consolidated, industrialized food system has revealed the terrible vulnerabilities of 'efficiencies' during the pandemic, where farmers have been forced

to destroy livestock and produce because they are unable to get it to market. A diversity of local and regional suppliers is what's needed in a crisis. This is what food coops like the Leverett Co-op are about, along with other benefits to their members."

Throughout the festival, and in the days preceding, the public can bid on dozens of items and services generously donated by members of the community. Original artwork, a private Zoom cooking class, landscaping services by Grass Roots, an acupuncture session, a trucking excursion to the Leverett Dump, homemade scarves and a snake phobia desensitization Zoom experience are just a handful of over two dozen items available for bidding.

A complete list of auction items will be available on the Village Co-op's website, where anyone can place their bid: leverettcoop.com.

"Anyone who's been to the

charming little store at the foot of Rattlesnake Gutter for groceries, coffee, beer or wine, a scone, breakfast, lunch or pizza understands what we refer to as 'Co-op Magic' – it's so much more than a grocery store, the Village Co-op is democracy in action," Traub said. "Coops are for people, not profit."

The Village Co-op is striving to match a generous anonymous challenge pledge of \$7,500 in order to pay down debt. With donors' help the store hopes to balance the books and lower the cost of shopping local for everyone. In the last six months it has closed the gap on a nearly \$200,000 deficit, installed new refrigerators and freezers, and made needed repairs all while weathering the effects of a pandemic. With support from the community, the Leverett Village Co-op can remain a thriving and sustainable business for many years to come.

"We have begun a search for a full-time general manager to lead the next phase of coop development, and our next challenge is to increase our revenue by 50% to offset staff costs," said board president Samuel Black. "Debts to local businesses and larger-scale food suppliers are paid off, and other debts have been consolidated and will be paid off as becomes necessary. The Co-op is in good shape thanks to community donations and loans, a forgivable Payroll Protection Program Loan, a 30-year low fixed-interest Emergency Injury and Disaster Loan, and support from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Food Security Infrastructure Protection Program."

Direct donations to the Village Co-op can be made online, in person, or over the phone during the telethon.

And don't forget dinner – Friday nights are pizza night!

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8102150: Nothing strengthens authority so much as silence. - Leonarbo da Vinci
 810150: Unlike many, teachers are the only profession that teach our children. - Dan Crisley
 1152150: A book should serve as the ax for the frozen sea within us. - Franz Kafka
 115150: A functioning police state needs no police. - William S. Burroughs
 0152150: The older I grow the more I distrust the familiar doctrine that age brings wisdom. - H.L. Mencken
 0118150: Slavery has never been abolished from America's way of thinking. - Nina Simone
 0111150: Unhappy lies the head that wears a crown. - William Shakespeare
 0101150: Be careful what you set your heart upon... for it will surely be yours. - James Baldwin

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HEARTFELT from page B1

hot sauce was not even – pun intended – on the table. Pizzas were okay with mushrooms and olives, but green peppers? No thanks. Stuffed peppers? Heck no. Chipotle burger? I don't think so!

It wasn't until my wife and I moved from west to east and I began to experience new vegetables that I began to rethink my boycott of those gorgeous shiny green things that came with my CSA farm share. Eventually I began growing them in my garden. Lush emerald poblanos and firm jalapenos were coming into the kitchen, and I was okay with that.

I nibbled the very tip of a jalapeno ex-

perimentally and realized that it had a wonderfully fresh green flavor and a slow burn. I'd mince one and add it to coleslaw or throw it into a stew, welcoming the spicy bite it gave food. When my wife roasted poblanos and first made chiles rellenos, I thought I'd died and gone to heaven, wondering why I had denied myself this experience for so long. The combination of the spicy roasted chiles stuffed with hot steaming cheese or beans or even (as we discovered in Baja, Mexico) garlic-mashed potato rellenos served with a thin bean sauce, was like nothing else I'd ever tasted.

I felt a little cheated by my stubbornness; I could have been devouring this de-

light for all those many years, but I'd just had to prove my stupid point about hating peppers and chilis, and then I had to maintain that fiction.

Today I delight in the crisp crunch of raw bell peppers in all shades, including red, orange, and yellow. My salads are colorful, my casseroles have bite, and I've yet to meet a chile relleno I didn't like.

Now, a bit of history on the different spelling of chili, chile, or chilli: in Spanish-speaking countries you'll find it spelled "chile," in American English it's "chili," and in British English "chilli." Also, what's the difference between a pepper and a chile/chili/chilli? Peppers are in the genus *Piper* and chillies belong to the genus *Capsicum* and tend to be hotter than peppers.

No matter how it's spelled, whether it's a pepper or the spicier chili, you can have a lot of fun with this versatile vegetable: stuffed as a main course, chopped into a salsa or sliced into salad, you can't beat the spice and the heat.

Here is my recipe for our Baja-style chiles rellenos. My wife and I were served these amazing rellenos at a restaurant in Todos Santos, Baja, designated as one of Mexico's "Pueblo Magico" towns. Once home, we created this version, which is much simpler than the traditional variety, which requires beating and frying in egg whites. You may never go back to the traditional chile relleno once you taste this dish.

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 troublemandesoncopyediting.com for your grant writing and copyediting needs.



PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

From Surviving to Thriving This Fall, Winter, and Beyond

MONTAGUE – Over the course of four free workshops this fall, Montague resident Nadya Tkachenko will share with participants how the ancient wisdom of Ayurveda and modern habit science can help boost immunity and reduce stress.

Ayurveda is India's 5,000-year-old system of natural healing, and has been around through many pandemics. Nadya will share practical tools and proven modern habit-changing techniques for establishing consistent daily routines for optimal wellness. The workshops, conducted via Zoom, are **free and open to all**. Registrants will receive a recording. Register for one or all four at www.sunessenceyoga.com/health.

Sunday, September 13 at 3 p.m.: *Lifestyle Tools for Greater Immunity, Ease and Resilience*;

Sunday, October 4 at 3 p.m.: *Diet and Remedies for Boosting Immunity*;

Sunday, November 8 at 3 p.m.: *Getting a Good Night's Sleep for Mind and Body Health*;

Sunday, December 6 at 3 p.m.: *Tools for Busting Stress and Overwhelm and for Experiencing More Ease*.

Nadya Tkachenko has been a practitioner of Yoga for over 20 years, having first come to the practice looking for a way to de-stress after a long day at an office desk on Wall Street. Embarking on a quest around the globe, she participated in Ashtanga Yoga intensive at the Holistic Yoga Ashrama in Kathmandu. Later, she received a Hatha Yoga Teacher Certification from the Yoga Education Institute in London.

Nadya developed an interest in Ayurveda while living and studying Yoga in Nepal in 2002, and has been learning about its guiding principles ever since. She has been teaching in the Pioneer Valley for the last 10 years. Originally from Kazakhstan, Nadya is fluent in Russian and conversant in Mandarin, with background and degrees in International Relations, East Asian Studies, Social Anthropology, and Education. She is a mom of four young children who inspire her every day.

CHILES RELLENOS, BAJA STYLE

Poblanos Peppers: Put whole poblanos under the broiler, at least one per diner, turning a quarter turn once each side is blistered. When done, remove and place in either a paper bag (closed tightly) or in a bowl of ice water (wifey and I use different methods) and allow it to sit for a few minutes. You should be able to peel off the skin easily, being careful not to split or damage the pepper; do not remove the stem, it's what holds it all together.

Once peeled, find a slit or cut one and use fingers to remove membranes and seeds. (Don't touch your eyes or mouth afterwards!) Set peppers aside. If you've rinsed them to get all the seeds out, lay on a paper towel to dry.

Cheesy Garlic Mashed Potatoes: Cut potatoes into large chunks and boil potatoes until soft. Mash with butter and garlic, a bit of milk or cream, salt and pepper. Stir in 1/2 to 1 cup of grated or crumbled cheese like queso fresca. Set aside.

Sauce: On the stove, mix 2 Tbsp. refried beans with 1 to 1 1/2 cups of vegetable or chicken broth and heat while stirring until smooth. Add more broth if needed, but you want the sauce to stick to the back of a spoon when dipped, as with most gravies. Set aside.

Assembly: Taking each pepper, gently stuff with the cheesy garlic mashed potatoes and fold closed. Place into an ungreased glass baking dish and bake at 375° for 20 to 25 minutes until heated through. Make a pool of sauce on a plate, lay relleno on top and drizzle with more sauce before serving. Crumble some cheese on top.

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