

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 18 – NO. 43

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

\$1

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

OCTOBER 1, 2020

Wendell Meets With Leverett Police Force; Chief Retires

By JOSH HEINEMANN

As Wendell’s special town meeting was drawing to its conclusion on Saturday, four Leverett police officers gathered behind the Wendell selectboard in anticipation of the next event. Wendell’s present police chief, Ed Chase, has been ready to retire for several years, and a succession committee has concluded that joining with Leverett is the best option for Wendell’s policing needs. The date of transition has been set for October 15.

Chase sat at the front, facing the meeting. According to selectboard chair Dan Keller, Chase had originally intended to retire in 2021, then asked for retirement “the sooner the better.” He has participated in the succession committee meetings.

Saturday’s event was scheduled as a chance for Wendell citizens to meet members of the Leverett police force. Joining Chase were Leverett officers Mike Gralenski, Jeff

see **WENDELL** page A4

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Town Kicks In \$175,000 For School Ventilation

By JEFF SINGLETON

At its September 28 meeting the Montague selectboard approved the transfer of up to \$175,000 in federal COVID-19 aid to the Gill-Montague regional school district, and approved a warrant for the town’s October 13 special town meeting. The board also heard a report from Department of Public Works (DPW) superintendent Tom Bergeron that a collapsed embankment along Millers Falls Road had been stabilized by roughly 9,000 tons of “stone and dirt.”

The aid given to the school district will come from over \$733,000 granted to the town under the federal CARES Act, according to town administrator Steve Ellis. Montague has provisionally allocated some of these funds – Ellis estimated between \$250,000 and \$300,000 – to a variety of town projects to address the impact of the pandemic, but he said that state officials had told him CARES money could also be transferred to regional school districts “if a municipality finds it is in the public interest.”

Joanne Blier, the school district’s business director, presented the GMRSD’s requests to the selectboard. They focused on improving air flow in classrooms and other rooms in Montague. Blier said that the high school, “surprisingly our newest building,” has the biggest need. For example, two of the rooftop units that serve the gym are “not running,” and the third “is not bringing in fresh air.”

Two heat recovery ventilators need significant repairs, at an estimated cost of \$23,500 each. New air purifiers, which Blier portrayed

see **MONTAGUE** page A7

GILL-MONTAGUE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

School Committee Approves Limited Reopening Plan

By MIKE JACKSON

GILL-MONTAGUE – The regional school committee voted 7 to 1 Tuesday night to allow superintendent Brian Beck to move forward on a plan to open school buildings to priority students, as well as all staff, on October 20.

Beck said that upgrades to the schools’ ventilation and filtration systems were on track for completion, and that air purifiers and scrubbers were being installed in classrooms. The committee tentatively approved his recommendation to ask teachers to return in the first week along with the highest-priority special education students, to bring in a second phase of priority students on October 26, and then as a third step welcome all students back two days a week for a “hybrid” learning model.

Under the hybrid plan, families would be able to keep their children at home for remote learning if they prefer. Gill-Montague Education Association president Karl Dziura declined on Wednesday to comment on the decision. The union, which is involved in negotiations over the learning model, has urged the school committee not to require staff to reenter the buildings.

Beck praised the towns of Montague and Gill, and the HVAC contractor Jamrog, for their support for the upgrades. He said he would share “before” and “after” assessments of the buildings’ airflow with district families before asking them to decide whether to allow their children to return to in-person learning.

Montague member Jennifer see **GMRSD** page A8

GOING REMOTE

Weighing The Options

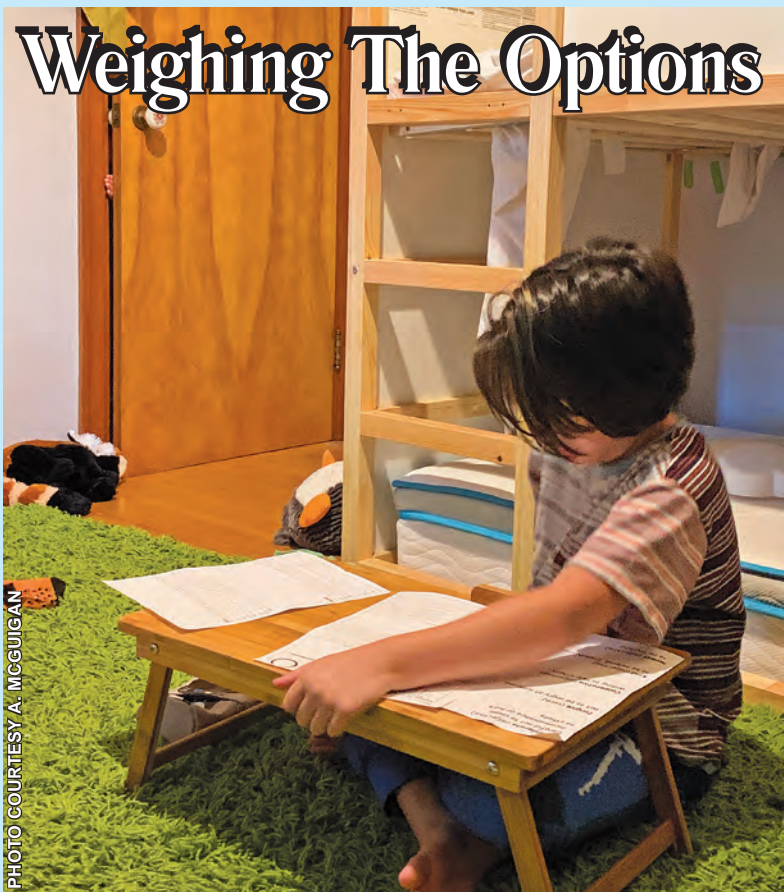


PHOTO COURTESY A. MCGUIGAN

Sheffield remote second-grader L. fills out a worksheet at his home classroom.

By MIKE JACKSON

TURNERS FALLS – “Everyone’s struggling with it in a different way,” Alex McGuigan says, and it’s true: though so many lives have been upended, each of us is navigating a unique set of conditions.

In March, Alex was forced to close the doors of the vintage clothing shop she had relocated to Avenue A only a month earlier. Now she is an at-home mom, struggling to keep three-year-old O. occupied and seven-year-old L. focused on remote learning.

If Gill-Montague schools reopen in a “hybrid” mode, it could free up two days a week for her to work on reopening the shop – but she is still learning about the district’s plans, and weighing the risks inherent in sending L. back into a classroom.

I dropped by the McGuigan residence yesterday for a lunchtime chat. The scene was a little chaotic, just on the edge of fun. Every Wednesday is a half day for L., so he was able to join us for part of the interview. (The transcript has been abridged, and edited for clarity.)

MR: Last night they said that the HVAC repairs are going pretty well, and the superintendent made a proposal that on October 20 priority populations start coming in, and all the teachers. They could bring everybody back, in hybrid form, as early as the first week of November. Have you been polled about whether you’d send L. back in?

AM: Before the school year started, I voted for full remote, because I couldn’t really grasp the concept of sending him to school – I didn’t feel comfortable then, at all. Now, I just don’t know what to think. It’s really hard to have an opinion on something that you can’t comprehend.

I don’t know what November’s going to be like; I don’t know what December’s going to be like. We’re doing well right now, but I’m about to open up my shop again, because I have to – I need an income. J. just started a new job, and he got promoted, which is great, but it also means that I have that much less help.

see **WEIGHING** page A7

State Approved Borrowing For Farren Repairs in 2018



NINA ROSSI PHOTO

The Sisters of Providence worked for years to convince local legislators that a state investment in the building’s physical plant would be necessary.

By JEFF SINGLETON

MONTAGUE CITY – The Montague Reporter has learned that a \$30 million potential appropriation to renovate or rebuild the Farren Care Center, scheduled to close at the end of this year, was inserted in a 2018 state bond bill. The earmark passed both houses of the legislature and was signed by the governor, but has not been supported by officials in the Baker Administration, for reasons that are not publicly clear.

This news comes in the context of a second hearing on the proposed closure held on Wednesday. Virtually

all of the criticism at the hearings has focused on the fate of the Farren’s vulnerable residents, but little attention has been paid to the history of the facility itself, its ownership structure, or efforts to address its structural problems, particularly by the legislators who represent Montague.

In researching the Montague City Road property, the Reporter encountered a maze of often confusing transactions. Originally dedicated in 1902, the hospital’s administration was given over to the Sisters of Providence, a Catholic religious community based in

see **FARREN** page A6

Businesses Make Investments To Adapt to a Long Pandemic

By SARAH ROBERTSON

GILL – When F.M. Kuzmeskus, Inc., the busing company that serves several Franklin County school districts, realized how much the pandemic would impact their business, they knew something would have to change. With more than 100 school buses in their fleet, the company needed to find a way to quickly and reliably disinfect the vehicles multiple times per day, possibly for years to come.

Commercial spraying disinfectants were in high demand last spring, and many distributors were on backorder for months, so Kuzmeskus executive vice president Pamela

Reipold decided to reach out to the Greenfield-based spray nozzle manufacturer Bete Fog Nozzle for help.

After months of consulting, researching, and prototyping between the two companies, the Bete FastPASS (Public Area Spray System) was born.

“It’s the first system of its kind in the country,” said Reipold. “It’s big stuff!”

The technology involves a system of pressurized tubes permanently installed into the roof of each bus, with nozzles that spray a mist of disinfecting liquid over the seats and aisles. Hoses from a motorized cart connect to the back of the bus

see **ADAPT** page A6



ROBERTSON PHOTO

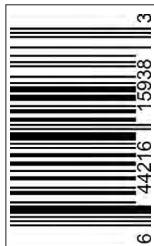
Travel Kuz service technician Jonathan Harris demonstrates how the FastPASS system works in one of the company’s buses.

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About Face Computing

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August 2002

Careful, Careful

For going on three months now, Franklin County continues to be mercifully spared of community transmission of COVID-19. If Gill-Montague schools are to invite in students (and order in staff), the data on the virus will come under increased local scrutiny. Mask use, widely adopted by May, has again grown very lax locally, and we hope that the community is ready to get serious about protecting itself if evidence shows the virus has returned.

And it may very well return. Across the state, in Boston, the official two-week case count has climbed from 282 to 440 to 627 to 716 to 750 to 825, the most recent data prompting the state of Massachusetts to color in the capital danger red on the weekly sick map.

Worcester, Springfield, Lowell, New Bedford, Lynn, Lawrence, Framingham, Haverhill are also in the red, meaning that 9 out of the 15 largest municipalities in the Commonwealth are in outbreak mode.

And it is true that reopening indoor workplaces will function to pump the bug around from town to town, since many education workers commute. Will paraprofessionals, teachers, subs, and others isolate themselves from their families, as some doctors and nurses did during the spring wave?

There is good news, though: to balance out this alarm, we turn to a September 23 *Washington Post* article outlining efforts to analyze nationwide data from August and early September.

"Thousands of students and teachers have become sick with the coronavirus since schools began opening last month," the article explained, "but public health

experts have found little evidence that the virus is spreading inside buildings, and the rates of infection are far below what is found in the surrounding communities."

That data set is limited, but we will know more as the experiments with in-person learning multiply a hundredfold around the country.

The *Post* article also clued us in to the "National COVID-19 School Response Dashboard," an online tool maintained by Brown University economist Emily Oster and colleagues. It's a handy-looking tool that, once a rich data set has been built, could be useful for comparing the impact of different mitigation strategies (at-home screenings; outdoor classes; fixed cohorts; temperature checks, etc.)

Public education in a time of pandemic has already provided quite a lesson in ethics and public policy. At the population scale, we are forced to set broad but intangible benefits like socialization, emotional support, and learning itself against narrow but potentially quite tangible risks of physical harm.

Our government never even considered paying parents for the work of supervising learners in the home, or enough childcare workers to supervise them in pods, so it makes some sense that families' protests, combined with state concerns over neglected children falling through the cracks, are shifting the hot potato on to public school staff.

We hope and trust that the care taken thus far in the process will continue in Gill-Montague. It is alarming to see that in Boston, in the same week as the rate of transmission entered the red, public schools are continuing to press forward with the launch of hybrid learning.

National News

He was a Patriot and the people left behind there were heroes. Really? And I resent – Are you talking Hunter, are you talking about Hunter? I'm talking about my son, Beau Biden, you're talking about Hunter? I don't know Beau. I know Hunter. Hunter got thrown out of the military. He was thrown out dishonorably discharged. That's not true he was not dishonorably discharged. For cocaine use. And he didn't have a job until you became vice president. None of that is true. Once you became vice president he made a fortune

in Ukraine, in China, in Moscow and various other places. That is not true. He made a fortune and he didn't have a job. My son like a lot of people at home had a drug problem. He's overtaking it. He's fixed it. He's worked on it. And I'm proud of him, I'm proud of my son. But why was he given tens of millions of dollars? He wasn't given tens of millions of dollars. [crosstalk] It was all discredited. We've already been through this. I think the American people would rather hear about more substantial subjects. Well, as the moderator,

NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION



Every day since the start of the COVID shutdown, a small group of people have gathered on the common in Montague Center to sing songs together. On Monday, Laurie, Nell, and Will decided that it was too hard to sing "Swinging Along" sedentarily, so they got up to pump their arms and legs while walking in a circle. They have a website, towncommonsongs.org, where you can find information about singing in the time of COVID and about starting a small group of your own.

Letters to the Editors

More Downsides of Wood Burning

In the *Montague Reporter* last week, a letter was printed to rebut a letter I had written the previous week. I would like to respond to the critic's points:

There was an objection to my statement that wood biomass is as bad as or worse than fossil fuels. I share the distress behind the writer's objection to the points I made, as I too own a wood pellet stove. I purchased it and relied heavily on it for many years, believing I was cutting carbon emissions. However, that was before I learned of the more recent findings that wood burning and pellet burning is detrimental to our climate, environment, and health.

I do not expect people who own and rely on wood/pellet stoves to stop using them immediately, unless they have the financial resources to replace them with air source heat pumps powered by PV panels or by purchasing a geothermal system. I do believe, however, that we are obliged to become aware of the hazards of wood biomass and waste biomass in order to make sure that our government does not incentivize their use as a renewable energy source.

When the Massachusetts House and Senate include biomass as a subsidized renewable energy source and offer tax breaks and funding, large corporate biomass plants suddenly become financially feasible.

They are often sited in our cities and disproportionately impact the health and well being of our most vulnerable citizens who live closest to those facilities. While the

pollutants spread for many miles and adversely affect us all, proximity to such facilities is directly related to adverse health impacts. It is no coincidence that Springfield has one of the highest rates of childhood asthma. Planning for a large biomass facility will definitely increase the health problems that currently exist. This is clearly environmental injustice.

Exacerbating the situation is the hundreds of acres of commercial logging occurring in our forests, which greatly reduces their potential for resilience and carbon sequestration. Thousands of acres of our state forests have been and continue to be aggressively commercially logged by the very agencies we give the job of protecting them.

As difficult as it is, we must face the facts and do everything we can for the sake of our children, grandchildren, and future generations. With this new data, I find it difficult to understand why the IPCC would

include biomass as a renewable energy source, as stated by the writer.

The IPCC's latest report is from several years ago, and at least one member of the group, Dr. Bill Moomaw, has come out against biomass. We must become aware that there are economically driven politics behind that irresponsible recommendation, as there are those who would love to spend millions of our tax money inventing unknown carbon capture technologies (which may further disturb the natural systems). It makes much more sense to save our natural forests to capture the same carbon for free.

This is a climate emergency. We desperately need world leaders to promote progressive policies which will reduce global warming and put the well being of life on Earth ahead of money making.

Miriam Kurland
Williamsburg

Still, Montague Community Wood Bank Needs Volunteers

The Montague Community Wood Bank is looking for volunteers to help split and stack 10 cords of wood to meet our needs for the 2020-2021 heating season.

With the ongoing pandemic, volunteer work at the wood bank was shut down this past spring and summer, leaving the wood bank with a serious shortfall.

New safety protocols approved

by the Montague Board of Health are in place and we are now ready to accept volunteers again.

Last year the wood bank supported 21 households, and we are looking forward to sharing the warmth yet again.

People interested in volunteering should RSVP by email to Mahoneyspa@gmail.com or by calling (413) 800-3525.

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LARKIN-ROSSI ILLUSTRATION

By NINA ROSSI

Flu shots are a “must” this year, and the Franklin Regional Council of Government’s Cooperative Public Health Service is offering free or reduced-cost influenza vaccine clinics to all Franklin County residents this fall, including in Erving, Northfield, and Gill. Please see the local clinic schedule on page A8.

If you have insurance, the vaccine is free; without it, the cost is \$20 for adults and \$10 for children. Bring your insurance cards, and fill out the forms at www.frcog.org/flu-clinic before you come. Masks are required at all flu clinics.

FRCOG has sent a reminder about why it is important: “When most of us are vaccinated, we build community immunity that protects the elderly, children, and those with compromised immune systems from the terrible effects of influenza. During this coronavirus pandemic, flu vaccination is even more vital for staying healthy and for conserving health care services needed for COVID-19 patient care.”

The effort was put together by volunteer town emergency planning teams and nurses, and the FRCOG’s health service nurses and emergency planning staff. These teams will be setting up the clinics, which will serve as practice for future COVID-19 vaccination clinics, and other mass preparedness work. For the county-wide schedule, visit www.frcog.org/flu-clinic.

The Turners Falls Water Department will begin **reading water meters** on Monday, October 5. They advise that any water usage after this date will affect next year’s sewer bill.

Looking for work? MassHire maintains a “Hot Jobs List,” curated by Career Center staff and updated daily at 8:30 a.m. Go to www.masshirefhcareers.org to access the list with live links to JobQuest entries with more information.

Authors and Artists will host a free **Honoring Nature reading group** online this Sunday, October 4 from 11 a.m. to noon. This month’s reading is *World Enough and Time* by local author Christian McEwen. This book focuses on slowing down and taking time to pay attention.

McEwen, originally from Scotland and now living locally, is speaking at the Authors and Artists Festival this winter, and is also offering a workshop on Saturday, October 24 from 1 to 3 p.m. “One of life’s great joys is finding time to listen, whether to the scattered wonders of conversation or to the many voices of the non-human world: birdsong, wild wind, river’s sweep. In this bright fall workshop we will identify sources for the listener’s delight, and share ways to grow them into poems, songs and stories,” reads the description.

Sign up now at www.authorsand-artistsfestival.wordpress.com.

The LAVA Center is offering an **online drop-in writing lab** this Monday night, October 5, as part of their “Lit Up the Night” series, which occurs on the first Monday of the month. Register at info@localaccess.org.

On third Mondays, you can join their Online Book Club, though the October club is already full. Get on a waiting list to chew over Ocean Vuong’s *On Earth We’re Briefly Gorgeous* by emailing jan@localaccess.org.

The Communicators Club sent us information about an online event aimed at exploring the **persuasive power of graphic design**. Led by professional graphic designer, illustrator, and caricaturist Andre K. Mills, the Zoom presentation is set for noon to 1:15 p.m. on Tuesday, October 6.

The \$10 fee includes networking opportunities and the chance for those attending to promote their business before the main discussion begins. A question-and-answer session will follow. To register, go to <https://conta.cc/32F2dsr>. For more information about the Communicators Club, visit communicatorsclub.org.

Congratulations are due to **two local authors** picked by the Massachusetts Center for the Book for honors in fiction and children’s picture books in the 20th annual Massachusetts Book Awards.

Jennifer Acker of Montague received Honors in Fiction for *The Limits of the World* (Delphinium Books). “Acker’s debut novel is a story of the success and secrets of several generations of an Asian-Indian immigrant family,” reads the press release.

And **Micha Archer** of Leverett received Honors in the Picture Book/Early Reader category for *Daniel’s Good Day* (Nancy Paulsen). Archer’s book is described by the Center as being “enhanced by her colorful collages depicting a young boy’s walk through his friendly neighborhood, appreciating the simple things that make his day a good one.”

Salmon Falls Gallery in Shelburne Falls announces **two new shows of paintings** on view from October 2 through November 15. Laura Radwell and Susan Valentine are exhibiting oils on canvas.

Radwell calls her exhibit *Embodied Landscape*, describing her series as “a melding of gesture and body contained in landscape and landscape contained in the body.” Valentine presents *Flowers, Large & Small*, in which she describes the beauty of our earth on canvases as small as 9 by 12 inches and as

large as 5 by 9 feet.

Contact the gallery for viewing details: (413) 625-9833 or salmon-fallsgallery.com.

The Springfield Museums invite **submissions of original portraits** by artists of all ages residing in the Connecticut River Valley and Hartford County, CT. They are especially interested in works that complement the themes explored in their current exhibition, *The Outwin 2019: American Portraiture Today*, such as identity, human connection, and responses to the current political and social environment.

Submit by October 3 for the first round of selections, or by January 3 to be entered in a second round. Get full details online at www.springfieldmuseums.org/portraits.

Artists are also invited to submit to the **Hosmer Gallery** at Forbes Library in Northampton for their online exhibit. Anyone living and making art in the Valley, of any age, may submit up to three digital images for inclusion. The exhibit will continue to grow and remain online for one month after the library resumes full services, whenever that might be. Submit at forbeslibrary.org/gallery/virtual-gallery/.

Wouldn’t you like to laugh away some anxiety? This Saturday, October 3 from 5 to 7 p.m., the Stone Church and Epsilon Spires in Brattleboro present **Comic Covid Catharsis**.

Hosted by William Forchion and featuring standup comedy by Kim DeShields, Adrienne Vivenzio, and Timothy Lovett from Comedy as a Weapon, this show is outdoors, in early October temperatures. Bring blankets and chairs to occupy your COVID circle in the parking lot of Epsilon Spires. There will be opening sets from Joshua Cunningham, Joel Kaemmerlen, Tom Roché, and Lauren Cahillane. Masks required, full bar and cuisine available. Details and tickets available at epsilonspires.org.

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Another Letter to the Editors

Ground Policy Inquiry In Specific Examples

I am probably jumping the gun a bit on the Montague police review process, but my main comment from watching the initial meeting on September 22 is that these committees will struggle if they do not put some focus on the “picky details” that have in fact driven the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests. Of course, these are not really picky details, because they involve people’s lives, and the stability of local communities.

I believe at least one of the committees should look at the various incidents that have driven the protests – George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Jacob Blake, Rayshard Brooks, and the more recent shooting of Dearian Bell in Atlanta – and cull out a list of policy questions for the Montague police department.

For example, on the Breonna Taylor case: do the Montague police or the regional anti-crime task force implement no-knock warrants, or knock on doors in the middle of the night? Are there protocols for making sure their warning is heard? How are they trained to respond if they are shot at?

The George Floyd case in Minneapolis might seem less controversial, but it still raises important issues about the ability of police departments to enforce their protocols – and recognize potential rogue officers in advance – and

the responsibility of other officers at the scene, including an officer new on the job witnessing a potentially illegal use of force by a superior.

We should also look at the local complaints raised at this summer’s BLM rally in Turners Falls.

I think looking at these specifics, as at least one focus, has a number of virtues. While I would hope these committees have diverse views on many of the more ideological positions taken at BLM rallies, I suspect there is more of a consensus that the movement has raised a host of legitimate issues about specific police practices. (I certainly feel that way, and I am critical of the currently dominant anti-racism ideology, as some people may know.) This approach could potentially be a source of unity and progress.

Another virtue of this approach is that it connects the work of the committees to the BLM movement itself, and to the specific issues that have driven it. Certainly the movement is also driven by ideological trends: ideas like “institutional racism,” “white supremacy,” “privilege,” and “defunding the police.” These may well be raised in the process, and I am all for debating and discussing them in the right venue.

But I feel the aggregation of the horror stories we have seen in the press and social media

are central to the movement, and deserve analysis with officials from the police department. I am more than willing to do some legwork on specific incidents which I already have a file on.

By the way, as a town meeting member, I do not feel these committees should get bogged down this fall with police funding issues. We already have a very labor-intensive, but generally effective process, to deal with the police budget that includes the finance committee and selectboard.

I feel those who want to reduce the police budget, and spend the money on other ways to address some of the issues police deal with – and in theory this is a reasonable point of view, no matter how skeptical some of us are – should utilize the existing process which is very important to this community. That is what happened this spring in Amherst, where the anti-racism groups came before the finance committee of the town council.

Starting the police committee work off with a time-sensitive debate over funding, as was suggested last night, also potentially starts the process on a contentious note, given the legacy of last spring’s town meeting.

Jeff Singleton
Turners Falls

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WENDELL from page A1

Belanger, Meghan Gallo, and Jim Bernier, as well as Leverett select-board chair Julie Shively. Leverett chief Scott Minckler was not able to attend due to a death in the family.

Keller began the meeting by thanking Chase for over forty years of service as chief, keeping the peace, giving the department a low profile, and steering situations away from violent confrontations. The first citizen speakers echoed that sentiment, and Chase was forced to accept a spontaneous standing ovation from the 30 or more Wendell residents present.

Shively spoke for Minckler, saying that the Leverett police department also emphasizes deescalating situations, and that violence is not a first option. The officers who spoke echoed that view. Shively said that Leverett has different areas, and that south Leverett is more like Amherst, and north Leverett more like Wendell.

The first comments by Wendell residents continued with the idea the police primarily “protect and serve,” rather than enforce. Chris Queen said he was concerned with

the militarization of police departments nationally. Karen Copeland discussed the goals of power versus safety. Gloria Kegeles encouraged Wendell citizen representation.

When Wendell resident Sam Hathaway asked Shively how complaints about the police were handled in Leverett, she hesitated, and then said, “In five years, we haven’t gotten any complaints.” She said Minckler is working on a grant to get body cameras for the department.

Citizen Dan Leahy said that when he commuted through Leverett, he felt so hassled that he changed his route. The Leverett officers seemed nonplussed, and an officer who had recently stopped him for speeding discussed the incident — which resulted in a warning — at length.

The transition will start with a 90-day period during which Leverett officers will come to Wendell only when responding to a call. If that goes well, it will be followed by a one-year “step by step experiment,” according to Keller. The 90-day period will begin on October 15.



ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

New Police Chief

On May 17 Ed Judice stepped down and Ed Chase, officer for one year, was unanimously appointed to the position of Police Chief. Chase has lived in Wendell since 1961, and says “Ed Judice is the best chief we’ve had.”

Ed is a 29 year old Mahar graduate who lives on New Salem Road and works as a foreman for a home building company.

Chase has a great admiration for the way Judice ran the force and “would give him back the job in a year if he wanted it.”

There were two applicants for the police post, Joe Hartjens and Ed Chase. Chase had the recommendation of the outgoing chief, and after a brief interview was selected.

The new chief said that speeding was his first priority upon assuming control. A new radar unit will be joining the force in the next few weeks and it will be instrumental in the strict enforcement of the speeding laws. In addition the new chief will have an evening pa-

trol focusing on the thickly settled areas in Wendell.

Ed said that “we don’t have a lot of crime” but that “breaks are easy in a place like this.” He advises that people observe each other’s houses for unknown cars. Property stolen recently from a trailer near the center of town was recovered by the police, but the thief skipped town and has not been caught.

Chief Chase said in regard to marijuana use in town that “I’m not out to get anybody” but will not tolerate the presence of those who “flaunt” their herb.

Ed participated in the recent twelve week training sessions run by the Orange Police Department. These courses dealt with investigation procedures, points of law and how to write proper citations.

Theles “Jay” Blackbird has been appointed to help fill out the seven person police force complement.

— From the *Wendell Post*,
Vol. 1, No. 3 (June 1977)

NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

Emergency Equipment; Policy on Letters of Support

By **JERRI HIGGINS**

A request for money to connect Gill’s police, fire, and other emergency services to the state Interoperable Radio System program (CoMIRS) topped Monday evening’s selectboard meeting agenda. Extending the town’s temporary third full-time police officer and disbursing funds from the fire department’s emergency management grant were also on the night’s agenda.

Deputy fire chief William Kimball presented the selectboard with the budget request for accessories related to CoMIRS not covered under a \$92,917.78 grant through the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG). Gill’s share will be \$8,525.37 for police equipment, \$26,627.09 for fire equipment, and \$2,000 for two antennas, for a total of \$37,152.46.

“We are future-proofing the technology, going this route,” said police chief Christopher Redmond, “instead of having to do it later at a non-subsidized cost.”

Kimball added that if the departments had to buy the equipment at a later date, “the same amount of equipment would cost us basically four times [that] amount.”

Kimball told the board that in a meeting earlier that day, FRCOG said it could only help with the cost of the radios, not the accessories, which he said are necessary for the system’s operation. Kimball also said he believes that the FRCOG will cover the equipment installation costs of \$100 for each vehicle, but stated that is currently uncertain.

Six of the new radios will be “tri-band mutual aid radios” allowing “the chief officers, and each vehicle that would go mutual aid... to keep in communications with our out-of-state, and out-of-jurisdiction, departments, as well as still being able to communicate with NMH security and coordinate alarm responses with them,” Kimball said.

The budget request was approved, with selectboard members holding

off on specifying a funding source.

“Right now there are two possible sources,” said town administrator Ray Purington. “Some could come from the Northfield Mount Hermon donation account, which is currently about \$15,000, and then either from the capital or general stabilization fund — or free cash — which is about \$100,000 for this year.”

Selectboard member John Ward said his preference would be the capital stabilization account, while member Greg Snedeker recommended spreading the cost out among the various possible accounts.

More Emergency Costs

The continuation of the third full-time police officer, using state COVID-19 funding, was approved for another six weeks, and will be evaluated after that.

The town’s contact at the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency said that money is still available “as long as it is unbudgeted, and for emergency response personnel,” Purington said. He added that he thought the funding should remain available through the end of the year.

Chief Redmond said that having the position has been helpful, and that there is still an “uptick” of work from COVID-19 related issues, which will likely increase heading into colder weather.

Fire chief Gene Beaubien was approved to use \$2,700 in EMPG funds, with \$700 going toward the town’s annual CodeRED service contract, and the rest for purchasing two “Infinite Command accountability boards,” which he said his department will use to track “where on the fire scene [emergency personnel] actually are.” The choice of two boards, rather than one large one, makes it easier for emergency responders to bring them out on calls.

“It is an easier way to track, and have a visual aid,” said Kimball, who said the boards include a universal dash mount, can be switched from vehicle to vehicle, and are easier to use in inclement weather.

Support for Legislation?

The selectboard, along with energy commission member Claire Chang, held a lengthy discussion on two letters seeking the selectboard’s support for pending legislation, as well as general policy on sending letters of support.

Chang presented the letters, which have unanimous support from the energy commission, for the selectboard’s consideration. The first, from the mayor and co-director of sustainability of the city of Newton, recommended adjustments to the state House and Senate climate bills currently in conference committee, and asked for Gill’s selectboard to send support.

The second, from Springfield city councilor Jesse Lederman, urged that biomass incineration not be classified by the state as “non-carbon emitting sources,” or defined as “renewable.”

Chang said that in her view, letters of support for pending legislation were no different than “animal control, or cows that are in the road, or a dog barking.”

Selectboard chair Randy Crochier said that he would not be comfortable signing such letters as a selectboard if there is no consensus from the whole board.

“If we can tailor a letter so that all three of us are comfortable with it,” added Snedeker, “that speaks better to the town, in terms of representing the entire town. If we cannot come to that conclusion, it is hard to say if I want to vote on a letter if two out of three of us are behind it, in terms of political support. I think it may be better to sign off on it as an individual.”

“I think we should do our due diligence and address, on an individual basis, the things that we are asked to address,” said Ward, “and we address them at an open meeting, in the public eye.”

Crochier said the letter from Newton will go on the next selectboard agenda, and the biomass letter on a future agenda.

Other Business

Asked why no date has yet been set for the annual town meeting, Crochier said that Purington “has his hand in many pots” at the moment, and is “working on the budget, which would be the basis for when we have it,” adding “hopefully in October.”

Gill has yet to approve an annual budget for the current fiscal year, and is operating on a month-to-month budget.

The monthly “one-twelfth” budget for October was approved, with Purington saying it was a little different from last month’s budget, “but still hitting the state’s minimum.”

Purington said that the October budget differences included the second-quarter assessments for the FRCOG (\$14,720), the Solid Waste Management District (\$1,388), and the Gill-Montague school district (\$156,841), plus another \$22,738 toward the school district’s third quarter, “getting the budget to the Department of Revenue’s required one-twelfth of last year’s budget, which is \$305,367.”

Snedeker told the selectboard about a new report called *Missing the Mark*, written by the MA Business Alliance for Education, in partnership with the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce. Snedeker said the report deals with Chapter 70 education aid inequities, and the distribution of benefits.

“It comes at an interesting time,” he said, “because the state is also opening up a commentary between now and October 16, I think, to chime in on education funding.”

Snedeker said he plans to write a letter “urging the state to take another look at the 59–41 split, and see if the state would entertain the idea of going to a 50–50 split, in addition to possibly slowly erasing the cap on the Chapter 70 local contribution.”

“That way, it would give towns relief to their local budgets in excess of about a billion dollars,” he explained.

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Voters Shrug Off Lawyers’ Advice

By JOSH HEINEMANN

WENDELL – Wendell’s Old Home Day was skipped this year due to COVID, and with it the summer time naming of the town’s Citizen of the Year. Instead, she was named as the September 26 special town meeting opened, outside on the town common. Selectboard chair Dan Keller called Wanita Sears up to the front and cited her years of volunteer work for the town, including her work on – and clerking for – too many boards to mention.

In the course of the two-hour meeting, Wendell citizens passed most of the articles unanimously, and went against the advice of town counsel by approving an article that provided for an appointed (as opposed to an elected) Municipal Light Plant (MLP) board.

The issue of whether the MLP board should be elected or appointed has been debated in town for years, but the decision had been deferred because, until Wendell’s fiber-optic network is established and running, the board has little to do; the selectboard has functioned as a placeholder. Now, the cables have been strung, Wendell households are being connected, and the MLP board will have responsibilities the selectboard does not need or want.

Article 14, placed by the selectboard, proposed a three-member MLP board appointed by the selectboard, and **Article 15**, placed

by citizens’ petition, proposed a five-member elected MLP board.

Just days before the special town meeting, town counsel advised that an appointed board is contrary to state law. When the meeting reached Article 14, Keller moved to pass over the article.

Citizen Michael Idoine objected to the “eleventh hour” information from town counsel. Interim MLP manager Ray DiDonato said that Leverett and Petersham have appointed MLP boards, created and maintained with no state interference.

Finance committee chair Doug Tanner said he favored an appointed board, and added that it is easy to change from an appointed board to an elected one, but hard to change in the other direction. Tanner said that an appointed board can be created quickly, and would stabilize the system’s operations and create necessary job descriptions. An elected board, he argued, could not be created until the town holds an election, and with the system beginning to function, the selectboard does not need the extra work.

“We have the right to decide,” said citizen and former moderator Kathy Becker. “We are not obligated to” follow the advice of counsel, she said, and if the attorney general disallows the vote, “it doesn’t cost us a penny.”

Robert Heller, who initiated the citizens’ petition for the elected board, did not speak to the subject at

the meeting, but in a paper published online and circulated at the meeting, he stated, “Since the board represents the owners of the network, who are the voters of the town, it makes very clear sense that the voters should be the ones who select the members.... This network is an important and critical piece of town infrastructure and needs to be run with the interests of the town as a whole, with input from the whole town.”

The motion to pass over Article 14 failed 31 to 23, and then Article 14 itself passed 40 to 14. That vote made Article 15 – to create an elected MLP board – irrelevant, and it was passed over.

In **Articles 1 through 5**, town citizens approved \$2,607.11 for bills of the prior year.

Article 6, which approved \$10,000 from stabilization for the town’s share of repairs to the dam that holds back McAvoy Pond, passed unanimously. **Article 7** approved \$10,000 to be raised and appropriated for unanticipated legal fees, and passed with a majority.

Articles 8 and 9 increased Wendell’s assessment for tuition at Mahar Regional High School, and for repayment of a reconstruction loan, by a total of \$14,104. Tanner said those articles were made necessary because two students from Wendell were assigned to New Salem when the annual town meetings’ assessments were calculated.

Article 10 exempted farm equip-

ment and animals from excise tax, and passed unanimously. **Article 11**, which would have reduced the excise tax exemption for personal property from \$10,000 to \$5,000, failed.

Article 12 allowed the selectboard to acquire easements that would allow construction of two new dry hydrants needed to replace the dry hydrant at Bowens Pond, where the dam is on the state’s short list for removal. One dry hydrant would serve the south end of town, and get water from McAvoy’s Pond; the other would get water from the unnamed pond by Farley Road west of Kemsley Academy. The article passed unanimously.

Article 13 took \$500 from stabilization for upgrades to the veterans’ memorial. The estimate for the work needed was \$6,000, and the fin com balked at that amount,

citing how close Wendell is to its Proposition 2½ limit, but wanted to allow something. Tanner said the monument is for veterans, and not for more wars, and that he hoped some of the \$5,500 difference could be made up with voluntary contributions.

Article 16 created a five-page zoning bylaw for recreational marijuana establishments, and with five minutes before the next scheduled meeting, it passed without dissent.

Citizen Sam Hathaway asked how large an area would be required for a growing facility to meet all the required setbacks, and said it would be possible to draw permitted facilities out of existence.

Planning board chair Christopher Parker answered that he did not know precisely, but estimated about 20 acres would be needed.

NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Expedited Timelines; Tech Issues

By GEORGE BRACE

At the September 29 Leverett selectboard meeting, chair Julie Shively reported that joint policing with Wendell will begin on October 15, earlier than planned. The board also signed an inter-municipal agreement with Amherst which moved forward work on the Teawaddle Hill Road waterline project, met with the fin com to discuss articles for the special town meeting on October 24, and discussed ways to improve the audio for people participating remotely.

Shively reported that the forum on joint policing held in Wendell over the weekend went well. She said multiple officers from the Leverett department were in attendance, and she praised the job they did answering questions on the move. She said the officers put Wendell residents’ fears at ease, and that some people are “a little excited” about the change.

The board hopes to have a temporary agreement or memorandum of understanding in place by October 15, but Shively said that Leverett police will provide coverage through mutual aid if an agreement isn’t ready at that time. Plans for the two towns to enter into a formal contract at the start of the new year remain unchanged.

The board voted to reopen the town’s police contracts for the purpose of giving officers and the chief small pay increases to account for additional duties when they begin serving Wendell, such as being on call. Officers will be given a small hourly increase, and the chief a stipend, so as not to affect

possible overtime pay.

Shively said reopening the contracts was also necessary due to the new arrangement being outside the scope of the current police union contracts. She noted that the money for the raises will come from Wendell, and will not affect Leverett’s budget. The board worded the motion to make clear that the raises and stipend would be contingent on the Wendell coverage, and if that duty ended at some point, the raises would be withdrawn.

Special Town Meeting

The board and finance committee discussed a number of proposed articles to appear at a special town meeting (STM) on October 24. The discussion was highlighted by concern over bills from the prior fiscal year that were much larger, and dated from much earlier, than the norm.

Unpaid fuel bills from several months before the close of the previous fiscal year were estimated at \$5,000 for the school and \$1,968 for the public safety complex. Board member Peter d’Errico commented that such bills are usually in the hundreds of dollars, and originate from closer to the end of the fiscal year. No one present at the meeting had information on the reason for the error.

The board agreed the bills had to be paid, but felt the money should come from the departments’ budgets. The board and several residents also wanted more information on the error, and what the fuel status of the two buildings was. Fin com member Ann Delano also proposed setting a financial cap and deadline

for the submission of department requests for the payment of bills from prior years.

Warrant articles for the STM were not finalized, but will also include \$10,000 to replace a 40-year-old snowplow, \$7,225 for heating, ventilation and air-conditioning equipment at the public safety complex, and \$2,300 for ice rescue suits for the fire department.

Water Agreement

The board signed the inter-municipal agreement with Amherst allowing work to proceed on the Teawaddle Hill Road water line.

Board member Tom Hankinson said he’d been contacted by several residents who said they didn’t feel they had a sufficient understanding of the costs involved, and that he was concerned taxpayers did not have detailed information on the project’s costs over time. He proposed the board not sign it until the end of the STM.

D’Errico said that since \$2.3 million had been unanimously approved for the project at town meeting, they didn’t have a choice about whether or not to sign the agreement.

A resident participating remotely expressed anger that the board was “dragging its feet” on a project they had been waiting 20 years for. Hankinson signing the IMA, but reiterated that he had an obligation to explain to taxpayers how their money was being spent, did not feel they had a full understanding when they voted, and wanted his motion on the record.

D’Errico replied that taxpayers would be pleased the project was coming in at \$1.9 million, \$400,000 less than had been approved.

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The Wendell Free Library is currently seeking applicants for a **Library Assistant**. The library assistant will work closely with the library director and learn the inner workings of a small library. Essential to the position is an ease with working with the public of this small, neighborly town in the heart of the Wendell State Forest. As a part time position, this is a perfect opportunity for a library student to learn on the job, or for a local library lover to service their community’s reading, entertainment, and social needs. Applicants are encouraged to write a cover letter that tells a story about an enjoyable experience working with people. Please apply by October 23, 2020; send a cover letter and resume to the director, Anna Lawrence (she/her) through email: alawrence@cwmars.org or mail: PO Box 236, Wendell, MA 01379.

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The Town of Leverett, MA is requesting bids from qualified contractors for the turnkey procurement and installation of a 13.6 kW pole-mounted tracker solar photovoltaic system. This system will be installed at the Leverett Library, located at 75 Montague Rd., Leverett, MA. Bids must be provided in a sealed envelope and marked “**Library Pole Mounted Solar Photovoltaic System Bid**”.

Bids must be received at the Leverett, MA Town Administrator’s Office, Leverett Town Hall, 9 Montague Rd., Leverett, MA 01054 on or before **October 16, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.**, at which time they will be opened and read aloud. A 5% Bid Bond must accompany the bid submittal. All bids are subject to prevailing wage and the weekly payroll reporting. Specifications and bid forms may be obtained by contacting townadministrator@leverett.ma.us.

Other Business

As the meeting drew to a close, the laptop in use for internet participation died for the second time in recent months, initiating a discussion on the ongoing audio difficulties faced by people participating remotely, some of whom needed to do so for safety reasons.

“The sound is just so challenging,” said one resident participating remotely. “Tonight, for example, I couldn’t tell who was talking, because people were not identifying themselves before they talked. It’s very confusing.” “There’s no reason for you not to try to make it as accessible as possible for everyone,” she added. “You guys are in the position of power, and so you do bear the burden of greater responsibility.”

Skepticism was raised about improving the visual accessibility, but d’Errico said, “We can work out the sound... Sound is the part that’s really crucial.”

Shively agreed: “We’ll have to deal with the sound. The video will be a surplus.”

As the discussion closed, town clerk Lisa Stratford commented on the change in circumstances, say-

ing that the board had met for 15 years without a single person in the room except for herself and town administrator Marjorie McGinnis.

The board also discussed what kind of sound system would be adequate for the special town meeting, with members believing what was on hand was not up to the task. Resident Josh Nugent volunteered the use of two large speakers, and soon thereafter found himself also volunteering to run the system.

The board voted to draft a general support for the installation of two solar collectors at the library. Multiple questions were raised about the positioning of the equipment, safety, and the financial aspects. It was pointed out that grant funding will be used to create something that will save the town money, and that the library is not asking for money, just support.

“I am for this idea, completely,” said Shively.

“We think it’s a good idea, assuming these other pieces fall into place,” said d’Errico, referring to the need for further work on the plan for their installation, which would require moving the baseball field.

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FARREN from page A1

Holyoke. Farren Memorial was long a part of the economic and cultural life of Montague, though it shifted its general focus to acute care in the 1970s.

In 1990, the hospital was purchased for \$4.7 million by a nonprofit organization named Farren Care Center, Inc., founded the previous year in Turners Falls to “improve public health in cooperation with federal, state, municipal and other health departments and offices.”

A \$7.5 million state bond was issued at that time to help convert the facility into a longterm care facility, administered by a Catholic organization based in Springfield and Holyoke named Mount Saint Vincent Nursing Home, Inc. Shares were issued in 1991, and the organization

updated its bylaws to give special powers to the Diocese of Springfield and the Sisters of Providence.

On October 1, 1993, Farren Care Center, Inc. changed its name to “F.C., Inc.,” and on the same day, Mount Saint Vincent Nursing Home, Inc. changed its name to “Farren Care Center, Inc.” Also on the same day, the deed was passed from the former entity to the latter for \$1.

In 1997, this new Farren Care Center, Inc. was itself reorganized so that its “sole member” was the Sisters of Providence Health System, Inc., part of Catholic Health East; further filings in 2014 and 2016 reflect it shuffling around a series of national Catholic healthcare nonprofits. An organization called Trinity Health Senior Communities, a subsidiary of a non-profit organi-

zation based in Livonia, Michigan, currently runs the facility.

Meanwhile, F.C., Inc., the local nonprofit that had actually purchased the building, filed its last annual report in 1998, and was automatically dissolved by a state court in 2007.

The reorganizations of the Farren’s ownership over the years appear not to have solved the problems of its physical plant. One source, who worked at the Farren but asked not to be identified, said they believed that the shifting and complex ownership structure may have made the state skeptical of proposals for a large infusion of public money to fix the buildings.

But the Sisters of Providence have, over the past decade, reached out to Montague’s representatives in the legislature, and they in turn

made significant efforts to obtain state aid for the facility.

We contacted former state representative Steve Kulik and former state senator Stan Rosenberg to ask them about their work on the Farren funding problem. Both men were in positions of leadership in their respective legislative bodies, and both retired in 2018.

Kulik, a former Worthington selectboard member who eventually became vice chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, represented Montague as part of the 1st Franklin House district. He said he had been in the Farren about “once a year” during the decade before he retired from the legislature. He called the facility “a special place,” but recognized early on that it would need a major renovation or reconstruction, mentioning serious problems with the complex’s boilers.

Kulik said he met a number of times with various state officials about the facility, including the Secretary of Elder Affairs, and worked alongside Rosenberg to increase the special rate of patient reimbursements from Medicaid, which accounts for most of the Farren’s revenue.

Eventually, they settled on getting a potential appropriation into the bond bill, which was signed by the governor in June 2018. Kulik said he was unsure of the fate of the appropriation, but thought it might have been stalled over legal concerns about state aid to a religious organization.

Rosenberg confirmed most of Kulik’s analysis, but also said there had been resistance from officials at the state level, particularly at executive agencies like Administration and Finance. They argued, he said, that the Farren’s services and its population should be decentralized, and moved into smaller facilities around the state. But that alternative was a non-starter, because the Farren served a population that had been rejected by smaller nursing homes and other facilities.

Rosenberg called the unwillingness to fund a Farren reconstruction or find another viable solution a “system failure,” although he added that this was not a failure only of the current Baker Administration.

Another obstacle to state funding of a major renovation or new facility, he said, was that capital bond funds almost never are used to finance the construction of private entities. A review of the allocations in the 2018 bill proved this to be accurate.

Rosenberg’s original bill in the Senate explicitly allowed for two options to address this problem: construction and ownership by a joint public-private partnership, or construction and ownership of the buildings by the state itself. In both scenarios the corporations that provided services at the Farren would lease the buildings.

Presented with the final language of the bond bill, Rosenberg said he was surprised that those options had been eliminated. “I believe there was a solution,” he said. “Something may have happened.” He suggested, however, that the failure to explicitly name the Farren in the bond bill may have kept these options open.

Trinity spokesperson Christine Looby would not comment on the details of the bond bill or its process, but stressed that no progress had been made in developing and funding a renovation plan. The bill, she told the *Reporter*, “authorized the Commonwealth to borrow money to

fund the Farren project. In order for the authorized funding to be used, the Farren project must be prioritized to be funded by issued bonds. This has not happened.”

Both Rosenberg and Kulik stressed that many projects that make it into a capital bond bill do not see the light of day. A lengthy process is required before any allocations can be made, including a feasibility study, negotiation over final funding, and, in the case of the Farren, lease negotiations with Trinity.

Montague town administrator Steve Ellis said that getting a potential appropriation in a bond bill is like “leading a football game 21 to 20 at halftime.” But the idea that the Farren renovation was ever leading at halftime was not mentioned in a Department of Public Health hearing on the facility’s closure, which continued Wednesday night.

Trinity’s proposal to move the Farren’s roughly 100 residents to an under-utilized nursing home it owns in Holyoke – still called Mount Saint Vincent – and then sell it to a for-profit company called iCare was strongly criticized on both nights of the hearing, by stakeholders including state senator Jo Comerford, representative Natalie Blais, and Montague town officials.

Wednesday’s continuation strongly resembled the September 16 session. Two officials from Trinity justified the move as necessary to provide “appropriate care” for its population in a more viable setting. They emphasized the “chronic infrastructure problems” and the “ongoing workforce challenges” at the Farren, without mentioning specifics, including the fate of the appropriation in the state bond bill.

The Trinity officials were followed by 13 speakers who all sharply criticized the proposal. Many were relatives of former residents of the Farren who described in moving words the impact of the facility’s staff culture on patients and their families. All emphasized that the hospital was a “unique institution” with a staff trained to help a difficult population with multiple disabilities.

Several speakers with relatives at Mount Saint Vincent also expressed concern about the transfer there of so many Farren patients with multiple disabilities. They noted long hours and staff shortages at the Holyoke facility, and said they wondered how the Farren’s closure would address labor shortages being experienced by Trinity.

Upon request for comment, Comerford and Blais gave a joint statement to the *Reporter*. “While we are grateful for the efforts of Senator Rosenberg and Representative Kulik, bond bills authorize far more spending than actually ever materializes. They are often aspirational and contingent on multiple forces,” they wrote. “Through our due diligence, it became clear that the state had no interest in funding the necessary renovations and/or a new building on the Montague site, regardless of a bond earmark.”

Baker administration officials have not been forthcoming with information as to why executive office officials were resistant to the Farren’s renovation. Comerford and Blais continue to oppose the closing of the Farren at this time, and have requested a meeting with the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Additional reporting was provided by Mike Jackson.



ADAPT from page A1

and supply it with cleaning fluid and pressurized air.

“Even beyond COVID, we’ll use this system all year long for colds and the flu,” Reipold said.

The bus company, also known as Travel Kuz, serves the students of Franklin Tech, Gill-Montague, Pioneer Valley Regional, and Erving districts. Currently only Franklin Tech and Pioneer Valley Regional are utilizing the buses, which are being manually cleaned until the FastPASS systems are permanently installed over the next two weeks. School districts are expected to pay for the upgrades with grants they received for COVID-19 safety measures.

“It gets rid of any human error,” Reipold said. “I just feel good giving the kids, our staff, and the school bus drivers that extra level of protection.”

Ted Toothaker, systems engineer at Bete Fog Nozzle, helped with the design and construction of the new system. Unlike other disinfection systems, Bete’s FastPASS does not require an operator to enter a bus to clean it. Kuzmeskus will use the tubing to spray the bus interiors twice a day with a solution of hypochlorous acid, a commonly-used disinfectant approved by the EPA and CDC.

“It will make our jobs easier by not being exposed to the inside of the bus, and not have to walk in and out of each vehicle one hundred times a day,” said service technician Jonathan Harris.

With the state pressuring some area schools, such as Gill-Montague and Mohawk, to submit reopening plans for in-person classes or face an audit, the need for safe transportation is a factor in the minds of many parents and educators.

“I really think it will make parents more comfortable putting their kids on school buses,” Reipold said.

As cold weather pushes more people indoors for school, work, and worship, some are concerned about an increase in virus transmission.

Recent studies have shown that airborne transmission is a major means of spreading the coronavirus. In addition to spreading through respiratory droplets released when we cough or sneeze that fall to the ground, the virus can also spread aerially whenever anyone breathes or talks, hanging in the air for hours in poorly-ventilated spaces and potentially traveling well beyond the six-foot social distancing threshold put forward by the CDC.

Window Shopping

Other local businesses are mak-



Green Fields Market has built a takeout window for food and beverages.

ing food service and banking safer from airborne disease with permanent changes to the way they serve customers.

Green Fields Market just opened a new takeout window outside their downtown Greenfield store serving prepared foods, ice cream, and coffee drinks. Customers can now stand outdoors to order hot food made on site with local ingredients, Pierce Bros. coffee, and Bart’s ice cream.

Green Fields communication manager Sarah Kanabay said the takeout window is a great way to keep shopping local while staying outside. “You really support the local food economy when you order through the takeout window,” she said.

To encourage customers to use the new online ordering system, Green Fields is offering a 10% discount on all orders made online until October 10. Curbside pickup for regular groceries from Green Fields will still be picked up at 170 Main Street, however.

“Should you wish to avoid coming into the store, now you can order your food online and pick it up through the window,” Kanabay said. “It’s great because now people have more choices... The takeout window is open seven days a week, and has almost the same hours as the store.”

The takeout window at Green Fields will be open from 9 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., Mondays through Saturdays, and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sundays.

Virtual Banking, Real Tellers

Greenfield Savings Bank has also extended their hours throughout the pandemic with the help of their “smart” ATM machines, dubbed Teller Connects. Through these machines, the bank’s customers can access all the services available inside the bank at an ATM while talking to a teller via video. “With COVID it helped us, be-

cause it was another option for people to be able to work with a teller without direct contact,” said Linda Ackerman, assistant vice president to the bank. “If somebody doesn’t want to wear a mask, we have alternative ways to bank.”

Greenfield Savings Bank first introduced their virtual teller machines in 2017, and now have them in seven locations in Hampshire and Franklin counties. The newest Teller Connects machines were installed in Turners Falls and South Deerfield this August. Using a touch screen, users can choose whether they want to speak to a virtual teller during business hours, or use the machines as a regular ATM.

Newer machines can accept up to 50 checks at a time, producing a virtual deposit slip on site. For first-time Teller Connects users, the bank is offering a three-dollar coupon.


“Because of virtual teller ATM machines during COVID, all branches were open for teller service, almost without interruption,” said Paul Benjamin, head of marketing for Greenfield Savings Bank.

Over 160 employees work at the bank’s ten locations throughout Hampshire and Franklin counties, and at least five new positions have been added during the pandemic. Nearly all the bank branch locations are also open for in-person banking, with the exception of Northampton, and feature new plexiglass barriers and air filtration systems installed inside the air ducts. All these adaptations will remain permanent fixtures to all of Greenfield Savings Bank’s locations.

“The bank’s priority is to protect our customers and protect our staff,” Benjamin said, noting that the air filtration system will help stop the spread of other kinds of illness, too. “With the anticipation that this may be a year or more,” he said, “it just made sense that this is something we keep up forever.”



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MONTAGUE from page A1

as necessary during the pandemic, would cost a total of \$41,613.

“Some rooms don’t have any ability to have fresh air,” said Blier, and some of these “do not have the ability to open windows.” Blier divided the total costs of the high school and middle school requests between Montague, Gill, and Erving. (The latter town tuitions students to the high school.)

Blier’s list also included projects totaling just over \$71,000 at Sheffield and Hillcrest elementary schools, which are owned by Montague. She allocated the \$6,200 cost for work at the Gill Elementary School to Gill.

Blier said the school district had already spent around \$500,000 of its own CARES Act money, and would need to spend still more for additional staffing during the pandemic. She said the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education told her that districts should “reach out” to the towns for money.

Ellis reported that even with the proposed school allocation, the town should have a balance of \$300,000 in the CARES Act fund.

Selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz said he was concerned about the cost of maintaining the air purifiers once staff became used to pure air. Ariel Elan that “in [her] dreams” it would be a good time to get a private maintenance service contract for the district’s air purifiers. Blier said a maintenance contract was in the district’s regular budget.

The board voted to endorse an allocation from the town to the district, “not to exceed” \$175,000.

Budget Cut

The selectboard approved a warrant of 13 articles for the Tuesday, October 13 special town meeting and recommended all the articles, al-

though with virtually no discussion.

The articles include cuts in the operating budget to conform to reduced revenue estimates; a \$50,000 appropriation to replace the senior center roof; \$5,000 to hire “professionals” to survey the Montague Center Park; and a complex article implementing a negotiated agreement with the FirstLight power company related to the construction of a new Fifth Street pedestrian bridge.

The meeting will take place at the new DPW facility on Turnpike Road. Ellis said the facility should be completed by October 6.

Banking Sector

DPW superintendent Tom Bergeron reported on the project to stabilize a collapsed embankment on Millers Falls Road that leads down to the Connecticut River. The embankment, which included a pipe carrying rain runoff from nearby streets, began to degrade last winter and substantially washed away during the past spring’s rains. The property is mainly owned by the FirstLight power company.

Bergeron said the DPW had dumped over 9,000 tons of stone and dirt, laid a new plastic pipe to carry water runoff to the edge of the river, and covered it with dirt and rock. “Hopefully we get this rain that they’re saying, so the sediments on top will settle down and lock in the stone better,” said Bergeron.

He said the design was similar to another embankment stabilization project several miles to the east on Millers Falls Road.

Selectboard member Chris Boutwell mentioned an embankment in the area that saw “huge boulders” fall over it in 1962.

“I think it was later than 1962, Chris,” said Kuklewicz.

“Could be,” said Boutwell.

“We’d have liked to have had big

rocks like that to put down this embankment, but nobody wants to haul that stuff,” said Bergeron.

Still Spinning

The board heard an “update” on Spinner Park, a small “pocket park” on Avenue A whose planned reconstruction has been stalled by the discovery of a previously unknown electric conduit which required a new design and costly reconstruction. The project is under the direction of Brian McHugh of the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority, which administers the federal block grants which fund the project for the town.

McHugh said the electric company Eversource had provisionally agreed not to require that the conduit be moved, as long as a spare conduit is buried in back of the park. He also said that a connection to the park’s electrical box may not need to run all the way to a pole on Fourth Street, but brought in Kuklewicz, who is an electrician, to explain the technicalities.

McHugh also gave a final report on projects financed by the town’s 2018 block grant.

Other Business

RiverCulture director Suzanne LoManto announced that the town had received a \$6,500 “Resurgent Places” grant from the state. LoManto said she had applied for funding for a mural at 38 Avenue A, the site of the former “Cumby’s building” across from town hall, and for “art mitigation” to soften the look of the construction fence at Spinner Park. She said the mural at the Cumby’s building would be removable, since there is a potential construction project planned for the location. The board voted to accept the grant.

Parks and recreation director Jon Dobosz asked the board to establish a gift account for donations to the



community garden next to Unity Park. Dobosz said he has also applied for a grant to build a well next to the community garden, “but I don’t want to get ahead of myself.”

The board approved the gift account request, after Dobosz assured them that he had cleared the idea with the town accountant.

The board approved a request for the use of Peskeompskut Park by the United Arc’s Grandparents Support Group from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. on October 6, and a request from Eversource for a pole on Millers Falls Road near the industrial park.

Christine Ford was appointed to the position of assistant administrator at the Water Pollution Control Facility, while Jeffrey Warren and Annabel Levine were appointed to the tree committee.

Ellis reviewed a timetable for capital projects to be submitted for eventual town meeting approval. He

said there would be an initial deadline of November 2 and that final submissions, after feedback, will be targeted for January 11. He also announced a “public comment” period for a state study of the local contribution portion of the Chapter 70 education aid formula; the deadline for comments is October 16.

Ellis also reviewed the latest state guidance on celebrating Halloween during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. He said that the state had issued “precautions” but assured the board that “Halloween is not in any way canceled, or forbidden.” He did note, however, that Turners Falls would not be hosting the traditional Rag Shag Parade.

The board retired to an executive session to discuss property negotiations with FirstLight Power Resources. The next selectboard meeting will be held on



WEIGHING from page A1

MR: *L. ’s at Sheffield?*

AM: Yes – though he’s never set foot in the building. Neither have I, except to pick up his Chromebook. It’s a little bizarre.

I have to say, it has gotten a little bit better. The rhythm exists a little bit more. Every Wednesday’s a half day. Our first half day, I realized every day should be a half day!

MR: *If this whole pandemic wasn’t happening, what would your two-kid plan be at this point: L. at school during the day, and then O. with you, running the shop?*

AM: No, we actually started O. at Ja’Duke two weeks before the pandemic. He’s three, almost four – this is a very important time, starting preschool, being with other kids for social and emotional development.

But I haven’t sent him back. They opened back up again, and I was like, I want to say yes so badly, but I can’t. My mom lives with us, she lives downstairs, and she’s already immune compromised. I don’t know how you get a bunch of three-year-olds to follow those hygiene rules. Masks, he’s pretty good with, but eating? All it takes is one case!

L.’s actually the one I’m most concerned about. With the remote school, I need to stay on top of him, because he has attention issues already, and putting him in front of a remote situation is just not simple. He’s definitely my kid.

MR: *What does “staying on top of him” look like?*

AM: Constantly checking in.

Reminders to sit up straight. I get nervous: he’s bright, and it’s easy to lose interest in school and develop really bad habits when it comes to dealing with structured learning.

MR: *How do you like school so far this year?*

LM: It’s sort of good.

AM: What’s your favorite part of school so far?

LM: Staring at a screen?

MR: *It’s pretty much on your computer? Do you get to turn it off and do other work?*

LM: I usually have an hour to do my work. After I’m done I just pull out the [Wii] Remote and the Nintendo Switch.

MR: *What are you learning?*

LM: It started with a lot of how to start second grade, that kind of stuff, those first couple weeks. I was on one meeting. People find it useless when you have to say your name. It’s supposed to introduce kids to each other, but it just.... you feel like you’re just going to fall asleep.

MR: *How easy is it to be in the classroom on your Chromebook?*

LM: It’s got like three buttons... I love SeeSaw. It’s like a little thing where you can draw and do little jobs, and post them. *[L. heads off to get dizzy on a swing with O.]*

MR: *Are you trying to run the business from home?*

AM: The CDC did these forgivable loans for microenterprises. That was not easy to do, it’s confusing. I

applied through the CDC. That was \$5,000, and it was very specific; I had to make a budget. I think they’re doing another round, so it’s up to ten now. \$10,000 means I could pay rent to my landlords, and that, in turn, is such a ripple effect – I want to pay rent.

What I wanted was tools: things that I could use at the business to make my own stuff. I got a new color laser printer, so now I’ll be able to run off flyers and stuff like that – it’s kind of a big deal. I got this vinyl cutter, so I’m able to make signage, and I just made merch. Anything I can get to make the stuff you would normally buy – I’m making reusable bags. With the vinyl cutter I can put our logo on them. I need to reopen as soon as possible, because in a couple months I might have to close again. And honestly, it’s depressing downtown right now – it’s like a tumbleweed rolling.

MR: *Did they ask, “if we go back in, would you keep L. at home?”*

AM: They have not asked me that yet. I don’t know! Do the teachers feel safe? That’s who I would believe, I guess – if the teachers feel like they’re being heard and taken care of, that’s who I would follow.

MR: *The teachers’ union has been very outspokenly critical of the idea of going back in.*

AM: Is that for all of Mass.?

MR: *Most school districts in the state are already at hybrid. A bunch of the ones starting off fully remote are here in the northwest, where there’s really no COVID. The state*

is pushing some of the districts on it, including Gill-Montague.

AM: I mean, looking at the discussions online, it seems like a lot of parents are upset that we’re not in school, because there are no cases. But to me, just because there are no cases doesn’t mean that there won’t be, you know what I mean?

When I was looking at the numbers before, I didn’t believe them, honestly. My mom was hospitalized early in the pandemic, and they would not give her a COVID test.... Are you not testing because you don’t want that statistic?

MR: *What is there for parents right now, for online communities?*

AM: I’m on “Greenfield Moms” – it’s a total shit show, just everyone arguing all the time about everything. The majority of the moms on there are the ones who say it’s ridiculous that we aren’t back in school.

The “Quarantined With Kids Support Group” is good. I think there’s a lot of people who are from across the state and don’t live here, so it’s not specific to Franklin County or even Western Mass, but it is mostly people from around here.

MR: *What is the benefit of the group, for you?*

AM: Earlier, it was “what are we doing, how is this happening” – all of it. All of a sudden, your kids’ lives are completely uprooted, you can’t go anywhere, you can’t do anything, you’re exhausted. Everyone’s struggling with it in a different way: people with kids, people who don’t have kids, people living by them-

selves, people in huge group homes.

Parents had a very specific way of struggling, because half of them were working, and half of them weren’t – and the ones who weren’t were dealing with that issue, too.

With me it was a major identity crisis time. We had just opened up, and to close again when I could finally see how we were going to be profitable.... I went through the stages of grief. I went from an income-earning, multi-faceted person to Mom, 24 hours a day. Earning income, for me, makes me feel powerful. As a family all of our money is shared, but still it’s something like a badge of honor for me.

MR: *What’s the balance, timewise: school support, plus another one here, and the job?*

AM: There is no balance, that doesn’t exist; we’re just trying to figure it out. I have to say, from my own experience, that having –

OM: Can I watch *Minions* again?

AM: Yup. You’ve gotta give me a couple minutes.

Everything blends into each other. I am grateful, in a way, to have school existing to keep a schedule for me. I am not good at time management, so having a set schedule helps me be productive with the shop.

MR: *So, what are the final decision-making points for whether or not you’d send L. back in?*

AM: I would like to hear what the teachers think. I think that’s the only way I would be able to make a decision. It’s so hard to say.



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GMRSD from page A1

Lively cast the sole vote against the motion after asking a series of questions about the logistics of a safe and socially distanced return. “Some may say that the [COVID-19] numbers in Franklin County are low because of compliance with masks,” she said. “Why are [students] wearing masks all day, if they’re going to take them off to eat?”

“One of the things that we still need to refine a resolution to is how we’re going to be feeding students,” Beck replied, “both in the hybrid model, as well as at home.”

Lively said she worried that if teachers were sent back to teach remotely from empty classrooms, some might decide to take a leave for childcare, and she asked if the district could be flexible in allowing some to continue to teach from home.

Beck said the district had been advised against doing so by its attorney. “The FMLA and COVID relief acts provide really clear parameters for people who need to make decisions like that,” he added.

Pupil services director Dianne Ellis said the district’s “responsibility is to provide ‘FAPE’, free appropriate public education, to the students,” and was working with families of students with disabilities to tailor service delivery under pandemic conditions.

“Happy teachers make happy students, and I want everyone to be happy,” said Montague member Cassie Damkoehler, who works as a teacher in a neighboring district and has three children in Gill-Montague schools. “Ultimately, we have to be providing FAPE to our students.... Teachers are bending over backwards for the priority populations, but for some kids, through remote learning, this isn’t possible.”

Reached after the meeting, Ellis said that about 22 students were identified as eligible for return under “Phase 1,” and about 30 to 36 under “Phase 2.”

The third step, however, would

include all students with individual education plans, as well as all English-language learners – totaling between 250 and 300 of the district’s roughly 900 enrolled students. At that point, she said, the administration feels it would be preferable to make hybrid learning available to all.

“Once we bring that many students back, from a logistics standpoint – coverage, lunches, recess, bus duty, teacher prep and planning time – it’s going to be hard for us to cover without having more of our faculty in the buildings,” Ellis said.

“We want our special education students to be with their typical peers as much as possible,” she added. “‘Least restrictive environment’ is a standard, under federal and state law, that children with disabilities shouldn’t be segregated down the hall.”

Beck said more complete information about the HVAC upgrades should be available by the school committee’s October 13 meeting, to inform a decision to approve full hybrid in early November.

“I just felt that I didn’t have enough information to vote ‘yes’ right now,” Lively said afterwards of her dissenting vote.

Lively, a parent of a kindergartner and a first-grader, said that she was starting an indefinite leave of absence from her own job in order to support her children in learning from home.

“There’s a big learning curve, and we’re all working against it,” she said. “I definitely understand the challenges of remote learning for parents – there’s been times when I’ve been completely overwhelmed.”

Lively said she supported the committee’s decision, but was not comfortable endorsing the reopening plan herself. “I asked a lot of questions, and I’ll likely continue to,” she said. “The more transparent the process, and the more everybody understands what it’s going to look like, the better we can plan.”



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Wed. Oct 14	Bernardston Senior Center Drive-Thru (if weather, inside w/distancing) 1—3 PM	20 Church Street, Bernardston
Fri. Oct 23	Seniors Clinic Drive – Thru, Town Hall 9:30 — 11:30 AM	69 Main Street, Northfield
Sat. Oct 24	Inside Gill Elementary School (w/safe distancing) 10 AM — Noon	48 Boyle Road, Gill

* For insurance forms and updates, visit: www.frcog.org/flu-clinic

Forgivable Loans for Local Businesses

MONTAGUE – The town of Montague is participating in a Microenterprise Assistance Program (Covid RMAP) administered by the City of Greenfield, and implemented by the Franklin County CDC. The program opens October 1, with applications for the first round of funding due by 5 p.m. on Thursday, October 15.

Forgivable loans of up to \$10,000 are available to help businesses cover documented losses due to the COVID-19 shutdown that are not covered by other programs. The region was awarded \$600,000 for loans through the federal CARES Act and the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). The town encourages eligible businesses to review the program guidelines and apply if eligible. Businesses that have already received a Microenterprise grant from an earlier round may be eligible for an additional grant of up to \$5,000.

Over \$40,000 has been deployed to assist Montague businesses to date under the previous funding round. We know there is significant need in the community,

and while this program will not be able to fund all of the need, it will connect business owners to technical assistance and also provide the town with documented need for future possibilities. Application cycles will be held every two weeks until funds are depleted.

For eligibility requirements, see www.fccdc.org/covid-recovery-micro-enterprise-assistance-program/.

An online information session for interested businesses is scheduled for Wednesday, October 7, at noon. Log-in information, application, FAQ, and forms will be on the Franklin County CDC site listed above. Application documentation will include 2019 personal and business taxes, 2020 monthly profit-and-loss statements, a family income form, and other information detailing the loss.

For more information, contact Franklin County CDC business development director Amy Shapiro, the primary contact for businesses with questions or who need assistance with applications, at amys@fccdc.org. Translation services can be arranged if needed.

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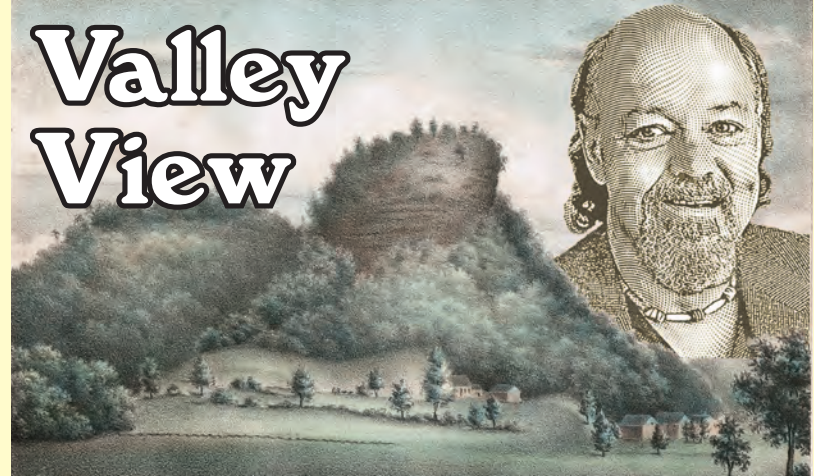
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By GARY SANDERSON

GREENFIELD – Daybreak is upon us. Autumn’s first sparkling frost blankets the ankle-high hay-field with a crusty glaze illuminated by a somber, orange glow peeking over the eastern horizon.

I’ve pulled into this familiar old haunt for the first time in nearly a year – three enthusiastic English springer spaniels crated on my truck’s bed. They’ve eaten and are revved up for an early-morning romp around the perimeter of sheltered, marsh-lined, scent-filled, riverside cropland I long ago dubbed Sunken Meadow.

My last visit was a poignant affair indeed. I was there for the burial of Chubby, an extraordinary gundog and pet who died tragically and prematurely on the final day of last year’s pheasant season, two days after Thanksgiving. I had avoided the site since. Too painful. It even bothers me to drive past his peaceful resting place on the point of a tall, quiet shelf overlooking the Green River. A regal grave. Fit for a king.

The dogs I was boarding belong to an old friend. He was away for the weekend, judging a field trial in North Conway, NH, New England’s tallest peak looming large to the north. The temporary four-legged companionship was, for me, a welcome change after months of solitary morning rambles. It’s been a long time since I’ve been without a dog or dogs of my own.

I turned onto the double-rutted farm road through the hay-field, laying a loud path through glistening grasses, past a small greenhouse to the back of the field. There, I spun around and backed into a parking spot, my truck facing out not 50 feet from Chubby’s grave, carpeted by a thin patch of tall, dense goldenrod fronting the tree line, a broad red oak standing in tall sentry. Chubby’s spirit was there. Palpable. I could see him in his classic pose, ears perked, nose high, ready to ramble. Yes, something was in the air.

As I walked to the back of the truck to release the dogs, I spotted movement some 150 yards away along the eastern edge of the field. It was a single deer, traveling a long-established run connecting the floodplain to the upper terrace upon which we were parked. I

knew the run well. Have walked it myself. Who knows how long deer and other animals have traveled that path? Likely longer than I’ve inhabited the planet.

The lean, graceful deer, a doe, didn’t see me, and apparently hadn’t heard my truck. She approached in casual, loping bounds as I stood motionless, watching our collision course unfold. She finally spotted me just before passing, stopped within 10 yards, froze, glared, rolled her ears forward, cocked her head left and right, took two or three more graceful little hops past me, and stopped again.

I talked to her in a soft, soothing voice: “Don’t worry. I’m not going to hurt you.”

She locked eyes on me, more curious than threatened, awaiting my next move. I cooperated, taking two steps, dropping the tailgate and releasing the eager dogs from two porta-kennels. Apparently, they had not seen the deer from their crates, because they jumped down and ran in the opposite direction. That was more than the deer could tolerate. She bounded away and took a sharp right, out of view, down a run leading to the river. It had been her destination from the start, precisely where she was heading upon entering the open field from below. I have over the years seen many deer use that run in broad daylight, including an up-close-and-personal, 8- or 10-point buck. It’s a major travel route between feeding and bedding sites on both sides of the river.

When the dogs finally caught wind of the deer, as I knew they would, they spun around and followed her scent trail past the truck and into the wood line where she had disappeared. Not wanting them to pester the animal, I gave them a whistle and brought them back for a walk in the opposite direction, around Sunken Meadow to the south.

That doe was not a stranger. I was sure I recognized her. We have met several times since spring around the perimeter of adjacent hayfields across the road, a quarter- to half-mile west. This latest encounter had been our sixth or seventh in tight quarters, face to face out in the open, separated by 20 yards or less.

This young doe and two

see **VALLEY VIEW** page B3

Art: Sometimes a “Matter of Life and Breast”

By CHRISTINA TRINCHERO

LAKE PLEASANT – Diagnosed with Stage IV breast cancer in February 2020 after being diagnosed with the disease first in 2014 and again in 2018, artist and certified trauma facilitator Barbara “babs” Mayer has published a book that chronicles her experiences with cancer. (Mayer writes the name babs in all lower case letters, as an homage to the poet e.e. cummings.) The book includes Mayer’s musings on everything from nerve pain and brain radiation to blue fingernails and the “tiny little hairs that fall out of her head and catch on her eyebrows.”

The art journal, *A Book about Breast Cancer Art*, features photographs of two dozen mixed-media collages – some of which use images from her mammograms, medical leads, and her own hair – to capture the fear, anxiety, pain, anger, disbelief, and reckoning that accompany this disease, which Mayer refuses to let define her.

Through her art, Mayer beckons the reader to join her in what she has experienced. But more importantly, she invites anyone impacted by cancer to pick up a canvas and create.

“I hope to encourage people to express what they are going through, be it through art, writing, music, or dance,” says the 66-year old Lake Pleasant resident. “This is the reason I am sharing my book. My goal is to inspire others to express themselves



Lake Pleasant artist babs Mayer has published a book full of artwork that expresses her experiences with having breast cancer.

through art during their trauma, and to eventually find a way to heal.”

Breast Cancer as Trauma

In September 2014, Mayer’s oncologist told her she had breast cancer. Putting her disbelief aside, Mayer turned to the skills she had learned as a trauma facilitator to help others diagnosed with cancer.

“Since 2013 I have worked with survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault,” Mayer says. “To address their trauma, I facilitated a healing arts program that I am certified in called A Window Between Worlds.” In early 2020, Mayer was offering this program, developed

by a Los Angeles-based nonprofit, to cancer survivors in a series of support groups.

Of the people she has worked with over the years, Mayer says facilitating their awakening is an amazing moment, both for her personally and for the person experiencing the trauma.

“I see someone who says they can’t do art, and there are beautiful colors on the paper, and she is having feelings,” says Mayer.

As a healing medium, Mayer thinks art creates an unassuming opportunity. She describes it as a quiet, peaceful place; it’s a window

see **LIFE** page B8

Fun Times at Railroad Salvage: A Montague Police Log Retrospective

Compiled by EMILY ALLING / Illustrations by NINA ROSSI

Wednesday, 9/18/13
3:25 pm. Smoke investigation near the old Railroad Salvage on Power Street. Three juvenile parties spoken to; camp fire extinguished.

Sunday, 12/1/13
3:12 p.m. Callers reported hearing shots fired near the old Railroad Salvage building. Following report, caller learned that

subject had been firing potato gun.

Wednesday, 5/7/14
11:24 a.m. Report of vehicle into Jersey barriers at former Railroad Salvage location. Accident was due to driver being distracted by a passenger’s medical issue.

Monday, 5/26/14
6:40 p.m. Caller reported hearing a loud explosion coming from either the Railroad Salvage

area or the paper mill. Officers responded and interviewed people in the area, who did not hear anything. Officer advised that the sound may have been part of the Railroad Salvage building falling down; there is also a large piece of metal hanging off the building that makes a loud sound when the wind blows.

Thursday, 7/10/14
1:46 p.m. Truck stuck in ditch near Railroad Salvage.

Sunday, 11/9/14
3:43 p.m. Officer contacted by a party reporting that he just extinguished a fire in a trash can in the area of Railroad Salvage.

Tuesday, 2/24/15
6:41 p.m. Caller reports a suspicious male walking up to the building just past the main Railroad Salvage

building; caller concerned for party’s safety.

Monday, 3/9/15
4:10 p.m. Caller concerned that the abandoned Railroad Salvage building is a huge safety issue; he has seen teenagers going in and out of the building, and is concerned that it could collapse on them.

Tuesday, 3/10/15
6:28 p.m. Report of people inside Railroad Salvage building. Officers sent two male parties on their way and advised them not to go in there again.

Tuesday, 3/31/15
6:38 p.m. Officer checking on a suspicious vehicle parked near the Railroad Salvage building. Two parties who exited the building were advised that they were trespassing, and warned of the dangers of

see **TIMES** page B4





CHRISTOPHER CARMODY COLLAGE

“BROWNIE”

This mature little lady, a 13-year-old chihuahua, is still pretty active when she isn’t busy cuddling! She is affectionate and enjoys playing, especially with her plushy toys. She is accustomed to living with adults, and is not a fan of children until she gets to know them really well. She makes a good alert dog and will bark her little lungs out when someone unknown comes near the yard or home.

Brownie lived with the same guardian her entire life. Sadly, she is moving to a place where pets are

not allowed. If you’re interested in adopting Brownie, contact 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.



MAZE REVIEW

A Corn Maze in Charlemont!

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

CHARLEMONT – I decided that the corn maze at the Hicks Family Farm, on the Mohawk Trail in Charlemont, would be a cool topic to write about. On the day I went there, I talked to Ryan Hicks, the owner of the place. “Tenth year it’s been done,” he told me of the maze, which I also learned is seven acres.

Beside the maze, I observed an okay-looking mini-golf course people could play. Along with that was a petting zoo that consists of two goats, two pigs, a calf, and bunnies. One of the bunnies you could pet. Hamburgers and hot dogs are there for people, sold out of a truck, and I learned people could also get ribs to eat.

The corn maze has four parts to it. They are called Farm & Garden, the Forest, Land of Oz, and Story Land. I personally went through the maze myself, and did the scavenger hunt that people can do when they enter the maze.

It felt rather enjoyable to be in the middle of the corn maze. It was a cool feeling, because the corn stalks were taller than me, and of course all around me. I hadn’t experienced that kind of feeling since a snowstorm that happened to me. The banks were taller



Take your picture at these cutouts!

WLOSTOSKI PHOTOS



The entrance to the corn maze at the Hicks Family Farm.

than me at that time.

I believe I did reasonably well when it came to finding what was on the list from the Farm & Garden section’s hunt. I found most of what was on the list, which included a windmill, four scarecrows, and items with blue ribbons on them.

Ryan also told me the farm stand was “100 feet down the road from the maze,” and sold pumpkins. One of the pictures on the farm stand’s website shows they sell a lot of pumpkins there, including white ones.

Asked for the number of people that come to the maze, Ryan said “quite a few.” Flashlight Fridays, which go from September 18 through October 2, are where you do the normal scavenger hunt during the night with a flashlight.

Haunted Nights is “where we have 21 people dress up in costumes, trying to scare you,” said Ryan. He also mentioned that “lots of people show up. More people come for Haunted Nights than Flashlight Friday.” Haunted Nights start on October 10 and end October 30, and go from 7 to 9 p.m.

For more information, go to www.hickscornmaze.com. I observed little kids and their families enjoying everything that was there.

Senior Center Activities OCTOBER 5 THROUGH 9

GILL and MONTAGUE

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

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

ERVING

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

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

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

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

LEVERETT

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

WENDELL

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

Local Supermarket Senior Accommodations

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

Big Y:	Senior hours from 7 to 8 a.m.	(413) 772-0435
Foster’s:	Senior hours from 7 to 8 a.m.	(413) 773-1100
Food City:	Senior hours from 7 to 8 a.m.	(413) 863-9591
Green Fields Market:	Senior hours from 9 to 10 a.m. Curbside pickup available. Order by 8 p.m.; order ready for pickup between 1 and 6 the following day. Delivery also available. \$6 per delivery inside Greenfield. \$8 outside Greenfield.	(413) 773-9567
McCusker’s Market:	Only six customers allowed in store at a time. Curbside pickup available. Order between 12 and 1 p.m. for pickup the following day. Delivery available. \$10 per delivery. Email pickup@franklincommunity.coop	(413) 625-2548
Stop and Shop:	Senior hours from 6 to 7:30 a.m.	(413) 774-6096

EXHIBIT ANNOUNCEMENT

Jules Jones, *Piece Me Back Together*

From combined sources.

AMHERST – Turners Falls artist Jules Jones is featured in *Piece Me Back Together*, a digital exhibit during October through the Augusta Savage gallery at UMass-Amherst. This exhibit is part of the gallery’s 2020-21 theme, “Healing Bodies.”

“Because many of our bodies – whether planetary, ideological, physical, cultural or otherwise – require attention, we have invited visual and performance works that offer new ways of viewing Wellness as defined by our artists,” says the gallery about “Healing Bodies.”

Jules Jones is a queer disabled artist who studied painting and drawing at Greenfield Community College, where they received their associate’s degree in Fine Arts in 2014. They continued on to UMass-Amherst to complete their bachelor’s degree in Studio Arts.

Jones explores the concept of Wellness in paintings that reference global art traditions and cultural iconography. They use monotype, lithography, woodcut, linoleum and rubber cuts, and screenprints with pieces of paintings on paper, layering line, color, and shape to make vibrant collage and print paintings that explode with energy.

Jones writes in a show statement sent out with the press release: “As a disabled artist, the concept of ‘wellness’ can often feel wildly unattainable, and its definition is certainly



Jules Jones, Anxiety Grip, 2019.

amorphous. My wretched madness, my melancholic moods have shaped, and will shape, my life to come. Instead of exhausting myself fighting against my disabilities, I can fight to the best of my ability against the Big Boogeyman that is ableism (one of many icky Isms), that decides just who is welcome to participate in this thing called life... Art walks with me as I grapple with self-compassion, self-forgiveness, and self-mercy. Our worlds, our Bodies start healing

the moment we embrace compassion for ourselves, facing the Boogeymen buried deep within us, the keeper of our traumas. We are capable of healing our bodies, one emotion or one brushstroke at a time.”

This exhibit is free online from October 7 through October 28. There will be an opening reception via Zoom on October 7 at 6 p.m. Visit <https://fac.umass.edu/> to find the Augusta Savage gallery link for *Piece Me Back Together*.

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VALLEY VIEW from page B1

others started the spring traveling as a trio. I ran into them a few times when walking in March and April. Then, pregnant in mid-May, they separated to establish fawning nests. Now, for some reason, one is barren and the other two are out and about, feeding with their little ones, typically in small family units, occasionally together. One has twins, the other one fawn. I have thus far twice seen all five feeding together, but never with the barren doe, who is for now a loner. She'll likely rejoin the others by winter.

I will never know why that one doe is without young. Maybe she never got bred. Perhaps a breeding didn't take. Possibly her fawn or fawns were mortality victims, killed by predators or chopped up during the first cut of hay. It sometimes happens, no matter how careful farmers are.

What's important to remember about the deer I'm describing is that they're neighborhood deer that have learned to live on the margins of residential areas. They are often within sight, sound, and scent of humans who rarely know they're there. Bolder at night when they feed close to homes, they know how to stay out of sight and, over time, figure out who's threatening and who's not.

I fall into the latter category, passing through at about the same time every morning since March, and never in any way threatening them when we meet.

These close encounters in my daily travels are a new phenomenon for me personally. Always in the past I have walked with fit, alert, athletic dogs, all of them gun-dogs governed by superior noses. Thus, I seldom saw deer that my dogs moved, and even when I did, they were typically fleeing. Often, I'd hear something, look into the marshy perimeter, and see only

white flashes and movement before they disappeared. Those deer knew the sound of my truck, my whistle, and my voice, knew that I traveled with dogs, and learned how to skirt us, often standing motionless to let us pass.

That all changes when walking without dogs. I now routinely bump into deer, often face to face, and have discovered that a soft, calming voice and slow movement puts them at ease. Over time they have accepted me as a non-threatening component of their habitat.

Interestingly, I have yet to see a buck, or at least not one I could recognize since they sprouted antlers in June. Well, yes, there was that overcast morning, less than a month back, when, on my way out, I passed the two does and their three fawns feeding together across the road from my home. They saw me and knew I briefly saw them before I quickly passed. Then, on my way home, they were gone and one solitary deer, just one, was feeding out in the middle of the foggy field, maybe 150 yards away.

What immediately caught my attention about the feeding deer – head down, probably munching sweet clover – was a contented twitch of its tail. When I stopped, handicapped without glasses, to look for antlers, the deer picked up its head and looked straight at me. I couldn't tell if it had antlers. Too far away. Gray, hazy sky.

A buck? I wouldn't be surprised. What I know for sure is that that deer's contented tail-twitch was different – a subtle variable worth pondering.

In the meantime, I'll keep an eye out. The rut is near. That's when bucks are most visible, out and about, wandering wide to sow seeds for next spring's fawn crop. Then they'll come out of the shadows where they're typically



MR Wrapping Paper Edition Artist Profiles: #4

By **REPORTER STAFF**

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

We announced our seven winners on September 10. The seven are: Lahri Bond (Lake Pleasant); Hannah Brookman (Turners Falls); Emma Kohlmann (Northampton); Cecely Ogren (Turners Falls); Peter O. Zierlein (Northampton); Steve Schmidt (Amherst); and Jeanne Weintraub (Montague Center). The themes they proposed range from Christmas Chard to Holiday Bo-



tanicals to Grandma Moses does Turners Falls!

This special issue will go to press on Thanksgiving week.

We have asked each artist the same three questions, and we will run their answers separately in the coming weeks. **Cecely Ogren** proposed a holiday botanical theme for her wrapping paper. She answers our three questions this time:

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

CO: I want my wrapping paper to feel warm and nostalgic.

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

CO: Any book written by Neal Shusterman. I haven't read *Dry* yet. Or maybe a new tent, since mine broke last summer.

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

CO: I think the biggest gift the local newspaper has ever given me is a sense of community. You can live someplace without being emotionally attached to it, but it just feels temporary. Knowing about the people and goings-on in town makes it really feel like a home.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Empty Mills Explored; Debt Collector Gets Aggressive; Chickens Allowed To Wander; People Need To Chill

Monday, 9/21

8:23 a.m. Two open doors at the Indeck building on Canal Road. Officer advises no one in the area. Building secure.

12:48 p.m. Report of loose dog, possibly pit bull, on Turnpike Road. Called animal control officer; no answer. Officer advises good Samaritan helped with the dog.

Tuesday, 9/22

1:50 a.m. Caller states that a female is running in and out of her apartment and through the halls yelling, screaming, and causing a disturbance. Caller states he approached the female and asked her to keep it down, and she started yelling at him. Removed to hospital.

4:45 a.m. 911 caller from Seventh Street states male just arrived home and now she hears a lot of yelling and banging. Both involved parties state that a mutual friend came over intoxicated and was banging on the door; they were telling him to leave. Nothing verbal or physical between them. Peace restored.

10:58 a.m. Caller received two scam calls from someone claiming to be involved with her grandson. Caller confirmed with grandson that this was a scam.

3:46 p.m. Report of abandoned vehicle on Carlisle Avenue. Shutesbury PD attempting to make contact with registered owner. Caller advises car was picked up.

5:16 p.m. Anonymous voice mail reporting an unsafe-for-COVID-19 gathering at the baseball field in Montague Center.

7:20 p.m. 911 abandoned call. Upon callback, male advised his dog stepped on the phone. Officer advised of misdial.

8:22 p.m. Report of car vs. deer on Turners Falls Road. Car occupied x3; air-bag deployment; no injuries. MPD units, Shelburne Control, AMR, and TFFD advised. Vehicle towed. Report taken.

Wednesday, 9/23

6:39 a.m. Officer out at Southworth Paper Mill with what looks like a forced open door.

6:44 a.m. 911 hangup call. Upon callback, female states she hit her power button too many times. Confirmed misdial.

11:55 a.m. Report of out-of-control male party assaulting and threatening people at Wentworth Congregate Housing. Caller states he was punched, but does not need medical attention. Units advised.

5:19 p.m. Report of illegal burn on Turners Falls Road. Shelburne Control and MPD officer advised.

6:44 p.m. Report of bear

on Taylor Hill Road. Unable to locate.

10:51 p.m. Lightlife employee requesting TFFD to investigate smell of burning wires throughout building. No smoke or fire observed at this time. TFFD advised. Ever-source called to advise that they are currently at 101 Industrial Boulevard for a transformer fire; phase 3 will be restored in approximately one hour. Command advised.

11:10 p.m. Report of hit and run on Montague City Road. Vehicle side-swiped caller and continued toward General Pierce Bridge, possibly striking a barrier. Officer checking bridge for damage. Greenfield PD and Shelburne Control notified to be on lookout.

Thursday, 9/24

12:31 a.m. Caller from Highland School Apartments reporting a loud noise, possibly a generator, in the area. Officer advises noise is likely the railroad doing some work off East Main Street.

10:26 a.m. Caller from Lake Pleasant Road states she is having trouble with people working on the house next door; states her son asked them to move stuff from her property and they have gotten into a verbal argument. Officers advised.

11:20 a.m. Caller from Lake Pleasant Road states police just left his residence and he was told to call back if any other problems arise. Caller states the other male is back at his house causing a disturbance again. Advised of options.

5:09 p.m. Caller from Millers Falls Road would like it on record that a man came to her home in an attempt to collect a debt from a shed that she purchased. The man was aggressive, and she no longer wants him on her property. She is going to reach out to the sheriff's department to request a no trespass order.

Advised to call back if man returns.

8:24 p.m. Caller from East Main Street states that someone stole two packages that were delivered. Report taken.

9:18 p.m. 911 caller from Millers Falls Road states that a heavyside male in a big black pickup is knocking on everybody's door. Entire area checked; nothing found.

Friday, 9/25

9:23 a.m. Caller from G Street would like it on record that her granddaughter's bicycle was stolen off the back porch. Described as an older lime green and black Trek mountain bike. Referred to an officer.

11:33 a.m. ACO responding to Randall Road for report of barking dog. Owner agreed to try to keep dogs inside more.

1:42 p.m. Post office reporting four-foot sinkhole on Prospect Street. Units advised; DPW advised and responding.

4:25 p.m. Caller states that about 30 minutes ago, a young male at the skatepark showed a knife to his young granddaughter and said that he was gonna use it. Area checked; no one matching description found.

4:55 p.m. A 67-year-old Turners Falls man was arrested on a default warrant.

4:58 p.m. Caller states that two motorcyclists are driving very dangerously, tailgating cars and swerving into oncoming traffic on Bridge Street. Officers advised.

Saturday, 9/26

9:42 a.m. Caller from Randall Road concerned about a light green sedan parked near his driveway where they have found drug paraphernalia in the past. Vehicle gone upon arrival.

10:26 a.m. 911 caller states that a female who lives on Avenue A just damaged her car with a shopping cart. Caller does not want to press charges; just wants the female to

leave her alone. Advised of options.

3:20 p.m. Report of car vs. telephone pole on East Mineral Road. Caller states operator is out of the vehicle and steam is coming from the front of the vehicle. TFFD and AMR advised. Party transported to hospital. Vehicle towed. Ever-source will replace pole at a later date.

4:40 p.m. Report of three loose chickens on X Street. Officer located owners, who advised that they are free-roaming chickens and are okay to be wandering around.

7:46 p.m. Report of male party causing disturbance on Avenue A. Units advised. Male party is inside for night; all is quiet.

Sunday, 9/27

7:49 a.m. Caller from Avenue A states that upstairs neighbors are being very loud. He has spoken with them and asked them to quiet down. Parties spoken to and advised of options.

8:53 a.m. 911 caller from East Main Street reporting that she can hear a man yelling and swearing from somewhere in the building. Involved male spoken to and advised of complaint; he said he would quiet down.

8:56 a.m. Caller states that a sewer grate at Davis and Griswold streets has been removed and there is an open manhole now. Sewer grate put back in place.

4:45 p.m. Caller from Randall Road states that a loose dog was just struck by a vehicle. Dog appears uninjured. Caller believes dog has scars consistent with abuse. Dog returned to owner, who advised that the dog is a rescue, and the scars are from its previous owner. No signs of injury.

5:11 p.m. Greenfield PD advising of fuel spill starting at Poet's Seat in Greenfield and ending at the Fifth Street bridge. TFFD advised. Officer reports traffic is flowing fine at this time.

Montague Community Television News

We'll Edit Your Videos!

By **MICHAEL SMITH**

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

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

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

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

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

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TIMES from page B1
being inside this building.
Tuesday, 5/12/15

1:12 a.m. Caller reports that he was robbed down at the old Railroad Salvage; party took his wallet.
Monday, 5/18/15
4:07 p.m. Passerby flagged down officer to report smoke in the area across from Railroad Salvage. Officer located and spoke to two parties on the riverbank with a small campfire; they will extinguish fire.

Wednesday, 7/8/15
10:33 a.m. Caller reports noticing a couple of tents and a camper by the old Railroad Salvage last night; it appears people are living there. Responding officer checked on party, who is putting together a trailer at this location. Party advises that it will be a few days before he can move.

Thursday, 7/9/15
8:33 a.m. Report that people are camping out behind Railroad Salvage. Officer has been checking in with the subject periodically to make sure he is making progress on removing his items.

Monday, 7/13/15
11:32 a.m. Fire chief inquiring about the party that has been at Railroad Salvage with a tent and a camper; chief spoke with the property owner, who was not aware of anyone camping there, and does not want this person on the property. Area search negative; tent still there with belongings.

Wednesday, 7/15/15
9:35 p.m. Caller from Railroad Salvage reports that a male party known to him, who lives in the Patch, drove by where he has set up his tent and was revving his engine. Caller politely asked the party not to do so, and the party became belligerent, calling him names and threatening him.

Saturday, 7/18/15
11:10 a.m. Report of 4 or 5 tents set up at Railroad Salvage and several

subjects in the area. Per officer, if property owner reports trespassing, an officer will respond.
Tuesday, 7/21/15
12:08 p.m. Caller contacted Chief Dodge with three concerns: (1) a female who appears to be camped out in the Peske Park bandshell with a lot of belongings; (2) a male who is camped out behind Greenfield Savings Bank next to Food City; (3) parties with tents who have been congregating at the old Railroad Salvage site (see next entry). Officer spoke with woman in bandshell, who advised she was resting in the shade while waiting for a ride. Officer checked behind GSB: male was not there, but there was trash on site.

12:15 p.m. Caller reports several subjects camped out at the old Railroad Salvage property; advises that subjects are hiding behind fence at this time. Officer placed call to property owner, advised her of the complaint and inquired if she wanted any police assistance. Owner will be in to pick up copies of relevant calls.

Sunday, 8/23/15
10:24 a.m. Report of a suspicious vehicle (a box truck) in the bushes at/near Railroad Salvage. Caller observed the vehicle pull in. Officer advises that the box truck is still backed up into the bushes; located two subjects fishing and a pickup truck.
Saturday, 9/26/15
10:46 p.m. Officer checking on vehicle in Railroad Salvage parking lot. Boyfriend/girlfriend having some alone time.

Wednesday, 11/11/15
4:10 p.m. Caller reports that there is an open gate at Railroad Salvage and people walking in and out; feels this is unsafe.

Saturday, 11/14/15
4:18 p.m. Caller reports she was walking

in the area and noticed someone has painted a large swastika in the parking lot of the old Railroad Salvage. Caller also reports that the fence that surrounds the hydro station has a lock or chain that she thinks was cut.
Thursday, 1/7/16
12:04 p.m. Officer spoke with a subject who emerged from the area of Railroad Salvage. Subject advised against being in that area.
Thursday, 2/11/16
11:17 a.m. Report of two teenagers inside the Railroad Salvage building.

Subjects advised they are new to the area. Same moved along and advised of the consequences of being in that area.

Sunday, 3/20/16
6:04 p.m. Per Chief Dodge, he was contacted by residents in the Patch reporting that the Railroad Salvage annex building is unsecured and people have been going in and out. Advised DPW that officers found clasp ripped off door and are unable to secure it; DPW will respond tomorrow.

Wednesday, 3/30/16
6 p.m. Caller advising he can see two or three kids on the roof of the red

building at the Railroad Salvage complex. They appear to be throwing things off the roof.
Tuesday, 4/12/16
8:03 p.m. Caller reports that he parked his vehicle at Railroad Salvage

a letter on the tent to give owner time to remove it before they take it down.
Sunday, 11/27/16
10:23 a.m. Officer requests message be left for FirstLight advising of

smoke near Railroad Salvage, can hear voices in the woods on the riverbank, and can see light smoke rising. Small cooking fire located.
Tuesday, 4/10/18
7:10 p.m. Caller informing of open door and open window at Railroad Salvage. Owner advised and en

Caller was highly uncooperative in answering questions. Not as reported; caller had a recent falling out with involved parties, and is trying to get them into trouble.
Thursday, 6/21/18
8 p.m. Officer investigating smoke near Railroad Salvage; made contact with a female party who had a cooking fire. Female was instructed to put fire out and was willing to do so.

Friday, 8/10/18
8:06 a.m. Caller requesting assistance removing several homeless people trespassing on the riverbank near Railroad Salvage. One subject was served with trespass notice by FirstLight yesterday and given until noon today to leave and remove all of his property. Officer following up. Subject did not have anyone to help him move, so his property was still on site; however, it appeared that he was making attempts to clear out the area. Officer and FirstLight employee helped subject move his remaining items. Subject advised of consequences if he returns.

Tuesday, 10/23/18
5:51 a.m. Officer checking on vehicle parked at Railroad Salvage. Parties were playing Pokemon Go. Moved along.

Friday, 2/21/20
4:13 p.m. Caller states there is a raccoon staggering around not looking well; walking along Canal Road near old Railroad Salvage. Caller states it is near a small brown shed near a blue shed. Officer states nothing found in area. Copy of call left for ACO.

Friday, 3/13/20
9:28 a.m. Officer speaking with party who is in the fenced-off area on the Railroad Salvage property. Moved along without incident.

Monday, 6/8/20
9:36 p.m. Report of fireworks near Power Street. Officer located parties with fireworks in the old Railroad Salvage parking lot. Parties moved along.

Wednesday 7/22/20
4:39 p.m. Report of kids attempting to swim in the Connecticut River by the White Bridge near the old Railroad Salvage. Caller unsure if it is legal/safe to be swimming there. Officer reports two parties on tubes; all conditions seem to be safe. Parties are just relaxing. Seems OK to be on the water at this time.



around 3:30 today to use the bike path; when he returned at approximately 4:20, he found two of his tires slashed.

Wednesday, 9/7/16
1:27 p.m. Officer located personal belongings inside a tent across from Railroad Salvage. Items put in evidence bag, logged, and placed in evidence locker.

Thursday, 9/8/16
6:43 a.m. Out with suspicious vehicle occupied x1 in front of Railroad Salvage. Medical services requested; female unresponsive but breathing. TFFD on scene. All units clear; female was awoken by EMS. Same stated she fell asleep in the car in the lot last night. Female verbally trespassed from property and sent on her way.

Wednesday, 9/28/16
7:57 a.m. Caller from FirstLight property near Railroad Salvage reporting at least one tent set up in area. Officer checked area; no one around, but tent is set up in woods with a couple of chairs and miscellaneous items around it. Caller will put

trash and miscellaneous household items dumped on their property behind Railroad Salvage; this is a courtesy call, as FirstLight has expressed in the past that they'd like to keep their property free of illegally dumped items.
Wednesday, 11/30/16
4:37 p.m. Caller states that there is a lot of trash from illegal dumping across the street from the old Railroad Salvage. Caller and others from neighborhood were going to clean it up to the best of their ability.

Saturday, 12/31/16
1:38 a.m. 911 transfer from state police; operator at Northfield Mountain Project reporting structure fire can be seen on security cameras; believed to be old Railroad Salvage building. Officers and TFFD en route. Three additional 911 callers reporting same; no additional info or better location.

Tuesday, 7/25/17
6:24 p.m. Caller reporting strong odor of smoke in Canal Road area. PD and FD responding. Officer advising he can smell

route to location to secure building and inventory tools stored inside.

Thursday, 4/26/18
7:53 p.m. Report of three subjects at the smaller abandoned building to the right of Railroad Salvage. Officers spoke with parties on site; parties advise they have permission to be there. Call placed to building owner. No answer; will try back.

Friday, 5/4/18
12:35 a.m. Officer out with suspicious vehicle near Railroad Salvage annex building. Male operator reported that he had the building owner's permission to be there. Male was able to contact building owner by phone; confirmed with officer that male does have permission to be there. Owner advised to come to MPD to have same noted.

Tuesday, 6/19/18
12:46 a.m. Caller in the area of Railroad Salvage states that there are several parties on FirstLight properties intoxicated and fighting, and that they had lit a campfire so big that it will light the whole woods on fire.



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26B: Paul Flaherty, Part II

Interview by J. BURKETT

TURNERS FALLS – Last week we ran Part I of this interview with Paul Flaherty, a well known “free improvisation, free jazz/noise” musician from Connecticut. We hope you enjoy Part II!

MMM: So now where, back further in time? Kindergarten, maybe?

PF: No... on to junior high school, where I played sax in the school band but never improvised a note. I was not an unpopular or popular kid. Just existing, trying to survive and get through it all.

We had a Gym/study hall teacher/guard named “Butch Busino.” He was quite often a bully with the kids, slapping and wrestling them down in Gym and acting like a king in study hall. I never hated him, but I watched him do things that left me with little or no respect for him. He was a clown, and kids often talked back or even down to him. And he’d blow up and berate them.

I had him for study hall in grade 8, right

after lunch. The room we studied in was large with high (20 foot) ceilings and wooden floors, huge glass windows, and about 150 wooden desks. Nice acoustics. Every desk had a student.

One day at lunch I ate quickly and then approached each lunch table in the cafeteria. I told everyone that we all were going to drop a book in Busino’s study hall at exactly 1:15. I told each table that everyone was in, we all were going to do it. I was not a leader. I had no followers. And no one said “Great Idea!!” They all just listened, and went back to eating. But I preached the idea to everyone.

An hour later in study hall, as 1:15 approached, I wondered if I’d be the only fool who dropped his book. But around 1:10 I began to notice a number of kids with grins on their faces turning to look at the big clock high on the back wall.

There was whispering rising throughout the room, and Busino noticed. He began pacing around the front and feeling that something was up. The look on his face read “Something’s going on, but I don’t know what

it is.” We all seemed wrapped in anticipation.

And then it was 1:15. Not one kid, not five kids, but every kid in that study hall – boys and girls – dropped a book, and then another, and another... Some dropped up to eight books one at a time. A few kids knocked all their books off at once. It went on for about a minute.

The sound was frighteningly and beautifully exploding all around us. Cannons, hundreds of horses galloping... It seemed like 25 drummers tearing loose at once. Again, it was a stunt, but as the years went by and I told the story, it was the sound I kept trying to explain to people. Wonderfully rebellious.

Butch Busino went insane. Everyone was trying so hard not to laugh that we were pissing our pants. Butch was screaming at us all to pick up our books as straggling books kept dropping. He focused on the male athletes, who he assumed organized the whole thing, and began lining them up against the wall. He demanded a confession as to who planned this. We all watched as he then called the principal to come lecture us.

I stood up at this point, before the principal arrived, and screamed at him, “What are you doing?!! What are you doing?!!” He stopped dead and focused his stare on me, but then shook his head as if to say “No... It couldn’t be you.”

I would have liked to have confessed, but to what? We all dropped a book. We all played the noise music. We all slapped the clown.

The principal came and admonished us and the athletes were blamed, without punishment. Busino seemed like a bigger idiot than ever. He could have laughed with us, but he took it as a personal affront.

Good.

Years later, I realized that I had organized a free musical happening. Each player expressed themselves in their own way. I was proud to have taken part. We all heard the music. Anthony Braxton would have numbered it.

MMM: Did you ever try that again in other study halls?

PF: Yes, but without luck... It was a miracle.

MMM: So, this is the final story. Is it the craziest?

PF: No, and it doesn’t really hold up to

the others. But it was a solo noise piece, and that has to start somewhere.

I was 14, a sophomore in high school and spent a lot of time at the Rockville Library. Sometimes studying school work, sometimes studying old baseball statistics with friends, usually sneaking peaks at the girls who were there.

The building was a class act. Mostly white stone with wooden floors and at least 25-foot ceilings. Even whispering carried, and drove the librarians nuts.

There was one special section below we weren’t allowed to go to. It had amazing thick green floors of glass. So thick you couldn’t see through, and we always wanted to go below and see it from that angle. So one day we – my cousin David and I – snuck down and found that it wasn’t much different, but noticed a janitor’s room was there. A tiny, one-room apartment with a bed, a little sink, and a window. I nervously went in and unlocked the window.

That night – the library was open till 9:00 pm – as my cousin Dave pretended to be reading upstairs, I very quietly crawled through the janitor’s window from the outside, got below the green glass floor, lit a cherry bomb, tossed it under the glass floor, and heard it detonate just as I dove back through the janitor’s window.

No one saw me. I escaped. But when I asked my cousin how big the sound was, he said it was incredible, but that all he could do was start laughing. “They probably know it was you.”

The next day I went to take out a book and the librarian told me I was banned from taking out books for three years. I didn’t argue. Free improv one-note explosive noise concerts are seldom appreciated.

My biggest regret was that I didn’t hear it from the audience perspective, but then, what musician does.

MMM: Any regrets that you actually started improvising on the saxophone, and didn’t stick to books, bombs, and screaming children?

PF: Yeah, some... The sax has driven me nuts at times. But overall, no regrets. I’m glad the librarians didn’t drop dead. It’s all part of becoming a freeform musician.

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WARREN ONDRAS PHOTO

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— Lisa McLoughlin, editor

Improving Life Along the North River for Fish and Farmers

By LISA McLOUGHLIN

COLRAIN – The longnose sucker fish (*Catostomus catostomus*) in the North River in Colrain were unhappy, so the Connecticut River Conservancy (CRC) is doing something about it.

These endangered fish like places to hide in deep, quiet water and well-vegetated stream banks. They do not like silt. They spawn in shallow riffle areas during a five-to ten-day period between mid-April and July, and within gravel streams that have moderate to fast flows. They do not build nests, preferring to lay their adhesive, sinking eggs in clean, well-oxygenated gravel to develop.

In short, the longnose suckers need clean water to thrive, and they could use some help.

Endangered fish won't be the only ones benefiting from the river restoration project managed by Andrea Donlon of the CRC. Other fish will benefit from the improvement of their aquatic home, and farms will keep more of their fields.

In preparation, almost a mile of the East Branch of the North River along privately-owned agricultural land in Colrain was studied. Tropical Storm Irene had wiped out the thin forested buffer along the river and caused significant bank erosion that nine years later is still keeping plants from re-establishing themselves.

The solution is to plant a 25-foot wide buffer of native plants between the fields and the river. Trees on the riverbank will taper down to native grasses near the fields, and the shore will be protected with 40 wooden buttresses from 460 locally-harvested trees. These buttresses will stabilize the bank, provide cover for the fish, shade the stream to help keep the water temperature down, and allow plants to get a foothold.

The buttresses, which stick out 14 feet from shore and contain tangles of branches for fish habitat, are an alternative to stone riprap or armor, such as was used along the South River in Conway. They have less of an effect on the water velocity, which increases when the bank is hardened by rock. Increased water velocity makes the stream less hospitable to certain fish, sweeping woody



ANDRE DONLON PHOTO

Construction crew from Scapes Builders moves a root into place to build wood buttresses. Nicolas Miller, a fluvial geomorphologist, guides the work from the water.

debris downstream leaving them fewer places to hide, and erodes the unarmored banks further downstream.

The wooden buttresses are supposed to look more natural, and the wood itself provides for aquatic creatures. They last about 20 years, giving trees a chance to establish themselves and take over the work of stabilizing the bank.

In addition to the stabilization, an agricultural access road will be moved farther away from the river, and two culverts are being replaced with old-fashioned rock fords. This will allow the farmer to continue to provide access for tractor-trailer trucks – which weigh 50 tons – to haul manure to the fields without building expensive steel bridges.

The project started on August 24, and is planned to finish at the end of September. It is part of a cluster of nine river restoration projects being managed by CRC across New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. Once completed, the fish will have cleaner water, improved habitat, and a more natural river flow, and the farmers' fields will not be eroding into the river.

Local economies stand to benefit from two USDA environmental quality incentive program grants, totalling \$2 million, to the CRC and the Deerfield River Watershed Association. These were spent in part on local plants, and on construction, engineering, and planting jobs.

In addition to these nine river restoration projects, the CRC and its partners planted more than 6,400 trees this past spring, and have 13 more tree-planting projects lined up for this fall.

"We always say that a healthy environment and healthy economy go hand in hand, and it couldn't be any more true right now," says Ron Rhodes, river steward for CRC. "We're thrilled that our river restoration work can help boost the local economies during these difficult times. And we are proud of the partnerships we have been able to forge over the past decade that have resulted in nearly 350 miles of stream being restored and opened to fish passage."

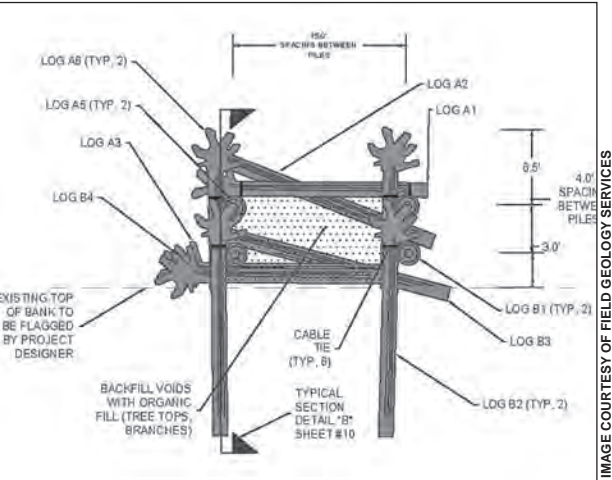


IMAGE COURTESY OF FIELD GEOLOGY SERVICES

Schematic of a buttress.

Dark Skies: Essential For Wildlife Health

By LISA McLOUGHLIN

NORTHFIELD – Nighttime artificial lighting is bad for wildlife, interfering with everything from reproduction, feeding, and sleep to protection from predators. You may have heard of efforts to eliminate lighting on beaches so that when sea turtles hatch they go into the water instead of up into parking lots. More apropos to our area, frogs and toads need darkness to croak, which is part of their breeding ritual. Globally, we've lost 200 species of frogs in the last 50 years, mostly due to habitat loss. Darkness is part of their habitat.

Migrating birds and birds that hunt at night are thrown off by artificial lights, and collide with buildings when they are drawn into cities. The Audubon Society estimates that hundreds of millions of birds are killed each year by building collisions. Lit buildings attract them, and they have difficulty seeing glass, making for a deadly combination.

More locally, hummingbirds are one species that needs to sleep at night, going into a very relaxed torpor that saves energy by lowering body temperature and heart rate. They do this when migrating, and when they're in our area during the summer. Artificial lighting keeps hummingbirds awake, meaning they must feed longer to sustain their higher "awake" energy needs.

To improve the lighting (or rather, darkening) environment on your property, don't use your outdoor lighting unless you really need it. Set up your lighting so



BRIAN TOFT-SCHUMACHER PHOTO

Migratory birds temporarily stuck in the World Trade Center Memorial Lights.

that the light aims down where you use it by adjusting it properly and using shielded lighting fixtures. Keep it off unless you're doing something outside.

The International Dark Sky Association website has a list of approved fixtures that will help you set up a more efficient and effective lighting system. Coordinate with your neighbors and local government to save money, and increase community health, by eliminating unnecessary bright lights.

For a great read on the myriad effects of a brighter night, try *The End of Night* by Paul Bogard, a very well-researched and enjoyable book, or visit the International Dark Sky Association's website.

BOOK REVIEW

Robin Cody, *Ricochet River* 25th Anniversary Edition (2017, Ooligan Press)

By LISA McLOUGHLIN

NORTHFIELD – *Ricochet River* is a strange and beautiful book. It's written in the voice of Wade, a smart, nonconformist teenage boy who is deeply rooted in place. It has a confessional, raw, coming-of-age feeling to it.

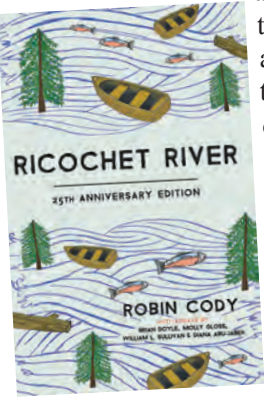
Wade is easy to like and complicated enough to be interesting. But it's not an insular book. The narrator, though ostensibly telling the story of his Indigenous American friend Jesse and his girlfriend Lorna, focuses instead on the river.

The idea of place is central to this story, and it elucidates the complex

relationships between humans and the rest of nature. All around the river's natural existence is the culture woven by adult family and community members, by corporations, and by government regulations. These

affect the teens' lives in the present and future, and the author presaged the young people of today, who are speaking out about how climate change and environmental destruction is their legacy from us.

I like this novel primarily for how it makes all the issues of what is impersonally called "resource management" personal. It's an important book for our times.



October 2020 Moon Calendar

Full Moon
Thursday, October 1

New Moon
Friday, October 16

Full Moon (Samhain)
Saturday, October 31

Last Quarter
Friday, October 9

First Quarter
Friday, October 23

Super moon setting on January 31, 2018 in Washington, DC.

NASA PHOTO

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by denis f. bordeaux

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SEE TOLD' YA! PEOPLE ARE STARTING TO REALIZE A FOREIGN COUNTRY, LIKE PUERTO RICO, IS TRYING TO SABOTAGE MY RE-ELECTION

THEY'RE ANGRY AS HELL ABOUT THIS MAIL-IN VOTING SCHEME BEING A CONSPIRACY AND A DISASTER.

THE PEOPLE WILL BE UP IN ARMS WHEN THEY FIGURE OUT ILLEGAL ALIENS ARE COUNTERFEITING BALLOTS.

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VOTE EARLY AND OFTEN

Cool Cats on the Ave

October

Another month gone by

But October is such a great month!

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Fattened mice to catch.

Kitty Birthdays!

Cool nights perfect for sleeping.

Some things don't change.

THREE DEGREES OF WARMING

© JANICE ROWAN

She's a gonner - I can't find the fact port on this one

Time for a brain bypass

OVER THE HILL

Carolyn Clark

It's hard to believe that we've been married for 55 years!

Do you still love me the best after all this time, Harry?

Absolutely! Well, ... you and Annette Funicello... maybe Jane Russell...

But, yes, you, Cupcake, best of all. Give us a kiss!

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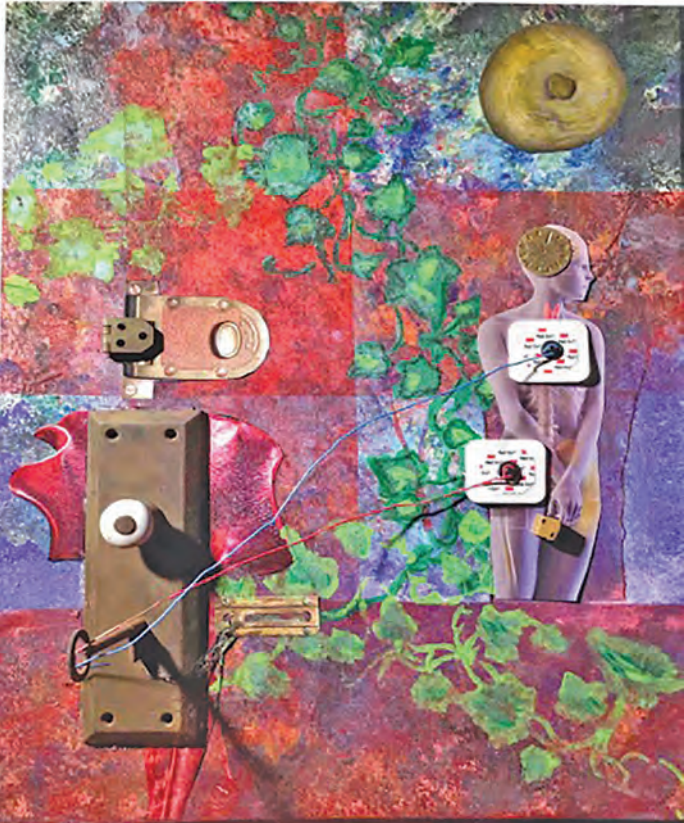
Bryan G. Hobbs
PO Box 1555
Greenfield, MA 01302

LIFE from page B1
of time to just be. “People have transformed before my eyes, and this is my greatest joy,” notes Mayer.

Survivor Versus Patient

Nearly a year ago, Mayer was anxiously approaching what she thought was going to be her last chemotherapy treatment. It was October 9, 2019. She had planned an art exhibit, titled *A Matter of Life and Breast*, at Cooley Dickinson Hospital, where she was receiving treatment.

Mayer, her wife Beth, and long-time friend and cancer survivor Janet prepared the installation, which included 26 collages of various sizes. The common theme throughout her



This collage by Mayer uses found objects, as well as several of Mayer’s medical leads. She explains that the “camvas is meant to convey that beauty is locked away for safe-keeping. It is still there and will reveal itself when this is all over.”

art is what Mayer describes as “found elements and mixed media” that she uses to personalize her cancer journey.

“People who attended the show were really moved by the art,” recalls Mayer. “I thought, I can make a book to help others who have been diagnosed with breast cancer. I want to help them tap into their creative resources, and maybe get their own feelings out about cancer.”

Yet the urgency to publish the book came sooner than expected.

For a short time, Mayer thought she was done with cancer. She looked forward to being a cancer survivor instead of a cancer patient, to “live a long life afterwards with Beth,” Mayer writes in her book.

“Cancer wreaks havoc on me – invasive, intrusive; if I ask you nicely to leave and never come back, would you?” she asks rhetorically.

In late March the coronavirus was beginning to surge in western Massachusetts. Businesses were closing; people were entering lockdown. Despite the pandemic and a myriad of cancer-related medical appointments, Mayer began the lengthy process of photographing her creations and writing captions to accompany her artwork. The book, published through online custom publisher Shutterfly, was funded in part by her stimulus check and donations from friends and family.

Her goal was to have 50 books made. As of this writing, Mayer is in the process of distributing the books to hospitals in western Mass and to Cancer Connection, a Northampton-based support agency for people diagnosed with cancer. Additional recipients include Mayer’s doctors and nurses, and others who have been significant in her process of having cancer and being a patient.

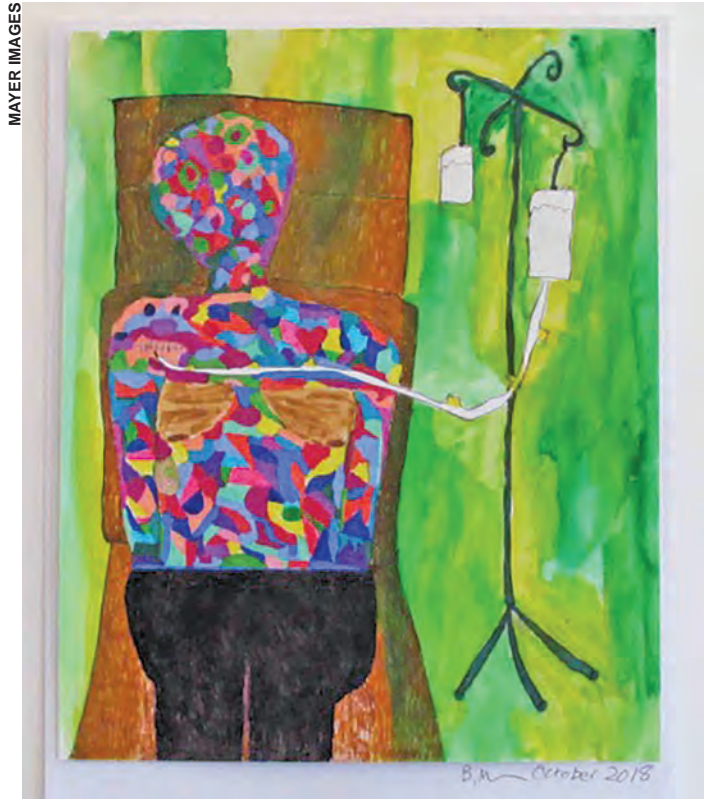
Mayer says she is pleased with the book. “Everyone who has received a copy is touched by the book. I think I have achieved my purpose.”

Leaving Her Legacy

Mayer says one of her goals is “to leave the book as my legacy, as a way to continue to help people through their cancer trauma once I am gone.”

In a recent interview, she explained existing in a strange limbo. “I don’t know whether I am living or dying. Right now, I guess I am doing both.”

Mayer’s cancer treatments – daily doses of oral chemo-



Mayer’s description of this collage is: “Chemo, and how I used coloring to help endure the treatments.”

therapy and infusion treatments every three weeks – have resumed indefinitely. Now that her art book is published, Mayer is working with A Window Between Worlds to develop the babs Mayer Scholarship Program. Through the scholarship, each year one new facilitator will receive training to begin their own A Window Between Worlds program, helping trauma survivors heal through art.

Mayer’s advice to everyone, no matter what your trauma or stage of life might be, is to “give yourself permission to let the hard stuff go away. There are pieces of us that need to be heard, and art is one way to let go.”

Free digital downloads of Mayer’s art book, *A Book about Breast Cancer Art*, are available. Contact karan@graphixforchange.com. To learn more about the babs Mayer Scholarship, visit awbw.org/babs.



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