

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 18 – NO. 42

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

\$1

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

SEPTEMBER 24, 2020

G-M REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

State Pressures Schools To Return to Buildings; Teachers Argue Against

By MIKE JACKSON

GILL-MONTAGUE – The decision to schedule a limited return of students to Gill-Montague’s school buildings was delayed at least one more week on Tuesday night after superintendent Brian Beck reported that assessments of the buildings’ ventilation systems were still not completed. But a letter last week from state education commissioner Jeffrey Riley demanding Gill-Montague and 15 other districts submit reopening timelines, under threat of an audit, has provoked an outcry from teachers and paraprofessionals.

“In our area, many districts including Easthampton, Frontier, Hawlemont, Mohawk, Pioneer, South Hadley, Northampton, and Greenfield currently teach remotely,” Karl Dziura, president of the Gill-Montague Education Associ-

ation (GMEA), argued before the school committee. “Greenfield, our next-door neighbor, with whom our district’s citizens freely intermingle, apparently has the blessing of DESE to do so.”

The official rate of COVID-19 has been low throughout Franklin County, with 41 positive tests reported in the past two months, just under one-quarter of the statewide average.

“In light of the stark discrepancy between local public health data and your reopening plan, I am requesting a timeline by which you anticipate providing in-person instruction for the majority of your students,” Riley wrote last week to a list of districts that included Mohawk and Hawlemont, but no others in the county.

“Please note that your response may trigger an audit to assess overall efforts to provide in-person

see **GMRSD** page A7

ERVING SELECTBOARD

Erving Seeks Citizens for Police Chief Hiring Board

By KATIE NOLAN

On Monday night, the Erving selectboard began preparations for hiring a new police chief to replace Christopher Blair, who is currently on leave. The board reviewed the chief job description, reviewed the draft request for quotation (RFQ) to find consultants who specialize in chief searches, and discussed forming a screening committee.

The board made minor edits to the job description, and town administrator Bryan Smith said he would provide a final draft at the next meeting on September 28.

Jeffrey Rollins, a resident who attended the hearing, suggested adding military experience as one of the required qualifications in the job description. Selectboard chair Jacob Smith said that military service fit into the requirement for a bachelor’s degree and ten years of experience, or an equivalent combination.

Selectboard member William Bembury said that, during his own career in law enforcement, he noticed that “over 50% of the officers came from a military background.”

Bryan Smith proposed publishing the RFQ on Thursday, signing with a consultant in October, conducting preliminary screening of chief candidates in November, identifying finalists in December, and preparing an employment offer for a new chief in January. He estimated the cost for the consultant at \$10,000 to \$15,000.

see **ERVING** page A8

BRIDGE UPDATE

The Latest Dish On the Bridge Repair Scene!

By JEFF SINGLETON

The town of Montague is not an island, but it is nearly impossible to access without crossing a bridge over a body of water, generally a river or a stream. During the past few years many of these bridges, constructed many decades ago, have degraded to the point where they and those who cross them may be at risk.

The most well known of these is the General Pierce, which connects Greenfield and Montague at the end of Montague City Road. For years pieces of this bridge’s deck have fallen into the Connecticut River, famously causing residents to hold their breath and roll down their windows when they cross should their cars fall into the River.

Other bridges produce less angst, but may be in worse shape. The Center and South Street bridges in Montague Center, which cross the Sawmill River, have each been reduced to one lane per order of the state bridge

see **BRIDGES** page A5

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Town Stabilizes Embankment, Prepares for Flu Vaccination



A truck dumps rocks down a Millers Falls Road embankment earlier this month. “When I was there on the 13th, the 186th truckload was dumped,” photographer Ed Gregory writes, adding that an engineer said the job was “about one-third complete.”

By JEFF SINGLETON

At its September 21 joint meeting with the town’s board of health, the Montague selectboard heard health director Daniel Wasiuk announce that his department would be administering this winter’s flu vaccine, which has been recommended by Governor Charlie Baker’s office. Wasiuk said the vaccine would be available beginning “sometime in October,” and that priority would be given to town employees, students of the regional school district, and then the “general public.”

The announcement follows a statement by Baker urging “all residents” to be vaccinated against the

flu this year, and links this policy to the COVID-19 pandemic. “It is more important than ever for people to get a flu shot this year as we deal with the COVID-19 pandemic,” Baker said on September 17. “If more people are vaccinated against the flu, this will not only help reduce the spread of flu but also the impact of flu-related illness on healthcare facilities, resources and staff involved in the treatment of COVID patients.”

In August the Governor announced a requirement that all students attending Kindergarten through college have a flu vaccination by December 31. At his recent press conference, which took place

see **MONTAGUE** page A7

PARTICIPATION

Planning Department Dabbles In Pedestrian-Friendly Paint

By PETE WACKERNAGEL

TURNERS FALLS – For a hundred years, the street has been the domain of cars. In the 21st century, policy makers and planners have been concerned with re-envisioning it as a multi-use space.

Cars gained exclusive use of our streets through legal means – including jaywalking laws, passed nationwide during the 1920s – and through the “might-makes-right” logic inherent in their size, speed, and potential to cause injury or death. This appropriation of the street by automobiles transformed a mixed-use commons, one that

had accommodated transportation as well as commercial, social, and political activities, into a single-purpose space.

Recently, planners have worked to create “complete streets” – streets that can be safely used by all means of transportation. The state Department of Transportation (MassDOT) launched a “Complete Streets Funding Program” in 2014, and Montague adopted a “complete streets” policy in 2017.

To become eligible for these state grants, streets “must serve pedestrians, cyclists, and transit in addition to vehicular traffic,” says town

see **PAINT** page A5



A state grant to the town has allowed one freshly ordained landscape architect a chance to interfere with the Second Street entrance to Unity Park.

GOING REMOTE

Our Youngest Learners

By MIKE JACKSON

GILL-MONTAGUE – Tension is building over whether and when Gill-Montague administrators should reopen school doors for limited in-person learning, but the baseline for school this year is remote. Even in a hybrid model, most students would likely work from home for part of the week, with many of the digitally mediated ways they are interacting with their teachers merely traveling in and out of the buildings.

On Monday I spoke with Sarah Burstein, principal at Hillcrest Elementary School, about what computerization looks like for the district’s youngest students. (This transcript has been abridged, and edited slightly for clarity.)

MR: *How’d things go today?*

SB: Today was the first day for pre-K and kindergarten. All of our kindergartners were able to successfully log in and participate in their morning meetings, and learning with their teachers. Our preschool teachers reported that all of their students were “at school” today... They were all very excited to see their teachers and classmates, and many of them have already learned how to use the microphone icon to mute and un-mute themselves.

MR: *How many students are in each grade? Is it fewer than expected?*

SB: Our kindergarten classes have between 14 and 15 students each, and we have three classrooms at every grade level – this year we have 45 kindergarten students, there’s about 48 first graders, and preschool right now is about 40. That’s lower than normal. We usually have about 150 to 160 students.

We have had some kindergarten families decide to wait another year because of COVID; some preschool families decided for various reasons that remote preschool was not a fit for them, mostly because it’s a shortened day, so managing the childcare aspect of things with remote schooling was a challenge.



Hillcrest Elementary School principal Sarah Burstein.

[Pre-COVID], preschool was a half-day program for 3-year-olds and a full-day program for 4-year-olds. Now the day primarily runs from about 8:30 to 11:15. Some preschoolers who have special education services might receive some of those outside of that end time – later in the day they might be connecting, for example, with the speech language pathologist for a one-on-one therapy session.

MR: *Are teachers all teaching from home themselves?*

SB: We have a mix. Some teachers are teaching from their classrooms here in the building, and some are teaching from home.... Our administrative assistant and our custodian are here, and a member of our technology team, and a changing mix of teachers and paraprofessionals.

MR: *What’s it like to be in a mostly empty building while school is starting at home?*

SB: Well, you know... it’s like everything else in COVID. There are many unexpected components of this whole thing. It’s quiet, and I desperately miss the energy of teachers and kids and families in and out. It’s quieter than I would like it to be, for sure.

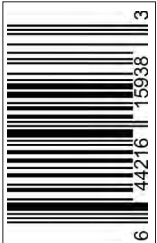
And it’s super clean and shiny – our custodian had extra time this summer, so our classrooms have been painted and the floors are sparkling, and it’s empty.

see **LEARNERS** page A4

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The Montague Reporter

"The Voice of the Villages"

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Technical Administration

About Face Computing

Founded by

Arthur Evans
Harry Brandt
David Detmold
August 2002

Common Cause

We knew there would be trouble coming when the state published a list of which school districts would be opening with fully remote learning. The map showed mostly urban districts – cities still contending with community transmission of the virus – and then some rural ones that had successfully beaten its first wave, including a crescent across the northwest part of the state.

Educators and technologists here are doing everything they can to deliver quality teaching over the internet, but the model transfers a significant amount of work onto households. The state has set educational mandates, and this inevitably pits teachers and parents against each other: should we concentrate the students where the paid workers are and intensify the risk, or spread them out and intensify the exploitation of unwaged care?

Focusing only on “priority” populations of students with special educational needs – disproportionately coming from marginalized households – doesn’t exactly solve the problem: is it better to perpetuate their neglect, or to single them out for higher risk of exposure?

There are ways to loosen this knot, but most will involve lobby-

ing for public policy intervention.

First, these mandates for educational outcomes *can* be relaxed during the pandemic. Given the right support and stimuli, young brains will always grow and learn. Maybe that just looks different this year. While the virus is still a major threat, schools should give up the pretense of functioning as an urgent conveyor belt into the workforce, anyway. Let’s reduce the anxiety.

And second, to the extent that children will be learning outside the school buildings, we need to find ways to provide equal access to learning pods. As wealthier families pay to enroll their children in study halls, the demand to reopen public schools as daycare centers of last resort only intensifies. Given the politics of 2020, stipends for at-home caregivers are probably off the table, but maybe we can find a way to subsidize “priority” pods in order to ease the unwaged burden?

These are win-win goals for parents and teachers – groups that have rarely worked together in coalition. There’s a first time for everything. Data shows the virus is spreading statewide, but for now, the northwest part of the state has been given a rare opportunity to lead the way.

CORRECTION

Erving assistant town planner Mariah Kurtz is earning her keep this week! Kurtz spotted an error in last week’s edition. Whatever you may have read then about the time and location of the coming

Erving special town meeting, it will be held at 10 a.m., next Saturday, October 3, outdoors, behind the senior center at 1 Care Drive.

We are happy to correct the error, and grateful for the help.

To Fellow “Boomers”

This is an appeal to the baby boom generation to think carefully before competing for jobs in the current economic environment.

If you really need the money, please go for that job. But if you’re bored in retirement and just want to get out of the house and do something, think about what that means to the younger generations trying to establish themselves in the workforce. They, through no fault of their own, have had to deal with the fallout from the dot-com bubble to the Great Recession and now the COVID debacle. Many are saddled with burdensome education loans that are, in part, the result of politicians not wanting to raise taxes out of fear of angering us.

You have had a long career and

have lots of experience, so you are better able to compete for these jobs, even part-time ones. But when you take those positions you are depriving younger members of the community opportunities that you had when you were starting out on your career path.

And from a purely selfish point of view, Social Security depends on younger workers paying into the system to help support us in our old age. The sooner their careers start, the more they contribute to your retirement security.

By all means, volunteer and mentor these young people, but don’t take their jobs.

David Dempsey
Montague

NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION

Eric Magnuson has always been into listening to and talking about music. The Greenfield native opened Breakdown Records on Avenue A in Turners Falls about a year ago. Magnuson says the store sells lots of \$5 albums, and VCRs and tape decks move fairly quickly off the shelf. He wants to do host DJ-type shows at the store, whenever gatherings become possible and desirable again. For now, he is open every day but Monday.

Letters to the Editors

Hey, Don’t Lump In Biomass

In Miriam Kurland’s letter last week, the association of biomass with fossil fuel energy in the second paragraph was concerning to me, as a user of wood fuels to reduce my family’s contribution to climate change: “We need to dramatically convert from fossil and biomass to true renewable energy forms like wind and solar, and use less energy.”

I agree with Miriam completely on the last point made about reducing our energy consumption if the net result addresses climate change.

The deliberate choice to group biomass derived from wood with fossil fuels is, however, misleading readers to make a dangerous association between a renewable fuel source and a non-renewable fuel source. Where I think the author made this mistake is in following other opinion writers who have also tried to make biomass guilty by association.

How this rhetorical argument

came to exist is that at the chimney, both fuel sources are emitters of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses. It is well documented in scientific literature that the difference in energy density will show wood fuels emit more carbon dioxide per unit of energy in this narrow viewpoint. Where the logic of this association begins to fall apart is when looking at the cycling of matter and energy around the world over time.

The emissions from the firewood and pellets used to heat my house each winter are recoverable on a human time scale, which is why the IPCC and many other entities including the Commonwealth of Massachusetts value biomass as a part of the solution towards addressing climate change. The carbon in the wood I burn this season will cycle through the world over the next 50 years as it becomes a part of another tree growing in the forests of Massachusetts.

This might not sound like the speed of action that Miriam and other WSFA members would like, but compared to the oil and gas burned by my parents and grandparents for decades without any care, I will actually be giving my child a balanced carbon account when I leave the earth sometime in the latter half of this century.

All of the work we do to address climate changes now, as readers of the IPCC reports will know, is about what the earth’s climate will be in the year 2100. In this upcoming year of climate reckoning, my infant son sleeping in his crib upstairs will be an old man, hopefully with children and grandchildren of his own.

It is my hope that for their sake we put aside misleading information, hold each other accountable, and move forward with the important work ahead.

Sean Mahoney
Leverett

When Reporting on LLCs...

Limited Liability Corporations exist to allow owners to shield their personal lives from financial liability of the small (or large) company (e.g. the bank can’t take your house, even if your business fails). They are also a handy way of not directly having your name on everything your business does or doesn’t do. They are *not* supposed to be a shield from knowing who is legally making the decisions at a business.

Most states have a registry where you can look up the required business registrations, filings, Board of Directors, etc... In Massachusetts, it can be found at <https://corp.sec.state.ma.us/CorpWeb/CorpSearch/CorpSearch.aspx> where one could see that the Solutions Consulting Group LLC listed as the owner of Railroad Salvage – with significant back taxes due, along with a

long string of missed cleanup deadlines – is just Jeanne Golrick of 11 West Main Street, Millers Falls.

Thanks to Citizens United, corporations may have the same legal standing as actual people; but that is no reason to not note who is actually behind any of the corporations.

Thank you for your continued good reporting!

Garth Shaneyfelt
Greenfield

Editors’ note: According to documents available in the Registry of Deeds, another public database, 9-11 West Main Street was foreclosed upon in 2017-18, and purchased from the bank by a new owner in May 2020.

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LARKIN-ROSSI ILLUSTRATION

By NINA ROSSI

The first-ever **Rattlesnake Gutter Festival** will be streaming live from the Leverett Village Co-op this Friday, September 25. The event is a fundraising telethon for the grocery store and cafe featuring a silent auction, local entertainment, virtual tours, and a membership drive. There will be live music, dance, and special guests throughout the day. Bidding on dozens of items and services donated by townspeople can be done online this week at leverettcoop.com. You may also bid at the live auction Friday between 4 and 6 p.m.

Looking for work? Attend a **virtual manufacturing job fair**, starting Monday, September 28 and ending Wednesday, September 30. Local employers Hillside Plastics, Judd Wire, and CharterNEX Films, to name a few, are looking to hire for 100 job openings. For more information about joining this event, go to www.massshirefhcareers.org.

Dementia Friends is a movement that seeks to change the way people think, talk, and act about dementia. Find out about **how to become a**

Dementia Friend at a Zoom information session with Nancy Spittle, RN, next Tuesday, September 29 at 6:30 p.m.

The event is brought to you by the Village Neighbors, a volunteer community helping folks age in place in our rural area. Seek more information at www.villageneighbors.org or call (413) 345-6894.

On Wednesday, September 30 join an online workshop to **learn about climate mitigation solutions** with Connor Stedman. “Thinking Like A Watershed: Community-Scale Climate Adaptation and Resilience in the North Quabbin” starts on Zoom at 7 p.m., and is co-hosted by Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust and North Quabbin Energy. Find out more at www.mountgrace.org.

Microsoft is taking **applications for the Community Skills Program**, part of its larger commitment to address racial injustice. The program will award up to 50 unrestricted, cash grants of up to \$100,000 per year for three years to Black- and African American-led nonprofits that provide digital skills and workforce development to the

Black and African American community. The program also includes support for leadership development and technology capacity building. The deadline to apply is September 30; see www.microsoft.com.

Great Falls Books Through Bars invites volunteers to join them again at Just Roots Farm in Greenfield on Sunday, October 4. The group sends books, letters, and other supplies to people who are incarcerated across the US. Help them pack books into envelopes, tape them shut, and write letters to go with them, while working under tents at the farm.

There will be handwashing stations, port-a-potties, and plenty of companionship with up to 14 other people in your group. All will be respecting social distance guidelines, and you must wear a mask at all times. Please RSVP by September 27. Email gfbtb@riseup.net to sign up for one of two work sessions that afternoon: 1 to 3:15 p.m., or 3:45 to 5:45 p.m.

From LifePath: Join an **inter-generational Inclusion Showcase** by creating a piece of art that will stimulate dialogue and reflection about racism and inclusion within our community. Participants of all artistic levels, ages, races, identities, orientations, cultures, and backgrounds are strongly encouraged to participate.

Questions for reflection: Have you ever experienced or witnessed

racism? Do you know someone who has? How could western Massachusetts be a more inclusive community?

Groups and individuals are invited to submit family-friendly artwork, theater, music, writing, or other medium of expression by October 5. LifePath will present and host the Showcase on Wednesday, October 28, at 2 p.m. via Zoom.

Join Tapestry and the Opioid Task Force at an upcoming **community overdose prevention training** to learn how to recognize and respond to an opioid overdose. Participants will also learn how to administer Narcan, a lifesaving opioid overdose reversal drug, and will receive instructions about how they can obtain free Narcan.

These Zoom sessions will be held on Wednesday, October 14 at 6 p.m., Monday, November 9 at 7 p.m., and Thursday, December 17 at 10 a.m. The event is open to the public. If you want to join the Zoom call, email maile@opioidtaskforce.org.

Throughout the month of October, the Shea Theater will be providing **live music at the Great Falls Farmers market** in Peskeumskut Park, every Wednesday at 5 p.m. This was made possible by a grant from the Garlic & Arts Festival. The lineup includes Eavesdrop, Hannah Rose, Izzy Heltai, and Ruby Mack.

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

GUEST EDITORIAL

Let’s Pass a Strong, Equitable Climate Bill!

By SALLY PICK

MONTAGUE CENTER – The climate crisis isn’t just in the West, with the devastating fires due to long-term drought, or in the south where hurricanes repeatedly batter coastal communities.

The Massachusetts state website warns that “Wildland fire risk continues across the state. Extended drought conditions have rendered grasses, shrubs, and forest fuels very dry.” In late June, a wildfire at the beginning of the drought scorched 55 acres of forest in Leverett, and we’re not out of the woods. In fact, on the day I’m writing this, the National Weather Service issued one of the few red flag warnings I’ve seen, cautioning that critical fire weather conditions – drought and gusty winds – could result in rapidly spreading, hard to extinguish fires.

The climate crisis is worsening, so, with a climate bill being finalized at the state house, it’s time to press our state legislators to immediately pass strong and equitable climate legislation.

The Massachusetts House and Senate have each passed their own climate bill. Now, a conference committee will decide the contents of the final bill.

Please join me in calling on our legislators to act with the urgency consistent with the impacts of our climate crisis. Climate emergencies are not waiting, and neither should Massachusetts.

To find your representative and senator’s names and contact information, go online to malegislature.gov/Search/FindMyLegislator and type in your address. Natalie Blais and Paul Mark were among the local representatives who co-sponsored a 100% renewable energy bill and an equitable carbon pricing and rebate bill, neither of which were included in the final climate legislation being reviewed. Senator Jo Comerford introduced a bill to establish a net-zero building code, which is in the Senate bill.

We have strong climate advocates in our local legislators, but they need to hear from us to thank them for being climate champions and ask them to continue speaking with members of the climate conference committee to push for the rapid passage of a final climate bill which includes (or excludes) the following key priorities:

Aspects of H. 4933 and/or S. 2500 to include:

- Set a deadline of January 2022 (or earlier) for release of regulations to meet the 2030 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction goal, and set interim goals for GHG reduction for 2030, 2040, and 2045.
- Increase the amount of offshore wind for electric generation.
- Institute detailed policies to address environmental justice.
- Increase energy efficiency standards for appliances, water and lighting fixtures, etc. that are subject to meeting future state and federal upgrades in efficiency standards.
- Allow solar owners to share net-metering credits across MA electric utility territories.
- Establish a land use commission to develop recommendations on land use restrictions within the Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target (SMART) program that protect our forests, farms and open spaces.
- Establish a carve-out for low-income solar.

- Raise the annual increase in the Renewable Portfolio Standard – the amount of renewable energy the state requires of public electric utilities – to 3%.

- Commit to an equitable, market-based mechanism to place a fee on carbon pollution.
- Change the Department of Public Utilities’ mission to include a consideration of GHG reduction goals in all of its operations.
- Develop an optional net-zero building code.
- Allow the Department of Public Utilities to authorize pilot projects to develop utility-scale renewable thermal energy.
- Establish a future utility grid commission for long-term grid modernization.

Aspects of H. 4933 and/or S. 2500 to delete:

- Biomass and nuclear power should *not* be defined as a “non-carbon” emitting fuel, rather, only clean renewable energy as defined in the Renewable Portfolio Standard and/or the Clean Energy Standard.
- Solar power should not become taxable.

Members of the climate conference committee, listed at left, also need to hear from us.

And for something really easy, vote YES on the November ballot to encourage legislators to pass a 100% renewable energy bill. This ballot question will be on ballots in towns in Representative Natalie Blais’s First Franklin district and 18 other districts across MA.

The question asks: “Shall the representative for this district be instructed to vote in favor of legislation that would require Massachusetts to achieve 100% renewable energy use within the next two decades, starting immediately and making significant progress within the first five years while protecting impacted workers and business?”

Though it is non-binding, a yes vote will send a signal to the legislature that voters in districts with this question on their ballot expect them to pass a 100% renewable energy bill in the next legislative session. We won’t wait.

Sally Pick lives in Montague Center, and serves on Climate Action Now’s legislative committee.

Climate Conference Committee
Member Contact Information

Representative Thomas A. Golden, Jr.
Thomas.Golden@mahouse.gov
(617) 722-2263

Representative Patricia Haddad
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Representative Bradley H. Jones, Jr.
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Senator Patrick M. O’Connor
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RECYCLE

PAPER

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in Montague



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LEARNERS from page A1

MR: *Is additional work being done in the building in preparation for in-person learning?*

SB: Yes. Our custodian is putting together about 120 adjustable-sized desks. Typically, for preschool and kindergarten, children don't sit at desks for learning – they're moving around the classroom; they might sit at small tables with classmates to do small projects. So we had to order a lot of desks in anticipation of having children come back, and being able to keep them six feet apart in their own personal learning space, which would mean a little, tiny, kid-sized desk.

And furniture is moving out of classrooms to accommodate additional space between students. And, like every school in Massachusetts, we've had an HVAC audit, so changes will come on the heels of that.

MR: *What was it like to be part of the planning process this summer?*

SB: It's been a matter of trying to pay careful attention to all of the different guidelines offered to us by DESE, and trying to apply those guidelines to make sure what we're offering is developmentally appropriate for the age of our students, and considering how those guidelines apply to our physical space.

Thinking about what resources our families need in any setting, whether it's remote learning or hybrid or in-person. For example, in remote learning, considering how many families need a Chromebook, or a hot spot in order to access the internet. Thinking about hybrid learning, [we're] considering cohorts of children within families, so if you have three kids, they're all coming for in-person learning on the same day.

Also, trying to consider how we might serve our "priority populations," children with learning needs that make remote learning especially challenging. All that, and also keeping an eye on the health of our community, and thinking about the

GUEST EDITORIAL

Wendell's Municipal Light Board Should Be Elected

By ROBERT HELLER

The Municipal Light Board (MLB) is the town board that governs the Municipal Light Plant (MLP). In the case of Wendell, this is the fiber-optic network that the town recently built.

This board will mostly be making policy decisions relating to the operation of this network, on behalf of the owners of this infrastructure: the voters who voted to borrow the money to pay for this infrastructure and will be paying the taxes to pay for that borrowing. This board will also hire a manager to manage the day-to-day operations of the network, and will also set the operating budget, which also means they will be setting the subscriber price for the services delivered over the network. They will also be deciding on the contractors to provide network operations, services, and maintenance.

Since the glass fibers that make up this network have a projected lifetime of at least 50 years, it can be expected that the MLB will be around for at least half of a century. A lot can change in town over half of a century, in terms of Selectboard makeup and other aspects of town politics.

The fiber-optic network is already becoming a critical piece of town infrastructure and it is likely to become even more important, especially as the old and aging analog telephone system becomes obsolete and likely eventually will be discontinued. This is not some short-term board, but a board that needs to be viable for many years to come.

Why this board should be elected

Since this board represents the owners of the network, who are the voters of the town, it makes very clear sense that the voters should be the ones who select the members of this board. That is, it

makes sense that the voters elect the members of this board at the annual town election. The election process gives the voters a chance to get to know the people who will be representing them when making decisions about this infrastructure, which is in fact owned by the voters.

As elected members of this board, the members are directly accountable to the voters, who are also the owners. I believe that this direct accountability is very important over the (long) lifetime of the fiber-optic network. This network is an important and critical piece of town infrastructure and needs to be run with the interests of the town as a whole, with input from the whole town.

The members of this board need to have a direct connection to the voters of the town, including being residents and voters of the town. The members should be known by the voters in town, that is by the owners of the network. The voters, the owners, need to have confidence that their interests are being kept in mind by the people managing this critical infrastructure, and the best way of ensuring that is by having the voters directly elect the members of this board.

An election implies that the people seeking to be members of this board will communicate their positions, qualifications, expertise, and views on the various aspects of the operation of the network to the voters in town. And will also be open to hearing from the voters the concerns of the voters, thus ensuring that the board will be responsive to the voters – the owners.

Pitfalls of an appointed board

There are a number of potential pitfalls of an appointed board. First of all, an appointed board is going to be subject to Selectboard politics, which has the potential for long-term problems.

Another problem is a matter of "divided loyalties," where it becomes possible that the board will make decisions that *please* the Selectboard because the board is beholden to the Selectboard for their (re-)appointments, rather than making decisions that represent the voters, who are the owners of the network.

The seats on the board could become political "prizes" handed out by the Selectboard. The board could also become a *faceless bureaucracy*, where the members are not generally known by the voters of the town. Or worse, a rubber stamp group approving policies decided by the Selectboard or because they are unwilling to look at new options.

It is also possible that the board could end up being made up of people who are disinterested in the MLP and are only serving as appointed placeholders, who might have no motivation to show up at meetings or participate in the meetings they do attend. Or even worse, be made up of people who are not even residents or voters in town.

Conclusions

I would like to urge the Town Meeting to vote down Article 14 at the special town meeting this September 26, 2020 and instead approve Article 15. I would like to thank you for reading this paper.

Robert Heller has lived in Wendell since the mid-1970s. He was on the original Broadband Committee (from its formation in 2005 until its reorganization as two committees in 2016). He has been operating a small software and Linux administration consulting business, Deepwoods Software, since 1993 out of his home deep in the woods on Locke Hill.

impact this has on families – of our students, but also families of all of our teachers and staff members.

MR: *Are you in regular touch with a lot of families?*

SB: I try to send out a lot of information! I have a newsletter that goes home every Friday. I am getting emails and phone calls from parents who have questions: some who are facing challenges, and also families who are emailing to say, "It's going really well, thank you so much!" We're really trying to listen carefully to the challenges that families are facing.

Our first graders had a full week of learning last week, and by the middle of the week, families were sending some good, actionable feedback. Our first-grade teachers put their heads together and thought about how they might adjust the schedule to respond to some of the feedback. We're hoping to condense the amount of time that children are engaged in front of the screen....

MR: *Are there forms of support for parents in their own support role?*

SB: Every grade level has put together at-home learning materials, with some guidance for families.... games that families can play, things connected to the monthly learning themes, in preschool; arts and crafts materials, and learning materials like workbooks and children's literature that are going home.

Our teachers are also offering daily office hours for families... so families have an opportunity to connect in real time with their teacher every single day, and ask questions about the assignments.

In addition to Google Classroom, up through third grade we're using a platform called SeeSaw, which allows children to very easily share their work with their teachers, using a really simple camera function which can take pictures and also take video and record children's responses. Even our youngest students can

do that, almost entirely independently – preschoolers can do it with a little bit of help from home.

That's a big shift from the spring, when work could only be submitted through Google Classroom. That can be cumbersome – you have to add something to your Google Drive, and then upload it to your Google Classroom. With SeeSaw, kids can just log into their Google Classroom, click over to SeeSaw, and it's very kid-friendly for submitting work.

If you go to our district homepage, you'll find a whole "Family Technology Resource Page"... We've configured the Chromebooks so that the startup page for each child brings them directly to their Google Classroom, and they don't have to weed through things.

MR: *It's amazing how early some of these skills are being developed.*

SB: Right. I do think that, in many cases, the kids are much more savvy than their parents....

Our teachers are really setting the example of being lifelong learners right now, in terms of learning new ways to connect with families, taking on new technologies and implementing them very quickly; taking advantage of the professional development offerings we were able to provide... but also, on their own, connecting with other educators across the country – through Facebook and other social media – figuring out ways to deliver really engaging learning, for really young kids.

That's been heartwarming to see. And the materials they've gathered to send home with kids, to be able to provide something as similar to a classroom experience as they can.

I'm watching teachers take a brand-new math curriculum we just began implementing last year, and take advantage of the online resources the publishing company has created: taking these technology tools provided by the curriculum, getting them into their Google Classrooms,

creating interactive slides they can present to kids, so they can do, in real time, some of the learning they would do in a classroom.

MR: *At these ages, how heavily do state mandates weigh in the mix?*

SB: Because we have the youngest children, we have a little more flexibility.... There is no "structured learning time" for preschoolers; for kindergartners, it's two and a half hours a day; for first graders it's five hours a day. That time can be a mix of live teaching, recorded sessions, and independent work that is completely screen-free....

The tricky piece for us is that a significant portion of our preschoolers are children with IEPs, because public school preschool is essentially created to service special education preschoolers. We have more typically developing preschoolers as well, but the mandate for public schools to offer preschool is primarily to offer special education services.

So there is an urgency there, certainly, in that we have children with IEPs who have a wide range of [required] services, and we're really focused on trying to get them the services that they need.

MR: *Are there mandates around evaluation, for students?*

SB: We are still expecting MCAS will happen this year. We don't do MCAS at our grade level – that doesn't start until third grade – but yes, we are still trying to follow our mandates for preschool and kindergarten screenings. Those need to be completed by October 31, and again, teachers are getting really creative about how to do those screening exercises virtually instead of in person.

And then also trying to figure out special education evaluations – and all of the assessment that happens regularly in elementary school classrooms has to be adapted to virtual learning. We have progress reports for all of our students – we will be us-

ing our standards-based report cards. We really want to make sure that we are measuring children's progress and responding to what they need, so we do still need to do that data gathering, but it does look different. The data isn't going to be as robust as it might be in real, in-person learning.

MR: *We hear this catchphrase, "priority populations," moving toward the center of the conversation.*

SB: It has been part of the conversation, really, since the middle of the summer. It's complicated by a variety of factors. We're eager to *safely* be able to serve those kiddos.

MR: *In terms of families' eagerness to have kids go back into the buildings, or anxiety about what remote learning is like, are you seeing any shifts at this point?*

SB: It's a little early to say – we're on day six for our first graders, and day one for our kindergartners and preschoolers!

On the first two days of first grade, families' reactions really ran the gamut: from great joy, in seeing their kids connecting with their classmates and teachers on the screen, to the stress of having to oversee that throughout a school day, and feeling really concerned that they might not be able to handle that along with all of their other family responsibilities.

Families saying, "Oh my goodness, I need to be the math teacher, the reading teacher, the PE teacher, and the principal all rolled into one!" Families have that back-to-school energy, but a lot of questions too.

Later in the week, we had some families saying, "It's going great, we're so excited," and other families saying "We're exhausted, can you scale back the schedule a little bit?"

I think that there are some families who are very eager for in-person schooling, and other families who are still quite fearful of it. Our families probably reflect the general population.



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NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Emergency Radios; STM Prep; Citizen of the Year

By JOSH HEINEMANN

Fire chief Joe Cuneo met the Wendell selectboard, as their September 16 Zoom meeting opened, with news of a Franklin County-wide change in the emergency radio system. He said the old system is in decay and the county is shifting to a statewide system with a different frequency, different equipment, and a different cost assessment.

The fire service now pays an assessment to the Franklin County system, and he hoped that the assessment for the new system would be in the same price range, and that the two assessments would not overlap. The state will provide new basic model radios, through FRCOG, but the cost of installing them into emergency equipment will be the town’s responsibility. Extra features that may be added to the base model radios are also the town’s responsibility. Cuneo said he needs the selectboard to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) by October 15 for the process to continue.

The board of health is short one member after member John Sullivan passed away suddenly. Town coordinator Nancy Aldrich is writing a letter of condolence to his wife for board members to sign at their next meeting. No one has stepped forward to fill the empty position.

Board members discussed the warrant articles for the upcoming special town meeting, to be held outside at 9 a.m. this Saturday, September 26. Bills of prior years and school assessments must be paid, so the board favors them.

The choice between an appointed municipal light plant (MLP) board and an elected board is becoming imminent, as the town’s fiber-optic network approaches completion, and the selectboard and broadband committee both support an appointed board. The article that would create an elect-

ed board asks for a five-member board. Filling town positions has always been a problem, and selectboard member Laurie DiDonato agreed to offer an amendment that would reduce the MLP board to three members.

Article 15 is a marijuana bylaw, created by the planning board. Aldrich said she thought the attorney general might only strike down parts that are illegal.

In practice, it is the finance committee that weighs in on whether they support a town meeting article, and selectboard members vote as individual citizens.

DiDonato said animal control officer Maggie Houghton is willing to remain as dog officer for now, but she does not want to take on other aspects of the animal control officer role. DiDonato said the police departments of some other towns take that on, and it requires more training.

Wendell’s pollinator group has submitted a 25-page “pollinator action plan” for board members to read and, they hope, support.

Citizen Harry Williston wrote a letter to the selectboard with his concerns about speeding in town, and approaches the town may take to curtail overzealous drivers. The selectboard will forward that letter, and the results of the recent speeding survey, to the highway commission.

Computers used in the assessor’s office have become obsolete. A suggestion was made to offer them over the town listserv, but that may not be legal. They will be stored until the next auction of surplus town property.

Board members chose a citizen of the year, who must be surreptitiously brought to the special town meeting to be awarded the honor. A plaque is not available, as the firm that makes the plaques is closed for now, but Aldrich said she would print out and frame a certificate and bring it to the meeting.

BRIDGES from page A1

inspector. A very small bridge on North Leverett Road has experienced a similar fate over the past year, and an even smaller one in the woods on Chestnut Hill Loop has been closed completely.

Then there is the Fifth Street footbridge across the Turners Falls power canal, closed down several years ago by a state inspector because, in the words of Montague public works superintendent Tom Bergeron, “nothing was holding it up.” The footbridge, which is owned by the town, sits next to an auto bridge owned by the state which was repaired a few years ago to remedy a strange and dangerous bump in its deck. Now the footbridge will be moved to the west side of the auto bridge, because a required handicapped access ramp would block a crucial road to the factory buildings across the canal.

Closed bridges or one-lane bridges have a tendency to generate questions about their status to the *Montague Reporter* editor and staff. Once the editor has heard a critical mass of these, he starts ruminating aloud to reporters that the paper needs to publish a “bridge update” soon. Thus this article, based on conversations with Montague town administrator Steve Ellis and town planner Walter Ramsey.

The General Pierce Bridge process is finally underway, after a somewhat contentious public hearing last year at which local officials asked for a more extensive project that would fix the bridge’s upper portion. The Department of Transportation essentially said no, but will add more extensive lighting to the top. The design phase of the project has been completed, and a contract for construction awarded.

The General Pierce is scheduled to close at the end of this year, but first the contractor must widen Route 2 at its intersection with the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge to account for greater traffic diverted in that direction. The whole construction project is targeted to be completed in 2024 and to cost over \$13.7 million in state money. The contract contains “incentives for early completion,” in Ellis’s words.

The next construction project on

the docket is smaller and obscure, except to those living in the Chestnut Hill woods. This is the replacement of a bridge on a road called the “Chestnut Hill Loop,” which drivers from outside the area might not even notice. The new bridge, actually a “box culvert,” according to Ramsey, could cost more than \$450,000. This is the amount of a small bridge grant from the state. Ellis says the town may have to shoulder some additional costs. Bids are scheduled to go out in January, with construction to start in the spring.

The two bridges on roads that connect Montague Center with Route 63 – the South Street and Center Street bridges – are currently reduced to one lane of traffic. The Center Street bridge has no projected renovation plan but, according to Ellis, the South Street one is on the famous but hard to find “state bridge list.” Ellis, who is generally very well organized, could not find the list in his files, and this reporter found no information on construction costs or timeline in the state “bridge portal.” Ellis estimated that reconstruction had been priced at around \$3 million, and scheduled for Fiscal Year 2022 or 2023.

There is also no new news on the bridge on North Leverett Road, which a driver heading into Leverett might not realize is still in Montague. The driver might also not realize they are crossing the bridge under normal circumstances, although now there is signage reducing it to one lane. But this small bridge is apparently not small enough to qualify for the state small bridge program, according to Ramsey.

Then there is the Fifth Street Bridge pedestrian bridge across the canal in Turners Falls, closed for years, which once served as an important access point for workers at the canal factory buildings. The town recently received a grant to build a new bridge to provide access land to the recently-designated “Canal District,” but the design showed that a handicapped access ramp would block Canal Road, so the bridge has been moved to the opposite side of the auto bridge.

A further complexity arose when bore holes to evaluate the bridge’s on and off ramp were drilled within

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the boundary of the FirstLight Power Company land, as mapped by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, which is relicensing FirstLight’s local hydroelectric holdings. According to Ellis, that problem has now been resolved, and the bridge replacement will go out to bid this winter for spring construction.

Ellis wistfully marveled at the “incredible complexity” of bridge projects, and this reporter promised no more “bridge updates” would be sought in the coming weeks – unless, of course, there is another bridge disaster.



PAINT from page A1

planner Walter Ramsey. Out of 40 different improvements named in the town’s Complete Streets Prioritization Plan, ten have already been implemented, including the new bicycle lanes on Avenue A.

In response to the COVID pandemic, MassDOT launched a grant program, “Shared Streets and Spaces,” aiming to temporarily transform streets into places for socially-distant gatherings. I first heard about the program in early June from a Boston Society of Landscape Architects email listserv that I joined after I graduated from UMass-Amherst’s landscape architecture program in May.

I immediately wrote to Walter, who requested my assistance in preparing a grant application, which I did as a volunteer. After the town was awarded the grant in July, I was hired as a laborer to install the project. The grant requires that the projects must be designed and built by mid-October.

Montague’s proposal was a pedestrian improvement project intended to increase walkability between downtown and Unity Park, a priority named in the Downtown Turners Falls Livability Plan. According to assistant planner Suzanne LoManto, the goals are to “slow traffic, increase pedestrian safety, and introduce the idea of expanded sidewalks on Third Street.” The project includes three “interventions” – at the corner of Third and L; at



Concentric semicircles do their best to intervene outside the old Chick’s Garage building on Third Street.

Chick’s Garage at 151 Third Street; and at the entrance to Unity Park on Second Street.

Unlike most highway projects, meant to last years or decades, Shared Streets and Spaces favors immediate and temporary action. This approach is rooted in “tactical urbanism,” a

grassroots approach to city-building that uses low-cost and temporary materials to create places and improve neighborhoods. “Temporary interventions act as a way to activate a space or observe a public behavior (like driving) before committing to a costly, permanent

building project,” LoManto explains.

My first task was to source planters. After an exhaustive search, we decided to purchase seven 4’-diameter plastic planters from Dawn Enterprises, LLC. They are manufactured to order in Florida, and should arrive during the first week of October. Their function is to slow traffic by reducing the driver’s cone of view and the width of the travel lane. They will be removed from the street in the winter, and returned in spring.

My next task was to design the pavement markings. After producing several ideas, we selected a curvilinear design titled “Rock Dam” for Unity Park, and a concentric semicircle pattern for 151 Third. I often design using large, simple, geometric shapes. More important than their preference by adherents of the contemporary style, I believe that they are pleasing to the gods, who look down upon them from above.

Most recently I have been in the field, painting these designs on the street. I have found it to be a dirty but enjoyable occupation. Much of the enjoyment has come from the companionship of volunteers who helped paint, and the interest of curious passers-by. Much thanks to Nova Motorcycles and the Five Eyed Fox, who donated to help with a volunteer day we hosted.

I will be painting for another week or two – feel free to say hello!



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It is difficult
to get the news from poems
yet men die miserably every day
for lack
of what is found there.

- William Carlos Williams

edited by Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno
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September’s Featured Poet: Al Miller

Grandmother

Remembering the gourds
That grandmother grew and at harvest
The smell of dry loam the yellow light
The long rays of autumn the delight
That a grown living thing would become
a ladle I'd be drinking from the galvanized
well bucket cold water running down my chin chest
Seeds kept moist and alive

In the body of the gourds scooped
Out fell to the earth in a viscous yellow
Orange fluid darkened the tilled soil
A damp blackness, my fingers meshed in
matted hair the void where a face should be
a muddled mind and mist a red cast

Seeds and thoughts the scent of compost and flesh
harvest no longer waits for names and blue faces
to be embossed in impermanence and black granite
buried in the ground the cordite un-stilled air
momentary red hue a seed cradled
thinking of the gourds that
my grandmother grew

Young Bodies Old Eyes

Some will die of fear knowing their own
While the rest of us unsure if we've
Survived

Getting off the plane at Ben Hoa
Glint in our eye's possibility hope
An MP is yelling bunkers across the tarmac

Those taking our plane
wouldn't meet our gaze
Seemed unusually aged

Older men from other
Wars command our
Internment makes me

Wonder only for this moment
Why young men return from any war
With old men's eyes

Collection

I have a traveled butterfly I cup
In my hands examine the black lace
At the edge of its wings failed origami
Crushed in the grille of a voyager van

I keep a large dried sunflower on my window sill
To run my fingers over the spiral pattern
From the center of beginning a reed woven basket
A spiral pattern Holy symbol carved in olive wood

And I have a memory in the basket of my ribcage
A darkest night and you're asleep I lie awake
Your hips and breasts against my back
Shaped to despair held by your arms

July 1969

Stars and Stripes News
A caption under the photo read
Armstrong steps to the moon
I sat on the edge of a bomb crater
In the Que Son Valley of the earth
The story read one small step for man

One giant step for mankind
A caption in my head read
ARVN soldier steps from his APC
Onto anti-personnel mine evaporating his legs

Armstrong visited the Sea of Tranquility
Lunar fatigues Luminous in the earth's light
My green fatigues rotted at my waist
Like the flesh in my boot defoliants
Denuded the bombed cratered earth

And yet we shared that same beguiling light
July 1969

President Nixon Flew to Palm Springs
For a game of golf
Held his putter with his discretion

in the morning

the eastern sky a violet
periwinkle blue
no wind and clear
Highland heifers
their muzzles frosted
near the trough above the pond
does and fawns behind the swale
gambol about before they fade
through the trees and into shadow

raise their heads at the sound of a gate
blue birds drop to the brown stems
a blue flutter below the heart
near the village at Hiep Duc dead soldiers

wandering trails
a particular cloth could be your own
small swatch pale olive
and blooded brown
a right direction one could turn
for the light
dark enough for the world to see
black cloth a plodding ox

who keeps the altars
while off at war
the edge of fields
the wooden plows
variants of failed proof
blushing youth a Polaroid
possibilities run out
life stands
an empty chair
ceramic container filled with water
an embroidered crane
above a heart
lost desire
destinies entangle maggots have finished
a piece of crystal the French had left


shadows falling
back to the source this space
as tight as memory can make
bent to the weight born to the light

Contributor Notes

We are very pleased to feature this month the poems of frequent contributor **William Allen Miller**. Al received the Purple Heart and Bronze Star with V Device from action in Viet Nam. He appears in the film *Straight Talk: Vets in the Classroom*, produced by Robbie Leppzer and narrated by Kris Kristofferson, and he co-authored and performed in the 2010 play *Ambush on "T" Street*. He is the 2015 winner of the Amherst Writers and Artists prize for poetry with his poem "David."

Al has spoken in classrooms about his war experiences for more than thirty years. From August 24 to October 3, 1989 Al fasted on the US Capitol steps for reconciliation with Viet Nam and his own soul. His work appears in *War and Moral Injury: A Reader*. He lives in Montague with his wife and best friend Suzanne.

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MONTAGUE from page A1

at a CVS pharmacy, he noted that “some people were troubled” by the mandate, but he urged them to consider the “message” he had received from healthcare workers who “really put themselves on the line this winter and spring.” The state Department of Public Health has increased its supply of vaccines by over 25% this year to 1,165,000 doses.

Wasiuk did not mention the source of the vaccines being administered by the Montague health department, which he said would be available from “sometime in October through December.” He said that “we have got to work our logistics, times, locations, et cetera before we make an announcement.”

Later in the meeting, town administrator Steve Ellis mentioned a room behind a “mysterious door,” next to the downstairs entrance to town hall, that may be used to administer vaccines. The plan is to upgrade the room with federal CARES Act funds, but it was not clear whether the space would be ready by October.

The board of health and selectboard agreed to end their regular joint meetings for the time being, since the level of infections in Montague has remained low. However, based on a proposal by selectboard member Mike Nelson, it was agreed to keep health board topics on the agenda in case an emergency meeting was necessary. (A quorum of the board of health – Nelson and Chris Boutwell – also sit on the selectboard.)

According to the federal Centers for Disease Control, there have been between 12,000 and 61,000 deaths annually from the flu nationwide since 2010. According to an estimate recently released by

Johns Hopkins University, the death toll from the COVID-19 virus has topped 200,000 nationally.

Planned Blackout

In other news, the electric company Eversource has announced that there will be a blackout of service on the night of Saturday, October 3 between 12 a.m. and 6 a.m. that would impact approximately 600 residents. The announcement was accompanied by a map of the affected area, which appears to be primarily on the “top of the hill” in Turners Falls, but also on a few streets in downtown Turners.

A memo from Eversource’s Melissa Hancock said residents affected by the outage would be notified three times – twice by telephone and once by mail. She said the blackout “is associated with the reliability work currently taking place in town.”

Ellis said the town will also post information about the outage on the town website.

The board held two location hearings and approved requests by Eversource for new telephone poles on Pine and Elm streets in Turners Falls, and along Lake Pleasant Road. As he has at recent pole hearings, selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz urged the electric company to remove the discontinued poles sooner rather than later. Kuklewicz has complained that the old poles often linger for many months after the electric transition is completed.

Ellis said he had received complaints about the safety of large transformers installed on poles on High Street. Eversource representative Joseph McCarthy said the transformers met the “national standard,” and that the company had encountered “no safety issues.” Kuklewicz, who has

served as a town electrical inspector, said that a smaller transformer serving his house sometimes caused the lights to dim when neighbors used the same electric source.

Tons of Rock

Department of public works superintendent Tom Bergeron reported significant progress has been made stabilizing a failing embankment off of Millers Falls Road. The embankment is the third in recent years near the same road that has required extensive – and expensive – work by Bergeron’s department.

During the past week the DPW has rolled tons of rock over the bank, and at the Monday meeting Bergeron announced that 240 feet of plastic pipe has been laid over the rock. The pipe connects to a system that drains water runoff from nearby streets.

Bergergon said the next step would be to cover the pipe with “backfill.” He also said that “directional logs” may be used to channel water coming from the pipe at the bottom of the embankment, which feeds into the Connecticut River. The embankment collapse has created a small sand bar in the river. The embankment and the river bank are owned by the FirstLight power company.

New Microbrewery

The board held a hearing for a new liquor “pouring permit” requested by the Pioneer Valley Brewery, a new brewery at 151 Third Street. Mike McManus, a consultant for Pioneer who presented the request, stressed plans for expanded on-site parking to avoid extensive customer parking on Third Street.

In response to a question from Kuklewicz, McManus said that

Volunteer Opportunity: Montague Finance Committee

The Town of Montague has an opening on its Finance Committee! The Finance Committee is an advisory group comprised of seven residents who are involved in the development of the Town’s annual budget and other matters related to the town’s finances and fiscal health. Serving on this committee is a great opportunity for a person who wants to learn about municipal finance and local government. The current vacancy is for a 3-year term that ends in 2023.

The Finance Committee meets on Wednesday evenings, weekly, from January to May and as needed at other times of the year. These meetings are open to the public, and we encourage potential candidates to attend a few before submitting a letter of interest to the Moderator of Town Meetings. Members of the committee welcome questions and would be happy to talk with you about what the role entails. For more information, visit the Finance Committee’s pages on www.montague-ma.gov, or contact committee chair Jen Audley at (413) 863-3060 or jaudley@gmail.com.

The Town of Montague is an equal opportunity provider and employer and strongly encourages candidates from diverse social and economic backgrounds.

in the “long term” the brewery planned to serve only packaged snacks, but in the “short term,” if “COVID is still a problem when we do finally open, then we will find a solution.” The state is requiring that all bars serve food with alcohol, and prohibits satisfying this requirement with packaged snacks during the pandemic. McManus estimated the brewery would open in “six to ten weeks.”

The board approved the pouring permit, which only allows malt beverages produced on premise.

Other Business

Police chief Chris Williams requested that the board approve a lengthy memo of understanding (MOU) for a new 800-Hz communication system for regional public safety services. Williams’ request was endorsed by Turners Falls fire chief John Zellman. Williams said plans to discontinue the older Franklin County emergency system and join the more powerful state police system had been “in the works” for three years, but was delayed by the COVID pandemic.

Williams said the newer system would be more reliable and have fewer “dead zones” for police and

fire fighters. He said the new system would probably require purchasing newer radios, which he estimated could cost \$23,000, but said he was applying for a grant for the purpose. He called the purchase of the newer technology a “once in a lifetime” opportunity.

Zellman said the efforts to transition to a newer system had been “going at a snail’s pace and stuck in molasses,” but then “somebody suddenly shifted into fifth gear... so we’re trying to stay ahead of it.” He also said that the managers of the current system were “buying parts off of eBay right now to keep the system up and running.”

The board approved the MOU. The board approved a request for a change in managers for the bar at St. Kazimierz Society.

It also approved a \$3,500 “pay requisition” from Berkshire Design for work at Spinner Park, and an “engineering agreement” with the firm Tighe and Bond for landfill monitoring services.

The board then retired into an executive session to discuss real estate negotiations with FirstLight Power Resources. The next scheduled board meeting will be on September 28.



GMRSD from page A1

instruction and to ensure your remote learning program is consistent with 603 CMR.27.08,” Riley continued, referring to statewide guidelines adopted in July.

“Even those who support changing to hybrid must recognize that threatening to punish a district with an educational program audit for not complying with DESE’s wishes is a misuse of authority,” the GMEA response read. “We hope all sixteen school committees will protest this coercion, and we hope the Massachusetts Association of School Committees stands up to this bullying for its member districts.”

Concern Over Disease Spread

Dziura was joined in public comment by several other district staff members, who all urged the school committee not to approve a return to in-person instruction.

“I am most concerned to see, as many of the teachers have predicted would happen, that in Attleboro a student was sent into school with COVID-19 by their parents knowingly,” said Sarah Chase, a preschool teacher at Hillcrest Elementary. “The towns in our district are not in a bubble. Teachers in this district live all over Western Mass, Vermont, and New Hampshire and travel to work in GMRSD. Their spouses and partners do, too.”

Chase also compared the regional district with Greenfield, where her daughter attends school. “There is an eventual plan [there] for priority populations only,” she said. “There is no talk of typical children returning, as seems to be the push here in Gill-Montague.”

Jessica Vachula-Curtis read a statement co-signed by 11 of her fellow teachers at Turners Falls High School. “In the hybrid model, teachers would be in the school building with often less reliable internet connection, teaching to some masked, socially distanced students in the classroom while up to 10 kids at home join from a screen,” she read. “We are concerned that this model will be even more challenging technologically.... It will not, in any way, look

like ‘normal school.’”

And Kayla Biggs, a special education paraprofessional at Hillcrest, questioned the idea that special ed students should be first to return.

“Our priority students will face the greatest exposure risk, be very obviously separated from their ‘typical,’ at-home peers, and face requirements of masking, distancing, hand-washing, and general discomfort not required of at-home peers,” Biggs argued. “This raises questions of what, in this extreme situation, constitutes the legally required ‘least restrictive environment’ for our students in special education.”

The GMEA letter cited articles indicating that “five to ten percent of Covid victims will be ‘long-haulers,’ enduring continuing symptoms for an indeterminate period of time.”

“We are also now seeing teacher deaths reported in the news across the country,” Chase told the school committee. “To me this is simply unacceptable, yet teachers are now targets of hate.... COVID-19 is the first time in my career I have heard educators saying ‘no.’”

Biggs addressed caregivers supporting students in at-home learning. “We see you. We see how hard you’re working,” she said. “Thank you for partnering with us, in this global crisis – in this enormous shared work of creating safe and effective learning for your children.”

Focus On HVAC Systems

The school committee did not directly discuss or vote on the matter, at the request of superintendent Beck, who reported that the administration was still waiting on an evaluation of the ventilation system at Sheffield Elementary School.

“I don’t feel comfortable making a recommendation,” Beck said. The committee tabled the question to an emergency meeting next Tuesday, September 29, in hopes of having the Sheffield air data on hand by then.

Beck described the efforts already underway to improve filtration and air exchange at the schools, including Turners Falls High School and Great Falls Middle School, which

“requires significant repairs,” and Hillcrest, which he said had received the “most favorable assessment” from contractors measuring the exchange of air in various indoor spaces.

Montague member Jennifer Lively expressed surprise at the contractors’ findings. “The high school and middle school is our newest building,” she said, “and that needs the most amount of work... I would have expected Hillcrest to be in much worse shape.”

“When you look at some older equipment,” Beck replied, “it looks like it’s built to go for 1,000 years.” He raised the possibility that the more modern system may have been more vulnerable to the effects of deferred maintenance in recent years.

The district has purchased “\$80,000 worth of air scrubbers and air purifiers” thus far, said Beck, and the cost of the HVAC improvements could top \$100,000.

Business manager Joanne Blier said that savings on reduced expenditures in areas such as transportation and athletics, as well as federal CARES Act funding, are going toward covering the filtration improvements, but that the towns of Montague and Gill will be asked to contribute.

“It’s really hard to put together an operating statement this early in the year,” Blier told the committee.

Beck said he planned to share the HVAC reports with the public, as well as data on increased airflow in each building and classroom after repairs and upgrades are made.

“Brian has recommended three times now, over the course of the last couple months, that the school committee not vote to reopen,” said Montague member Haley Anderson. “I think that shows a great deal of transparency and responsibility – I just hope that it is recognized that way.”

Asked on Wednesday to comment on the DESE commissioner’s letter, Beck declined.

Other Business

The school district is continuing to pro-

vide meals for all youth in the community. “Anybody can get a meal from any of the locations,” Blier clarified, adding that the town of Erving is now providing meals for students who live in Erving.

Evening meal pickups have been added, from 3:30 to 5:30 each Tuesday and Thursday at Turners Falls High School, to help accommodate families’ work schedules.

Beck reported to the school committee on remote attendance figures during the first week of school. Gill Elementary had a 100% attendance rate; Sheffield, 213 of 219; Great Falls Middle School, 2014 of 211; and Turners Falls High School, 297 of 303.

The superintendent detailed efforts to follow up with the absent students, in many cases already leading to the resolution of technical or access issues.

The planning board tasked with evaluating the feasibility of a “six-town” district with Leyden, Bernardston, Northfield, and Warwick – the towns that currently constitute the Pioneer Valley District – has received a report from consultants who reviewed the two districts.

The 98-page summary report from the Abrahams Group concludes that “there will clearly be economies of scale that can provide a more robust education than is currently offered,” if the six towns create a merged district.

The Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) will hold its annual delegate assembly remotely on November 7 this year. No Gill-Montague member volunteered this week to be the committee’s delegate.

Among the proposals MASC will consider are a resolution calling for a moratorium on all high-stakes testing this year, including the MCAS test, and one pressuring DESE to waive accountability requirements on districts this year concerning school attendance.

The school committee voted unanimously to accept a \$17,600 donation from Greenfield Savings Bank, earmarked to purchase a new softball backstop for the athletic department.



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SUZEE'S THIRD STREET LAUNDRY

TURNERS FALLS

24 HOURS

ERVING from page A1

“That sounds real steep to me,” commented Rollins. He asked whether a screening committee would be formed, and whether citizens would have input in the hiring process.

Bembury said he considered it “valuable” to hire a consultant, but “I would hope that in this process, we have a committee in this search.” Bembury, Jacob Smith, and selectboard member Peter Sanders proposed a seven-member screening committee, composed of one selectboard member, one town staff member, a chief from another town, and four citizens.

“The purpose of the firm is not to make the decision,” said Jacob Smith, “but they give feedback and give recommendations.” He said that the board could decide to reject all of the RFQ proposals.

The board decided to ask any interested citizen to write a letter of interest and send it to the board, and to form the chief screening committee in early November.

Streets and Streetlights

The selectboard approved an extra 60 hours of overtime for en-

gineering oversight for the River, Warner and Strachan streets project. Bryan Smith said that construction was nearly complete, and that milling and paving should be completed in October.

The board reviewed a draft solicitation for quotes to repair the decorative streetlights installed approximately 15 years ago on Main Street. Bryan Smith said that if the solicitation is published by September 30 and a contractor is hired by mid-October, the repairs could be completed by mid-November.

Other Business

The board received two letters of interest for the vacancy on the conservation commission. They decided to forward the letters to the commission for review.

The board appointed Leslie Brown to the cultural council for a three-year term, ending June 30, 2023. Two vacancies remain on the cultural council.

The board decided to join the state contract for magnesium-containing road salt, which is considered to be more environmentally friendly and less corrosive than other road salts.

2nd Franklin Candidates To Meet in Online Forum

NEW SALEM – The Friends of the New Salem Public Library will be hosting an online candidates’ forum for the Massachusetts House of Representatives, 2nd Franklin District, race between Independent incumbent Susannah Whipps and Democratic challenger Will LaRose, Saturday, October 3, from 11 a.m. to noon.

The forum can be viewed live on Zoom (registration required) or streamed through Athol-Orange Community TV. A recording will be made available through AOTV.

Hosted by Anna Channing and moderated by Mary-Ann Palmieri, candidates will make opening statements and answer prepared questions, as well as those submitted in advance through the event registration, as time permits. Live questions will not be taken during the forum.

The event is free, but participants must register by Wednesday, September 30 to receive the Zoom link and submit questions. Register and submit questions at tinyurl.com/2ndfranklinforum. Limited to 100 participants.

FACES & PLACES

By JOE R. PARZYCH

GILL – On a positive, beautiful fall Sunday at Upinngil, Carly Raber is at the front counter at the Red Hen Bakery, baking delicious desserts next to the dessert case. As soon as she had a break from preparing, she stepped out of the bakery, and went into the barn for a minute to check on a cute little baby Ayrshire cow.

As soon as customers drive up



JOE R. PARZYCH PHOTOS



the main road of Gill to Upinngil, they can smell the bakery’s famous desserts. More customers come in and out the door, stopping by the farm and chatting with the Hatches while they buy milk and other groceries. They drive there due to popular demand and the farm’s friendly atmosphere.

I am surprised that no one gets a speeding ticket, smelling those delicious baked goods!



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WEST ALONG THE RIVER
BACK TO THE FUTURE
PERFECT, 1609

By DAVID BRULE

PARIS – It’s not often you can catch up with a 400-year old ancestor. It can happen, though, if you’ve got some imagination and a fondness for historical speculation.

As fascinated as we Americans are with genealogy and ancestral origins, it’s startling when you pick up the trail of a forebear in a faraway place. That happened for me just the other day on a Paris street called the Rue St. Honoré.

Family history can be very instructive. It helps explain who we are by telling us where we’ve been, and sometimes tells us even where we’re going. The search is something of a mystery novel, and the trail this time led to No. 129 Rue St. Honoré.

The ancestor in question lived on that street, just outside the walls of the Louvre, which is now a museum. But in Louis Hébert’s day, it was royal palace, and a place of dark and deadly intrigue.

Louis was born at No. 129 in 1575, or at least that’s what the plaque affixed to the outside of the building states. The house in those days was called the Mortier d’Or, and Louis lived there with his father Nicolas, his mother Jacqueline and various brothers and sisters. Louis was an adventurous sort, luckily for about 1,000 of us who count him as a progenitor and ancestor, because he brought our DNA from Paris to New France in the New World in 1607.

We descendants of Louis Hébert can point to that year with pride. We’re a bit tired of the Anglo-Saxon bragging of those whose ancestors came over on the Mayflower in 1620. We French Canadians beat the Pilgrims by 13 years, crossing the Atlantic with Samuel de Champlain.

By 1617, we had already started a small settlement called Kébec, where Louis and his wife and

children were surviving as best they could in a new land, ravaged by fiercely long winters. Take that Miles Standish, Priscilla Mullins, and John Alden!

Back in Paris, though, there were years of bloody goings-on outside Louis’ doorstep on that busy street in the late 1500s, and it’s little wonder that men like him were more than ready to head out to the New World to make a fresh start.

His childhood was spent in unsettled times, and his father’s shop, an apothecary, surely served as a meeting place for political discussion. The wars of religion between Catholic and Protestant had been raging ever since Martin Luther posted his objections about the Catholic Church on a church door in Wittenberg.

One of the most gruesome chapters had its start just outside the family’s house in 1572, a few years before Louis’ birth. Full of intrigue, conspiracy, murder, massacre, and general mayhem, this chapter set in motion a chain of events that would lead to the opportunity for Louis to seek his fortune in the wilds of Canada.

You can’t make up a story like this. King Henry II, father of a number of princes and at least one princess, managed to get himself killed in a friendly joust just outside the Louvre, to start the latest round of trouble. His sickly and weak son became Charles II. Henry’s widow, Catherine de Medici, was now the Queen Mother. She was the daughter of an Italian banking family, disciples of Machiavelli, and well known for their skill in inventive uses of poisons to kill off their rivals.

Catherine was pulling the strings in the realm, and decided to marry off her Catholic daughter Margo to the Protestant King Henry of Navarre. The wedding, held in Notre Dame and the Louvre in

see **WEST ALONG** page B3



A statue of Louis Hébert, the apothecary, stands in Québec City.

Above: The Turners Falls power canal was drained this week for its annual maintenance.

GREAT FALLS APPLE COLUMN

By ANNABEL LEVINE

TURNERS FALLS – A dream was realized this week as the Great Falls Apple Corps descended upon the parking lot of the USGS Silvio O. Conte Anadromous Fish Research Center, down at the end of the Patch, to pick from their apple orchard. Fifty trees sit next to the parking lot, many full of hanging green and red jewels, a tantalizingly close distance from downtown Turners.

From the early days of GFAC, having an orchard downtown was one of our goals. We thought that we’d have to be the ones to find the land, procure and plant the trees, and then wait patiently for fruitful abundance.

Fate had other plans.

It started with a tip I received two years ago at a Montague Tree Committee meeting. Julie Kumble, then a committee member, asked me if I knew about the apple trees at the “fish lab” on the Patch. She said there were some old trees down there and it might be worth looking into. I drove down a few days later and found myself star-



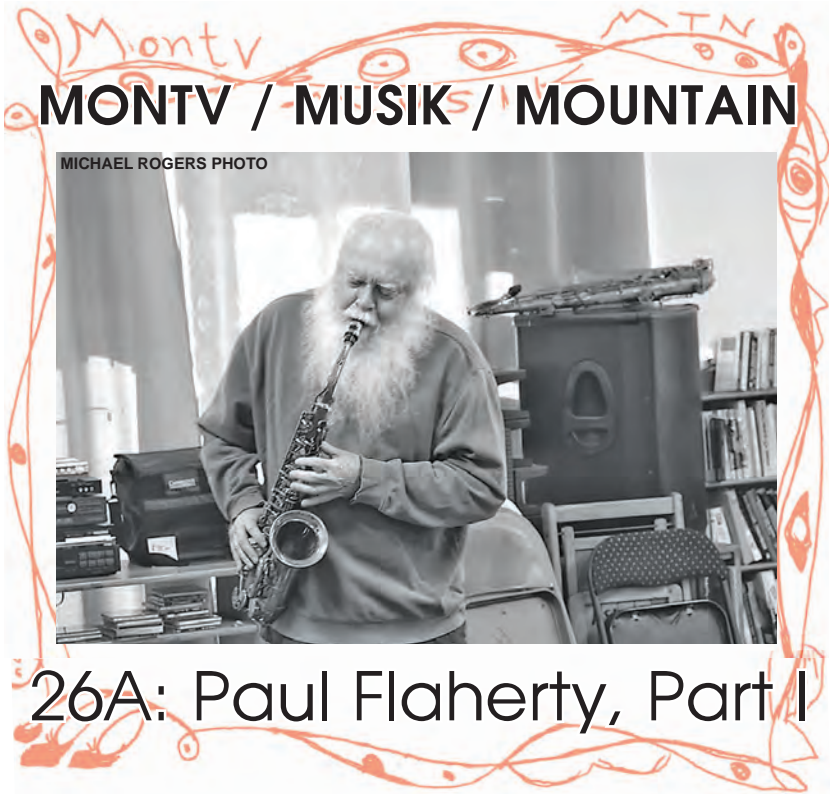
The apple harvest gets a bath before being processed at the Great Falls Harvest/Market.

ing at rows of apple trees, but there was also a sign that clearly stated: “Do not trespass in the orchard.”

The sign turned me off and I pushed the orchard to the back of my mind. This summer, almost two years later, I found myself once again in Julie’s company, this time gleaning at a farm field in Deerfield. I told her that GFAC was looking

for trees to pick from, and asked her again about the trees at the research center. She told me she has a friend who works at the center and she would be happy to connect us. Emails were exchanged, I was put in touch with a supervisor, and a few days later I found myself driving along an eerily empty canal with

see **APPLE CORPS** page B6



26A: Paul Flaherty, Part I

Interview by J. BURKETT

TURNERS FALLS – Paul Flaherty is a well known “free improvisation, free jazz/noise” musician from Connecticut. He has played regularly in West Mass for over 20 years, at venues like Flywheel, the Root Cellar, Hampshire College, and Mystery Train Records. Check out his many LPs and CDs, and go see him live, as soon as that’s possible!

MMM: Hi Paul! So, you’ve been associated with free improvisation, free jazz/noise since I’ve known you

in the late ‘80s. How far back does your improv playing go?

PF: Well, I usually trace it to my first experience playing with my cousin Dan Flaherty in 1971. He was 17 and I was 23. His father (my uncle Roger) bought him a drum set, and Danny was obviously a natural free rock drummer.

When I heard him I’d only been jamming with recordings (for 7 years), and I’d just gotten Ornette Coleman’s *Science Fiction* LP. I got my sax and we instantly connected. Sax and drums... Freeform. We started tearing it up almost every night.

MMM: Did you gig with that duo?

PF: The music was so exciting to me that I thought everyone would love it. I booked us in a Country Rock biker bar, Jack’s Bar, figuring they’d find it really different.

I’d done a sax/drum piece like that there, sitting in one time only, with Jim Polenza on drums. Jim rides with the NYC Hell’s Angels even today, last I heard. He always played with a loaded shotgun next to his drum set, and he told the crowd to “shut the fuck up,” that they were “going to hate it,” and told me that I reminded him of “fuckin’ Roland Kirk.”

No one questioned Jim, and after we played they stayed quiet. But, they weren’t happy. I began to notice a lot of glaring sideways twisted looks, slyly aimed in my direction. At this point Tommy Mayo, the mad scientist of the bar scene (think Rats-o Rizzo... plus he had a still and he won the science project with it every year in high school) slid up beside me and said “Man, I love that shit you just did, but people here are planning on really fuckin’ you up. We gotta walk you outta here now.”

I assumed it was a joke, but then noticed a bunch of patrons had picked up two-by-four pieces of wood. So Mayo and three other guys crowded (literally) around me, and the barflies stared at me with bloodlust in their eyes as they

see **MMM** page B4



CHRISTOPHER CARMODY MONTAGE

“INTERSTELLAR”

I’m Interstellar, a sensitive boy looking for a calm, patient family to call my own. I came from a house with over 30 cats, so my first love is other cats – I will need to go home with another cat, one who lives with you already or one of my friends at Dakin. I’ll need a small room set up for me so I can get used to my new home and find my litterbox.

Since my experience with people has been limited, I can be very scared of people approaching me.

Being picked up scares me, and I will likely always be nervous. Am I the cat for you?

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MARY AZARIAN WOODBLOCK PRINT

By LESLIE BROWN

MONTAGUE CITY – Our last week of summer travel was to Rocky Neck in Gloucester.

Rocky Neck was first populated largely by artists who found the area scenic, quiet and small: the ideal spot for a studio on a small piece of ocean. Nowadays it also holds a B&B, several elegant restaurants, and our spot, Rocky Neck Accommodations.

Now, well after Labor Day, it was quiet and peaceful, a restful spot for vacation. One restaurant was still open, and a small luncheonette serving breakfast and other light meals. Most who find this spot are returners who know it well, or folks who just happen to drive down a couple of dead end streets to explore.

This is our third return to the comfort and peace of Rocky Neck. Our hosts have housing out here and a year-round home a few streets away for the off season. Ironically enough, they will be traveling our way when they close down the business for the season.

The first few days were sunny and hot, but then we woke to

a breezy, partly cloudy day. I persuaded my partner to drive up to an area thrift shop, where I bought a like-new Talbot’s sweater, a double knit cotton pullover which kept me warm for the rest of the trip. We picked up a couple of sandwiches and drove up to Stage Fort Park for a picnic and a stroll through another of the town’s historic spots.

Gloucester, founded at Cape Ann, is one of the first English settlements in what was to become the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Life in this settlement was harsh and short-lived. Around 1626 people moved to what is now Salem where the land was more fertile for agriculture. Ship building and fishing provided a decent living.

Stage Fort is a reconstructed Civil War fort. The most prominent feature is a massive boulder with a plaque commemorating the early settlement. Now it is several acres of trees, green lawns, and benches for hikers, picnickers, and a few fishermen.

On this, our last full day in Gloucester, we had a leisurely picnic and walk before returning to town. At our home-away-from-home we enjoyed leftovers and a glass of beer or wine before we climbed into bed with our books. We are especially content with our accommodations which include a full kitchen, master bedroom and bath, *and* an upstairs

patio with a private view of the water and three chairs and a table overlooking the whole place. Magical.

We ate one meal out a day, often breakfast, and then picked up snacks at the local grocery. It was one of the most relaxing vacations of the year, and a mere 122 miles from home. We did treat ourselves to one elegant meal, at the one upscale restaurant still open on Rocky Neck. We ate on the deck and enjoyed pasta Bolognese and a fresh salad; Ken enjoyed a Sam Adams Octoberfest, and I had a glass of a pleasantly-blended rosé wine.

It was relaxing and pleasant to eat outside just a few steps from our rooms. In the mornings we took coffee and muffins up to our aerie on the third floor. Sometimes we were joined by a nosy seagull; more often we had the place to ourselves.

This one last morning we made a fresh pot of coffee and went up to our private space under the roof. Then we made some toast, finished packing, and headed home to the house and garden – and to our little cat, who we hoped would give us a good report on our new cat minder.

We highly recommend a brief getaway at the end of the summer before taking on the chores of the fall season. We got home refreshed anew, and the cat gave us a good report on the new minder. Good news all around!

Senior Center Activities SEPTEMBER 28 TO OCTOBER 2

GILL and MONTAGUE

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

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

ERVING

Erving Senior Center director Paula Betters writes that the Center is closed until further notice:

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

will call them back and if we can help with services of any kind we will do so. I am working with other agencies so we can be sure to keep our seniors healthy & safe.”

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

LEVERETT

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

WENDELL

Wendell senior activities have been canceled. The Wendell Senior Center is closed. The Senior Health Rides program is also suspended until advisories change. For more information, call Nancy Spittle at (978) 544-6760.

Local Supermarket Senior Accommodations

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

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

LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here’s the way it was September 23, 2010: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Town Hall Sticks With 4-Day Week

A large contingent of Montague town hall workers showed up at the selectboard meeting on Monday in support of continuing the four-day work week at town hall.

The workers in town hall have been on a four-day work week since August 2008, as an energy-saving measure and in order to provide service to the public after 5 p.m., Mondays through Thursdays, according to town administrator Frank Abbondanzio.

“The service part is the most important reason to continue this,” said Abbondanzio, who added the move to four longer days seemed to have increased productivity among the workers, many of whom work right through their half-hour lunch break. He said closing town hall on Fridays allowed the town to save about 10% of the total energy costs of running town hall.

“It provides a higher level of service to the public at no higher cost,” said Abbondanzio. “A lot of the public can’t come in until after they get out of work.”

“It’s a morale booster,” he added. “After a big cutback on health insurance, the town is not able to do anything much in the way of raises at the moment.”

Soapbox Derby!

More than a thousand exuberant spectators thronged the hay-bale lined course at Unity Park on a sunny Sunday, September 19 to witness the thrills and spills of the Montague Soapbox Race. It was a grand time for racecar drivers and spectators alike, and there’s a buzz around town that future competitors are gunning to take race winner Joe Landry off the pedestal in 2011.

State senator Stan Rosenberg and selectboard chair Pat Allen, decked out in leathers and spiked hair, judged the style competition – a tough job considering the amazing range of carts entered in the race. Once carts were registered they had to pass a safety inspection for brakes, adequate steering and mandated helmets.

The Erving police department provided a radar gun, and host Russ Brown announced the speeds and times – there were many racers travelling over the posted speed limit, but the patrolling officers were not there to issue tickets!

Ivy Muller, 10, of Montague, daughter of race organizer Michael Muller, rode her “Poison Ivy” en-

try with legs braced, looking like a sulky driver holding the reins of a spirited race horse, and guided her entry to a first-place finish in the youth division at 17 miles per hour, finishing in just 19 seconds.

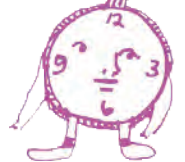
Big wheels, ball bearings, and skinny tires, plus plenty of weight, add up to a winning combination. That was evident when some of the smaller kids in lightweight cars ran out of momentum before they got to the finish line.

George Brace of Amherst scored the first crash of the day when his rotund pink pig lost control and veered into the hay bales. Brace won second prize for style. The judges did not say whether it was the race car style or the crash drama that earned him the honor.

John Landino won first place for style for his fancy Dadaist car be-decked with noisemakers, stuffed toys and other gewgaws. His spectacular Isadora Duncan inspired roll-over wipeout, when his flowing cape got caught in the rear wheels and turned him upside down, cast a momentary pall over the crowd when Brown called out for EMTs on the field.

Fortunately, Landino appeared to suffer more from a bruised ego than from scrapes and bruises and managed to take his second run down the hill – though rumor has it his brakes were more judiciously applied this time.

“One too many Dadas!” summed up Brown.



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WEST ALONG from page B1
August 1572, was ostensibly planned to put an end to the religious war by means of this mixed marriage. However, once the Protestant guests arrived for the uneasy matrimonial ceremony, Catherine and her son Charles launched the infamous Massacre of St. Bartholomew on August 25.

The bells of St. Germain l’Auxerrois began tolling at midnight, the signal for Catholics to begin eliminating the Protestant wedding guests. Thousands died that night, just outside the doors of the Hébert household on Rue St. Honoré, and all over Paris.

Henry of Navarre, the groom, was saved only by his forced conversion to Catholicism. He and his new wife Margo, who despised each other quite mutually, left Paris for his kingdom in Protestant southern France.

Three years later, our ancestor Louis was born and baptized in the same church that announced the beginning of the massacre. He grew up during a time of pestilence, plague, and more upheaval. Charles II had died within a year of the massacre, his brother became king as Henry III, a somewhat scandalous transvestite, who was in turn assassinated a few years later, clearing the way for the return of Henry of Navarre to become Henry IV, one of France’s most beloved kings, and a sponsor of Samuel de Champlain, who some say was his illegitimate son.

Like I said, you can’t make this up!

So the stage was set. By 1600, Champlain, fascinated with the New World, was eager to explore that part of it called New France. He put together a crew, and needed a few specialists to help in settling and starting up a colony. He hired

six stone masons, a tinker, a blacksmith – and an apothecary.

Louis Hébert, having followed in his father’s footsteps as a pharmacist, was the man for the job. He was more than ready to leave his shop and seek adventures in a new land. He was recruited by Champlain to serve as doctor and maintain the health of the crew, and eventually to care for the well being of the new settlement.

After a number of round trips with Champlain beginning in 1607, he settled in Port Royal (modern Annapolis) in Nova Scotia, and later in a remote site called Quebec, with his family. He learned new herbal cures from the Amerindians, and took up farming, out of necessity, to survive. For many years Louis, his wife Marie Rollet, and his children were the first and only European family that survived in the harsh climate and long winters. His house and farm were located at the current site of the basilica of Quebec.

There is a monument to Louis Hébert near the site, honoring him and his wife as the first family to be established in New France. His children produced many descendants who populated Quebec, and down through the generations. Some of us ended up in this small town in Massachusetts called Montague.

So it was with no little emotion that I read the plaque on Rue St. Honore the other day, stating that this is where a part of the family story started. It did state that this is the house in which Louis was born.

As for me, having completed the circle of a centuries-old voyage begun here, it might also have said: “*Enfant du pays*, by the time you get back to read this, I will have been gone for 400 years.” There’s the future perfect tense for you. I knew I’d get back to it somehow!



PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Fund Healthcare, Not Warfare!

GREENFIELD – September 26 is the UN’s annual International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. Area residents will be out on street corners with signs for banning nuclear weapons and funding life and climate sustaining needs.

From 11 a.m. to noon, we will gather at four corners on Greenfield Common with signs to eliminate

nuclear weapons and fund social priorities.

See traprock.org/intlday2020/ for details on Cries From Every Corner actions in Greenfield, Sunderland and Northampton, or plan your own! These community “Stand Outs” are supported by the Traprock Center for Peace & Justice and Massachusetts Peace Action.

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! greatfallsfarmersmarketurners@gmail.com

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Spills And Crashes; Moped Gang; Noise Complaints; Unwanted “Hope”; Unwanted Customer; Kids Fighting

Monday, 9/14

10:31 a.m. Caller reports that a male party living in Millers Falls failed to do work on her roof and she already paid him \$1,900. Caller states that he finally contacted her via Facebook and said that he was sorry that he never did the work, that his drug addiction has taken over. Caller advised to contact Erving PD since that is where he lives and where the work would be done.

11:53 a.m. DPW superintendent reporting some kind of spill on Montague City Road; states it starts at Paradise Parkway and goes down to 134 Montague City Road. DPW is requesting TFFD to come take a look; could be diesel fuel, but they’re not sure. TFFD advised. DPW will have a sander come out.

2:45 p.m. Caller from Turnpike Road requesting officer to come to his residence to speak with him regarding multiple acts of vandalism to his property. Summons issued.

3:48 p.m. Caller states that yesterday he saw what he believes to be a human body part by the river at the end of East Mineral Road. Units checked area extensively; unable to locate.

5:09 p.m. Multiple 911 callers reporting two-car accident with possible injuries at Third Street and Avenue A. Units advised; AMR and TFFD also advised. Officer reports that area of L and Third Street on Avenue A will be shut down until the scene is clear. Road reopened; one vehicle towed; citation issued.

5:30 p.m. Caller from Lake Pleasant Road found a stray cat and is wondering what to do with it. Animal control officer advised having caller contact the Dakin Animal Shelter in Springfield. Caller advised.

6:47 p.m. Caller from Federal Street reporting a group of people riding mopeds; she doesn’t believe that the bikes are street legal, and would like it on record that she has requested extra traffic patrols for the areas for a few years. Referred to an officer.

8:39 p.m. Caller from Turner Street stating that her neighbor is harassing and threatening her. Parties separated; situation mediated.

Tuesday, 9/15

11:32 a.m. Caller complaining of loud music coming from an open window somewhere in the area of Fourth and L streets. Area checked; no music heard.

12:51 p.m. 911 caller reports that another vehicle just bumped into hers on the General Pierce Bridge.

No injuries. Report taken.

6:45 p.m. Two complaints received re: loud on Montague Street. Officer spoke with homeowners, who agreed to quiet down for the night.

10:01 p.m. 911 caller states he was assaulted by another male on Unity Street. Officers spoke with both parties. Peace restored.

Wednesday, 9/16

8:18 a.m. Report of suspicious activity from yesterday. Caller from Greenfield Road advises that his neighbor observed two men in the woods behind caller’s house watching the property while caller’s children played. Neighbor approached subjects, who fled toward Randall Road and took off in a white Euro van with ladders on it. Officer requesting extra patrols in area.

10:38 a.m. Report of younger female yelling at older female in the backyard of a residence on Fourth Street. Younger woman is yelling profanity and telling the older woman that she should kill herself. Area checked; unable to locate. Neighbor advises she has been outside for at least ten minutes and did not hear what was reported.

11:40 a.m. Report of white trash bag on Millers Falls Road that vehicles are swerving around. DPW advised.

4:32 p.m. Report of two kids walking in the canal. Unable to locate.

7:54 p.m. Report of four vehicles stuck behind gate on Migratory Way. Units advised.

8:59 p.m. Report of two suspicious male parties possibly attempting a break-in on Montague City Road. Caller scared parties off. Units advised; unable to locate.

Thursday, 9/17

2:37 p.m. Caller reporting male who urinated in Peskeomskut Park. Caller advises that she did not

see the man’s genitals but saw him walk around and knew what he was about to do. Last seen riding a bicycle. Caller states that this man frequently drinks in the park. Referred to an officer.

4:35 p.m. Report of suspicious bag of groceries left at Our Lady of Czestochowa. Investigated.

10:12 p.m. Report of car into pole on Millers Falls Road. Caller states occupant is declining medical attention. Units and TFFD advised. A 23-year-old Millers Falls resident was arrested and charged with speeding; operating under the influence of liquor or .08%; marked lanes violation; and operating an unregistered motor vehicle.

Friday, 9/18

12:38 p.m. Caller reports that he gave someone permission to access his computer remotely, but they are still accessing his computer and he wants them to stop. Caller advises the person claimed to be from Microsoft, but he does not believe the person is actually with Microsoft. Advised of options.

1:08 p.m. Report of vandalism to the water tower on the old Rod Shop property on Rod Shop Road. Someone painted “HOPE” and an unknown name on the tower. Caller called back advising he spoke with a neighbor who advised that the two paintings were done on separate nights each of the last two nights. Report taken.

2:22 p.m. Report of vandalism to vehicle on Keith Street. Report taken.

5:12 p.m. Male party advised by officer that Franklin County Technical School no longer wants him to be on school property. Advised of further consequences. Moved along without incident.

5:29 p.m. Officer checking on party taking wood that DPW cut on Millers Falls

Road. Party has permission from DPW supervisor to take the wood.

7:46 p.m. Caller from Sunderland Road states that there is a backyard campfire that has been left unattended several times; is concerned because the fire is rather large and it’s windy tonight. MCFD toned out. Fire was small, and attended.

10:07 p.m. Caller from Turners Falls Road states that a man on a motorcycle revved his engine right outside her house as he was going by in a direct attempt to harass her due to an ongoing issue between them. Officer advised caller to call whenever this happens.

Saturday, 9/19

12:02 p.m. Caller from Greenfield reports that a Turners Falls resident is accusing him of breaking in overnight and stealing things. Caller denies being involved; advises he contacted GPD and was referred to MPD. Advised of options.

1:43 p.m. Caller from Park Street reports finding used toilet paper in her yard on multiple occasions; unsure if neighbor put it there intentionally or if they threw it in their own yard and it rolled down into her yard. Advised of options.

4:17 p.m. Request to remove unwanted customer from Montague Village Store. Male had left prior to officer’s arrival. Advised of options.

9:09 p.m. Caller states that she saw a few kids fighting near the old police station on First Street. The fighting stopped and they went their separate ways on bicycles. Area checked; all clear.

Sunday, 9/20

1:35 a.m. Caller states that they just hit a deer on Millers Falls Road. Deer walked off. No injuries reported. Positive damage to vehicle. Deer dispatched; vehicle towed.

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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MMM from page B1

escorted me to my car.

One guard was the owner, who said “Man, if you ever get a band, bring ‘em down here.” And I thought, I sure will.

MMM: *Weren’t you afraid they’d kill you?*

PF: I should have been.

So then we showed up at Jack’s with sax, drums, trumpet (Art Riker, who’d never played free), and a rhythm guitarist (Tom Martello). We played one long set (the trumpet player smiled, thanked me, and left after 45 minutes. I never saw Art again)... Four hours of hard improv... At all times at least one of us kept playing.

In the end the owner was impressed with how our friends could drink, and he hired us back. He said “the locals hate you,” but that he’d handle them.

Next week, back we came with an electric organ player (who thought we were nuts) instead of trumpet... also Don King sat in on guitar. It was zero degrees outside. When we got there we found out the audience had other plans, and had blocked our entrance. The owner had passed out, and the locals had chipped in and hired their own Country/Rock band. (How about that?)

So, I charged in and yelled that this was our gig. I got the owner on the phone (they woke him) and he said I should throw the other band out. I turned around... and I “woke up.” My band mates looked scared to death, and suddenly I realized that the audience was holding hammers, two-by-fours, and clenched fists.

I screamed “Fuck This... We’re Leaving!!!”, and thank God... they let us leave. This bar was known for nightly brawls (I witnessed many) of up to 50 people at once, so it was a depressing but very lucky experience, and... I was now aware of freeform’s appeal. (At least at Jack’s Bar.)

I told this story in an interview for *Opprobrium* (a New Zealand magazine) around 25 years ago, but it’s a good lead in, to go back further.

MMM: *I was assuming we’d discuss your early bands, your early recordings. But you want to go back even further?*

PF: Yeah, actually you got me thinking earlier about when the free music started for me, and I always refer to my saxophone experiences. But there were other musical experiences that at the time I considered stunts, but certainly were musical and even theatrical.

I was a movie fan as a kid, and

I held the record for being thrown out of the Rockville Palace Theatre 15 weeks in a row. (Until my cousin David Flaherty broke it at 16 weeks.) Every Saturday and Sunday my friends and I would be at the double feature (\$.25 with a box of free popcorn). We lived next to the movie theater, so we started this around age 7.

But by the time I was 10 years old, my little sister, Eileen Flaherty, had become 2 and a half years old. At school every Friday the guys would all start asking me if I was bringing my sister to the movies, and when I said yes, they all smiled.

We’d all sit in the center of the theater, about 20 boys and one little girl. A teenager named Bert, dressed in a red uniformed jacket, would patrol the aisles with his flashlight and a twisted desire to throw troublemakers into the street. (I usually refused to leave until the police came. But I was back first in line the next day.)

Bert probably wasn’t so bad, but we hated him. We waited ‘til he wasn’t around, and usually a love scene was heating up. I’d tell Eileen to check for Bert, because if he saw us looking back, he’d just toss us. She was very tiny and sweet looking.

If the coast was clear, and the actors were about to kiss, I’d just have to glance at Eileen and qui-

etly say “now.” We all were ready and Eileen, at this point, would let out the most piercing, howling high-pitched scream I’ve ever heard before or since. Bert would come racing down the aisle, as we all sat there totally straight-faced, eating our popcorn.

No one laughed, and no one looked at Bert as he floated his high beams among us.

Eileen, amazingly, looked as innocent as a baby girl would until Bert was gone. Then Eileen would look back, with her devilish look... and then... “now.” And the unbelievably long, high, screeching scream of a young child being stabbed ripped through the theater again. And here comes Bert with the flashlight, and we all do our deadpan routine.

It was glorious. Usually three times was the limit. I couldn’t let Eileen get bounced, but the third time was a closing scene. Eileen would let out the almost dog-whistle howl and Bert would examine us, but when he finally left he’d walk down front and saunter like a sergeant before his troops across the front of the theater.

His eyes were now looking into the projector, and he no longer could see us. I had one more “now” in me, and all together we sailed our flattened popcorn boxes

at Bert. Each time we did it he hit the deck as the boxes hit the screen, and never saw us do it. Then we went back to our deadpan.

It was musical theater, and unquestionably, Eileen was the star.

It took me decades to realize that it was noise music... music, that was, in the 1950s, well ahead of Yoko Ono’s *Fly* movie. The Rockville Palace was the beginning and ending of Eileen’s short-lived (about 10 performances) musical career, but it was brilliant in its concise delivery.

Another musician also got his start in the neighborhood theater. Gene Pitney began performing his first gigs there in the ‘60s, and springboarded off Eileen’s magic into a career of his own. The Rockville Rocket was rumored to have been in the audience for a few of her performances. He was friends with Bert, and people say Bert actually invited him to check out the anonymous afternoon screamer, who may well have inspired Gene to sing “Town Without Pity.”

MMM: *Did your parents ever know you had your sister hijacking the movies?*

PF: Not ‘til a few years later. They were proud of us both.

Next week: PART III!



Excerpts from the Secretary-General’s Address to the UN, September 22

By UNSG ANTÓNIO GUTERRES

NEW YORK – The COVID-19 pandemic has changed our annual meeting beyond recognition, but it has made it more important than ever. In January, I addressed the General Assembly and identified “four horsemen” in our midst – four threats that endanger our common future: First, the highest global geo-strategic tensions in years. Second, an existential climate crisis. Third, deep and growing global mistrust. And fourth, the dark side of the digital world.

But a fifth horseman was lurking in the shadows. Since January, the COVID-19 pandemic has galloped across the globe – joining the four other horsemen, and adding to the fury of each. And every day, the grim toll grows, families grieve, societies stagger, and the pillars of our world wobble on already shaky footings.

We face simultaneously an epochal health crisis, the biggest economic calamity and job losses since the Great Depression, and dangerous new threats to human rights.

COVID-19 has laid bare the world’s fragilities: Rising inequalities. Climate catastrophe. Widening societal divisions. Rampant corruption. The pandemic has exploited these injustices, preyed on the most vulnerable, and wiped away the progress of decades.

For the first time in 30 years, poverty is rising. Human development indicators are declining. We are careening off track in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Meanwhile, nuclear non-proliferation efforts are slipping away – and we are failing to act in areas of emerging danger, particularly cyberspace.

People are hurting. Our planet is burning. Our world is struggling, stressed, and seeking real leadership and action. Excellencies, we face a foundational moment. Those who built the United Nations 75 years ago had lived through a pandemic, a global depression, genocide and world war. They knew the cost of

discord and the value of unity. They fashioned a visionary response, embodied in our founding Charter, with people at the center.

Today, we face our own 1945 moment. The pandemic is a crisis unlike any we have ever seen. But it is also the kind of crisis that we will see in different forms again and again. COVID-19 is not only a wake-up call, it is a dress rehearsal for the world of challenges to come. We must move forward with humility, recognizing that a microscopic virus has brought the world to its knees. We must be united: we have seen, when countries go in their own direction, the virus goes in every direction. We must act in solidarity: far too little assistance has been extended to countries with the fewest capacities to face the challenge. And we must be guided by science, and tethered to reality.

Populism and nationalism have failed. Those approaches to contain the virus have often made things manifestly worse. Too often, there has also been a disconnect between leadership and power. We see remarkable examples of leadership, but they are not usually associated with power. And power is not always associated with the necessary leadership.

In an interconnected world, it is time to recognize a simple truth: solidarity is self-interest. If we fail to grasp that fact, everyone loses....

The world needs a global ceasefire to stop all “hot” conflicts. At the same time, we must do everything to avoid a new Cold War.

We are moving in a very dangerous direction. Our world cannot afford a future where the two largest economies split the globe in a Great Fracture – each with its own trade and financial rules, and internet and artificial intelligence capacities. A technological and economic divide risks inevitably turning into a geo-strategic and military divide. We must avoid this at all costs. Excellencies, in the face of the all-encompassing challenge of the pandemic, the United Nations has mounted a com-

prehensive response.... Yet, some countries are reportedly making side deals exclusively for their own populations. Such “vaccinationism” is not only unfair, it is self-defeating. None of us is safe until all of us are safe. Everybody knows that. Likewise, economies cannot run with a runaway pandemic....

Beyond the immediate response, recovery efforts must lead to a better future starting now. Recovery is our chance to re-imagine economies and societies.... Inclusivity means investing in social cohesion and ending all forms of exclusion, discrimination and racism. It means establishing a new generation of social protection – including Universal Health Coverage and the possibility of a Universal Basic Income. It means providing access to education for all and harnessing digital technology – the two great enablers and equalizers of our time. It means tax systems in which everyone – individuals and corporations – pays their fair share.

It means ensuring the centrality of human rights in all we do – in line with my Call to Action on Human Rights, launched earlier this year in Geneva. It means equal rights and opportunities for women and girls. The pandemic has demonstrated more clearly than ever the effectiveness of women’s leadership. Twenty-five years since Beijing, today’s generation of girls must be able to realize their unlimited ambitions and potential...

A sustainable New Social Contract means transitioning towards renewable energy to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. I am asking all countries to consider six climate-positive actions as they rescue, rebuild and reset their economies: First, we need to make our societies more resilient and ensure a just transition. Second, we need green jobs and sustainable growth. Third, bailouts of industry, aviation, and shipping should be conditional on aligning with the goals of the Paris Agreement. Fourth, end fossil fuel subsidies. Fifth, take

climate risks into account in all financial and policy decision-making. Sixth, work together, leaving no one behind.

But to truly reduce fragilities and risks, and to more effectively solve shared problems, we need a corresponding New Global Deal at the international level.... We need to integrate the principles of sustainable development into all decision-making, to shift the flow of resources towards the green, the sustainable and the equitable. Global financial systems must move in that direction. Trade needs to be free and fair, without perverse subsidies and barriers that tilt the playing field against developing economies.

And a New Global Deal must address historical injustices in global power structures. More than seven decades on, multilateral institutions need an upgrade to more equitably represent all the people of the world, rather than giving disproportionate power to some and limiting the voice of others, especially in the developing world....

Dear friends across the world, we cannot respond to this crisis by going back to what was, or withdrawing into national shells. To overcome today’s fragilities and challenges, we need more international cooperation, not less; strengthened multilateral institutions, not a retreat from them; better global governance, not a chaotic free-for-all.

The pandemic has upended the world, but that upheaval has created space for something new. Ideas once considered impossible are suddenly on the table. Large-scale action no longer seems so daunting; in just months, billions of people have fundamentally changed how they work, consume, move and interact. Large-scale financing has suddenly proven possible, as trillions [of dollars] have been deployed to rescue economies....

The pandemic has taught us that our choices matter. As we look to the future, let us make sure we choose wisely. Thank you.

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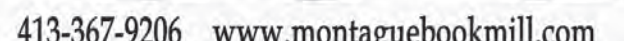
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by denis f. bordeaux

SIR, YOU JUST STATED SCIENTISTS DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY'RE SAYING ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE. CORRECTAMUNDO! AND THEY DON'T.

DID NOAH BLAME "THE FLOOD" ON CLIMATE CHANGE? NO! HE KNEW ONLY GOD CAN CONTROL THE WEATHER.

LIKE I SAID WARM WEATHER WOULD GET RID OF COVID, COLD WEATHER WILL GET RID OF WILDFIRES. GOD KNOWS WHAT HE'S DOING, NOT CLIMATE CHANGE.

BUT SIR, EVERY WEATHER INDICATOR, EVERY WEATHER EXPERT, AND ALL THE WEATHER SCIENCE SAYS CLIMATE CHANGE IS REAL.

I HAVE FAITH GOD WILL USE THE WEATHER FOR THE GOOD OF AMERICA. SNAP

Cool Cats on the Ave

Justin

Watcha got Apollo?

You've been going nuts with that thing.

Pretty agile for an old guy.

Naps keep me fit.

Sweet-nip dreams.

THREE DEGREES OF WARMING

by JANICE ROWAN

I don't like wind or solar for clean energy in Massachusetts

Well, then we'll take it out of the climate policy bill

MARY REED

Robert DeLeo

Is this what happened in Boston?

OVER THE HILL

Carolyn Clark

Thelma, I can take your iPhone to Jeff today to see if he can get it up and running again.

No need, Sport. It's already done. I just had to go to "Settings."

...and about seven clicks after that, EUREKA! All fixed!

Wow. I'm impressed, Cupcake!

Well, it actually was our new neighbor's 8-year old child who fixed it.

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APPLE CORPS from page B1

my extendable fruit picker in tow.

Because the research center is federal property, we had to schedule a picking time with supervisor Marty Garcia, who remained on site as we picked. He greeted us on arrival and let us in on some of the history surrounding the apple trees. The orchard had been planted by a director of the facility over 20 years ago, and includes at least 10 different types of apples. It was intended to be used by UMass, and the Franklin County Technical School managed it for a while. It hasn't been tended for the past couple of years.

Marty pointed out the same sign that turned me off two years ago to say how he didn't like how the information was presented, and he fears it has discouraged people from asking about the apples. He told us he was glad we were there to use the abundant fruit rather than the deer and woodchucks, who get drunk off of fermented apple drops.

Two apple-picking sessions later, we have diverted over five crates of apples from the woodland creatures and lawnmower, and hope to get as many as we can in the coming week. This endeavor fits snugly within GFAC's 2020 season goals. When COVID hit, we decided to forgo most programming and focus on growing and distributing food. This summer we were keyed into a gleaning group, and began to have large amounts of produce on our hands.

With an increase in food volume, we needed help. Almost as serendipitous as this orchard dropping into our laps, we found a perfect partner with the folks at Great Falls Harvest/Market. Owners Chris Menegoni and Bridget Chaffee not only offered space in their refrigerated walk-in to store the produce, but expressed a willingness to help us process and prepare food to distribute.

This week the training wheels are off, and we are taking our food distribution endeavor for a test run with this apple harvest. We had our first processing session on Monday, where volunteers joined the Harvest crew to core and slice crates of apples which will soon become juice, apple sauce, and pie filling. These items will then be given away as is, or made into prepared foods to give away at the meal distribution site



A discouraging sign marks the orchard at the Silvio O. Conte fish lab.

at Our Lady of Peace church.

To fund future meal distribution, some of these apple products will be hitting the shelves at the market with all proceeds going towards buying ingredients, containers, and other supplies. Keep an eye out for some Great Falls Harvest/Market and Apple Corps collaborative deliciousness coming soon.

If any of this sounds interesting to you, we still need volunteers to pick and process apples! We have at least one more apple picking session at the research center scheduled this Friday, September 25, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. All are welcome, and all volunteers are encouraged to take some apples home as a thank you.

Want to get involved? Reach out to the Great Falls Apple Corps on Facebook, Instagram, or via email at greatfallsapplecorps@gmail.com.

MR Wrapping Paper Edition Artist Profiles: #3

By REPORTER STAFF

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 will feature the work of local artists chosen from the proposals we have received, with an in-house cover design as the outer page.

We announced our seven selected winners on September 10: 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.

This special issue will go to press on Thanksgiving week.

We have asked each artist the same three questions, and will run their answers separately in the coming weeks. **Emma Kohlmann** proposed an uplifting design of people, animals, and plants holding each other for her wrapping paper. Emma is also the artist who designed our new *MR* T-shirts. She answers our three questions this time:

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

EK: I want my wrapping paper to symbolize a heartfelt gift. I want to make the figures gently embracing as a way to uplift and celebrate the life we live today.

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

EK: I imagine any gift would be able to be wrapped in the wrapping paper. I love wrapping my own gifts in custom wrapping paper. I think it gives a personal flair. Especially if an artist made it.

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

EK: I guess knowing that other artists are working on these pieces is in itself a gift. Knowing that we are all collectively working on art is beneficial to our changing world. A free press, and community-led institutions like newspapers, are essential at this moment.



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