

YEAR 18 - NO. 39

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

SEPTEMBER 3, 2020

Brand New DPW Garage Eyed for Fall Town Meeting

By JEFF SINGLETON

The Montague selectboard voted on Monday to hold the traditional fall special town meeting on the evening of October 13. The board appeared to settle on the new public works facility on Turners Falls Road as the meeting place, although the motion that was approved did not specify the location.

Town meeting moderator Chris Collins recommended the nearly completed highway garage as the best venue, and also recommended the date. Collins said the alternative – an outdoor meeting at the high school, similar to the annual town meeting - would be too risky. "We got lucky at the annual, we had perfect weather," he said. "I'm not so sure that is going to be the case in October."

Town administrator Steve Ellis appeared to support the recommendation, saying the space at the garage would be approximately 100 feet by 120 feet, and that the building has "modern ventilation systems that are designed to pull the air out," "very large doors around three sides of the perimeter," and radiant floor heat. Though there had been uncertainty as to whether Eversource would be able to connect electricity on time, Ellis said the building committee heard on Monday that the power would be connected.

The approved motion opened the warrant for a town meeting on October 13, but did not mention the location. Ellis told the Reporter that it was a reasonable assumption that the board approved the DPW garage venue, but suggested that other options could still be on the table.

The selectboard plans to accept articles through September 10,

see MONTAGUE page A7

Rock Dam Tragedy Highlights A Lack of Safer Swim Spots

ANDY TOOMAJIAN PHOTO

FirstLight Requests Yet Another Extension

By MIKE JACKSON

TURNERS FALLS - FirstLight Power, the company that owns the hydroelectric operations at Turners Falls and the Northfield Mountain pumped-storage generator, has once again asked the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) for an extension on submitting its final application for a new license to generate electricity using Connecticut River water.

The company's Northfield and Turners Falls licenses, which it recently split and now holds under two separate subsidiaries, were due to expire in 2018, but have been repeatedly extended as a complex fiveyear review process has dragged on for six and now seven years.

Stakeholders closely watching the process - including environmental and recreational groups who hope that FERC will require First-Light to reduce the amount of water it diverts from the river - expected

see **FIRSTLIGHT** page A5

ERVING SELECTBOARD A Mysterious **Expansion** of **Trash Volume Puzzles** Erving

By KATIE NOLAN

Jan Ameen of the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District has been puzzling why Erving residents generated ten tons of trash a week in July, when they averaged about seven a week throughout 2019. "What is going on?" she asked at the August 31 Erving selectboard meeting.

New Food Truck Brings Flavors of Chiapas to Gill



Cielito Lindo Authentic Mexican Food is open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

By VICTORIA MAÍLLO DE AGUILERA

GILL – Since a week ago, if you go to the intersection of Route 2 and the bridge that connects Gill with Turners Falls, you will see a colorful food truck called Cielito Lindo. This new addition to Franklin County's dining scene is in the same location as the wagon specializing in Polish food, which closed one year ago. The changes are visible, with new and striking colors, and the parking space that surrounds it has been full of cars.

I got there around noon, and there were already quite a few people in line, all wearing masks and keeping a safe distance. There were four people waiting to order in front of me, but the line was moving fast. While I waited, I had time to consult the menu, handwritten on a white board. The prices are not expensive at all, very competitive. I went for the tacos al chorizo and the tacos al pastor. When I got to the window, the chorizo were already sold out, so I ordered tacos de carne asada instead.

paper bag, with the tacos in separate containers. I almost flew across the bridge wanting to get home to share them with my husband. When I opened them, I saw that they came with utensils, napkins, and an extra container of fresh sauce.

The tacos are all made with fresh, homemade corn tortillas. I am not an expert of Mexican cuisine, but I know that tacos al pastor consists of pork meat marinated in a sauce of chili peppers, pineapple, and other spices. The meat can be cooked on a vertical grill or cut into strips after marinating. Ours were served with lettuce, chopped pineapple, radishes, chopped onion, lots of cilantro, lime, and roasted chives. I loved the mixture of flavors: the sweetness of the pineapple and the spiciness of the chili, and the consistency of the freshly made tortilla.

We tried the tacos de carne asada next. These tacos, the best known in the United States, are made with beef marinated in lemon juice, soy sauce, garlic, onion, and coriander, and cooked on the grill or barbecue. Their flavor was

very different from the previous

ones; we could taste the flavor of

the grill, and the lemon. They also

came accompanied by lime, co-

riander, and roasted chives. They

were very good, but I preferred

see TRUCK page A5

Rock Dam is known locally for its beauty, and its deceptive danger.

By MIKE JACKSON

TURNERS FALLS – The death on August 22 of Welman Hernandez-Diaz, a 35-year-old Worcester man, at Rock Dam has highlighted once again the dangers of the Connecticut River - and the lack of a safe, official swimming area in town.

Responding to emergency calls late that Saturday morning, Montague police and Turners Falls firefighters recovered Hernandez-Diaz from the water, but he had reportedly already been submerged for over ten minutes. They administered CPR, carried him through the woods to Migratory Way, and loaded him onto an ambulance to Baystate Franklin Medical Center, but according to state police, he was pronounced dead at the hospital.

Rock Dam is located at the far end of the Patch, in the bypass stretch between the Turners Falls Dam and Cabot Station hydroelectric facility. It provides beautiful scenery and easy access to the river, but has also been the site of repeated tragedy.

see ROCK DAM page A8

Town Beset By Costly Errors

By JEFF SINGLETON

MONTAGUE – In the middle of a pandemic which has forced the town of Montague to reorganize service provision for its residents, as well as rethink the funding of those services, officials have been confronted with a remarkable number of unexpected and costly curve balls. Consider the following.

• An embankment just off Millers Falls Road has unexpectedly collapsed, not only threatening the road itself but property on the bank of the Connecticut River owned by First-Light Power Resources. The fix may eventually cost the town up to half a million dollars, while the short-term solution to get through this winter will use up significant amounts of state Chapter 90 highway aid already allocated to other purposes.

• Work on the cap for the old

town burn dump off of Sandy Lane, a project required under state and federal law which has been delayed for years, was proceeding smoothly when a major, previously unknown dumping site was discovered on the periphery of the project. A new design required that \$50,000 be transferred from the town reserve fund via an appropriation at the upcoming special town meeting.

· Recent selectboard meetings featured much angst over the discovery of an electric conduit under Spinner Park, which is undergoing a major reconstruction. Rerouting the conduit, which supplies power to a number of downtown buildings, will require a design change for the park reconstruction. The small "pocket park" on Avenue A has already been the object of a good deal of controversy over the decision to move the

see **BESET** page A5

"Something feels funny," said selectboard chair Jacob Smith.

On July 1, Casella Waste Management started hauling the town's residential trash for disposal. Ameen said she had been working "every week" with Casella to determine the reason for the increase, and said that she plans to "get up early and follow the truck" to find better answers.

Ameen shared statistics showing that Erving households averaged 1,227 pounds of trash per year in 2019, while Gill averaged 622 pounds and Montague 932 pounds. She suggested that part of the problem is out-of-town trash: "You folks have a porous curbside," she said. Erving and Conway are the only Franklin County towns that do not charge residents for trash disposal. Ameen recommended initiating a modified sticker program, where town stickers are required on each trash bag, but each household receives one or two free stickers per week.

Planning assistant Mariah Kurtz wondered if Casella's drivers, unfamiliar with the town boundaries, might have picked up Montague see **ERVING** page A6

The food is cooked in the moment according to the orders, and after waiting a little bit, I received my meal. You can eat right there, at picnic tables with umbrellas, or take your food home - or to the beautiful riverside. I took mine to go in a

LEVERETT SELECTBOARD **Black Lives Matter Stencil Clash Reaches Town Hall**

By GEORGE BRACE

Leverett's selectboard meeting Tuesday night included a lengthy discussion with approximately 10 representatives of the town's newly-formed Social Justice Committee showing up in person, and others participating remotely, to express safety and other concerns over recent theft and defacement of Black Lives Matter signs and road stencils.

The committee was formed over the last two months, in part to advise the selectboard on matters of social justice. In the first public result of that effort, the group has sent a letter to the selectboard and police department that includes their concerns and a list of recommendations. The letter led to an exchange of ideas and viewpoints

Tuesday night which was orderly, but at times emotionally charged.

The letter urged town leadership not to view the defacement of stencils and signs as a political or property damage matter, but as a public safety and social issue which goes "far beyond property damage." Opening with a recognition of the difficulties faced by the police, it went on to describe the "potential impact the police can have by addressing the pain, anger, and fear in the community."

The committee requested that police and town officials condemn the defacement and theft, name them as "hate crimes," acknowledge that they signify a threat beyond property damage, and work with the SJC to "determine a path forward." At the meeting, SJC members and residents

see LEVERETT page A7

Our Poor Proofreaders Read All Of This A 2 A TI Va M M M O Fi

EditorialA2	
Illustration: Annual CheckupA2	
Letters to the EditorsA2-A3	
Local BriefsA3	
Participant-ObservationA4	
Wendell Selectboard NotesA4	
Gill Selectboard NotesA6	,
Gill-Montague School CommitteeA6	,

rtBeat: A Chapbook For Our Times	
he Gardener's Companion	
alley View: The Oral Tradition, Revived	
1/M/M: To Drunk To Fiddle	
Aontague Police Log	
Iovie Review	
Our Monthly Science Page	
ive Comics and a Puzzle	



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Electoral Creep

An awful lot is going on in United States politics at the moment.

Perhaps the most consequential news of the week has been an executive order by the Trump administration, through the Centers for Disease Control, to delay all evictions for nonpayment of rent until January 1, a date that happens to be located after the presidential election and before the presidential inauguration.

It's a positive step that will prevent untold suffering - for four months. But by itself, it is also a time bomb. It does not represent any relief on rent for unemployed tenants; the debt of tens of millions of Americans will continue to rack up and then snap, nationwide, in the dead of winter.

Like many other recent developments, it appears to raise the stakes for the November 3 election, but in some ways it is worse. If Trump wins re-election, he will have the power to extend the moratorium past December 31. If he loses, he will have the power to let it expire.

Dr. Shiva Ayyadurai of Belmont, one of our state's most energetic political trolls, is gaining national notice for his forcefully held conspiracist beliefs. Long an opponent of vaccines, he has aligned himself with the Qanon movement, which holds out fervent hope that Trump is waging a secret war against a vast global cabal of powerful Satanist pedophiles.

More recently he has been pushing the idea that coronavirus is a manufactured conspiracy to prepare the world for a much more sinister coronavirus vaccine. And, oh yes, this is the guy who claims to have invented email. (All the time. It's right there in his Twitter handle - "Dr.SHIVA Ayyadurai, MIT PhD. Inventor of Email.") Though he claims to "set himself outside left-wing/right-wing politics," according to a bizarrely credulous August profile in the Greenfield Recorder, his preferences seem fairly clear. In the summer of 2017, Ayyadurai spoke at the "Boston Free Speech Rally," an alt-lite event that took place a week after the Unite the Right event in Charlottesville, Virginia that culminated in the vehicle ramming death of an antifascist woman. Surrounded by tens of thousands of counterprotestors and phalanxes of police, Ayyadurai shared the Boston Common podium with such luminaries as Kyle Chapman, a white nationalist street

fighter who became briefly famous for hitting leftists with a big stick at a rally in Berkeley.

Dr. Ayyadurai ran for senate against Elizabeth Warren as an Independent in 2018, using the slogan "Only a Real Indian Can Defeat the Fake Indian." During that race, Buzzfeed News uncovered a network of fake Facebook accounts backing his campaign. He ended up with 3.4% of the vote – 91,710.

This year, he appearently figured his prospects within the Republican party had improved, as he ran in Tuesday's primary against Dover attorney Kevin O'Connor. He lost 60% to 40%, but he gained in vote count – 103,361, as of press time.

But he's not taking the defeat sitting down.

"Election Fraud is occurring in Third-World Massachusetts,' he tweeted on Tuesday night, as the results were being announced. "At least we STILL have the 2nd Amendment." (You know, the one about guns.)

"At least 100,000 mail-in ballots for #Shiva4Senate were destroyed in the Massachusetts US Senate elections," he alleged on Wednesday. "My attorneys are preparing a lawsuit."

Why is the Reporter wasting precious page space on this curiosity? Well, because of this map (cribbed from *nytimes.com*):



The pink repesents the towns Dr Ayyadurai won.



Bruce Gray does an annual inspection on the Lycoming engine of a Kitfox aircraft in his hangar at the Turners Falls Airport. Bruce has been an aircraft mechanic for 27 years, and moved his company, RB Gray Aviation, here a year and a half ago. The federally mandated annual inspections are an important part of his business.

Letters to // the Editors

Unearthing Bears Fruit

Thanks to Charlotte Kohlmann, three seasons later, for her story (Unearthing the Archives, December 12, 2019) on an international crowdsourced translation I am launching. Durch's Sieb der Zeit Gefallen is the title my grandmother, who I called Omi, gave to her 1,819-page handwritten memoir. She died in 1982, but not before reading her manuscript onto 35 hours of cassette tapes. Friends of hers later typed it.

Kohlmann neatly captured the spirit of Fallen Through the Sieve of Time, the title in English, and my quest to turn it into a podcast. I wasn't the only one impressed by Kohlmann's writing. In January, I received an email from Donald O. White, an octogenarian professor emeritus at Amherst College, who reported seeing a "fascinating" article about this endeavor, adding, "I wish to offer my services as a translator for this important project.... Kindly let me know how I might help out." He taught German at Amherst College for 42 years, won a PEN award in 2013 for a novel he translated during retirement, and was ready to go to work on Durchs Sieb der Zeit Gefallen. Wow. He translated a clip, one of more than 600 digital files I divided the tapes into, on the early days of the Nazi regime. His wife, Drusilla Macy, read it for the project. He wanted to do more. I suggested he start at the beginning. During the COVID lockdown last spring, Prof. White in Vermont and I in Amherst got into a routine. He translated a section, I edited it, he approved the edit, and I posted it. We covered stories from Berta Allerhand Landré's (BAL, for this project) early childhood, and observations on relatives from both sides of her family. Thanks to Prof. White, who lost his voice to cancer treatment, we now have two and a half hours of scripts that don't need translation, just an excellent dramatic reading.

There is a description of this resource at www.BertaLandre.org. There are also four audio files of readings from the early chapters. One, by Montague Reporter features editor Nina Rossi tells of how BAL's mother's life was saved by "Sister Canesia," a courageous and extraordinarily talented nurse whose ambitions were thwarted by her gender in ways the then six-yearold could identify with later in life.

Rossi got wind of the Crowd-

often leading to a cataclysm. They remind me of the H.G. Wells quote from 1920: "Civilization is on a race between education and catastrophe."

I digitized these tapes many years ago and revisited them recently, mostly while driving or walking. I understand German, thanks to my Omi. I wanted to share these tales. So was born the idea to crowdsource translating stories from the life of a Jewish woman from a provincial working class family who earned a doctorate at the University of Vienna in 1925. She moved to Cologne with her new husband in 1931, fled to Prague in 1937, was sent to a concentration camp in 1945, and moved to Munich as a "displaced person" in 1946. She retired to Vienna in 1968. By then she had had a late life career as a journalist, the author of trade books and radio scripts, the founding editor of the Annette Betz Verlag, a leading imprint in children's books, and as a translator of young adult literature from French and English into German. Thanks to Kohlmann's article and Prof. White's efforts, you don't have to know German to join the crowd by recording a reading. Contact me if you are interested. The website has a link to a donations page, with an added incentive that once the initial fundraising goal is met, everyone who has given any amount will be in a drawing for a beautiful quilt stitched by Franklin Medical Center ER nurse Suzanne Love, my sisterin-law. The quilt is also the backdrop for a tutorial video which explains how the project works.

Topping the list was Erving, where he garnered 75% of Republican ballots, followed by Wendell with 71%, Monroe, Otis, then Montague with 65%, Tyringham, and Gill, at 65%. He also won in Buckland, Colrain, Ashfield, Northfield, Athol, Orange, Bernardston, and Shutesbury.

What's going on? It could be as simple as the fact that Dr. Ayyadurai bothered to campaign in our quadrant of the state - rather intensively, in fact. That was his face on the huge signs on Route 2, that was his weird puff piece in the Recorder... and his campaign was the only one to call our office this week.

It could be as simple as that. Who knows? If you voted for him, feel free to explain your thinking in a Letter to the Editor. For the rest of us, well, it's just one more thing to worry about this year.

sourced Translation Podcast through a mutual acquaintance and suggested it to Kohlmann for her series on historical artifacts and their keepers. Kohlmann had an Omi of her own, Ursula Kohlmann, a native German speaker. Grandmother and granddaughter teamed up to do a translation while the latter researched her article.

Also on the website, you will see links to a series of promotional You-Tube videos using readings from a sequence of vignettes that begin on January 30, 1933, the day Adolf Hitler came to power. They describe immediate consequences for the mixed (i.e., one a Jew) couple and their infant daughter (my mother). They also grapple with family members who "swing over" to the Nazis.

Listening to these, as you can do in English as well as German thanks to half a dozen translators, you get a sense of how the normalization of the once unthinkable creeps forward,

Eric Goldscheider Amherst

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By NINA ROSSI

Beginning Monday, September 21 the Turners Falls Water Department will begin shutting off water to properties with water usage bills more than 90 days overdue.

These bills were mailed on May 1st and were due within 30 days. Payments can be made in the drop box (to the left of the front door) at the Water Department Office, 226 Millers Falls Road. Any questions, please call Suzanne at 863-4542.

The Connecticut River Conservancy calls for folks to be a *#RiverWitness* as a way of showing appreciation for our local rivers. They invite people to share online their photos, videos, and stories of what they see when visiting rivers. These will be compiled into a mosaic. Tag your images with #RiverWitness and post on social media with information about where you are, what brings you to the river, and if you are seeing river beauty or river pollution. They also welcome art inspired by the river, or created from trash pulled from the watershed.

If you see trash, you can also sign up to take care of it with the **Source** to Sea Cleanup, which is happening all month, or register the site as needing cleanup. You may register, and get tips for cleanup and ideas to stop river pollution from happening in the first place, on the Conservancy website: www.ctriver.org.

Two 1980s films are featured at this Friday night's Backlot Cinema at Epsilon Spires in Brattleboro. Reserve a four-person or two-person spot on the blacktop for Wild Style (1983), starring Lee Quinones, Patti Astor, Lady Pink, and Fab 5 Freddy,

followed by Stations of the Elevated (1981), a "richly chromatic 16mm tone poem" featuring early urban street art in the Bronx and Brooklyn, combined with ambient city sounds and the jazz of Charles Mingus.

The art space Looky Here is having a Street Sale this Saturday, September 5 in front of their location at 28 Chapman Street in Greenfield. Come by and shop for riso prints, art supplies, and miscellany from 9 a.m. to noon.

They are also opening a new gallery show, featuring art by Lauri McNamara and collaborative works by Dan Melchior and Montague Reporter columnist Josh Burkett. There is limited-occupancy viewing (five people at a time) this Saturday morning, and from 6 to 8 p.m. on September 12.

NatureCulture page editor Lisa McLoughlin is already busy coordinating six months of programming in conjunction with the Northfield Authors & Artists Festival slated for February 2021.

A virtual reading and discussion group starts this Sunday, September 6 with Sherri Mitchell's book, Sacred Instructions, from 11 a.m. to noon. Dr. Mitchell, an Indigenous lawyer, writes about the sacred teachings of the Penobscot as a way to help heal the Earth.

The first Sunday of each month will feature readings and discussion on different books, and many of the authors of these featured books will speak at the festival in February. For more information and to register for the free festival, free book reading groups, and associated programming, visit www.authorsandartistsfestival.wordpress.com.

Valley Jazz voices is starting a Virtual Fall Season next Thursday, September 10. Jazz Voices is the largest jazz vocal ensemble in the Pioneer Valley, and the learning will continue this fall with virtual classroom sessions led by Jeff Olmstead with guest presenters; virtual choir projects with coaching on how to record and upload; instruction in online apps like iReal Pro; plus music reading, vocal techniques, theory, and other instruction.

Register for the season on a sliding-scale; special student fee of only \$50. The sessions are held on Thursday evenings. Call Ruth Griggs (413) 727-3354 for information and to register.

Register now to receive a driveup flu shot on Monday morning, September 28, from 9 a.m. to noon in the parking lot of our Lady of Peace Church in Turners Falls. The church is offering the vaccines in partnership with Walgreen's Pharmacy.

Register by calling Marguerite Noga at (413) 863-2585 x 103. Masks will be required, and you must bring insurance cards and complete the necessary consent form. The deadline to register is September 11.

ArtBeat columnist Trish Crapo will have an online arts exhibit this month through the Hampden Gallery at UMass. "The Presence of Absence" opens on September 15 through October 7. Crapo uses photographs, video, and words that explore the theme of loss, with wind, a clothesline, and a white nightgown as her phantom companions. There will be an artist-led synchronous online visual poetry event on Thursday, September 17 at 12 noon. Find links to both at *fac.umass.edu*.

Greenfield Community College is hosting artist lectures this fall on Zoom every Wednesday at noon. The first one is on September 16, with Matt Steinke. His work is described as being at the intersection of sculpture, sound, text, and robotics. He calls his objects "inductive," in that they are meant to act upon and change the spectator. Check out his work by visiting matthewsteinke.com and attend this lecture online. Find links to the Zoom and a full listing of the series through ww.gcc.mass.edu/events.

An online gallery exhibit called "Breathing While Black," featuring works by over 50 artists from 17 countries who responded to a call inviting international responses "to the recent and ongoing slaughter of Black Americans," opens through the Augusta Savage Gallery at UMass-Amherst. This exhibit will be up through November 20. See fac.umass.edu.

Shelburne Arts Coop announces their new exhibit, called "Fotografia," featuring four photographers whose styles are different and dramatic. According to the press release, the show includes "Thierry Borcy's dramatic black and white outdoor landscapes, Albyn Davis's artistically manipulated colorful scenes incorporating people and architectural features, Marty Yaffee's striking colorful scenes of the Bridge of Flowers in different lights, and Candace Silver's still life and nature images that blur the boundary between photography and painting."

"Fotografia" will run from September 3 through October 11. The Coop, located at 26 Bridge Street, Shelburne Falls is open Thursdays through Sundays from 12 to 4 p.m..

The Cancer Connection Thrift Shop is open again in Northampton, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday. The Connection offers online services for cancer patients and their families and support people during this time, including a program on Calming Strategies, expert guidance in relaxation techniques offered over the phone. Find out more by calling (413) 585-1542.

> Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.









Concern Over Farren

On August 31 the Montague Selectboard voted, two in favor

Awkward Start

It is with deep sadness that I write this those staff understood the mission, and

with one abstention, to set the voting membership of two ad hoc Police Advisory Groups. The slate of 14 proposed nominees was chosen from 22 applicants by an Advisory Committee of a Selectboard member and four other residents.

The abstaining Selectboard member cited reservations about the process, which I share. The Advisory Committee named themselves to the Groups, along with an additional ten members from the interested list. My comments do not deal with the qualifications or specific interests of the four selfappointed members, nor of the others, and I recognize that Group meetings are subject to the Open Meeting Law and are open to the public. My comments address the appearance of "self-dealing" in the selection process.

It was stated that the Advisory Committee was chosen from among the earliest applicants, and that lengthy meetings over three months were spent screening the applicants. My experience with search committees of this sort is that their members usually are specifically barred from being candidates for the jobs they are filling, to avoid conflicts-of-interest and the difficulty of assessing one's own value versus others.

Since very complex issues will be discussed by these Groups, I feel it is useful to the town to secure a broad range of representative participants with a process that is as clear and transparent as possible. I am concerned that self-appointment does not result in a good beginning for these important and complicated issues.

I feel a significant effort is off to an awkward start.

letter regarding the Farren Care Center.

Further Letters to the Editors

I had the opportunity to work there, as a social worker and Director of Admissions, for almost twenty years. It was a wonderful opportunity for me, as I was working in a place that truly lived its mission and values under the Sisters of Providence. As you have been made aware, most Farren residents come to Farren because other facilities are unable to meet their medical or mental health needs.

In my roles I had the opportunity to talk to many people throughout Massachusetts and out of state as Farren and its unique program were well known for their willingness to care for people who others were unwilling or unable to help. We provided those residents the opportunity to be well cared for, and for many, to be able to enjoy life again.

That care can not be replicated in a new facility with new staff - it is the cultural system, which is based on the mission of the Sisters, that has been in place since it opened. I learned quickly that the staff treated residents as people, not based on their behavior or diagnosis. It is true that many staff left over the years because it is hard work, but even

treated the residents with the respect they needed while they worked there.

I appreciate the work many local legislators did in trying to secure money to rehab the building. It still seems to me to be the most responsible thing the MA state system should find a way to do. The residents deserve to continue to be treated in this unique facility, and receive the excellent care they have been receiving. Moving them during a pandemic appears to me to be deleterious to their health and well being.

The staff make Farren, and as I said, even when they change, new staff adapt to this unique and caring culture. It is the staff that must be a part of the lives of these residents. A new building in another location will not allow that to occur.

The Department of Mental Health and Department of Public Health worked hard with the Sisters to create this specialized facility over 25 years ago, to meet an unmet need, and it has done that. I hope they can use their expertise, knowledge, and resources to save Farren.

> Judi Fonsh, LICSW Leverett

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FROM THE FIELD

By JERRI HIGGINS

TURNERS FALLS - With my "Save the Post Office" sign in hand, I joined a number of other concerned citizens on the morning of Saturday, August 22, in front of the Turners Falls post office. We gathered with signs and chants to show support for the USPS and mail carriers, and protest the sabotage of central post office center sorting machines and the removal of hundreds of letter boxes around the country following the appointment of postmaster general Louis DeJoy.

DeJoy says the removal of equipment was mandated prior to his appointment, and he is implementing the law to make the USPS more efficient and profitable, but that is not what is being reported around the country: from postal supervisors and workers willing to speak out, to citizens not getting their medications, checks, or other timely mail - even to businesses who rely on the USPS for delivery of livestock.

Consider Pauline Henderson, a chicken farmer out of New Sharon. Maine, whose 800 chicks ordered from a Pennsylvania hatchery arrived dead, according to a CBS News report – one of many similar cases.

It is easy to conclude that this is being done to not only hobble the postal service, which so many citizens and businesses rely on, but to

make voting by mail difficult, if not impossible, for many this November.

Turners Falls resident Denise Aiken, whose partner works in a New Hampshire post office, said that he and other workers have seen mailboxes removed and mail delivery slowed down. Aiken said she was happy and grateful to see people out in support of the service..

"For the president to involve himself with the post office is unconscionable," said Aiken. "He needs to be out of there! If our country does not see this, then I do not know what is going to happen."

Other attendees talked about harm to people who rely on the mail for medicine delivery, noted that the post office is still the most affordable way to send regular mail, and shared their concerns that the USPS has become a political weapon.

Similar rallies were taking place around the country that morning, and may continue until the Senate dusts off and signs into law a bill reversing the 2006 requirement that the postal service pre-funds its retiree benefits. Introduced by Oregon's District 4 Congressman Peter DeFazio and passed by the House of Representatives in February, this new legislation seeks to remedy the restrictive 2006 "Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act," which requires the USPS to pre-fund retiree health benefits for all its workers - current FASCISM QJO ASCIST IN

Lenore Styler of Turners Falls said the post office is a "Constitutional right."

and future – through 2056.

Special Delivery for the Postal Service

The USPS petitioned Congress for remedy in 2010, unsuccessfully. As they outlined in their 2010 annual report Foundation for the Future: "We must pay today for benefits that will not be paid out until some future date. Other federal agencies and most private sector companies use a 'pay-as-you-go' system, by which the entity pays premiums as they are billed. Shifting to such a system would equate to an average of \$5.65 billion in additional cash flow per year through 2016, and save the Postal Service an estimated \$50 billion over the next ten years."

Lenore Styler signed up on MoveOn.org as a "host" for the Turners Falls rally. "Our government is lying to us," she said. "It is our Constitutional right to have the post office, and it should not be taken away or privatized." Styler suggested people get involved by organizing and joining local committees supporting democracy.

"The post office is not a Democratic or a Republican entity - this is non-partisan," said Jill Ingham, another Montague resident who relies on the postal service for bill-paying and connection. "Everyone should be concerned about what is happening here."



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Special Town Meeting Set for September 26

NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

By JOSH HEINEMANN

The Friends of the Wendell Meetinghouse had a response ready for the Wendell selectboard's August 19 meeting, and at that meeting, the selectboard accepted that response. The Friends accepted the terms of the town's Request for Proposals (RFP) and the town accepted the Friends' proposal.

The next steps in moving the ownership of the Meetinghouse from the town to the Friends is a purchase and sale agreement and a land development agreement (LDA), so that the town's and the member Gillian Budine wondered Friends' concerns are clear and un-

already agreed informally to that.

The cost of connecting town water and septic systems to the building, as well as other town services such as fire and police protection, can be covered with a payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) agreement, which might cost the Friends a bit less than regular property tax would have. But the Friends, as a non-profit organization, are not required to pay tax at all.

Board members agreed to forward a draft LDA to town counsel to make the language legally appropriate.

As another concern, selectboard if the Meetinghouse's water use, although minimal most of the time, might on special occasions exceed the capacity of the town's well and water system. When first tested, the well produced two gallons per minute, and in the decade since its construction the system's reservoir has been large enough that use has never depleted its supply.

sion committee has chosen to follow Wendell's present chief, Ed Chase. Chase is ready to retire.

If the town meeting goes long, it will interfere with the forum, but Budine was concerned that if a 9 a.m. meeting ended too quickly, people would leave the center of town, and not return for the forum.

Board members held off on deciding the hour. The warrant must be posted by September 12, and a decision about the time was postponed.

Town-Owned Lots

Board members chose Saturday, October 3 for holding an auction

The property was taken by the town for unpaid taxes and has been vacant for years. A contractor who had expressed interest in renovating the building is not ready to start work on the building now.

Other Business

Town coordinator Nancy Aldrich reported that the company that bought part of Seaboard Solar's contract with Wendell, C2 Energy, sent Wendell a check and a reduction in electric bills for a total of \$3,404 for the last quarter. Seaboard never paid Wendell what it agreed to, and what C2 is giving the town is a fraction of what Sea-



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derstood. Some of the restrictions in the original RFP, as written by the town, may prove unnecessary.

Selectboard member Laurie Di-Donato questioned whether the timeline for completing specific parts of restoring the meetinghouse are necessary. Chair Dan Keller said he thought the deadlines might be extended, and DiDonato asked how the town could enforce them. Would the town "take the meetinghouse back?" she asked.

The board does not want the town to own the building, and has been trying to turn it over to the Friends for years. For their part, the Friends want the restoration to move as quickly as possible so they can turn the building into a useful space. All three selectboard members therefore agreed that a timeline for specific restoration goals was not necessary.

At present, the Friends have no intention of selling the building, but one restriction board members thought should stay was that any sale to another party would maintain the public's right to use the building from time to time. The Friends have

Special Town Meeting

Town meeting votes in Orange and New Salem approved less money for Mahar High School than the amount the Mahar school committee requested for FY'21. Wendell and Petersham did authorize their shares of the school committee request.

Saturday, September 26 is the last day of the 45-day period within which the four towns are allowed to revote their authorizations, and so the selectboard chose September 26 for a special town meeting.

Saturday meetings are usually scheduled for 10 a.m., but a forum is already scheduled at 11 a.m. that day for Wendell people to meet and get to know Leverett police chief Scott Minckler, who the police succesof town properties, postponed from March. It will be held outside.

Open space committee members Ray DiDonato and Dan Leahy said that one property, 28 acres between Wendell Road in New Salem and New Salem Road in Wendell, are of some conservation interest as part of a wildlife corridor, and might interest a conservation-oriented buyer.

The title to a 0.8-acre landlocked parcel off Montague Road is not clear, and board members voted to hold that piece back. A five-acre parcel on Gate Lane has limited access, is surrounded by conservation land, and contains a building in disrepair. Board members questioned whether the building can be restored, or whether it can be used for fire department practice.

There have been no new developments concerning the house and property at 97 Wendell Depot Road, but board members thought that either town engineer Jim Slavas or his assistant Alistair MacMartin should see what can be done to stop the building from further deterioration.

board had promised. But money coming in, it was reasoned, is better than money going out.

For the foreseeable future, meetings of town boards and committees will continue to be conducted remotely, and there has been some issue with more than one meeting scheduled for the same time. DiDonato offered that she knew how to establish another Zoom account for the town, but said she would rather not. The cost, \$15.99 a month, is reimbursable to Wendell as a COVID expense, and board members agreed it was worth that much. Budine offered to take on the task of establishing a second account.

Schools are opening with online learning, which requires an internet connection. Wendell homes are being connected, but there is a monthly fee for the service.

Budine said she knew of one family with three children in school and no income. She wondered if Wendell's Dollars for Wendell Scholars, or the Friends of Wendell, could give the needed money to that family.



TRUCK from page A1

SEPTEMBER 3, 2020

the tacos al pastor, a different and more exotic flavor for me.

A few days later, I decided to return to interview those responsible for the food truck, and learn a little more about the story of Cielito Lindo. This time I arrived before opening time so I could have a conversation before the hungry customers showed up. I spoke with Neida Berdugo, the manager of the restaurant. She told me that they are very happy with the response they have had from the clientele, and the good reviews they are receiving.

The story of Cielito Lindo is the story of the dream of an immigrant family who came to Turners to work on local farms, leaving behind their family, their traditions, and their music in search of a better life, in search of a dream North of their country. This is one of those stories that makes you believe in our immigrants as one of the strengths of this country.

Neida's uncles, Rogelio and Rubilio Galvez, came to Turners from their native Chiapas when they were very young, around 30 years ago. They were the first family of Hispanic immigrants in town. They found a house on Fifth Street and there they started a new life without knowing the language, afraid of being pointed out, but working very hard every day in the fields, growing vegetables and fruits to help their families.

Neida came to Turners when she was seven years old, and has never returned to Mexico. Neida has loved to cook for a long time, and the idea of a restaurant had been hanging around her head, but due to financial reasons she had not been able to carry it out until now.

A young woman with a family of five children. Neida is used to cooking for her whole family or at special parties, and has even previously worked in a restaurant. The main manager of the kitchen at Cielito Lindo, Neida represents the mixture of cultures, and like many of us immigrants,



Patrons can sit at picnic tables at the new roadside food truck.

BESET from page A1

art nouveau statue of a female cotton spinner toward the back.

• Rummaging through the website of the Federal Emergency Regulatory Commission, our editor noticed a recent complaint from FirstLight to the town that an engineer preparing for construction of a new pedestrian bridge over the canal at Fifth Street had improperly drilled test holes into the hydro generator's property without informing the company. The mistake seems to have been a product of confusion of the precise boundary lines of the canal property.

These incidents all have a similar look and feel. They all have occurred within the past two months, and seem to be the result of poor documentation, often in the distant past.

Take the Millers Falls Road col-

all his life and remembered "work being done in that area... I would guess it was the '70s. I'm sure there are other folks in town that may know of things that have happened." He suggested that these people notify town officials, and "hopefully we can figure out if there are other locations that we are totally unaware of that have just been functioning for 30 or 40 years."

As for the burn dump on Sandy Lane, town planner Walter Ramsey said that in the process of capping the dump, contractors "found more waste than we were hoping for." He said that the capping project was going well when they started to build a required "detention pond." A large unknown dump site was found about an acre away from the "old landfill."

Ramsey said the landfill's burn

ment complex. "It's not uncommon to have undocumented feeders," he said. Spinner Park was constructed in the 1980s.

The Fifth Street bridge snafu may have resulted from confusion over the boundary lines of the power canal. First Light Power owns the canal, which was first constructed around 1870 by the Turners Falls Company, and expanded four decades later. The boundary lines recently established by federal regulators in the First-Light relicensing process currently under way may have been different from those on early maps.

"There was a communication breakdown and the field engineer was unaware that the boring location had been changed due to the boundary location," FirstLight wrote to the town. A response from town administrator Steve Ellis apologized for the error, which he called "accidental but wholly avoidable." Has this accumulation of expensive problems been the result of official incompetence, or poor record keeping by former town officials? Some town residents have not been shy about expressing the first opinion. "How does one start a project without knowing about massive power lines under it?" wrote one forum poster on Montaguema.net. Ariel Elan, a town meeting member, has been outspoken in her criticism of the record keeping of past generations. "Somebody must have been responsible for not keeping records," she told the board, "if originally there were records, so whatever gap caused a lack of records definitely needs to be fixed." On the other hand, town meeting member Mike Naughton suggested that the Spinner Park planners "did what they are supposed to do, at least this time around. Can't speak for maps that

sometimes feels neither entirely here nor there. The secret of her recipes has been passed through her uncles from her grandmother Aurelia, her father's mother, who continues to live in Chiapas. Although she has never returned, she has grown up knowing the flavors of the region's cuisine, which represents a mixture of Mexico and Guatemala.

One of these flavors is mole, a sauce that has chocolate and chili peppers. Different meats, from chicken to pork, can be marinated in mole, and are usually accompanied by rice and corn tortillas. The tortillas are made every day in the same food truck. The horchata, a drink made of rice, cinnamon, and vanilla, and all the fruit juices are also made on site. Neida's recommendation is the enchiladas, corn tortillas stuffed with chicken or cheese, cream, and lettuce.

The biggest problem she has

encountered in introducing the people of Franklin County to the flavors of Chiapas is finding raw materials grown in our area. Many of the products have to be imported from other states, making them more expensive.

I ask Neida the reason for the name "Cielito Lindo." She tells me that when they tried to come up with a name, they wanted something that was part of their culture, and they thought of titles of songs that people knew in the United States. That is how Cielito Lindo, which means "Beautiful Little Sky" in English, emerged. "Cielito Lindo" is a popular song among mariachi bands, and has also been performed by famous Hispanic artists.

The five workers at Cielito Lindo are all family, and all are bilingual in English and



Cielito Lindo's handwritten menu board.

Spanish. Neida says that she and her nephews love it when local people try to practice Spanish with them.

Finally, Neida tells me that being Hispanic, there is something that tells her that she should work - she does not feel good when she is not doing anything. She never imagined that in these times of pandemic, things would go so well. Her next dream, if customers continue to come like they have been, is to set up a full restaurant, and continue to make the cuisine of Chiapas known to the people of Franklin County.

I recommend that you visit Cielito Lindo, and take the opportunity to eat fresh Mexican-Guatemalan cuisine, prepared right there at very affordable prices!



FIRSTLIGHT from page A1

the company to publicly file its "final license application" on Monday, after multiple delays and extensions. They will once again have to wait.

"We were shooting for Monday the 31st - we were ready to go," Leonard Greene, director of government affairs and communications at FirstLight, told the Reporter. "We received a letter from Fish and Wildlife on Thursday afternoon."

That letter, signed by Thomas Chapman of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, was a response to a draft biological assessment the power company filed on January 9. It concerned "adverse effects" the company's impact might have on two vulnerable species: the northern longeared bat and the Puritan tiger beetle.

"There were a lot of different com-

tiger beetle, is endangered by all accounts, and scientists are trying to figure out how to save it from extinction. The insect breeds, along the banks of the river downstream.

Under pressure from whitewater rafters, FirstLight was preparing to offer a number of "boating flow releases" from the Turners Falls dam each year, events which would whoosh a presumably exciting volume of water down the river at once.

Recent research on the beetle – in particular, that of UMass-Amherst entomologist Rodger Gwiazdowski - has indicated that key stages of its delicate reproductive cycle occur very close to the water line. A fragile colony of Puritan tiger beetles exists at Rainbow Beach, a conservation area on the Northampton oxbow. Fish and Wildlife is therefore urging the company to review the possible impact of its proposed "peaking" releases on the shoreline downstream, and reconsider their timing. FirstLight did not submit its final application on Monday, and on Tuesday afternoon, a filing popped up on the FERC docket requesting more time. "FirstLight has determined the need to conduct additional field work on Puritan tiger beetles this fall in order to appropriately address the USFWS comments," it read. The company asked FERC for time to do the work "within the next two to three months," and said it should be able to file "by the end of the year, barring unforeseen developments." It is the third deadline the company has proposed. An attempt to reach Fish and Wildlife for comment received no response as of press time. Greene said he had "no idea" why the agency waited until last Thursday to respond.

lapse. The embankment, which began to fail in December and accelerated with the spring rains, is a highly unstable cliff of over 100 feet that is composed mostly of sand - in fact, it is the northern edge of the extensive glacial outwash sometimes called the Montague Plains. A pipe carries storm water drainage down this hill from streets populated in the middle decades of the last century.

It comes on the heels of another embankment collapse several miles down the same road which cost the town well over \$300,000 to address.

"I had pretty much no idea that this system existed until there was a problem there," public works superintendent Tom Bergeron said last week. "We have no prints.... FirstLight then sent us the original document showing our right of way, although not knowing that didn't really make a difference." At the next meeting, Bergeron said the rightof-way deed had "never been registered, so there were no prints, [and] nothing that stated this ever existed."

Selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz said he had lived in Montague dump had gone into service in 1930 and was closed in 1970. "But apparently, solid waste continued to be delivered to the dump until 1979, and that's what we're finding," he said. "That was not well documented."

Ramsey reported that the current engineer of the project said it is "not uncommon to find more waste outside of the boundary on these landfills with spotty records."

Spotty records were also a problem with regard to the unknown conduits below Spinner Park. Brian McHugh, who works for the regional housing authority which oversees town projects funded by Community Development Block Grants, responded to persistent questions about why the park designers had not been aware of the problem. "They did not show up on any record drawings," he told the selectboard on August 10. He also pointed out that the electric company Eversource had approved the original design.

Kuklewicz, an electrical inspector for the town, said the conduit was the responsibility of the property owner - in this case, the Powertown apart-

don't show what they are supposed to show."

ments that needed to be addressed, in addition to a number of requests for additional study and analysis," Greene said. "We certainly wanted to give them their due respect, and go back and re-evaluate some of the information they were looking for."

The legal status of the northern long-eared bat is currently in flux. According to the Center for Biological Diversity, its population has declined by 90% since 2006 due to a fungal infection called white-nose syndrome. Fish and Wildlife argues that its status should be "threatened," but in January, a federal circuit court ordered a reexamination of that decision. Listing the bat as "endangered" would ensure much more stringent protection of its habitat.

This affects FirstLight's land management plan - in particular, clearing trees in possible bat habitat. The company offered to avoid this in June and July, but Fish and Wildlife advises that be expanded to April through October, and also, given the possibility the bat's status might change, to plan for that scenario.

The second creature, the Puritan

"It's amazing how much you learn about things that you

didn't even know existed,"

he mused.





NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

Gill Gets State Money Toward Charging Stations, Town Hall Heat Pump

By JERRI HIGGINS

The Gill selectboard celebrated the recent award of two Green Community Grants, voted to charge a fee for recycling bins and use more money from the recycling program to fund hazardous waste collection, and divvied up town recreation equipment at Monday night's meeting.

"That was great news that we received Friday," said town administrator Ray Purington, speaking about two competitive grants awarded to Gill from Massachusetts' Department of Energy Resources (DOER) Green Communities grant program.

The town was awarded both grants it had applied for through the Green Communities program. \$45,900 was awarded toward an air-source heat pump project at the town hall, and \$7,500 toward an electric vehicle charging station at the east end of the Riverside municipal building.

"I am not amazed at the electric vehicle charging station," Purington said, "but I am astounded that we got the \$45,900 for the town hall."

Purington and selectboard chair Randy Crochier lauded Gill's energy commission members for their persistence. "Some projects might not have a fast payback," said Purington, "but [the projects] still deserve to be done because it is the right thing to do." He told the selectboard that the \$45,900, "coupled with another \$30,000 that the town will kick in, will convert the town hall, and get us entirely off burning fossil fuels to heat the building."

"I think that is a great thing," said selectboard member John Ward, "and I really commend the energy commission for their hard work in this – and I want to thank the other two guys on the selectboard too – for coming up with that \$30,000 match that shows DOER that the town is willing to step up and do our share to convert that entire building."

Ward said ridding the town hall of its "smelly oil burner" will greatly improve the building's air quality, and selectboard member Greg Snedeker added that the system would provide "much more uniform heat, and [be] more efficient." "That now makes three out of our five buildings off fossil fuel," said Crochier, noting that the highway garage and elementary school will be the only two buildings left using oil burners, and that those heating systems will be looked at in future projects, as both oil burners are less than ten years old. Purington said that while the town waits for the grant contracts to go through the "normal process," which will take some time, he has alerted the energy commission to start preparing the vendors and consultant the town is working with to get the project ready to implement. Purington will also contact Eversource to determine if they still have grant funding set aside for installing the electric vehicle charging station.

hazardous waste collection day is now on the town's website. The deadline to sign up is September 18.

The board also reviewed funding for the collection. "Last year, town funds paid \$750, and then the total cost to the town was \$805," said Purington, who said the remaining \$55 in matching funds came from Gill's recycling dividend program. He recommended allocating \$500 from the town budget this year, and using matching funds of up to \$500 from the dividend program. "It would potentially allow more participation, but at a reduced cost to the town budget," he said. The measure was approved unanimously.

Recycling bins were also on the agenda. Purington said that all 50 bins received in the spring, using the town's recycling program grant funds, were given out, and he would like the inventory replenished.

"We can either do that by using another chunk of the recycling program grant money," Purington said, "and then we can give the bins away free, like we have been doing, or we can establish a charge for them."

Gill pays \$7.10 for each recycling bin out of the grant funding, and the county solid waste management district charges \$7 for bins. The selectboard voted to charge residents \$5 per bin, from now on. Money Gill keeps from the sales will go into the town's recycling revolving fund.

Other Business

The state Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) has approved "learning pods," an arrangement in which small groups of students without access to technology at home can gather to study together. Gill-Montague schools are beginning on September 14 with full remote learning, and may transition later in the fall to a "hybrid" model that combines limited classroom time with at-home instruction.

Crochier said that the EEC has "come out with requirements that, right now, fall under the municipal level," but said that those requirements do not detail where those groups would congregate, or who would be directing or overseeing them. "We will keep people informed as we find that out," he said. Highway supervisor John Miner called in to request that his phone be added to the public safety cell phone plan through Verizon. Adding his phone would cost \$39.99 monthly, to be paid for through the Emergency Management Director town account. The selectboard approved the request, with Crochier recusing himself to avoid any appearance of a conflict of interest, explaining that he and Miner are both members of a local club. Ron Woods, the physical education teacher for the elementary schools in the Gill/Montague school district, said he is interested in the surplus basketballs, soccer balls, and scrimmage jerseys at Gill Elementary School, and that he believes the Newt Guilbault baseball league may be interested in the surplus baseball and softball equipment. Both takers were unanimously approved by the selectboard.

NOTES FROM THE GILL-MONTAGUE SCHOOL COMMITTEE Committee Braces For "Fall 1"

By MIKE JACKSON

GILL-MONTAGUE – The official coronavirus case counts for the towns of Montague and Gill have remained constant, with zero cases reported since early July. Between August 19 and September 1, there were 15 positive cases in Franklin County: 7 in Greenfield, 5 in Orange, and one each in Shelburne, Bernardston, and Deerfield.

Gill-Montague schools are set to begin remotely on September 14, but the school committee is watching the state data closely. At its next meeting on September 8, it will be asked whether a "hybrid" learning model should be introduced in October, offering in-person learning to most students two days a week.

The committee heard updates from superintendent Brian Beck at their August 25 meeting. Beck said the administration is surveying families to get head counts of prospective returning students, in order to split classes up most efficiently.

Thirteen teachers volunteered to train during the summer on the suite of software that connects them with students at home, and have been training their peers in its use.

The committee read, but did not yet vote on, a proposed "Interim Policy for COVID-19 Related Issues." Montague member Jen Lively observed that it did not specify which kind of masks students will

trash bags in Millers Falls. Ameen an-

swered that Montague residents are

required to put stickers on their bags.

Sanders speculated that, since the

annual Almost Anything Goes

bulky waste pickup was canceled,

people were "getting more cre-

ative." He added that trash from

other towns is placed for pickup in Erving – "I've seen it," he said.

Selectboard chair Smith said the

town should have a public forum to

get feedback from residents about

any changes to the trash pickup

service. Town administrator Bryan

Smith recommended re-issuing the

trash program rules, which prohibit

demolition debris and vard waste in

residential trash left for pickup. He

Selectboard member Peter

ERVING from page A1

be expected to wear. Recent research indicates some are less effective.

The district will be able to be reimbursed through the state from the USDA for meals delivered to students in early September, despite the delay of the school year.

The state will require that all students without a religious or medical exemption must receive a flu shot by the end of December if they are attending classes in person.

"I want to talk about academic rigor, and the increased rigor that we're expecting this fall," Montague member Haley Anderson said. "I want to know the district's plan that that rigor doesn't fall on the parents... I'm hearing reports from other school districts that have already opened that it's really an impossible task to keep all their children engaged in learning throughout the day."

Lively said she was interested in how many homeschooling requests the district was seeing. Both topics will be taken up at a future meeting.

A good chunk of the August 25 meeting was spent in discussion with athletic director Adam Graves about fall sports. Graves, having reviewed Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) guidelines, brought a proposal to offer two sports – field hockey and golf – during a "Fall 1" season from September 18 to November 20.

The seasons would include few-

change to the River, Warner, and Strachan Street roadway and sidewalk improvement project proposed by project engineer William Storti. According to Storti, the grade on River Street needs to be increased to meet the intersection with Gunn Street and create a flat space for the crosswalk. Bryan Smith said that McCrory and staff from Jack Goncalves and Sons Construction would meet this week at the intersection to consider alternatives. The board decided to review the information on September 8.

After receiving a complaint about speeders from Bridge Street onto Lester Street, McCrory worked with contractors to have the intersection re-painted. The selectboard was asked to investigate a four-way stop or a flashing speed sign. Bryan Smith told the board a four-way stop would require a traffic study and engineer's report. The board agreed that some calming or slowing measures are needed, but did not have a solution; they decided to revisit the issue at a future meeting. er matches than normal, with league play limited to nearby schools.

This year might include a "Winter" season through February 21, followed by one called "Fall 2" from February 22 through April 25, "February 24 is pretty early to go out there and play soccer, but that date's selectable," Graves said.

"Obviously, if numbers spike, we're going to shut down," Graves clarified. The school committee voted unanimously to approve the sports plan "as delineated."

Chair Jane Oakes of Gill mentioned that other activities, such as band and theater, are also important.

The committee discussed moving its meetings from Tuesdays to Wednesdays, in order to have on hand the freshest weekly data on the virus. The idea was rejected because Montague Community Television would likely be unable to broadcast the meetings live due to conflicting programming.

Lively suggested the committee could identify "metrics" in the state data that would guide a decision, or reverse a Tuesday decision on a subsequent Wednesday. Beck said the federal Centers for Disease Control has offered a 5% infection rate as a proposed threshold under which schools may as well open. "The general consensus is that's kind of arbitrary, and our metrics are going to be tighter," he said. "We want our kids to be safe."

firms that specialize in recruiting for towns. He said that several residents had already asked to be on a chief screening committee. Jacob Smith said that interested residents should write to the board, providing their qualifications and reasons for wanting to help.

As part of its municipal vulnerability preparedness program, Erving will move the municipal server from a physical location in town hall to a cloud-based system. Jacob Smith and Bryan Smith have been researching how the town can comply with state standards for protection of personal information. Jacob Smith said it was not clear whether the town needed a more stringent (and expensive) government system, or a secure commercial one.

TI 1 1 1 D C '4 1

Trash and Recycling

Purington told the selectboard that the registration form for the September 26 annual household said the rules are part of the contract with Casella. He agreed to provide a draft at the September 15 meeting.

Old Buildings

On August 31, Kurtz told the board that the hazardous materials cleanup and asbestos abatement project at the former International Paper (IP) Mill had been completed, and all paperwork submitted to MassDevelopment, the state agency that provided a grant for the work.

On August 24, Kurtz reported that Tighe&Bond had estimated a \$2.35 million cost for demolishing two buildings on the site and constructing an access road and water, sewer and electrical infrastructure. The demolition estimate was \$933,500, and Kurtz has applied for a MassWorks grant to cover non-demolition costs.

Asked by the board if the highway department could demolish the buildings, highway superintendent Glenn McCrory said his department couldn't handle demolition.

Roads and Sidewalks

The board discussed a potential

Former Erving Elementary School principal James Trill had advocated for a speed-monitoring sign near the school, and the town obtained a permit to install one about 100 feet south of Care Drive.

The board approved \$16,824 for rapid flashing beacons for the Moore and Pratt street crosswalks, and installing a stop sign on both sides of the Pleasant Street intersection with Central Street.

Other Business

The board began initial discussions about the search for a new police chief to replace Christopher Blair, who is currently on leave. They agreed that the town should hire a consultant, and Bryan Smith said he would get information about The board asked Bryan Smith and Kurtz to develop a scope of work, and obtain quotes from vendors.

Kurtz said that Green Communities grant coordinator Mark Rabinsky approved using \$10,000 of the town's Green Communities funding as the town's match for three electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at the municipal lot on Arch Street. National Grid is committed to paying the cost of installation, and 75% of the cost of the EV charging stations.

The FY'22 budget year will begin with a discussion of goals and guidance at a joint meeting with the finance committee on September 14.

On August 24, the board transferred the Pocket Saver Market liquor license from Vicki Fellows to Flis Market LLC. Manager Jonathan Flis said he and co-manager Elizabeth Donald want to open the market as soon as possible, but are currently cleaning and doing renovations.

The board also approved a \$5,000 Microenterprise Relief Loan to Quixote Consulting to aid with COVID-19-related losses.



MONTAGUE from page A1

make recommendations on the 14th, and post the warrant by September 29. Ellis said he expects 10 to 12 articles, and that several related to financial policies might be combined into a "consent agenda."

Potential uncertainties include extra funding for capping the burn dump, which will require additional design work, and a proposal for the town to purchase Pioneer Aviation.

Aviation Opportunity

That proposal was the big news at the previous week's meeting. Airport manager Brian Camden asked the board to consider purchasing the property and assets of Pioneer Aviation, a company that sits adjacent to the airport and provides fuel, flight training, and maintenance. The company has recently put the property up for sale, according to a memo Camden presented, because its owner recently died in a "tragic accident."

Camden said he feared that if the property, "roughly" 10.4 acres on the northwest side of the airport, were sold to a non-aviation developer, the loss of services might seriously undermine the airport's economic viability.

The initial purchase price could be as much as \$1.5 million, most of which would be funded by state and federal aid. The town would be responsible for 5%, or up to \$75,000. Camden showed estimates suggesting that the facility's revenue could pay back town borrowing for its portion of the purchase, fund the necessary increase, and even take the airport "off the tax rolls."

Town planner Walter Ramsey, noting the shortage of buildable lots in the industrial park, said that one of the lots owned by Pioneer could still be considered for non-aviation uses. "I just wanted to make sure we are not over-encumbering that property," he said, if the town decides to purchase the company.

Finance committee member Fred Bowman asked about the potential loss of property tax revenue. Ellis said a private lease agreement with the town might generate tax revenue, but "there's a few things we might have to work out with our assessors."

Camden's memo said that the 5%

local share of the price "will need to be secured no later than November to make sure a spring 2021 purchase occurs." This raised the potential need for an appropriation at the October special town meeting.

Ellis said that Camden's proposal responded to an important opportunity, but warned it might be unrealistic to prepare a proposal by that meeting. "I would agree [it] is timely, and probably very important to the long-term sustainability of the airport, he said, "but there's just a lot of moving pieces."

Ellis expressed a similar view on Monday, and later told the Reporter that a discussion of such a complex and expensive proposition could not realistically take place at a town meeting shortened by the COVID pandemic. He said that Camden would continue to weigh the options open to the town, and that another town meeting devoted to the airport issue might be held at a later date.

Police Review

After more than a month of consideration by chair Rich Kuklewicz and an informal screening group, the selectboard chose members for two committees which will review town police policies in response to recent Black Lives Matter protests.

The "Community Engagement Committee," which will evaluate how the department is perceived and experienced by different groups in the community, will include Denise Aiken, Joanna Mae Boody, Kathy Burek, Natan Cohen, Thomasina Hall, Kwamane Harris, Chris Pinardi, and Mike Nelson.

The committee to investigate "Equity and Use of Force" includes David Bulley, Ariel Elan, Faith English, Elliot Ezcurra, Deborah Frenkel, Richard Hall, Maddox Sprengel, and Kuklewicz.

Kuklewicz said that a number of qualified candidates were not chosen, but he would "encourage them to stay involved" in the public process. As official committees appointed by the selectboard, the police advisory groups will need to follow state open meeting law and town norms.

Selectboard member Chris Boutwell said he had "received correspondence" from two "senior members of the community who had both been placed on the same committee, and they felt they should be split, one on each side of the bus."

After some confusion about Boutwell's concerns, the board voted to appoint the recommended members by a vote of 2-0, with Boutwell abstaining. "I just don't think it was done right," he said.

Library Reopening

Library director Linda Hickman announced a \$30,000 state grant for a "Town-Wide Preservation Assessment." The grant would primarily be used to hire a consultant to survey historical documents at the three libraries, the town hall, and the Historical Society in Montague Center, and evaluate their condition and storage. "It would get the groups who have these different documents talking to each other better, and finding out who has what," Hickman said.

The board voted to accept the grant, and also endorsed Hickman's proposal for a controlled opening of the Carnegie Library, with a "target date" of September 15. The library will be open Tuesdays and Saturdays with a capacity of four "browsing patrons," who will be required to wear masks and maintain six feet from one another.

Highways & Byways

Northern Construction has been awarded the contract to renovate the General Pierce Bridge from Montague to Greenfield. Ellis said he expected the state "reach out" soon to Montague about work on Route 2 near the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge, which should be done before the General Pierce closed for construction, probably "later in this calendar year."

The board approved a proposal to stabilize a collapsing bank on Millers Falls Road. The emergency project, which will be funded by state Chapter 90 funds, is designed to stabilize the bank pending a long-term solution. A number of projects planned to be financed by Chapter 90 will have to be delayed. The board also discussed a potential engineering agreement with Stantec Incorporated to evaluate the bank

PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE MONTAGUE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

In accordance with the Mass. Wetlands Protection Act, MGL Ch. 131, §40, the Montague Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing at 6:30 pm on Thursday, September 10, 2020 to consider Notice of Intent #2020-02 Montague-Fairmont Structure Replacement Project filed by GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc. for Eversource Energy. The work will occur in the right-of way of transmission line 1044/1632, which transverses the town.

Due to the Covid emergency, the hearing will be held virtually via Zoom. Meeting ID: 952 8413 8540 PassCode: 952 8413 8540. Dial in: +1 646 558 8656.

> Application is available at *www.montague-ma.gov* or by calling the Planning Department at 413 863 3200 x 112.

collapse. (See article, page A1.)

The board also approved a \$65,132 contract amendment with Stantec for bidding and oversight of the bridge reconstruction on Chestnut Hill Loop. The project will be funded using a \$450,000 state small bridge grant.

The board approved \$3,500 for design work at Spinner Park, and a \$1,806 disbursement to Berkshire Design Group for work on that project.

The board approved a request by Eversource to place two new poles on Letourneau Way, and temporary access to town land on Sandy Lane and Lake Pleasant Road to begin the "Montague to Fairmont Transmission Project," which will replace structures and "aging conductors" between the Montague substation and that of Chicopee.

Ramsey presented a proposal for the disposition of 500 Avenue A, soon to be vacated by the department of public works. He proposed that some town land be added to the property, and that it be sold at an auction. The town would apply for a state grant to fund an environmental site assessment, at a potential cost of \$32,500.

Ramsey also proposed applying for a state grant to evaluate the collapsed Railroad Salvage building and devise a "community-supported and market solution" for that property, currently in tax title. Ellis said the town was currently working with the EPA and the DEP to determine the status of the site, which is

adjacent to "sensitive waterways." The board approved both of Ramsey's plans.

Other Business

The selectboard appointed Barbara Alconada to the board of assessors until the spring town election, to fill a vacancy left by the retirement of Terry Miner.

The selectboard and fin com, meeting jointly, approved an emergency \$50,000 transfer from the reserve fund for "unexpected engineering services related to the capping of the burn dump" near Sandy Lane. The depleted reserve fund, which needs to last until the end of the fiscal year, should be replenished by town meeting.

The budget gap in the current fiscal year, Ellis said, could stand at \$180,000. He discussed preliminary plans to close the gap by "trimming."

The board discussed the latest state guidance on the COVID-19 pandemic with public health director Daniel Wasiuk. Wasiuk reviewed recently issued state requirements of flu immunization requirements for students returning to school, and information on "rapid" testing services for schools.

On Monday, Ellis reviewed options for using state emergency funds under the federal CARES Act, and the board discussed the process by which the town's priorities would be set.

The next scheduled selectboard meeting will be on September 14.

LEVERETT from page A1

expressed deep pain over issues of racism, felt unsafe, and wanted the town to address these concerns more strongly. "I feel unsafe," several said directly. Selectboard members said that because the town had decided not to prosecute the Black Lives Matter road stencils themselves as graffiti, prosecution of subsequent graffiti defacing them might appear as an unequal application of justice. SJC members seemed to accept this reasoning, though some suggested that the acts could still be named as "hate crimes" without any legal charges. All agreed the issues involved were national and historical in scope, but the discussion focused on local concerns. The group discussed how the difficulty newcomers can face in feeling welcome in the community is amplified and made more serious with the involvement of racism. Visible racist sentiments, they argued, are different than other difficulties neighbors may have with one another, and should be treated differently. One said their children were confused and anxious about the sign defacement, and that it was difficult as a parent to explain what was going on; another said their children questioned why other area towns had

made bold statements on the issue, while Leverett did not.

Many of the residents who spoke were people of color, but others, including selectboard members, spoke

said she did not see the SJC's role as "bridge-building," but rather bringing social justice theory into the discussion; another said they did not wish to engage with racists, and dif-

LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING LEVERETT CONSERVATION COMMISSION

of feelings of alienation or unwelcome any new people can feel upon arriving in town. Board chair Julie Shively and member Peter d'Errico spoke of their own experiences with being new to town.

Expressing a general agreement with the committee, d'Errico said he had also heard from Leverett residents who had problems with the Black Lives Matter platform, whose voices should also be taken into account. He referenced a call for a religious leader to be declared "toxic" and "removed from the community," saying the board could not simply act on behalf of one group or another.

The discussion was fast-paced, intense, and covered a lot of ground. Committee members called for particular, strong statements and commitments from the town leadership, and the selectboard responded by committing to work on the problems highlighted by the group, but describing the limitations of their role.

Suggestions that committee members volunteer in other areas of town life and build bridges were met with pushback: one member

ferentiated the issue from other kinds of problems between neighbors.

At the close of the discussion, the group shared their just-completed mission statement, and d'Errico congratulated them on their first official act as an advisory committee. Police chief Scott Minckler said he had a meeting scheduled with the SJC for next Monday. It was suggested the group write an article for the town newsletter.

Other Business

The board scheduled a special town meeting for Saturday, October 17, at 9 a.m. to present an inter-municipal agreement needed for the Teawaddle Hill Road water line connection from Amherst. D'Errico said the agreement was necessary, but the meeting will also serve the purpose of fully explaining the project to residents.

One Teawaddle Hill Road resident, Steve Nagy, was not happy that a clause in the water contract did not specify what would happen after its 25-year-term if it was not renewed. Board members took no

The Leverett Conservation Commission, in accordance with the Wetlands Protection Act (MGL c.131 §40), will hold a public remote hearing on September 14, 2020 beginning at 7:00 p.m. to review two Notices of Intent and one Request for Determination of Applicability.

The Notices of Intent relate to a culvert replacement project on Shutesbury Road and the Eversource line 1044/1632 project. The Determination relates to a septic system upgrade at 177 Cave Hill Road.

The public can participate by emailing the Conservation Commission for the link to the Go To Meeting (ConCom@leverett.ma.us). The link will also be posted at the Town Hall on August 28th. The applications are on file and are available for public inspection in the Conservation Commission Office by appointment at (413) 548-1022 ext. 3.

action, expressing the opinion that it was a standard contract and that there were other ways to deal with the issue if it came up. The discussion became contentious.

The board greeted new town librarian Misha Storm, and wished her good luck. Storm will begin work on Tuesday, September 8, and said she was looking forward to it.

The board decided to use the same members as last time in the hiring committee for a new full-time police officer. The application period for the position ends on September 6.

Highway superintendent Matt Boucher requested the replacement of a 30-year-old snowplow in need of substantial repair. The board agreed it should be replaced.

Town administrator Marjorie McGinnis presented information on the town's voice-over-internet-protocol phone situation, saying that things are moving forward, and she will be meeting with the low bidder and gathering further information in the coming weeks. No decisions were made.

The board said they had been informed of a request from Eversource related to a new power line, but needed further information before reviewing it.



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A8

ROCK DAM from page A1

"Even when the river's not flowing a lot, there's currents," said Turners Falls fire chief John Zellman. "It fools you pretty quick – even for the best swimmers."

Earlier this summer, Zellman's department issued a public warning about river recreation, encouraging swimmers and fishers to "particularly avoid the areas near the dam and the hydroelectric stations, where water levels can change unexpectedly." Zellman said that restricted vehicle access to many areas below the dam also complicates rescue efforts for his department.

"We've had quite a few incidents this year," he reported, including a man left stranded on an island after the floodgates opened.

Police chief Chris Williams said he was surprised to hear how many cars were parked along Migratory Way during the August 22 incident. "That's the big one, where everybody seems to go," he said. "I grew up in Montague Center, so I spent my time on the Sawmill – I didn't even know where Rock Dam was until I became a cop!"

In 1998, teenagers Christopher Gallagher and Winter Clark were both dragged into whirlpools at the same location. The teens' deaths eventually inspired an official town commission in the early 2000s to provide a safe swim spot for youth, but it was unsuccessful.

"Montague is surrounded by water," said parks and recreation director Jon Dobosz, "but the only places that people can swim are the high school indoor swimming pool, and the obviously much more unsafe option of the river."

Turners Falls High School opens its pool to the public twice a week January through March. Lake Pleasant and Green Pond, popular swim spots long ago, are these days protected as backup sources of drinking water for the Turners Falls Water District, and swimming is banned there by the state.

Dobosz estimated the cost of

building an outdoor town pool at "over a million dollars," and its operation at up to \$75,000 a year, impossible to support from program revenue. "In New England, you're talking about eight to ten weeks, at most, for the season," he explained.

For his own part, Dobosz said he grew up in town, but never swam in the Connecticut. "I had friends with pools," he said. "I was one of the lucky ones!"

"It's a beautiful area, if you understand the danger," Montague selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz said of Rock Dam. "You have to be a good swimmer, and even then, it can be tragic."

Kuklewicz, who grew up in Turners, learned to swim at the Green River Swimming Area, a public "pool" in Greenfield. "The [Montague] parks department had a program that used to bring us there in the summer," he said. "They used to bus kids over."

Social distancing during this year's pandemic, and the closure of municipal pools, may be sending more people into rural areas in search of places to picnic and swim. "Everywhere was overcrowded this summer," said Montague town planner Walter Ramsey. "In Montague Center, even the Sawmill is showing evidence of being overused."

Ramsey said an official swim spot has been "stated as a priority in every planning document the town has done, going back at least 20 years."

"I see it as an economic justice issue," he added. "Not everyone can have a pool."

According to Ramsey, the town has requested improvements at Rock Dam as part of the FirstLight hydroelectric relicensing process – including better signage about the water's danger. "In the past, the response has been to limit public access, but clearly people are going down there – it's a fascinating natural feature," he said.

"But the river's always been a dangerous place to swim. That hasn't changed."

The *Montague Reporter* is currently seeking carriers to bring our newspaper around to deserving residents of the town of GILL each Thursday afternoon or evening, or by Friday morning. The entire route takes about two hours by automobile, but only because the roads there have been made so long, and you have to keep stopping and starting. It could be used as an important-sounding excuse to ride your bicycle. If you or a smaller member of your pod can take on even a half-hour portion of this job, please notify *circulation@montaguereporter.org*.





But we can't.

Barb passed before the realities of COVID-19 changed the way we live our lives, but there's one thing we know for sure. If Barb wanted to have a party, *she would find a way to have a party!*

We invite you to join us for a COVID-safe

Celebration of Life for Barb

Saturday, September 26, 2020 By Reservation Only, between 1 and 5 p.m. 390 Main Road, Gill, MA

We'll have great food and wine, photographs, and recorded tributes from family & friends. The event will be held in a large open sided tent, all guests will be required to wear masks and observe proper social distancing, and occupancy will be limited to no more than 50 people at any time.

Email **celebrationforbarb@gmail.com**, or call or text 413–834–4444 to make your reservation for 1, 2, or 3 p.m. Time slots will be filled on a first come, first served basis, and all reservations will be confirmed.

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OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER

SEPTEMBER 3, 2020

Above: The Pioneer Aviation hangar at the Turners Falls airport.

ArtBeat Everything Begins Somewhere: Amanda Lou Doster's Poetry

GREENFIELD – I've been having trouble reading lately. My mind just won't stay on any one thing. From the news articles I feel I should read even though they make me sodden with despair, to the works of literary genius I seek out to bolster my spirits, I just have trouble following word to word. But the first poem in Amanda Lou Doster's new chapbook, *Everything Begins Somewhere*, grabbed me.

The poem is titled "Actually," as if Doster and I had already been talking about something and she decided to switch gears. Here are the first six lines:

All my life I thought I spoke in tongues – Always prayerful in strange rooms, on pews and in beds, I imagined God calling me to ecstasy. It turns out I saw the divine in nondescript faces and when everyone understood me it wasn't transcendent, it was German.

I loved it. I read the whole poem. Then I read five or six more. Then I got up, got a glass of wine, and read the whole book. A couple of days later, I read it again. (Okay, it's a chapbook, so it's only 24 pages long. But poems are dense – in a good way, like chocolate cake.) Everything Begins Somewhere was published this spring by Slate Roof Press, a cooperative press based in Northfield. Slate Roof books are always physically beautiful, making use of unusual papers, well-chosen graphics and fonts, and the talents of master letterpress printer Ed Rayher of Swamp Press, who prints the covers. Doster's cover features a woodcut by Gail Kort, ablaze with warm colors on a rich saffron stock. Black and white photos of Doster's grandparents' farm in Arkansas, and one of her grandmother holding her mother as a baby, open and close the book.



Greenfield poet Amanda I ou Doster with her so



By GARY SANDERSON

GREENFIELD – The ancient, indigenous Great Beaver Tale about the origin of Deerfield's Pocumtuck Range has changed dramatically since 1890, when East Charlemont antiquarian Phinehas Field's 105-word, 1871 description was published in Volume 1 of *History and Proceedings* of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association (1870-79).

Soon after that bare-bones account by a white Christian man of deep Puritan persuasion appeared in print as the ninth of 12 Stories, Anecdotes and Legends Collected and Written Down by Deacon Phinehas Field, two rapid-fire embellishments of his Algonquian earthshaping creation tale were published. The first hit the street in 1895, crafted by venerable Deerfield historian George Sheldon. Then a slightly different version was presented in 1915 by Montague historian Edward Pressey. Sheldon, who apparently was not familiar with the landscape tale before Field brought it to light, increased the word-count to 120 and introduced a few new elements. Pressey upped it to 156 words, adding his own unique spin. And there you have it in its entirety: a white man's tale; that of Sugarloaf's Great Beaver, which stood till the dawning of our 21st century. In recent years, new life has been pumped into this deep-history oral tale by scholarly, professional, Abenaki storytellers, Marge Bruchac and Lisa Brooks, among other Native contributors who continue to come forward with their own little tweaks and twerks to an alluring tale. They've added vivid color and detail to a

foundational sketch.

It's appropriate that Native storytellers have revived this ancient earthshaping tale and molded it into a modern narrative that fits contemporary norms. Even thousands of years ago, Pocumtuck storytellers would have had the liberty to employ poetic license by shaping a deep-history tale to the times - say, for instance, folding it into narrative about natural disaster, such as a flood or drought, perhaps a devastating human epidemic, maybe blight or insect infestation of important plant foods. In the Native American cosmos, natural phenomena, good and bad, happened for a reason. Natural occurrences were seldom if ever viewed as simple coincidence, and could always be related to familiar, ancient tales known for millennia and told around cozy winter fires capable of stirring creative juices of storyteller and listener alike. A tale like that of the Sugarloaf beaver could last an hour or two, extend through the night, or even go on for more than a day, depending on audience receptivity. The longer versions would have been great theater, the full Monty, so to speak, introducing song and dance, the heartbeat of drums and chants, flashy costume and hushed drama – suspense that could strike fear or rapture into an entranced gathering. Fidgety children likely heard the short version of such stories around the spring fires of Peskeompskut (now Turners Falls) fishing camps, or in association with a Green Corn Moon festival. The full performance could have been reserved for promontories on the eastern or western horizon from which the Pocumtuck Range's see VALLEY VIEW page B5



By LESLIE BROWN

MONTAGUE CITY – All we wanted was to spend a week at the ocean in Maine.

Pack a bag and a few staples, a book or two, some shorts and T-shirts and hit the road.

This old-fashioned, relaxed vacation start is no more. Our landlady in Maine emailed us that we would need documentation of a negative COVID test. Ken called our local doctor's office and we were given appointments at the white tent outside our local hospital. The test involved a swab in the nose and a day's wait for the results, which

Si vingivan pour 2 manua Lon Dosier, wills 1501 3011.

I kept trying to put my finger on Doster's voice, asking myself what I liked about it. I think it's that she writes with a refreshing mix of clear intelligence, humility, humor, and a word that came up once I was on the phone with her – vulnerability. She loves a good ramble through unusual words: ... *if your / belly were made for pricklebushes, then / you would never have to clear the field, or / wrestle the wobble calf from its mother,* she writes.

But within the same poem, she can drop disarmingly

see ARTBEAT page B8

ESCAPE to the Seaside

happily came back negative.

We left on a Saturday and found the traffic as expected. Luckily we were only going as far as Wells Beach, but we sure were happy to see the Maine border.

Once in Maine we went to the local Hannaford grocery for staples requiring refrigeration, then our favorite lobster pound for fried clams and shrimp, white wine for me and a beer for Ken. Yummy! Then, on to the cottage to spend a week in paradise.

Our rental is no more than a conversion of a porch into a small apartment: one large bedroom, a bath with a shower, and a kitchenette with two burners and a microwave, plus a small television which we rarely used and a clock if you really felt the need to know the time.

involved a swab in the nose and a Our landlady was anxious about day's wait for the results, which the possibility of a hurricane, so

she and her husband went to their other cottage in the woods to batten down the hatches. We had the place to ourselves. The weather held out with gorgeous sunsets on the beach, a continuous breeze to keep the air cool as the heat of the day came on, and starlit nights with no sign of rain or storm. Unlike some years, folks came to the beach for the day and then left town or returned to their hotel for television watching or other entertainment for the kids. The nights were quiet.

I often read two books while away and walk, walk, walk on the beach and on the small roads in the area. We also enjoy the Rachel Carson memorial park and trail just a bit up Route 1, and of course, the famous Maine Diner. No one asked to see proof of our COVID-free condition, so we left the documents with

see GARDENER'S page B3



Looking north from the mountain we call Sugarloaf.

THE MONTAGUE REPORTER

Pet Meek



B2

"DAX"

Dax is "Mr. Mellow" and loves company and cuddling! His favorite things to do are chasing anything he can chase, playing with his sister, and simply sitting back and watching her burn up all her energy. This little guy is also a great lap cat!

Dax has special medical needs, though, due to the chronic diarrhea. If you're interested in learning more about his medical needs, email the adoption staff at springfield@dakinhumane.org and include your name and phone number.

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



Senior Center Activities SEPTEMBER 4 THROUGH 11

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

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@erving-ma.gov.

LEVERETT

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



Interview by J. BURKETT

TURNERS FALLS - You might not have heard of Ed Yazijian, but he is a real hero of underground musics to some of us! Based in the US and beyond, he has been in a variety of bands, and his newer solo LPs are really something else, as great as they are hard to describe.

His musical roots go way back, with interesting musicians on both sides of his family. Check out his new duo LP with Sir Richard Bishop (of Sun City Girls), his solo LPs and tapes, his duo LP with Dredd Foole, and his older bands like High Risk Group and Kustomized.

MMM: What are your earliest music memories?

EY: My earliest musical memory is of my mother singing old Irish ballads and rebel songs to me as a very young kid. She was born in Ireland, and her uncle John Francis McGuinn was the last seanaichi (bard) of Inishmurray Island off the coast of Sligo. The island was evacuated in 1948 because all the inhabitants were moonshiners, and the government wasn't able to stop them. John's sister, my great aunt Mary, taught my mother all kinds of songs in both English and Irish, and she would sing them to me. I was the only one in the family who liked to hear her sing. My sisters used to joke that they'd pay back their allowances if she'd stop. My sister just sent me a recording of our Uncle John singing songs he wrote and playing the harmonica on Soundcloud. He even sings a Bobby Helms song, "My Fraulein."

Another memory is of my first concert. My father took me to see Andre Segovia when I was probably eight or nine years old. He told me later that the concert was somewhere in Bridgeport, CT, but since we lived in NY at the time, I would guess that it was at Avery Fisher Hall in Manhattan. I'm not sure, though. I liked it, but I ended up falling asleep towards the end.

I played the violin in the school orchestra at Hawthorn Elementary School in Massapequa Park, NY.

MMM: You went to India as a teenager, right? What was the music scenario there like?

EY: I mostly lived in small villages off the grid in India, so there was no electricity for TV and radio. Music was mostly played by villagers for their own entertainment, and most of the music where I lived were old bhajans. I learned how to play the dholak drum to accompany my neighbors.

Later on I moved to a town in West Bengal called Navadwip, and lived as a sort of caretaker on an old zamindari estate. Zamindars were rich landlords who lived like kings until the Indian government dissolved the zamindari system in 1947. My landlord's father was a zamindar, but they lost everything except for an estate in town and a house in Kolkata. They were poor, but still kept a royal facade. One of the brothers who lived there and two sisters were quite mad, so it was kind of like living with Big and Little Edie at Grey Gardens. The old man never worked in his life, but was a good musician and played the sitar. When I met him he was 107 years old. His son gave me his old sitar, but I never learned how to play it properly. I just messed around with it. I had to leave it behind when I moved to Bangladesh, because it was too fragile to carry with me....

played some really fun gigs, made three records and also did a short tour

All through this period I was playing with Dredd Foole (Dan Ireton). My association with Dan has been the most enduring. He and Pat are two of my dearest friends. One highlight I remember in Boston was when Kustomized became the backup band for Sonic Boom of Spacemen 3. I think that was the only time I ever had to audition for a band or gig.

MMM: How about your newer solo music: how would you describe it, or like people to hear it? I feel like there is an Indian music influence, and Armenian?

EY: ... Most everything I do now is completely improvised. I think my two biggest influences in my music now are Indian classical and old time fiddle music from the Southeast US. And maybe psychedelia has something to do with how it takes shape.

If there's any Armenian influence, it's unconscious. I grew up listening to a lot of it. My grandfather had a huge collection of Turkish, Armenian, and Greek music on 78 rpm records. He liked to sit under his grape arbor with a glass of *raki* in one hand and a cigar in the other. It would be my or my father's job to crank the Victrola and play the records....

You asked how I'd like people to hear and think about my music. It's something to which I haven't given much thought. Like most musicians I'd like people to enjoy what I do, but I'd like them to listen and interpret it on their own terms....

MMM: What about your album with Richard Bishop?

EY: The latest record that I did with Sir Richard Bishop was completely improvised and recorded in one take in my living room in Greenville, SC.... Rick overdubbed a couple of guitar parts, but everything else was live. Rick flew in from Portland – he stowed his bag on the floor, immediately sat down, and we recorded the first song in one take. He stayed for about five days and we got an album's worth of material in that short amount of time. He's a man with endless musical ideas, and the skill to conjure them into sound. It's a total joy to play with him.

MMM: Are you working on new music, or do you have any music plans for the future?

EY: At present I've been playing with Sally Ann Morgan and Andrew Zinn of the Black Twig Pickers and Liz Payne, formerly of Town and Country. Sally also plays with Sarah Louise Henson as House and Land.

Thanks in part to the pandemic, they're the only people I hang out with besides my family. They make this nightmare tolerable. We're recording material on Sally and Andrew's farm right now. Hopefully it'll shape up to be a record. I have to say that I miss playing live.

MMM: What are your favorite things about Western Mass? Venues, places, people?

EY: As far as I'm concerned, Western Mass and Southern Vermont are two of the most magical and beautiful places in the world. So many old friends from Boston (you included!) live there, and the music that has come from your way is very inspiring to me. When I was a teen I used to camp out in the woods outside of Colrain, so I have a long-term connection to the area.

MMM: I remember you talking about an epic Holy Modal Rounders show in Vermont... when was that, in '71?

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

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	e. 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

MMM: What are some of your most fun memories of playing in Boston in the '90s?

EY: I loved pretty much everything about the music scene there. The first band I made a record with was High Risk Group. Later on I played in a band called 7 or 8 Wormhearts with Glenn Jones, Phil Milstein, my former girlfriend Lauren Hirshson, and Chris Brokaw on drums. Instead of a bass player we had two tubas, played by a duo called (Johnny) Blood and (Ned) Stone. Phil Franklin (later of Sunburned Hand of the Man) took over on drums when Chris left to start Come with Thalia Zedek. When that ended I played with Glenn in Cul de Sac for a while.

Up until then I had been playing violin, but I really wanted to play guitar. That was when Pete Prescott asked me to join Kustomized on guitar. I also played farfisa organ in that band. I had a great time in Kustomized. We

EY: My memories about that time in my life are very fuzzy, so I'm not sure if they'll totally match up with reality. Here goes: I was living in Waitsfield, VT when I was sixteen or seventeen. I had left home and was roommates with an old high school friend. She was friends with a daughter of the owner of Sugarbush Mountain, and they would have gigs at the ski lodge. One day my friend told me that the Fugs were playing at the lodge, and would I be interested in sitting in with them on fiddle?

I was really shy, so the thought of playing with the Fugs totally freaked me out! Still, I took the fiddle along and went there. That night I got really drunk, and the fiddle stayed in the car trunk. Due to my, ahem, inebriated state, I don't remember much else about that night, except that the fiddler playing with them was really great. I couldn't tell you if it was Peter Stampfel, Robin Remailly, or both. I learned later that it wasn't exactly the Fugs playing there that night, but rather some iteration of the Unholy Modal Rounders.

Later I ended up going to a bunch of house parties where either the Rounders or Automatic Slim and the Fat Boys played. There were several lineups I think, but Hurley was the constant. They were all great, but I do remember being really intimidated by Hurley. I can't really put my finger on why, because now he's so laid back and funny. Many years later I asked him about those days, and he brushed me off at first. Later that night he came up to me and started asking, "Do you know (insert name here), or so and so, or so and so?" I told him that no, I was drunk all the time, so I don't remember much of anything. He laughed and said, "Yeah, me too!"

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our landlady in case anyone questioned her. We are in good health, and happy to be so.

Our spot was a mere half block from the beach, we could sit out in our small yard, and the weather was ideal: cool at night for sleeping, warm and sunny during the day. The ocean water was chilly but wading was a pleasure.

We ate out for one meal a day, usually at midday. We enjoyed clams, shrimp, and swordfish, all locally caught. There was also a farm stand nearby with fresh corn, lettuce, and other salad greens. We brought our own garden tomatoes.

There was a local Renny's in the shopping plaza. It's like a general store, with everything and anything you could need. It always has sales, so I come home every year with deals on summer clothing, more bug dope, postcards, and anything else you can imagine. It's good for an hour's free entertainment on an overcast and foggy day even if you end

up buying nothing.

MOVIE REVIEW **Burden** (2018)

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – Sometimes, a true story is so incredible that people can't believe it actually happened. The story that this movie is based on really did happen, in Laurens, South Carolina in 1996. I found an article that told me about what happened between an African-American reverend named David Kennedy and a Klansman named Mike Burden.

In comparison to how on track the film kept in connection with the true story, I think it actually did pretty well. The film shows the KKK museum that's a big part of the story, and it shows Burden putting his blood, sweats and tears into it, like he said he did. This explains somewhat how he ends up being able to do a rather cool action involving the Reverend, which was a pretty big move for Burden to undertake.

The audience is shown the lives of the two main characters featured in the film. We see Mike Burden at a Klan meeting in full outfit, white hood and all, with other Klansmen lighting a cross on fire. Reverend Kennedy has a meeting with his parishioners about the racist presence in the town. Then Burden meets his girlfriend for the first time while working. He starts to court her, and forms a good relationship with her young son Franklin. We see this man in his character's best and worst moments.

Then his world begins to cross with Reverend Kennedy's a bit. The reverend and others protest the museum.

One of the best parts of Bur-



to where Burden, who really did think the Klan was family for him, is helped out by Kennedy when he is at his lowest point. Kennedy considers what Burden did to be a sign.

I'm not saying that things don't start to get a little bumpy for everyone involved. Reverend Kennedy's family isn't pleased with him taking in this man and his loved ones. But shortly after, Burden makes another decent move, trying to protect a friend when the Klan comes after them. I think people would agree with me that it is a huge show of how much the man has changed.

Beside Burden's big move, another moment I really liked was when he admitted he was asked to do the action he couldn't do, and also said that he's a man who can't go back to the Klan, because he doesn't want to. That right there was an incredible moment.

I think the movie keeping on track with what actually happened, and how this guy really felt, helped the film a lot. Winning the 2018 Sundance Festival is certainly good proof of that. Not to spoil the film too much, but I think what the Reverend ends up trying to do is the right move, and very appropriate, given what this film is about. Donations for that goal are asked for at the end of the film.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG Peddling Stolen Food; Panhandling At The Gas Station; Stealing Bikes On The Hill; Trail Cameras In The Woods

Monday 8/17

10:48 a.m. Caller from Federal Street advises that on Saturday she discovered tools outside her back window, suggesting that someone may have attempted to break in. Report taken.

12:42 p.m. Party into station inquiring who to contact to report that twice since yesterday a vehicle has run him off the road on Turners Falls Road in Greenfield. Party advises that he caught up to one of the vehicles once and the driver flipped him off. Referred party to Greenfield PD for any incidents occurring in Greenfield; also cautioned against any driving behavior that might be unsafe when trying to obtain the other vehicle's info.

1:15 p.m. Caller reporting that over the weekend, a male broke into the community room at Powertown Apartments and stole food. Caller advises male is selling that food right now on Avenue A. Officers off attempting to locate suspect. Suspect Mirandized. Report taken.

4:37 p.m. Caller from Federal Street requesting assistance with removing a skunk who is living under his porch and has been spraying for two days. Caller states that his dogs were sprayed twice and the smell is making him and his wife sick. Spoke with animal control, who requested Environmental Police be advised. Environmental Police advise the issue is a Fish and Wildlife matter. Officer states he went to the residence to advise parties not to take matters into their own hands, and that the proper agency will be notified of the issue. Party stated that the skunk may have left the area because she did not see it anymore. Advised to call back if skunk returns. 5:13 p.m. Caller states she received a voicemail from "Officer James Conner" who provided a case ID, warrant number, and badge number and requested to speak with her. Advised caller that nobody by that name is employed at MPD, but that it was probably a scam call because parties are not advised via phone when a warrant is put out. Advised caller of options. 6:06 p.m. Report of a coyote hit by a car on Mormon Hollow Road. Caller states that there is a traffic cone next to the animal and that the animal is suffering. Officer states that it was a fox, and that the fox has been dispatched; requests message be left with DPW to have animal removed.

happens again without her knowledge, her neighbor's young child may gain access to her pool. Advised of options.

Wednesday, 8/19 5:14 p.m. Caller reporting that someone called from

[*redacted*] stating that she was going to owe \$419 for a two-year membership to some kind of computer thing. Caller knows this is a scam, but is confused about how they can call from a local number. Advised caller not to give any personal information out and to call back if they call again. [First of three reports of scams involving some kind of computer thing during this reporting period.]

6:33 p.m. Caller reporting that a male wearing all black is with two other men, hitting golf balls into the water at Unity Park. Area checked; officer advises no one in area hitting golf balls, only fishing and picnicking. **Thursday, 8/20**

10:33 a.m. Caller reporting vandalism to the backboards on the basketball court at Unity Park last weekend. Report taken. 12:55 p.m. Caller from J Street reporting a breaking and entering that occurred sometime between 9:30 last night and 8 this morning. Report taken. 12:58 p.m. Report from Park Villa Drive of stolen

Park Villa Drive of stolen package that was delivered at 11:10 this morning. Officer located package at different unit. Package returned to caller. Friday, 8/21

10:53 a.m. Report of small bear near Oakman Street and Country Club Lane; caller advises people are chasing it and someone in a blue pickup truck is following it. MPD and Environmental Police officers advised. Upon arrival, officer spoke with caller, and bear went back into woods. 6:17 p.m. Report of a male speaking with young kids at Unity Park; caller states interactions don't look appropriate due to the age difference. Units checked area extensively; unable to locate anyone matching description. 6:22 p.m. Pharmacist requesting PD response to remove party from Walgreens because he is harassing customers outside and following them to their cars. Officer advised party of complaint and moved him along. 8:05 p.m. Report of dark-colored sedan parked in private lot on G Street playing loud music. Area checked; all is quiet. 11:36 p.m. Caller states there is a male outside FL Roberts harassing customers, yelling, and causing a scene asking for money. Male party ad-

Saturday, 8/22

11:32 a.m. Caller from Rock Dam reporting that her brother has been in the water for about ten minutes and people can't find him. (Language barrier.) All units, TFFD, and AMR advised. Received second call while on line with original caller stating man has been in water for at least ten minutes. Officer requesting to have dam closed. Contacted FirstLight power control station; they advised dam is closed already. [Redacted.]

2:05 p.m. Caller from Unity Park reporting a goose that appears to have a fish hook stuck in its side and is missing one foot. Called EPO, who advised to let nature take its course, otherwise to contact MassWildlife on Monday. 7:55 p.m. Caller from High Street states that his black and yellow mountain bike was stolen earlier today. Referred to an officer. Monday, 8/24

4:25 p.m. Caller from Griswold Street states that her green and black mountain bike was stolen from outside her residence sometime between the night of 8/23 and the morning of 8/24. Caller states there is high drug traffic in the area of her residence and that the bike may have been taken by a skinny red-headed male party who is known for stealing bikes in that area. Officer spoke with caller and advised her to get in touch with Greenfield PD so they can be on the lookout for the bike. 8:47 p.m. Report of dirt bikes going up and down Federal Street with no plates and no exhaust pipes. Caller states it is extremely loud and has been going on for three days. Units advised.

9:03 p.m. Party into sta-

Tuesday, 8/25

9:25 a.m. Report of construction trucks bearing company name "Greg's" speeding on Main Street over the past two weeks. Officer checked area and observed several companies working, but none bearing that company name.

10:16 a.m. Report of arson from Franklin Area Survival Center. [Details redacted; call under investigation.]

2:22 p.m. Caller requesting officer check on dog in a vehicle in the Replay parking lot; advises a collie was in that vehicle at Food City for approximately ten minutes, so he opened the door and gave it water. Owner returned and did not seem fazed that the dog was in the vehicle in the heat. Windows were down a little bit and the dog seemed calm. Caller saw driver leave Food City Plaza and is now parked at Replay. Advised caller that an officer would respond, and that should this happen again, he should call the PD first and not enter someone else's vehicle.

7:20 p.m. Multiple callers reporting that a dog was struck by a vehicle on Fifth Street and severely injured. Dog appears to be less injured than originally thought; owner will take to the emergency vet as a precaution. Dog was struck after it got loose and ran out in front of a moving car.

Wednesday, 8/26

1:24 a.m. Report of vehicle into ditch in Deerfield. Call transferred to Shelburne Control.

7:47 a.m. Caller from Seventh Street reporting that someone keyed his vehicle overnight and left a threatening note in the door handle. Note threatened the life of a female who does not reside there, threaten-

den's character, I think, comes out through the love he has for his girlfriend and her son. She gives him an ultimatum at one point, and he follows through with what she wants – but not before the head Klansman asks him to do something which he decides he can't do. This leads us

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

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!

Tuesday, 8/18

2:02 p.m. Walk-in party from Montague Street FL Roberts harassing reporting that someone customers, yelling, and unlocked her fence, not causing a scene asking sure who. Party expressed for money. Male party adspecific concern that if it vised and is moving along.

tion to report that two parties attempted to vandalize his vehicle today by smashing the windows. States that one party has an illegal firearm and that there were witnesses; will call back tomorrow with their info. 9:33 p.m. Caller states he was in his truck in the parking lot of Australis Aquaculture when an older dark-colored BMW with a roof rack with boxes attached pulled in and shut all its lights off. Caller stated the two people in the vehicle were unaware that he was sitting there and once he turned on his lights, they took off into Charter NEX's parking lot. Area checked; unable to locate. 11:45 p.m. Caller report-

ing power line sparking

across from old Railroad

Salvage building near a

tree. Area checked; noth-

ing located.

ing to hurt this female if she did not back down, and referenced a sexual assault accusation made against the person who left the note. Report taken.

10:20 a.m. Chief Williams advising of Lewis Tree crew working without a detail on Hillside Road. Spoke with crew and advised that any future work will need a detail or will be shut down.

12:41 p.m. Report of male who appears highly impaired stumbling and hanging around caller's residence making her uncomfortable. Caller advises she asked male to move along and he told her he was just stretching. Officer advises that while they were off with the party, the caller came out and attempted to intervene, which escalated the situation. Officers advised caller that they are handling

see MPD page B5

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New Drive-Up Teller Hours

Turners Falls

South Deerfield



282 Avenue A



61 North Main Street

at our Teller Connect/ATMs M-F 7-7





Member FDIC / Member DIF · Each depositor is insured by the FDIC to at least \$250,000. All deposits above the FDIC insurance amount are insured by the Depositors Insurance Fund (DIF).

VALLEY VIEW from page B1

beaver profile could be clearly deciphered; maybe even from atop Mount Sugarloaf itself - the beaver's head, its eyes, its brain. What better place to perform ritualistic theater?

Tales that introduced dark, dangerous, underworld spirits - maybe snakes, giant snapping turtles, horned serpents, underwater panthers or even revered black bears were reserved for winter, when such dangerous creatures were hibernating or unresponsive under dense ice, where they couldn't hear and thus wouldn't retaliate. If, however, such powerful forces were alert to the telling and insulted or disrespected, they could and very likely would strike back at disrespectful gatherings.

Eastern Woodland villagers had great respect for everything in their three-layered cosmos consisting of Grandmother Earth floating between the Sky and Under worlds. Theirs was a holistic universe, where plants and animals, springs and swamps, rivers and streams, mountains and valleys, caves and remarkable stones were all community members at council fire. Most everything had a spirit - even inanimate objects like the Pocumtuck Range, which local indigenous people believed had once been a troublesome giant beaver bludgeoned to death by the giant culture-hero Hobomock for flaunting rude, uncooperative behavior, in its case, hoarding and greed. Selfishness was not tolerated by Native Americans, who valued community sharing and charity.

In Algonquian culture, Hobomock was a creator, a transformer, and a mischievous, humorous trickster known by many spellings and names, including but not limited to Koluskap, Gluscape, Glooscap, and Maushop along the Northeastern coast, as well as Odziozo, Nenabozho, Nanabozho, and Nanabush to inland Natives extending through the Great Lakes. Many indigenous tales recounted classic battles between this culture hero and Pleistocene megafauna like the giant beaver, comparable in size to today's black bear.

Algonquian legend credited Hobomock with reducing the giant

beaver and squirrel to today's more manageable, less dangerous and destructive size. In the case of the Sugarloaf beaver, the culture hero punished an unruly, antisocial beast and left for eternity a petrified landmark in the form of its carcass.

Today, this abrupt, twisted landform we know as Sugarloaf - for millennia a visual reference for travelers and an observation point for residents - continues to challenge storytellers to conform the Beaver Tale to the times. Bruchac and Brooks have done just that, using the tale as the centerpiece around which to build their very own Western Abenaki narrative about our middle Connecticut Valley. It has become the peg they hang their hat on, an enticing tale that draws listeners.

In the process, place names of geographical features recorded in the extinct Pocumtuck language on our first deeds are being converted to Abenaki words, while distinctions between the ancient New England neighbors are blurred. The truth is that the Pocumtuck and Western Abenaki people occupied different territories, practiced somewhat different lifeways based on climate, and spoke barely mutually intelligible dialects of the base Eastern Algonquian language.

Because of a shorter North Country growing season, Native communities situated there clung more to their "Old Ways" of hunting and gathering than their southern, agriculturist cousins, who adopted Three Sisters farming of corn, beans and squash as their foundational food source. Yes, sure, these people often intermarried, congregated, traded, and united as allies in times of conflict. But, no, they were not one people before Europeans arrived in our valley - though the Sokoki had, by the turn of the 17th century, established their southernmost physical presence in new villages on the northern periphery of Pocumtuck territory. Those villages existed in an area now occupied by Northfield, Hinsdale, New Hampshire., and Vernon, Vermont.

By the late 17th century, the diaspora of southern New England Natives brought them west to the Berkshires and upper Hudson Valley, north to the upper reaches of Lake Champlain, and as far west as the Upper Great Plains, where they assimilated into the dominant societies. Not only did many displaced, homeless Pocumtuck, Nonotuck, Agawam, and Woronoco villagers ultimately wind up living in Western Abenaki villages along the northern shores of Lake Champlain. By 1750, and probably a generation earlier, they had, according to late, great anthropologist Gordon Day, adopted the language of their Sokoki hosts, many of whom had previously lived around Northfield. Simply put, the Sokokis comprised the largest slice of their Champlain villages' ethnic pie, so their version of the language ruled.

Bruchac and Brooks have many tendrils reaching into those upper-Champlain Native communities, and thus understand the melting-pot dynamics dating back hundreds of years. Though Bruchac, 66, is almost a generation older than Brooks, they both began their college careers in the 1990s. Actually, the younger Brooks, 49, completed each step of her degree path a little earlier than Bruchac, earning her BA from Goddard College in 1993, her MA from Boston College in 1998, and her PhD at Cornell in 2004. Bruchac completed her undergraduate BA at Smith College in 1999, before earning her MA (2003) and PhD (2007) at UMass-Amherst. Brooks is now a professor of English and American Studies at Amherst College, and Bruchac, assistant professor of Anthropology, is Coordinator of Native American and Indigenous Studies at the University of Pennsylvania.

So, both women are highly capable, articulate scholars and storytellers working at prestigious colleges. Their insights into Northeastern indigenous cultures and their understanding of the Native cosmos are top-shelf, yet not entirely unimpeachable in my eyes. Why? Because, although their interpretation of oral history, such as Sugarloaf's Great Beaver Tale, is framed in scholarly wisdom, interpretation is not and never will be fact, no matter how cleverly nuanced.

MPD from page B3 Randall Road. Officer checked entire area; the situation. Caller was not satisfied unable to locate. with that solution and Thursday, 8/27 3:19 p.m. Caller from left the area agitated. Wendell Road report-Courtesy transport provided. ing that her trail cam-

3:31 p.m. Caller from Randall Wood Drive states that a suspicious male came to his home and opened his storm door without knocking. When the caller came out and said he was calling the police, the male left quickly on foot towards

Unfortunately, there is no 19th-century, wax-cylinder, Native-tongue recording of the Great Beaver Tale collecting Smithsonian Institution dust. Thus, the deep-history tale told thousands of years before what late historian Francis Jennings calls the European invasion will never be known. End of story. Period. Instead, we must rely on clever and creative storytellers to give us their best recreations, shaping the narrative to fit their own perspectives.

Bruchac launched the Beaver-Tale resurgence with her own evolving oral presentations in Old Deerfield and elsewhere during the last decade of the 20th century, not unlike Sheldon crafting his pre-History of Deerfield narrative in the Greenfield Gazette and Courier. Hailing from a Greenfield, New York storytelling family that includes older brother Joseph Bruchac and his sons, James and Jesse, Marge Bruchac was the perfect Beaver Tale-rebirth vehicle. She had it in her blood, so to speak. Brother Joseph is a card-carrying creative writer and performer, with many books about Native and colonial folklore to his credit.

Another creative contribution was made by North-Country Western Abenaki poet Cheryl Savageau, who dedicated her poem about the beaver, At Sugarloaf, 1996, to Marge Bruchac, suggesting to me the likelihood that Bruchac had introduced her to the tale. The two writers are close in age, travel in the same circles, and are from the same bolt of cloth.

Bruchac's first publication of the Sugarloaf tale was in the essay "Earthshapers and Placemakers: Algonkian Indian Stories and the Landscape," which appeared in the 2005 compilation Indigenous Archaeologies: Decolonizing Theory and Practice. Describing the evolution and function of indigenous landscape tales, she stuck to the documented Pocumtuck-language place names for Mount Sugarloaf (Wequomps on a 1672 deed; now more commonly Wequamps, which she translates as "the place where a hill drops off"), the Pocumtuck Range (Pemawatchuwatunck), and the Connecticut and Deerfield rivers, as they appeared in the earliest deeds.

this time; no signs of abuse.

8:51 p.m. 911 caller reporting two male parties attempting to gain entry into the Crocker Building with a crowbar. While on the line, caller stated 4:20 p.m. Caller from a party returned home and let the males in. Units made contact with male, who stated that the lock is broken on his door and that maintenance

owner of complaint. is aware of happy and healthy at the issue.

eras have been stolen.

Third Street states

that her neighbor abus-

es his dog every day

when it starts barking.

Officer advised dog

Dog appears to be

Advised of options.



mented Pocumtuck names for landscape features and locations.

Then along came the articulate, younger Brooks, who threw her creative hat into the ring to assist in the reshaping of a pre-Columbian oral tale. Brooks chose to hike a separate path in her excellent, acclaimed The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast, which hit the market in 2008. This historical work of literary non-fiction views our slice of the Connecticut Valley, homeland of the Pocumtuck, through a Wabenaki lens, adopting the same Wabenaki place name Savageau had introduced for Sugarloaf in her poem. That name, Ktsi Amiskw, means "The Great Beaver," territory encompassing not only the Pocumtuck Range but also the fertile shelf it sits on. Never has the Pocumtuck name for this Great Beaver ever surfaced, so it will be forever unknown. Ktsi Amiskw apparently extends south from the foot of Mount Sugarloaf to the Holyoke Range, which is split by the Connecticut River (Kwiniteku) narrows exiting Northampton Meadows.

Now, as we enter the fourth decade of the new Great Beaver Tale paradigm, additional disciples have appeared from the Nipmuc and Narragansett nations, and local newspapers are singing praise of the refreshing new narrative employing Western Abenaki place names. The reporters say it's long overdue, about time, for local schoolchildren to learn of their valley's ancient, indigenous past. How better than by introduction to the indigenous tales of the land? Think of it: How better to arrive at an accurate sense of place than through a Native lens? Simply put, there is no better way.

Even so, it remains true that the new paradigm should never be accepted as the one told 2,000 years BC. At this point, we can only try to accurately re-create an extinct oral tale and the lessons its landscape carcass display. Sadly, Pocumtuck DNA is scattered far, wide and thin, their language is extinct, and the creation tale of their homeland has faded to a ghost of what it was. We can now only rely on scholarly interpretation and literary intervention, which is fun and captivating indeed, but not

On Gary's Bookshelf...

(We asked the author to share with our readers some of the sources of his own learning on these topics. – Eds.)

A great place to start exploring the Northeastern Native American cosmos and spiritual realm is William S. Simmons' classic Spirit of New England

Indians in Overalls, and The Lariat.

Listed below, in no particular order, are eight additional sources helpful in synthesizing coast-to-coast

Tribes: Indian History and Folklore 1620-1984, published in 1986 but still in print and relevant.

Also, you can never go wrong with Brian Swann's excellent Native American-literature trilogy: Coming to Light, Voices from Four Directions, and Algonquian Spirit, any Gary Snyder essays about hunter/gatherer universe in Practice of the Wild and The Old Ways, or anything written about Native Americans by quirky, obscure Jaime de Angulo, whose best-known work is probably Indian Tales.

De Angulo's Old Time Stories: How the World Was Made and Shabegok – little, hard-to-find hardcovers published by Bob Callahan and Turtle Island – were written for his children and are excellent. The same can be said for de Angulo's other Turtle Island books Coyote Man and Old Doctor Loon, Coyote's Bones,

Native American beliefs, culture and storytelling technique, all of which vary slightly from region to region but are honed from the same hunter/gatherer core:

- 1) Elisabeth Tooker, Native North American Spirituality of the Eastern Woodlands (1979)
- 2) Joseph Nicolar, The Life and Traditions of the Red Man (1893)
- 3) Frank Speck, Penobscot Man (1940)
- 4) Arthur C. Parker, Seneca Myths and Folktales (1923)
- 5) John G. Neihardt, Black Elk Speaks (1932)
- 6) Joseph Epes Brown, The Sacred Pipe (1953)
- Peter Nabokov, Where the Lightning Strikes (2006) 7)
- 8) Catherine McClellan, Part of the Land, Part of the Water (1987)

Eleven years later, in her 2016 PVMA online essay "The Geology and Cultural History of the Beaver Hill Story," she still used the docu-

the real deal. Sad but true, there is no other way to spin that stark reality.



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SEPTEMBER 3, 2020

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NatureCulture: The Science Page

Contributions to NatureCulture are welcome. What are you interested in? Would you like to write about birds, weather, science of any kind? We need your input. Send articles for consideration to: science@montaguereporter.org. Thank you! - Lisa McLoughlin, editor

The Science Page is Powered by the Solar Store of Greenfield.

Don't Feed the Bears!



A mother black bear and three cubs in a yard.

By LISA MCLOUGHLIN

B6

NORTHFIELD – Encounters with humans rarely end well for bears. Even if they are not killed as nuisances or run over crossing roads to our houses, such encounters change their behavior in ways that endanger them, by making them unafraid of humans and thus targets for euthanasia. Vermont's department of fish and wildlife quips that "a fed bear is a dead bear."

A study published in Scientific Reports (February 2019) and reported on by Susan Milius in Science News (March 2019) shows we harm bears further when we let them get into our garbage. Bears get most of their human food from scavenging, and this food has very high levels of sugar relative to their natural diet. If they eat scavenged human food, the amount of sugar they get reduces the time they spend hibernating, which in turn causes them to age faster. It is better for bears – and safer for us – if they live in the woods and eat their natural diet, and are not drawn to our houses to eat trash.

Safer at a Distance

Black bears are omnivorous: they eat plants, fruit, nuts, honey, fish, small mammals, carrion, and sometimes deer or moose calf.

A bear's sense of smell is seven times more acute than a bloodhound's. The best and most cost-efthe bear has an escape route and that you're not cornering it. Then, make yourself look big by linking arms with whomever is with you, or opening your arms and coat. Face the bear, and don't run in any direction. If it approaches you, stand your ground and continue to make noise. If it stays still, just back away slowly while making noise.

If attacked, don't play dead fight back.

Contrary to some common myths, bears can run downhill, and have great eyesight and hearing. If they're standing up, they aren't about to charge; they're looking around. Hunting bears doesn't solve the problems of human-versus-bear interaction, as studies show that bears killed by hunters are usually the ones in the woods.

Unfortunately, bears are good at tree climbing. Always check the yard before letting your dog out, and cooperate with neighbors by removing bear attractants throughout the larger community. When camping, keep food in bear-resistant containers, and don't sleep in the clothes you cooked in.

Bears' main habitat, forest, is declining. Bears don't naturally like people or each other, living mostly alone, except for mothers and cubs. By keeping our yards free of things that attract bears, we can live peacefully together.

Old School Science

By LISA MCLOUGHLIN

NORTHFIELD - Readers of the NatureCulture page know that Julia Blyth and Charley Eiseman, scientists living in Northfield, are doing groundbreaking research discovering new insects and leaf miner life histories, here and across the continent. Their work is largely unpaid, with only a few seasonal grants funding their extensive travels and field research.

So what keeps these scientists going? I had a chance to talk with the two of them. The answer seems to be curiosity.

Charley says he wants to know what everything is. "When I come up with something no one knows," he says, "I want to see it through to the conclusion and the next time someone will know what it is and move forward."

For example, the new species of Marmara they discovered over a five-year investigation period (see our February 2020 page) started with Charley's survey of leaf miners and gall makers on Nantucket. He was not able to identify everything he found, and felt a need to fill in the knowledge gaps. This same desire led him to write his complete guide to leaf miners of

North America, and keeps him going because as he continues to revise this definitive work, he realizes how incomplete our knowledge of these insects is.

Julia says that she is not nearly as driven to study one thing to the very end. "It's all interesting to me, all exciting to be part of," she says. She says she always knows she could be wrong, and that this is part of what engages her in the pursuit of knowledge. A love of adventure and learning underlies her scrupulously-detailed field work.

tioning and exploring new ground, and easily finding vast numbers of a specific thing once she has developed a search image. Charley, meanwhile, pursues the fine details, deeply describing each new discovery including the tiniest details of its yet-unknown life cycle.

An example of their complementary work is the story of discovering a leaf miner feeding on a pipsissewa plant in Wyoming in 2012. No leaf miners were known to eat pipsissewa or related plants, but Julia looked anyway, and noticed the mines. Charley knew right away that they were undocumented, and he explains what happened next: "So we collected them to try to rear them to adults. Some were still alive the following spring, but the rearing ultimately failed. As a last ditch effort, I sent them to a collaborator in



Julia Blyth (right) and Charley Eiseman (left), in their yard.

the Netherlands, and as a favor he analyzed the DNA of a dead larva and found that the pipsissewa miner is closely related to (if not the same species as) a moth that mines manzanita leaves on the West Coast."

This shows the personal-professional links with other individuals in the scientific community that are required to sustain their work. searchers, might have given up on the tiny moths given the difficulty of handling them and his lack of success at first try. For his part, Charley spends hours observing, photographing, and writing about the moths and their lives in the wild in exact technical detail.

In the age of "big science," where corporations and governments fund university and private labs looking to commodify Nature, it strikes me that what Julia and Charley are doing has a longer history. Networks of like-minded scientists have always been necessary, surviving even during wartime as scientists travelled to foreign countries, at great personal risk but with governmental impunity.

Further, the methodology – specimen collection on long, privately-funded voyages; laboratories

> set up in a private married teams of researchers working together for sheer joy and curiosity without pay - is still an underground process, reserved for people with some degree of financial freedom.

> It's something we don't often have the privilege to see, although it would be familiar to those of us who study the history of science and scientists: Joseph Banks, Cav-

endish, Pierre and Marie Curie, and Marie-Anne Pierrette, whose dowry paid to set up her and Antoine Lavoisier's lab.

I feel lucky to meet people who are moved to do important work describing and cataloging the world around us. I feel disappointed that our government-industrial complex is not putting time and effort

home;

fective way to avoid having bears in your yard is to not allow your property to become a source of food. Helpful hints: Clean your grill thoroughly after every use. Do not put out bird feeders when bears are awake (all but the dead of winter). Buy or make an "animal proof" trash can and composter, or put the cans and compost in enclosures. Do not leave pet food outside.

In late summer and fall, bears need to gain three to four pounds a day to hibernate. This is about 20,000 calories a day, approximately the same amount as seven pounds of birdseed. Avoid becoming a bear fast food restaurant. Fruit trees and bushes are not good choices for your yard if you live near bears, but if you need to have them, electric fences can help keep bears away from just about anything.

Encountering Bears

Black bears, the bears we have around here, rarely attack people. Here are some tips gleaned from the sources listed at the end of the article:

If you see a black bear, make sure

Resources

For more information, visit www. bearsmart.com and www.bearwise. org. These websites include lists of foods and plants bears like to eat to help you landscape, plus solutions for a bear that visits. The Vermont and Massachusetts Division of Fish and Wildlife websites are good, too.

For books, check out Living with Bears by Linda Masterson, as well as Talking with Bears: Conversations with Charlie Russell, by Gay Bradshaw.

Dr. Bradshaw will be speaking about her book, and her other animal research, at the Authors and Artists festival on February 27, 2021. I'm almost halfway through this delightful series of essays based on Russell's decades of living with bears in the wild. So far my main takeaways are that bears are very smart, can be traumatized by experiencing violence, and demand behavior they perceive as respectful.

As long as we do not try to push them around, and do our part not to create easy access to food near us, human interactions with healthy bears will not be violent.

Together, the two researchers complement one another's talents. Julia's lack of encyclopedic knowledge serves her well in the field. She sees clearly what is there, whether it should be there or not, always ques-

The specimens must be sent to experts in identification, the one or two people in the world with the knowledge, skills, and inclination to dissect and describe the genitalia of the insects, which is how they are categorized.

Julia's skill in pinning and mounting the tiny moths contributes greatly, since Charley admits that he, like many other insect reinto this knowing. For instance, the EPA is stripping protected species of their protection in order to commodify them and their habitats.

Julia Blyth and Charley Eiseman, 21st-century scientists living and working in a model that was more popular over 100 years ago, show us that science can still be something else - personal, useful, and just as much fun as ever.



Thursday, September 17

Wednesday, September 23

Venus and Crescent Moon

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ARTBEAT from page B1

B8

into, yes, vulnerability. It's hard to lay out here just how she got to the line about the cicadas driving you mad (you'll have to read the poem yourself), but from there she writes: ... They sing / from their stomachs, timbals buckling inward — / the way I lean hungrily into this land

I found myself leaning with her.

"It's so funny, these poems," Doster said over the phone. "It's interesting to revisit them now. I kind of jokingly call this book my scrapbook. I put all these 'pictures' in it."

One of these "pictures" shows up in the poem, "Everything is threshold." It's the image - like a stop-action snapshot - of a girl suspended midair out over water, having just let go of a rope swing. Doster achieves a thrilling airlessness at the poem's end, as she leaves the reader, too, hovering in possibility.

ory that sparked this poem," Doster said. "The back generations. She was born in Ohio. The

rope swing is the one from the old covered bridge near the Green River on the Greenfield-Leyden line. It was literally my first date with my now husband."

She laughs to think of the risk she took, going on a date with a man who, at the time, was a "near-stranger."

now that you're here everything is threshold, Doster writes. And the line swings open even farther now that she's filled me in on the back story, but the atmo-

along. Doster captures that heady sense of being looked at – and knowing you're being looked at – that pulses through the first encounters of potential lovers.

school at the University of New Hampshire, a time she remembers with fondness, partly for the structure it gave her to write in. It wasn't easy, she recalled. She commuted from Greenfield to New Hampshire where she slept on a futon in a cabin with some friends a couple nights a week.

"But it was a lovely couple of years," Doster said. "From 2009 to 2011, somewhere in there."

She got a stipend for teaching while in the program, "So, I got to write poems and pay my mortgage."

A Southern Touchstone

Everything Begins Somewhere

Amanda Lou Dost

Many poems in the book arise from Doster's Southern background.

"I'm technically a full-blooded Southerner," she said.

Her dad was from Georgia, her mom "I remember so vividly the piece of a mem- from Arkansas, each of their families going

family travelled while her father, an opera singer, was, as Doster put it, "chasing work." She listed the places: New Jersey, plus three different towns overseas, including one in Northern Ireland.

"We just didn't ever stay in one place for very long," she said.

In 1992, just a few years after the dismantling of the Berlin Wall, when Doster was 12, her father landed a job in Germany.

"He was the house tenor sphere of sensual possibility was there all in this tiny little East German village," Doster said. "I graduated from high school in Berlin. It was a strange time to be a teenager, and a strange place to be an American teenager."

Because of the dislocation of her immedi-Doster wrote the poem while in grad ate family's life, going home to her grandpar-

from the rope from the sun the way you will look at me I have been splitting wood all summer waiting for the cold to return my arms pretty strong for a girl swinging out above the river Enough introductions now that you're here everything is threshold and I will let the rope go and soon I will be in the water but for one moment I will hover as if I am thinking about it as if this were a decision I could unmake before I fall Amanda Lou Doster ents on both sides became a touchstone.

Everything is threshold

I don't want to meet you

to tell you again my life story

It is July or August again and so hot

wear cutoffs so my thighs won't burn

The rope swing hangs from the bridge and I

that not even the river can remember how to cut cleanly across the field

"It's where I ground myself," Doster said, adding, "It's painful to have this book come out at a time when I can't go down there."

Her Arkansas grandfather is about to turn 94 next week. And because of the pandemic, this is the first summer in a hundred years that her mother's side of the family won't be holding a reunion. The reunion's gotten smaller over the years, Doster said. She guessed maybe only 40 people attend now.

"They bring the old family photos and the family stories, and it's a big potluck," Doster said, the longing evident in her voice. "They still make the cobblers and the casseroles."

Doster's not currently working on another manuscript of poems, having put all of her creative energies into getting this one to press. She also works almost full-time at the

Franklin Regional Council of Governments, and is about to start schooling her son in a "pod" with other parents.

"But I recently started carrying my notebook around again," she said in a hopeful tone. "Having this book be truly complete is creating some space."

Also, with her son turning seven, "There's some spaciousness that's shifting, even in this time when I don't feel very spacious."

She paused. "I think I have space now," she concluded.

Hallelujah.

Buy Doster's book from Federal Street Books in Greenfield; call (413) 772-6564, or visit federalstreetbooks.com for details about shop-by-appointment or curbside pickup. Or order directly from slateroofpress.com.

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