

# The Montague Reporter

YEAR 18 – NO. 45

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

\$1

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

OCTOBER 15, 2020

## State Office Endorsed Farren Center Closure Before Public Hearings

By JEFF SINGLETON

**MONTAGUE CITY** – A spokesperson for the Executive Office of Health and Human Services has confirmed that the state has accepted Trinity Health of New England’s proposal to close the Farren Care Center, move its residents to a Holyoke facility, and sell that facility to a for-profit company.

In fact, despite public hearings last month on the Farren’s closure, Massachusetts has been working for over a year with iCare Health Network, a for-profit company based in Connecticut, on the plan to take over Trinity’s Mount Saint Vincent Care Center in Holyoke, according to an email received Wednesday night by the Reporter. The spokesperson indicated that this information was being provided “on background” and would not allow the email to be quoted.

The document does not specify that Trinity’s draft plan, which sets a proposed date of December 31 for



The Farren’s owner plans to close it down at the end of December.

the closure of the long-term care center in Montague City, has been approved.

The Farren, a former Catholic hospital that has been part of Montague’s history for over 100 years, see **FARREN** page A3

## LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

### No Vote Over Black Lives Matter Sign

By GEORGE BRACE

At their Tuesday night meeting the Leverett selectboard took no action on a motion for the town to fund a sign in support of the Black Lives Matter movement. Board members stated the town’s position in favor of the movement, but chair Julie Shively and member Peter d’Errico objected to the use of town funds without authorization by town meeting.

Members of the town’s social justice committee (SJC) participated both in person and remotely. The lengthy discussion was intense throughout, with moments of anger, in a meeting which lasted over two and a half hours overall.

Board member Tom Hankinson introduced a motion for the town to embrace and endorse Black Lives Matter by spending up to \$500 on a sign supporting the movement. Hankinson commented on the history and national scope of the issue, which came to a head in Leverett this summer due to the painting of BLM slogans on roadways, and their subsequent defacement.

Board members were unanimous in voicing their strong opposition to racism, but Shively and d’Errico noted the precedent that the town has used to deal with political and social issues in the past, and held that the board would be exceeding its authority if it approved the expense without a town vote.

Resident Brooke Thomas said he has had BLM signs on his own lawn “forever,” but felt the town was divided on the issue, and that supporting a particular group would erode confidence in the selectboard. Brooke said the board’s role was to keep the town together. He also pointed out that it would set a precedent for other groups, such as gun-rights and anti-abortion advocates.

Shively said she did not feel the town was actually divided on the issue of racism, but that “some people in town are... sort of turned off by

see **LEVERETT** page A7

## GOING REMOTE

### The At-Home Classroom: In Our Own Words



Our reporter’s own remote learning “classroom” setup.

By **IZZY VACHULA-CURTIS**

**TURNERS FALLS** – Local schools have started remote, hybrid, or in-person learning by now. My school, Turners Falls High School and Great Falls Middle School, has started remote, and is planning to move to hybrid around the 26th of October.

Greenfield High School has started remote, and hasn’t set a date for their return. Franklin County Tech has started hybrid: their students are remote for three days, then hybrid for two, then the next week their schedule switches, so they are in school for three days and remote for two. Stoneleigh-Burnham, a private school, is remote currently, and planning to bring students back to school in person in January.

Remote learning has been a big adjustment for everyone, teachers and students. “I don’t get the same learning experience and I don’t get to see my friends as much,” expresses Skye Evans, who goes to Stoneleigh-Burnham.

My own opinion is that although remote/hybrid learning isn’t preferable to being in school, it isn’t awful. I like that while learning remotely we can wear comfortable clothes, learn in the comfort of our own homes, and, most importantly, keep everyone safe by staying home.

“Something positive about the school year so far is how prepared the teachers have been, and how well they’re utilizing the technology,” says Greenfield High School student Sofia Holden.

Jeremy Kovalsick, who goes to Franklin Tech, is doing hybrid learning. “Since we are hybrid,” he

says, “we get to do everything that we would do in a regular school year, just a little less time.”

Another great part about remote and hybrid learning is, since everyone is spending a lot more time learning electronically, teachers have had students use new apps to assist with their learning. I asked a couple students about programs they have been using that are new to them.

“Only my English teacher and my electrical teacher have told us to use different sites for learning,” Jeremy tells me, “[which include] SkillsUSA and CommonLit. I haven’t really used SkillsUSA yet, but CommonLit is a site that was made by teachers that put a lot of short stories, poems and other stuff for annotations and questions about the story.”

“Some apps my teachers have been using that are new to me include Jamboard, which is a digital whiteboard,” says Sofia.

There are definitely pros and cons about going back to school this year. I think that we should do everything we can to keep our

see **REMOTE** page A5



Greenfield ninth grader Sofia Holden’s home setup.

## Eviction Moratorium Ends This Saturday

By SARAH ROBERTSON

**FRANKLIN COUNTY** – With millions out of work across the country, unpaid rent piling up, and emergency eviction moratoriums approaching their end, a unique public health crisis is brewing. Millions could face eviction and homelessness in the coming months just as a second wave of COVID-19 infections hits many communities.

“We know another crash is coming, and add COVID into that, with more tenants being displaced, we’re looking at a big crisis worse than the crash of 2008,” said Rose Webster-Smith, program coordinator for the housing organization Springfield No One Leaves. “I think it’s

going to be on a scale worse than what it was during the Great Depression unless we act now.”

In Massachusetts, a statewide emergency eviction moratorium is set to expire on October 17; next week, housing courts will be open and landlords can begin sending notices to quit for nonpayment. While Massachusetts governor Charlie Baker has the ability to extend the moratorium again, as of right now, he has indicated that he does not plan to.

In preparation for that day, some housing organizations are hiring staff, bolstering their support networks, and even, in some cases, preparing for direct action to halt evictions.

The Franklin County Regional see **EVICITION** page A7

## A WRENCHING LOSS



MICHAEL MARCOTRIGIANO PHOTO

Probably the largest and oldest Northern Catalpa (*Catalpa speciosa*) in at least Western Mass, if not the entire state, was pushed down by the wind in the storm that took out power to much of the area. The tree, located on the side yard of a house on Main Street in Montague Center, was likely planted when the house was built 131 years ago. The owners are devastated. It was stately even in the winter. When the winds came the tree was still in leaf, which allowed the wind to have a greater effect. (Photo and caption by Michael Marcotrigiano of the Montague tree advisory committee.)

## GILL-MONTAGUE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

### G-M Schools Still Planning For Hybrid Reentry This Month

By MIKE JACKSON

**GILL-MONTAGUE** – The regional school committee did not make any changes Tuesday night to the plan to begin returning small groups of students for hybrid learning on October 20.

Superintendent Brian Beck reviewed official COVID-19 data. He said the Montague board of health had told him that a cluster of 11 recent positive cases in Sunderland were “related to the outbreak at the University of Massachusetts.”

Beck then reported on ongoing repairs and upgrades to the schools’ HVAC systems. The contractor, he

said, was waiting for parts to improve ventilation at Hillcrest Elementary, and had shifted to Sheffield. Upgrades to the automated building management system at the middle and high school had “no specific timeline.”

Montague member Michael Langknecht asked Beck to confirm that the buildings’ airflow would be retested before students reenter the buildings.

“Getting larger numbers of people on campus really should only happen when we have an increased number of spaces that we could consider to have healthy air,” the see **GMRSD** page A4

### Someone Told Us They Read These Little Headlines!

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"The Voice of the Villages"

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## Understimulated

National politics continues to be completely mind-melting as we approach the event horizon. The First Family has purportedly conquered coronavirus; early voters in some swing states are forming blocks-long lines; one of the parties has installed unauthorized ballot boxes throughout California, where a lemur is also missing from the San Francisco zoo, and a person wearing a jetpack has been spotted flying above Los Angeles.

Republicans appear poised to claim a sympathetic 6-3 majority on the Supreme Court for years to come. Meanwhile Democrats, if the political forecasting website FiveThirtyEight is to be believed, have a 74% chance of gaining a majority in the Senate and an 87% chance at the presidency. The website, which is currently owned by the Walt Disney Company, famously erred in 2016.

Last week we wrote in this space that Trump had ordered a halt to negotiations over the next round of emergency economic stimulus. It didn't last long. Since then the president pivoted three times, first recommending a standalone bill to provide voters a second round of direct cash, then suggesting a package with a *higher* price tag than the \$2.2 trillion bill House Democrats have passed, before cycling back to his administration's earlier \$1.6 trillion proposal but bumping it up another couple hundred billion.

Maybe it's the polling, but Senate Republicans seem to have split off. We now have a *three-way* standoff, with each faction incentivized to portray another as responsible for the cumulative inaction.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, pushing a small bill that focuses on employer subsidies, wrote that Pelosi "frequently says she feels *'nothing'* is better than *'something'*" and "has worked hard to ensure that *'nothing'* is what American families get."

"We want to have an agreement. Yet Republicans refuse to ensure that such an agreement puts #FamiliesFirst," the House Speaker wrote last night Her position is that the small standalone bill is a non-starter, and that Trump's is laden with breaks for the wealthy. Her strategy is to hold out for something closer to the House bill, which contains state and local aid, childcare and rental assistance, tax credits, small business assistance, and emergency funding for COVID-19 testing, election systems, and the US Census. "Nancy Pelosi couldn't care less

about the great American Worker," the president tweeted in the wee hours of Thursday morning. "She should approve needed STIMULUS now. Most other Dems agree."

Conspicuously missing from this entire fracas is any pretense that there is a correct, technical way to enact stimulus amid an economic contraction. The two parties both discuss "workers," but diverge on what they hope workers *do*: the Democratic bill aims to soften the impact of quarantine (and, by way of the childcare assistance, remote learning), retroactively and for as long as it is recommended; Republicans seem to like workers to the extent that they go in to work, regardless of its necessity (hence their singular focus on replenishing the Paycheck Protection Program).

And while Trump seems intent on whatever will give him the best boost on November 3, it's fascinating to watch the rest of his party inch away and begin to hedge their bets. Massachusetts governor Charlie Baker came right out and said on Wednesday that he won't be voting for the incumbent.

A pragmatic, if not necessarily moderate, wing of the party that has not moved much visibly of its own accord in recent years is now looking to reduce downballot losses, making the case for Republican candidates as an important check on a scenario of unfettered (wild-eyed, socialist, etc.) Democratic power.

To be fair, if the party does make it to 50+1, it would mean Vermont senators Leahy and Sanders would be next in line to chair the Appropriations and Budget committees.

We're 19 days from Election Day, and there's absolutely no knowing what might happen afterward. We might all be armchair litigants for months, especially if state mail-in tallies are called into question.

If nothing else, it's all a very clear sign that the US presidential has become a political singularity so heavy that it distorts any other government action for between one and two years every four. At this point the contest seems more real, and more consequential, than the novel coronavirus pandemic; the 217,000 US deaths and counting are cast as a partisan talking point.

What's on the other side of the wormhole? Escalating social conflict, a surge in evictions, extreme weather events, more sickness? Can we count on our government to help us? Are there other preparations we could be making? Are you talking it through with your friends?



NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION

Susan Blauner of Turners Falls poses with her sculpture, *Masked*, which won first prize in the Montague Cultural Council "In These Times" art competition. Susan, who has never sewn before the pandemic, has now made about 150 masks, most of which she donated. The sculpture uses scraps of fabric, thread spools, and elastic mounted in a vintage drawer and displayed on a sink pedestal.

## Letters to the Editors

### A Reduced Halloween

Many families in Montague Center will not host Halloween this year due to COVID-19.

Traditionally the village of Montague Center is a mecca for Trick or Treating. Children can easily navigate through the village and enjoy multiple homes decorated in Halloween-appropriate themes. The Village Green also is the scene of many residents who set up "camp" and allow the participants to add to their loot bags.

Over the course of the years this event has become well known throughout the Valley, and the number of children has usually easily topped 800, with many adults also in

town enjoying the festivities.

This year would be extra special, as Halloween falls on a Saturday and a Full Moon. However, as we all know, 2020 has been the year of cancellations due to COVID-19. Many local homeowners are raising well-intended concerns about hosting this event.

With the social distancing and facial masks state mandates still in place, and the number of confirmed cases on the rise, in many local communities many residents are opting out of the Halloween festivities out of concern for all participants.

Residents on North Street have

already regrettably announced they will not play host. One homeowner admitted she can have between 75 and 100 folks in her yard at one time, and for several hours! No way can all those folks stay 6 feet apart and still enjoy the festivities.

We urge everyone to adhere to the wishes of the individual homeowner and respect their decision, knowing that next year Montague Center will certainly be the place to safely trick or treat.

Thank you,

Ann Fisk  
President, Montague Center  
Firefighters Association

### We Love Rosie Fund

Many transitions, weddings, graduations and rites of passage have had to be postponed or cancelled this year. One that hits home for the entire Town of Wendell is the retirement of our beloved librarian, Rosie!

In much the same way that townfolk have created safe graduation ceremonies, virtual baby showers, Passover Seders and now Halloween, people have been asking us what can be done to honor this Wendell Treasure who touched each one of us with her tireless efforts and many extra hours, her attention to our wants and needs and her creativity.

During the 40 years Rosie worked on behalf of our Wendell Free Library the gifts she has given us are innumerable. After her history of generosity it does not seem right to let the end of her career just fizzle out.

There is something you can do.

We are inviting you to contribute to the "We Love Rosie Fund."

By November 1, please mail a check made out to Christine Heard to 149 Wendell Depot Road, Wendell, MA 01379 or drop it in the box at her front door.

Judy Hall  
Wendell

### Kudos for Monthly Page

Estoy haciendo una pequeña donación a su periódico para apoyar sus artículos en español.

Estos artículos son importante para mi por tres razones: Primera, me gusta la oportunidad para practicar mi castellano y aprender más del vocabulario que se usan en las noticias. Segunda, es importante que las negocios y las noticias servir toda la comunidad.

Pero, la cosa lo mas importante es la gente que no pueden leer ni una palabra en español van a ver los artículos cada semana y ellos serán recordados que hay muchas culturas en nuestra comunidad y, como el *Montague Reporter*, nuestros tienen que ser conscientes de las necesidades de toda la gente.

Gracias por sus esfuerzos,

Tim Mc Nerney  
Shutesbury

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By NINA ROSSI

MASS MoCA holds its last outdoor concert of the season next Saturday, October 17 at 7:30 p.m. Andy Wrba, Berkshire County native and founder of the Berkshire Jazz Collective, plays with members of the Whiskey Treaty Roadshow and others. Limited tickets are available; get yours in advance at [massmoca.org](http://massmoca.org).

Next Monday, October 19, you may join a community-wide screening and discussion of the feature-length documentary "I'm Not a Racist... Am I?" sponsored by the **Communities That Care Coalition**. The film follows a diverse group of teens "through a yearlong exploration to get at the heart of racism," according to a press release sent out by the Coalition.

The movie and ensuing discussion – with producer André Robert Lee, director Catherine Wigginton Greene, Amy McMahan of Mesa Verde, and Keyedrya Jacobs – will stream on [GCTV.com](http://GCTV.com). Participants will also be able to use a chat function to join the discussion.

Jacobs writes that the Coalition is launching their Advancing Racial Justice in Schools project, and they hope that this community screening will open up more dialogue. Attend online from 6:30 to 9 p.m. on Monday, October 19 at [gctv.com](http://gctv.com).

Stop by the **Great Falls Farmers Market** for live music from folk foursome Ruby Mack in addition to fresh produce, flowers and more, this coming Wednesday, October 21. The free, 5 p.m. concert at Peskeomskut Park is made possible by the North Quabbin Garlic & Arts Festival.

Participate in a new type of **interactive, yet remote, theater** with Eggtooth Productions on October 22 through 25 at 7 and 9 p.m. each night. The show, *Stagehand*, is a blend of video game and theater, and will take place through Zoom. Participants will need a computer with microphone and speakers and a good internet connection.

Groups of four will be connected to an in-show avatar to explore a theater of mystery, full of objects, stories, and characters, set within the dormant venues of the Academy of Music and Shea Theater. For those 14 years and older. Tickets and more information at [sheatheater.org](http://sheatheater.org).

Artist and local business owner Christopher Janke is premiering a mixed-media **experimental video installation** at the LAVA Center in Greenfield from October 23 through 25, and October 30 through November 1. The installation is described as evoking the uneasy time "between the election of 2016 and the inauguration of 2017," an "inquiry into racialized fear and the turn from politics to violence."

Attendees must sign up in advance, as spots are limited. Sign up at [localaccess.org](http://localaccess.org) or call (413) 512-3063. Attendees will receive an invitation to a Zoom meeting with the artist on the Sunday after their attendance when they make an appointment for a viewing.

Check out a free Zoom theater workshop with **Nastya Vorobyeva**, a Russian performance artist and human rights **activist**, on Saturday and Sunday, October 24 and 25, from 10 a.m. to noon each day, through the Augusta Savage Gallery at UMass-Amherst.

Vorobyeva will teach her Play-

back Theatre method, an original form of improvisational theatre in which audience or group members tell stories from their lives and watch them enacted on the spot. She sees the method as a way of healing and creating a dialogue with communities in post conflict areas, and with communities that have experienced disasters, accidents, and other traumatic events. The fundamental Playback forms will be taught such as fluid sculptures, pairs, stories, tableau, and more. Information and registration at [asg@umass.edu](mailto:asg@umass.edu).

Another **Virtual Job Fair and Recruitment Event** sponsored by MassHire is coming up on October 26 through 28. Find out more about how you can participate and look at some other resources offered to the public at [masshirefcareers.org](http://masshirefcareers.org).

Congratulations to two local artists, **Jenny Smith of Erving** and **Susan Blauner of Turners Falls**, who won a Montague Cultural Council competition for art reflecting "In These Times."

Blauner received \$250 for her mixed-media sculpture called "Masked," on view at the Great Falls Market at 109 Avenue A. Smith received \$150 second place prize for her fiber and plush piece "Wilhemina Wheeler the Peaceful Protestor," on view at Swanson's Fabrics, 106 Avenue A.

"These works of art were chosen for their ability to address our current situation with COVID-19 and racial inequality," the Montague Cultural Council writes.

The **Gill Cultural Council seeks funding proposals** for community-oriented arts, humanities, and science programs. The applications are due by November 16. The grants can support a variety of artistic and cultural activities in Gill and surrounding communities. In 2020, the Gill Cultural Council awarded \$4,800 in grants.

This year, applicants are advised to consider social distancing issues in planning their events and the use of online sharing platforms such as Zoom presentations. For local guide-

lines and complete information on the Gill Cultural Council, contact Lynda Hodsdon Mayo at (413) 863-0138 or [assessors@gillmass.org](mailto:assessors@gillmass.org). Application forms and more information about the local cultural council program are available online at [www.mass-culture.org](http://www.mass-culture.org).

The **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.

Call the gallery for viewing details at (413) 625-9833 or see [salmonfallsgallery.com](http://salmonfallsgallery.com).

**Artspace Community Arts Center** in Greenfield is launching their Fall 2020 courses. All new art, writing, and music courses will be available to students and adults of all ages in a virtual class setting. There are several new teachers joining the ranks to bring more poetry, drawing, performance, and more to the Artspace community, as well as returning teachers.

Check out the offerings from the nonprofit community arts center at [artspacegreenfield.com](http://artspacegreenfield.com).

The Art Garden in Shelburne Falls is also holding its **Teen Art classes** online this fall. ARTEens will meet online once a week on Tuesdays, 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. from October 20 through December 8. As a hybrid program, ARTEens will provide art prompts, art supply deliveries, and an exposure to a wide range of techniques, artistic styles and artists. Contact [csartgarden@gmail.com](mailto:csartgarden@gmail.com) to register. Seventh-graders (including 12-year-olds) and on up are eligible.

Send your local briefs to [editor@montaguereporter.org](mailto:editor@montaguereporter.org).

**FARREN** from page A1

appears destined to close despite a 2018 bond bill authorizing \$30 million to repair or replace its key buildings.

According to the EOHHS email, even if that appropriation were implemented, the state does not consider the Farren viable in the long run, in part due to its location, and the plan is also intended to prevent the closure of Mount Saint Vincent. Most of the Farren's revenue comes from the state in the form of Medicaid reimbursements.

Critics of the proposal have pointed out that the Farren has had no reported COVID-19 infections, while a number of long-term care facilities in Holyoke, including Mount Saint Vincent, have had outbreaks of the virus.

Montague's two representatives in the state legislature, senator Joanne Comerford and representative Natalie Blais, met last Friday with the Secretary of Health and Human Services Marylou Sudders. They were joined by four other western Massachusetts lawmakers, senators John Velis and Eric Lesser and representatives Paul Mark and Aaron Vega.

Prior to the meeting, Blais and Comerford said that the bond appropriation was "at the top of our list" of concerns they planned to raise. Instead, the representatives told the *Reporter* after the meeting that they had received strong assurance from Sudders to implement measures to protect the Farren's patients, and to employees not rehired at Mount Saint Vincent.

Blais reported they had received the following list of assurances from Secretary Sudders:

"Providing a dedicated call line and trained ombudspeople to work one-on-one with caregivers, family members, and guardians to identify the best facility for each Farren resident at locations across the state, including Mt. St. Vincent; underscoring the need to sustain the proposed six-month severance paid to any current Farren employee who is not able to make the transition to Mt. St. Vincent; holding Trinity accountable for working with MassHire to place workers not making the move to Holyoke; holding Trinity accountable to working with the town to secure the Farren facility and fund a site transition plan; [and] employing strict public health protocols to ensure the well being of patients and staff."

The facility employs about 150 people.

A federal law known as the WARN Act requires employers with 100 or more employees to provide at least 60 days' notice before a facility's closing. Under state law (MGL Ch. 149 §. 183), employers are required to pay some laid-off workers severance pay if they have worked for a company which has changed hands within the previous two years. However, that law, which some in the legal community apparently call the "tin parachute law," has successfully been challenged in a federal court, and may not be enforceable.

A "site transition plan" has been a key request of the Montague selectboard. Montague town administrator Steve Ellis told the *Reporter* that

Trinity Health has committed to "funding a reuse/redevelopment study," but has not revealed its plans for the Farren buildings. "They seem to be taking it one step at a time," he said.

David Jensen, who served as Montague building inspector from 1988 until 2018, said that during his tenure he found "little wrong with the building, but they have healthcare system codes enforced by the state." Jensen also said he perceived that maintenance at the building was "probably underfunded." The older sections of the complex, he said, were not generally used for residents, but were leased to other organizations.

The state played an important role in financing the transition of the Farren from an acute care hospital to a long-term care facility in the early 1990s. In July 1990 a state agency called the Massachusetts Health and Educational Facilities Authority issued a \$7.5 million bond for "the conversion of the hospital facility... to a 110-bed skilled nursing facility, including the construction of certain renovations thereto and the acquisition of certain furnishings."

The state Department of Public Health website does not list protocols for moving patients from one long-term facility to another during the COVID-19 pandemic. The *Boston Globe* recently reported that Massachusetts has a high percentage of COVID deaths in recent months compared to other states in the region, in part due to death rates at long-term care facilities.

**ATTN: ERVING RESIDENTS**

The Water Department will be flushing hydrants starting on **October 19, 2020** and will continue until complete. The hours of flushing will be **7 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

**Erving Water Department**

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**GMRSD** from page A1

superintendent answered. "We're not going to go full hybrid until we have reports from each of the schools."

At Beck's request, the committee approved two half-days before hybrid learning starts. "Those would be the days when teachers would be required to begin coming on campus," he said, "to complete the process of setting their rooms up." Business manager Joanne Blier warned the committee that if the district does not officially approve its annual budget by December 1, the state will take control.

The town of Gill has not yet scheduled its annual town meeting, which it needs to do to approve its school assessment. Blier said Gill town administrator Ray Purington had told her he expected the meeting to be held by the first Saturday of November, but the topic was not on this week's selectboard agenda.

Langknecht said that in the past, state oversight has meant "they came over, they saw we had a budget, and they left." "You can sleep at night," he quipped.

Blier said the district had received inquiries from outside groups, including the Montague parks and recreation department, for use of the buildings.

The committee approved budget transfers totaling \$26,927 to replace a maintenance van.

The meeting began with two public comments which reflected the range of difficulty posed by both remote learning and the prospect of returning to the buildings.

Gill Elementary special education teacher Brittany Cooley said she was concerned to learn more details regarding the ventilation upgrades, asked about plans for COVID-19 testing and contact trac-

ing, and questioned the rationale behind the directive for all staff to return on October 20, when the first small groups of students return.

"One reason," she said, "was that staff would have access to technology, and support for said technology, if in the school buildings. However, not all teachers are receiving the technology... Another reason... is for collaboration purposes. I can assure you that teachers are collaborating on a daily basis while we are in the remote model."

Jesse Groneman, parent of a Great Falls Middle School sixth grader, praised school staff for their responsiveness and talent, but said the schedule was too strenuous.

"I have not seen any time away from the screen," she said, "nor have I seen him pick up a pencil or piece of paper once. I am really surprised by the lack of breaks.... My son doesn't get up from his computer, but when he does, he's missing class content. If he misses the wrong thing, he's lost."

Groneman said she had been told by staff that sixth graders "can't really do asynchronous time" because the grade is preparing for MCAS tests.

"We are right on the edge of pulling him out of school," she warned. "I think it's going to have consequences for social and emotional health - but also for MCAS results."

Most of the meeting was taken up by reports from principals on their schools' improvement plans.

The school committee will meet next on October 27.

Langknecht requested that a discussion of MCAS be added to a future agenda. Beck said the pandemic response advisory group had sent a statement to local representatives in support of "a reprieve in the midst of the pandemic."

## Bridge of Names Expected To Survive Storm Damage And Foggy Ownership

By **MIKE JACKSON**

**LAKE PLEASANT** - Despite the spectacular photographs of damage incurred to the Bridge of Names in last week's storm, the bridge is expected to be rebuilt, though it is not yet clear under whose legal jurisdiction it falls.

"I met with an adjuster from the insurance company to take a look at it," Mike Brown, superintendent of the Turners Falls water department, said on Wednesday. "It's still not clear if they're going to cover that or not, but they are proceeding in getting some estimates and looking at the damage, at least."

The bridge spans a gully owned by the Turners Falls Fire District, which oversees the water department, and the parcels on both ends of the bridge also appear to be owned by the District, according to Montague assessors' maps.

"If that bridge was located at our Lake Pleasant pump station, then it would be covered," Brown explained. "I'm trying to make the case that the whole lake, and the land around the lake, is Fire District property. They're looking at it now."

The bridge was built in the summer of 1975 by volunteers organized by the then-newly-organized Lake Pleasant Village Association.

"There's been confusion about the relationship between the Turners Falls water department, the Village Association, and the town about the status of that bridge,"

said LPVA president Matt Atwood. "I have no doubt that people will continue to contribute hours of time to see it restored."

The October 7 storm knocked out power to hundreds of thousands of homes; locally, damage was reportedly most intense in the former summer camp village on the Lake. One resident was reportedly on the bridge when the storm hit, and suffered minor injuries.

Atwood said that though the pavilion on the Bluffs side of the bridge was completely destroyed, and the bridge rendered impassable by falling trees, much of the structure was still left standing.

"Pretty soon we are going to need to start fundraising, to assist or complement whatever ends up happening with the insurance," he told the Reporter.

According to Brown, a local resident with a lumber mill has offered to mill the fallen trees in order to create boards to rebuild the bridge.

"We've got a tree company here doing cleanup right now," he said.

Atwood said power has been restored in the village, and much of the tree damage has already been cleared. "Lake Pleasant is doing well," he said. "People came together immediately following the storm, checked in with their neighbors, and went about cleaning up. We've had the benefit of being able to gather outside in a newly renovated Rutter's Park, and the village remains a really beautiful place."

### NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

## Gill Allocates CARES Funding to School Ventilation

By **JERRI HIGGINS**

Gill's selectboard discussed safety upgrades at Gill-Montague schools, extending the town's temporary third police officer, and fire department purchases at its meeting this week, which was held Tuesday evening due to the Monday holiday. Other business included a Shared Streets and Spaces grant, approval of the November election warrant, and a call to change the state aid formula for schools.

Town administrator Ray Purington said that out of \$131,282 Gill has been allocated under the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, about \$30,000 has been used. The board approved a \$50,000 request to help cover heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) repairs and upgrades currently underway at Gill and Montague schools, as well as ongoing costs for the extra police officer, personal protective equipment for first responders, and other COVID-19 related expenses.

"To get back to in-person learning at the elementary, middle, and high schools," said Purington, "the district is doing HVAC upgrades to make sure there are enough fresh air exchanges in all the classrooms and throughout the buildings."

Jamrog HVAC quoted the Gill Elementary School's estimate at \$20,900 for the ventilation upgrades, plus \$8,657 for air purifiers and \$2,950 to install a sink in a classroom

that does not currently have one.

Purington said that Gill's share for the HVAC work and air purifiers at Great Falls Middle School and Turners Falls High School was estimated at \$6,234, and that those figures are enrollment-based and subject to change.

"The total is \$38,741, with a caution, or suggestion, that these are preliminary estimates, so building in a little more would be helpful," he said. "These are all reasonable expenses, and all qualify under the CARES Act."

### Fire Department Requests

Fire chief Gene Beaubien requested \$1,300 to purchase LED headlights for Engine #2, describing the current headlamps as "getting dim and cloudy."

Selectboard member John Ward quipped: "Is it just you who noticed that, Gene, or some of the younger guys too?" After some chuckling, Beaubien replied that deputy chief William Kimball was the one who had noticed it. The board approved the request.

The department was also approved to subscribe to PSTrax operation management software costing \$1,125 per year, which includes cloud-based backup. An additional \$1,125 set-up fee will be spread out over the first three years, bringing the annual cost to \$1,500.

Kimball said the software would help the department eliminate paperwork and stay in compliance with

National Fire Protection Association requirements by keeping track of vehicle and gear checks and equipment maintenance in real time through smartphones or tablets.

"I think it is a good idea for the safety of firefighters, vehicles, and equipment," said selectboard member Greg Snedeker, "and it protects the town on the insurance side too."

Beaubien also told the board that Scott Nicholas submitted his resignation from the department as of the end of September due to time constraints between his growing family and other career pursuits.

### Other Business

Three support letters were approved by the selectboard.

Finance committee member Tupper Brown joined the meeting to discuss the first letter, regarding "equity in the collection and distribution of Chapter 70 school funding." Brown said the letter should include "recommendations... to the legislature to correct or improve upon this terrible inequity from which we suffer - or something along those lines."

Brown said that while looking at the details of the funding formula, in particular the cap set on local contributions at 82.5% of each municipality's foundation budget, he was "struck by the substantial magnitude of the funding shift - the obligations of the towns caused by that little device."

Public comments on the pending Student Opportunity Act are open until October 16 on the state

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website.

A letter from the city of Newton supporting the currently pending climate bill will also get a statement of support from the Gill selectboard, after removing discussion of the tax structure, as will Springfield city councilor Jesse Lederman's request to remove biomass from the state's list of renewable energy sources.

The board approved the warrant for the upcoming presidential election, as well as the appointment of three residents as election workers: Robin Paris, Cristin Carpenter, and Maryanne Gallagher. The appointments are valid through June 30, 2021.

Gill was awarded a \$22,022.56 "Shared Streets and Spaces" grant by the Department of Transportation for pedestrian safety improvements in the center of town, including "radar speed signs, painted crosswalks, and painted lane edge lines."

The highway department was approved for a purchase order of \$9,010 for line-painting on Main Road, from the town hall north to the town line, as well as on West Gill and Boyle roads. The traffic-calming measures are expected to be completed by October 31.

The board also approved extending the Gill Tavern's expanded liquor license, which will now cover their outdoor seating for up to 60 days after the end of Massachusetts' emergency order.

A sewer commitment of \$49,528.74 was approved.

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**REMOTE** from page A1

community safe, and that if we all can't go back to school, then we shouldn't go at all.

"I don't think we should [return yet]," Skye says, "just because COVID-19 is still a thing – and the president just got it, so if that isn't a sign, I don't know what is."

"I think that at least going hybrid is good," says Jeremy, "because then you can do more hands-on learning for some projects. If someone is worried about going to school with everything that is going on, they can just stay fully remote, while everyone that wants to go can go in person."

"I think that we should go back to school in person soon, but with major precautions," says Sofia. "My school is starting a hybrid model, which allows two groups of students to attend school in person twice a week. This is a good approach so that students are able to stay six feet apart, since the classes are smaller."

I asked Skye if they are learning as much at Stoneleigh-Burnham as they would at this time of the year in school. "I think I'm being taught the same amount," she replies, "but the pace is really fast, so I'm not necessarily taking in as much information."

The last question I ask of these students is: Since you are currently remote, what do you think the hardest part of going back to school will be?

"Probably the adjustment to living at school again, since I go to a boarding school," says Skye, "but also being a little nervous about being around a lot of people at once again."

"I think the most difficult part of going back to school is adjusting to new routines," Sofia answers me. "It will be very different from what I'm used to, and take some getting used to."

Some teachers have taken advantage of remote learning, and turned it into something fun and positive. One of my own teachers, Ms. Megan Murphy, uses a tool in Google Classroom called an "interactive notebook." This is a slideshow, set up to look like a classroom, that has links for us to find where assignments are.

I think the interactive notebook



Left: Franklin County Technical School ninth grader Jeremy Kovalsick's remote learning setup. Right: Stoneleigh-Burnham ninth grader Skye Evans' work space.



is a fun thing about remote learning – it's super easy to find everything, and when we join our Google Meets, Ms. Murphy has a fun check-in for us to do on the slideshow.

Ms. Murphy has been such an amazing teacher during remote learning, so I asked her a couple questions about how the online school experience has been so far for her.

**IVC:** What is your favorite part about remote learning so far?

**MM:** I have a few favorite things. First, and this is kind of silly, but I love when my students share their pets on screen. Seeing animals and pets gives me and my students something to bond over and get excited about. My first period class always asks about my dog, Willow, who loves to nap through class right by my side. It has been really funny to see more and more students asking about her.

I've seen so many puppies, kittens, doggos, and woofers, and it's been such a delight. And honestly, it's just really comforting for me to have my pets around, and I know that that is something that many of my students are benefiting from, too.

But there are a lot of other really cool, more "teachery" reasons to be excited about remote teaching and learning: I am able to use a lot more technological resources with my students now that most students have access to a Chromebook and the internet, and my students are reporting (via weekly surveys) that they are enjoying honing their technological skills.

Working collaboratively to troubleshoot tech issues is another great way to build community in a remote classroom, and it can be a lifesaver! My students are so good at technology, and I am so thankful that they have been so supportive not only of me but of each other as we navigate and adjust to our new normal.

All in all, I would have to say the best part about remote learning so far is the level of student engagement I have been able to promote in my remote classroom. I have really great attendance in my classes, for the most part, and students are submitting more work on time than I would usually receive in person, so I think that cannot go unsaid.

**IVC:** Do you think remote learning is more or less difficult than in-person school?

**MM:** I think the two are so completely different that it is hard to compare them. In a lot of ways, I think learning is more difficult for teachers to facilitate right now in remote classrooms than in their pre-COVID classrooms, but that is not to say that learning is not happening.

For many teachers (and students!), this is the first time we have been tasked to engage with this amount of technology, and change is really hard. I know that teachers are putting in hours and hours of work outside of the school day to ensure that their class feels as close to "normal" school as possible, and I think that those efforts deserve to be applauded and appreciated.

I also think the changes that are underway in our school, and

in schools across the country, will open up a lot of doors for teacher innovation and technology utilization in our future classrooms. I think it would be a drastic oversimplification to expect school to "go back to normal" whenever this is all over. Instead, I think that teachers and curricula will be completely reinvented to support not only the additional usage of technology, but will also work to recenter our work as educators in both hands-on ways of learning and the social emotional development of our students.

**"I think it would be a drastic oversimplification to expect school to 'go back to normal' whenever this is all over."**

**Megan Murphy, TFHS science teacher**

**IVC:** What has been a struggle, or something that's a big adjustment with you for remote learning?

**MM:** The biggest struggle for me has been replicating the authenticity of my classroom in regards to class community and interpersonal relationships. Again, not to say that class community is not being built, because it is, but at a slower rate than would happen during pre-COVID school. Even on Google Meets, the slight lag and delay of audio has made it really challenging to replicate whole-class conversations and small side conversations.

I will say I am proud of myself for my ability to keep up with my ninth graders in the Google Meet chat, but I would so rather be hearing their voices and their laughter as we joke around.

That's really the thing I miss most about being in-person with my students; I miss those passing moments of laughter that naturally happen during class. The one-on-one or small group conversations I have with students before the bell rings, the quick side joke to a student as I facilitate small group work and walk about my room, even the wave of hellos and goodbyes as classes transition. I really just miss seeing my students every day.

**IVC:** Do you think we should go back to attending school in person, or stay remote? Why?

**MM:** Oh gosh, that really is the million-dollar question isn't it?

There are so many variables to consider when tasked with answering this question. Issues of equity,

access, student support, safety, finances, PPE, and on and on and on.

It is undeniable that students in our community are not universally adjusting to remote learning well, and many of the students in our district are legally entitled to services that are much easier to provide in an in-person school setting. It is also undeniable that many families in our community have been provided no additional options for financial support or other compensation, resulting in the necessity to return to work to ensure that financial obligations can be met, which makes remote instruction an additional challenge for those families.

None of these issues can be ignored.

However, in my humble opinion, the safety of our teachers and staff (and their families), our students, and our community members as a whole should be prioritized first with the continuation of remote learning. To me, the risk of even one COVID case in our school is not worth the perceived benefits of a hybrid learning plan.

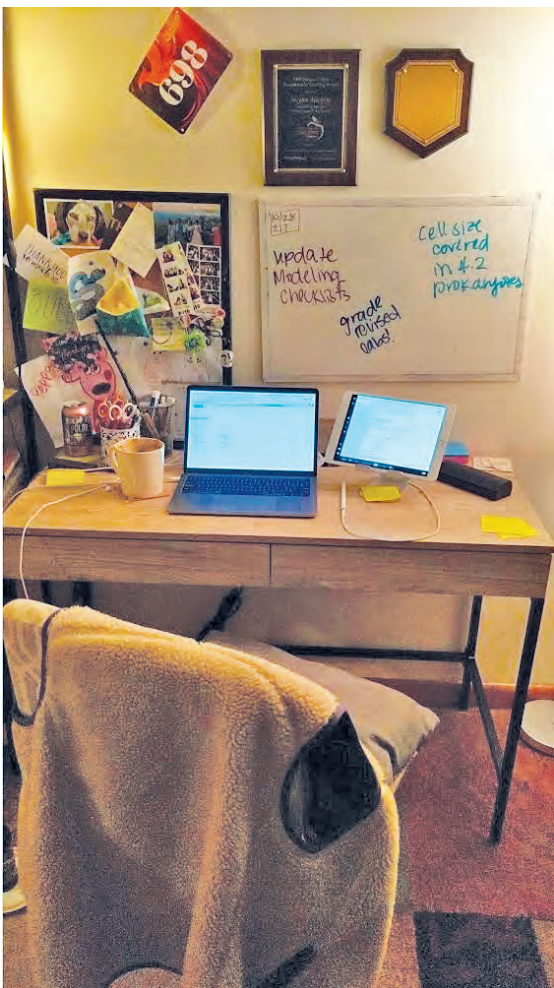
COVID-19 is an incredibly serious virus, and the long-term implications of being exposed to the virus are unknown. Last week, over one hundred educators and students tested positive from COVID-19 in the state of Massachusetts alone. [Ms. Murphy got this statistic from an article on the website *wbur.org*, by Carrie Jung.] I would be devastated should any of my colleagues or students test positive from COVID-19 if it could have been avoided by continuing with remote learning.

I am very nervous about a return to school. I live with two other teachers who teach in different districts in the Pioneer Valley, and we have agreed that if we each go back to school in person, we will no longer be visiting our friends or our families out of caution of spreading the virus from the various districts and counties we serve. I was able to see my mom last weekend, but truthfully, should we return to school in a couple weeks, I am not sure when I will see her again, and that breaks my heart.

Thank you so so much to Sofia, Skye, Jeremy, and Ms. Murphy for answering these questions!

To recap what everyone said, the most important part of staying remote or being hybrid is that it's keeping the community safe, and although it is not ideal, it is what we have to do for now. I hope everyone is having a positive start of the school year so far!

*Izzy Vachula-Curtis is a ninth grader at Turners Falls High School.*



Our reporter's science teacher, Ms. Murphy, answered a number of questions. Her own teacher's desk is shown at left.

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## Tracing a Path for Others

Though Flora Kousseimian didn't arrive in the US knowing much English, the knowledge she did come with was far more important.

She knew she wanted to go to college somewhere she could get a reliable education. She knew she loved math and science — particularly physics and renewable energy — and that she wanted to pursue a degree in electrical engineering. And she knew that her interests, coupled with her determination, could have a lasting effect on the well-being of her homeland.

Flora was 18 when she came to the United States to go to college. Born and raised in Chad, she grew up speaking French. "At this point in Chad not many people have access to electricity," she explains. "That limits them a lot. Flora knew that one day, with the right education, she might go back to Chad and help put solar and wind farms on unused land in the desert.

When Flora arrived in Western Massachusetts she enrolled at a language institute and, after a semester of intensive English classes, she enrolled in Greenfield Community College's engineering program. "When I got to GCC I was just freaking out about the whole thing," she remembers. "Language was still such a barrier for me."

Still, within months, Flora had stepped into leadership. She joined the robotics club and became a Peer Tutor and a Student Orientation Leader — a role she took on because she "knew what new students were feeling" and it was her way of telling them, "If I can do it, you can do it too."

When GCC's internship coordinator, Bob Barba, met Flora, he knew this: "She is one of those rare students who is not afraid to ask for help." Because of this, he pointed her to Hack.Diversity, a competitive internship program in Boston that works with high-performing students — predominantly Black or Latinx — interested in launching careers in tech.

Tori Goyette, Hack.Diversity's Senior Community Manager, can attest to the program's rigor: "The biggest barrier for students is that they must come in with a grounding in technology," she shares, "We require multiple references, an essay, transcripts, a resume, an interview, and a coding assessment for those interested in software engineering. Folks have to demonstrate their readiness."

Tori says that when she first met Flora, she recognized a woman who "takes leaps" — someone who "puts themselves into spaces and communities where they can be helped by directly helping others." Flora's cohort was further along in their coding education and still, Tori could tell she was prime for the program — a person who doesn't shy away from hard work.

Regardless of the barriers, Flora says those first meetings in Boston were well worth her efforts. "All these other fellows in the program were in almost the same situation as me — interested in the same thing and looking for ways to get out in the field. It made me feel like this was for me."

Desperate to understand what it felt like to work in the engineering field, Flora says "I applied for an internship because I just needed to know — how does that feel when you are out of the classroom and in the real world?"

When COVID hit in March, this was the one question that almost didn't get answered. In the middle of interviewing at tech companies around Boston, Flora watched as organizations began retracting their internships. Bob Barba saw what was happening, so he immediately stepped in.

One of the first organizations Bob called was Common Media, an IT and Web Design company in Greenfield because he knew Kristi Ceccarossi, their CEO, was aligned with Hack.Diversity's mission.

Within weeks, Flora became Common Media's first intern. "When I found Common Media I knew it was small enough that my work would matter and people would listen to me," she shares, "that they wouldn't be too big to take care of me, especially during a pandemic."

Flora also says that Kristi was the first one from the organization to call her. "That meant a LOT to me— she is the CEO and yet she never made me feel like she is higher than or better than me. Instead, she immediately offered herself as a mentor along my journey."

Kristi also knew she could be very frank with Flora about what it means to be a minority in the industry. "As a queer woman from a working class background, I have personal experience being the only person in the room that looks like me, that comes from a place like where I've come from. Flora and I have spent a lot of time talking about that, the ways in which those differences come up, how to navigate them and, ideally, how to use your identity as a source of power."

Kristi and the team at Common Media involved Flora in designing her own internship — building an experience around her own wants, needs and goals. "Not only did I intern there" says Flora, "but I got to trace a path for any intern that comes after me."

Tracing paths is one of Flora Kousseimian's strengths. This young woman from Chad is now at UMass Amherst, on her way to getting a BS in electrical engineering.

"She's just one of those students who is so gratifying to work with," says Bob, "With a little support she always makes a great leap."

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**EVICTION** from page A1

Housing and Redevelopment Authority (FCRHRA) has seen an unprecedented strain on their public housing and Section 8 programs, and is hiring more staff to deal with the ensuing crisis. "In the last two months, the pipeline of inquiries for emergency assistance funds has grown to about five times our typical volume," said FCRHRA executive director Gina Govoni.

Community Action Pioneer Valley, a nonprofit social services organization serving Franklin and Hampshire counties and the North Quabbin, also offers financial assistance programs to help pay rent, moving costs, utilities, and other COVID-related expenses.

"We anticipate that there will be a lot of phone calls, and a lot of need, after the moratorium ends," said Janna Tetreault, Community Action's assistant director of community services. "There are some tenants who may not feel a sense of urgency right now because they haven't been receiving notices from their landlords."

Through regular meetings with other area nonprofits like the Franklin County Resource Network, North Quabbin Community Coalition, and the Council of Social Agencies of Hampshire County, they are helping to build a safety net of support. As federal and state relief stalls, they hope to help those who fall through the cracks.

"We've had some flexible funds that can help with other expenses, like in the beginning of the pandemic, we had concerns about people's internet access," Tetreault said. "If people had other COVID-related expenses, they could call and get screened."

**A Patchwork of Protection**

A federal eviction moratorium, issued on September 4 by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), lasts until the end of the year. The CDC's order is less comprehensive than the Massachusetts moratorium, lauded as one of the most comprehensive in the country, and it still allows landlords to charge late fees and report non-payment to credit tracking agencies.

To qualify, renters must sign an affidavit explaining how they've been affected by COVID-19, and prove they made an effort to pay rent and have already sought other forms of government assistance. "Keep in touch with your landlord," Govoni said. "Tenants should complete the CDC affidavit and give it to their landlord if they are facing hardship due to COVID. The CDC protection is only available to those who complete this step. Others will have no protection after Saturday."

"That moratorium does the bare minimum. It only protects tenants - there are no protections for homeowners or landlords," Webster-Smith said. "2008 was mainly a lot of homeowners, but now you're going to have homeowners, small landlords, and tenants facing homelessness."

Both the state and federal moratoriums are being challenged in court by groups like MassLandlords, the National Apartment Association, and the New Civil Liberties Alliance. Arguing that the moratoriums, as unfunded government mandates, prevented them from collecting rent and paying their own bills, some landlords and mortgage lenders say that the government should subsidize their losses or allow them to pursue unpaid rent through aggressive legal means.

"We know a lot of people got those very bad forbearance deals. When it comes time for them to pay that lump sum, what people don't understand is the bank considers you in default," Webster-Smith said. "If you don't pay that lump sum, you go right into that foreclosure pipeline."

Before the pandemic there was already a backlog of eviction cases - about 4,000 statewide, according to Webster-Smith. The same judge, clerk-magistrate, and housing specialist travel between Hamden, Hampshire, Franklin, and Berkshire counties to rule on cases in a different district each day of the week.

By some estimates, between 250,000 and 300,000 households in Massachusetts could face eviction by the end of the year without rent relief, and legislation that would provide that relief is moving slowly.

In Massachusetts the Guaranteed Housing Stability Act, H.4878, would forestall evictions for non-payment due to COVID-19 job losses through the end of the year and establish a Housing Stability and Recovery Fund to relieve small property owners. The law creates an oversight board to make sure the money goes to the smallest landlords first, "so they're getting relief instead of the

corporations," Webster-Smith explained.

"I'm really hoping Baker gets off his butt and extends this moratorium. At least until we pass this bill," she added. "For me, having lived this, I'm really scared to see what happens if we don't have bold leadership."

Federal assistance so far has come only in the form of one-time \$1,200 stimulus checks and \$600 per week unemployment benefits, which expired in August. Lawmakers have squabbled since then over the details of a new relief package. According to the National Low Income Housing Center, it would cost around \$99.5 billion to provide relief to out-of-work or low-income renters nationwide.

In Massachusetts, the Emergency Rental and Mortgage Assistance (ERMA) program will disperse \$20 million in funds to renters or mortgage holders statewide to pay back rent. Modeled after another longstanding rental assistance program called Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT), ERMA is a broader and more generous program, crafted in response to the pandemic.

RAFT can give individuals and families up to \$4,000 toward back rent due since April 1, though advocates are trying to increase that cap to \$10,000, citing the lengthy pandemic. Anyone can apply for funds from both RAFT and ERMA on one form, but ERMA funds can only be used for rental and mortgage assistance, while RAFT money can be spent on any housing-related cost, including utilities, moving costs, and security deposits.

"From what I'm hearing, people are not applying for the RAFT program, and they absolutely should be doing that," Webster-Smith said. "There is money there for people to get access to. It's just a matter of the tenant filling it out and the landlord doing their part."

The FCRHRA is currently funding twice as many RAFT applications as they were at this time last year, Govoni said. "If you were denied in the past because you could not demonstrate your need in some way," she said, "you should call back if you are still in need of assistance."

**After That: Direct Action?**

Springfield No One Leaves (SNOL) has been working to bolster their housing advocacy work through direct action protests, legal aid, advocacy and organizing, while expanding their services northward into Franklin County and around western Massachusetts. Twelve attorneys volunteer their time with SNOL to help run workshops, craft petitions, and communicate with landlords and banks on behalf of renters and mortgage holders.

"We've definitely amped up our eviction defense network," Webster-Smith said. "We're getting ready to hire to make sure the capacity is there to cover other counties."

Other housing justice organizations, spurred by pandemic-induced financial hardships, are just getting started.

The Central Valley Tenants' Union materialized after a virtual meeting hosted by the Pioneer Valley Workers' Center last spring for renters to discuss landlord disputes and their rights. Today around 40 people call themselves members of the union, which is seeking to expand its support network throughout western Massachusetts.

"We just supported each other while learning more about tenant organizing and our rights," said Oriana Reilly, a leader of the Central Valley Tenants' Union. "The legal stuff sounds intimidating, but the most important thing is to be united with other tenants and write a letter."

This Saturday, the same day the eviction moratorium expires, SNOL is hosting an eviction blockade training in Greenfield in partnership with the Resistance Center for Peace and Justice of Northampton. It will be their third such training in the region after holding similar workshops in Springfield and Northampton. "It's not just about people risking arrest. There's other roles people need to fill like jail support, court support, media liaison, police liaison," Webster-Smith said. "It's almost like a production of a play, there's so many roles that go into it."

The training begins at 10 a.m., at a location to be shared with registered participants that day. Registration can be found on the "Springfield No One Leaves" Facebook page.

"If enough people stand up for themselves and stand up for other people," said Resistance Center co-founder and advisory board member Jeff Napolitano, "then institutions like the banks and the mortgage lenders and the landlords tend to realize that it's ultimately not worth it, or in their best interests, to be seen being responsible for kicking innocent people out of their homes."

**LEVERETT** from page A1

the ultra-liberalism of other people in town, and it has more to do with that than the actual issue."

Resident Steve Nagy expressed concern that the sign would support a specific organization, whose beliefs he was not fully aware of.

SJC member Manou Dalomba said he faces white supremacy on a daily basis, including recently in Amherst, two minutes away from Leverett. "None of you white people sitting in the room are facing what we so-called 'colored people'... face every day we go out," he said. "The selectboard should pay for it, and do it with a good heart."

Member Josh Nugent commented that he had heard fears expressed over the political aspects of the decision, but had also talked to residents who "have always felt fear, and this would be a very affirming... way for them to actually feel comfortable in town, sometimes for the first time."

Shively, who along with d'Errico personally pledged \$20 for the sign, said if she thought a sign would solve racism, she'd sell everything she had and put signs everywhere. "What changes it," she said, "is to make sure not only that you have policies in place that make racism impossible, but... you enforce those policies. And that is our job, and you can count on us for that."

"It's not even the funding," said d'Errico. "It's a question of, what is the town? The town is all the people. There's a structure to say what the town wants.... It has to be a town meeting decision. Any ten people can have a petition on a town warrant, and that will bring the town out, and whatever that meeting decides is legally what the town said. That's more an expression of town than three people here with a rubber stamp."

**Other Business**

The board heard that Wendell's lawyer had written a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for Leverett to begin "joint policing" in that town. The MOU states that Wendell will pay approximately \$3,300

a month to Leverett for October, November, and December. Work is underway on a permanent contract to begin January 1.

The board reviewed warrant articles for a special town meeting on October 24. Department heads remain uncertain over the effects COVID-19 will have on budgets, and are trying to play it safe. An unpaid bill from March became more mysterious when it was noted a more recent bill had been paid; board members were in agreement that it should come out of a current budget.

Conservation commission chair Isaiah Robison said the planning board and board of health wanted to review their regulations and make sure they are free of racism. An SJC member in attendance said the SJC would like to be involved. At the sight of a volunteer, Robison said, "Name a timeline" with a smile. Selectboard members expressed their approval.

The board passed on exercising Leverett's right of first refusal on a Chapter 61 property on Amherst Road, signed a contract for Voice Over Internet Protocol services, and approved spending Green Communities grant money for LED lights to replace current street lamps and new lighting for the town hall.

D'Errico said that instead of signing a letter to the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in support of changing the state's funding formula, he would draft one himself and present it to the board at a later date.

The board did sign a letter in opposition to a biomass project in Springfield, and approved a change in the polling location for the November 3 election to the elementary school.

At the end of a long night, tensions rose among board members over a procedural matter from a previous meeting involving the lack of a call for a second on a motion, resulting in a belief that the motion had not been deliberated. A majority of the board felt it had been, and the matter was dropped.

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# New DPW Car Barn Hosts Montague Town Meeting

By JEFF SINGLETON

The COVID-19 pandemic has produced many tragic consequences for those infected with the virus, particularly vulnerable populations with pre-existing conditions. But it has also produced creative adaptations and innovations, one of which was on display last night at the just-completed Montague highway garage on Turners Falls Road. The innovation was a special town meeting attended by a near-record 90 people, seated in chairs at least ten feet apart.

The highlight of the meeting, which approved all 14 articles in short order, was the effort of speakers to be heard in the facility, which at times resembled a giant echo chamber. There was certainly a learning curve here, as members needed to speak slowly and lean very close to the microphone. The results varied depending on the timbre of the individual's voice.

Perhaps the most effective speaker turned out to be Eileen Mariani, a long-term Montague Center resident who defended an article to provide funds for a survey of the village's park. Article 13 had been challenged because the survey seemed to be associated with a design that would eliminate the park's historic baseball field. Ms. Mariani responded that the money was only for a survey, and that the question of the baseball field had not been resolved.

And everyone in the giant garage space heard it.

The meeting began with a welcome by highway superintendent Tom Bergeron, who

thanked town meeting members and other Montague residents for the new facility, and pledged to "take care of it." Introductions and preliminary motions were then read, though perhaps not heard, and approved.

The first six articles, which included a \$109,000 reduction in the town's FY'20 budget and a \$50,000 appropriation for the Council on Aging roof, passed unanimously. So did a \$12,500 transfer of capital funds to Montague Community Television, which town accountant Carolyn Olsen succinctly described as "a matter of state bureaucracy."

When Article 7, which allocated nearly \$487,000 to various stabilization funds, came up, town meeting member and former building inspector David Jensen asked why tax revenues were being calculated and allocated "this late in the fiscal year."

Olsen responded that the allocation was due to the town's "financial policies," and the tax rate had not yet been set.

The meeting then approved articles for additional costs for capping the former burn dump on Sandy Lane (which town administrator Steve Ellis has portrayed as a historic event); to transfer cannabis revenues into a special stabilization fund; to pay a small prior year bill; and to move the date of the annual town election from a Monday to a Tuesday to eliminate "confusion."

The final article was a complex proposal to acquire and transfer various easements with the FirstLight power company in order to build a new Fifth Street pedestrian bridge over the power canal in a new location. The



SARAH ROBERTSON PHOTO

Last Saturday, October 10, a crowd gathered at the French King Bridge for a "standout" to protest the state's postponement of plans to erect safety barriers on the bridge. Stacey Hamel, pictured, organized the event. Hamel lost her son-in-law to suicide at the bridge in 2018. According to a recent letter from state senator Jo Comerford to the Department of Transportation, the towns of Gill and Erving have each spent an estimated \$880,000 responding to incidents at the bridge over the past decade.

motion passed with only a few dissenting votes, but not after a number of questions were raised about the proposal.

One speaker questioned whether FirstLight could be trusted, since the company had often been "litigious." Another complained that the easement transfer might be a prelude to FirstLight demolishing another bridge over the canal which it was supposed to have fixed many years ago.

This was no doubt the longest discussion of the meeting, which lasted less than 90

minutes. Exiting members commented that the well-ventilated garage seemed to reduce risk, but that trying to hear speakers had been "torture."

This reporter, however, found the first and perhaps only town meeting to be held at a highway garage to be yet another personal milestone. (I attended Woodstock, the Newport Folk Festival when Dylan went electric, and was thrown "up against the wall" in 1969 by Newton police for driving a van labeled "Toy Truck.")

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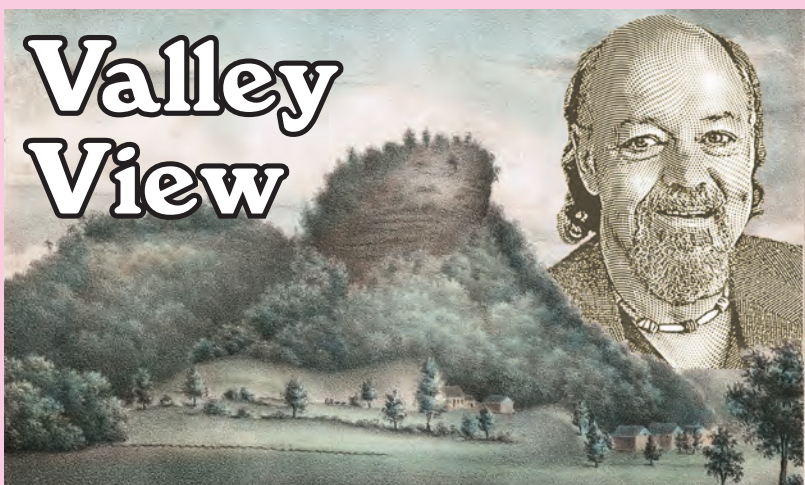
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OCTOBER 15, 2020

Above: Ed Gregory shared this photo of the solar array under construction on Millers Falls Road. The 2,710 photovoltaic modules take up 3.9 acres of the 4.2-acre lot. Thanks, Ed!

## Valley View



ORRA WHITE HITCHCOCK PRINT

By GARY SANDERSON

A proud, dignified Old Deerfield elder, tall and broad, taciturn to a fault, died peacefully with little notice in recent months, ironically during the planting and nesting season of birth and growth.

Though few knew his name, it was *Ulmus Americana*, more commonly American Elm – a dying breed that once lined our streets and neighborhoods as deciduous shade trees. That was before a post-World War II Asian invader known as Dutch Elm Disease – a fungal pathogen transmitted by the elm bark beetle – arrived to push our elms to the brink of extinction. Today, the few stragglers that remain stand as lonely reminders of our past.

Before we proceed in this sensitive Happy Valley, let me say I could have used either gender to describe this wise old sentry, standing straight as a preacher man in the fertile North Meadows. Elm trees have no sex: they're monoecious or hermaphroditic, meaning their spring flowers contain both male and female parts, which produce small, flattened seeds surrounded by papery wings that soften their fall to earth. Who knew?

Word of the tree's rapid demise came to me by phone from friend Dennis Dassatti, who gardens in the rich, fertile North Meadows. He and those intimately familiar with the stately tree were perplexed by its sudden death – leaves green one day, then brown, then soon on the

ground below, leaving a tall, broad, naked skeleton standing more than 100 feet tall, with a 19-foot circumference at the base and at least 10 muscular leaders reaching to the sun. Here today, gone tomorrow.

Dassatti had known the tree for at least a half-century. Standing along the bank of a small pond that some would call a mudhole this time of year, he used to sit camouflaged with his back against the large tree waiting for ducks to fly in over his decoys within range of his Belgian Browning Auto-5 fowling gun. The tree was the hunter's friend and associate, offering cover.

In more recent years, Dassatti has tended a long, narrow garden strip maybe 200 yards southeast of the tree. So, there his old friend stood as he worked, blotting out some of the hills called Sunnick on the western horizon. He was sincerely moved by its passing, like losing an old teammate.

There is no shame or foolishness in feeling such affection for a tree. In fact, many indigenous cultures do or once did identify plants, animals and some remarkable inanimate objects as beings with a soul and a spirit. It's a worldview Western Civilization has trouble getting its heads around, yet one that's gained much traction in alternative chambers of Western thought. Then, of course, there is Native American, hunter-gatherer spirituality, which follows the same holistic pattern, granting equality to virtually everything in

see VALLEY VIEW page B5



DENNIS DASSATTI PHOTO

The author and forester Bill Lattrell measure the ancient elm.

## From Bohemia to the Bay State, Part I

### The Struggles of One Czech Family in Western Massachusetts

By JAMES E. BRIDGMAN

**TURNERS FALLS** – For 150 years western Massachusetts has been home to a small but thriving Czech

community. The first Bohemians to come to the area arrived in the 1860s to work in the cutleries in Franklin County. Over a 30-year period hundreds of Czechs, primarily from the Plzeň region of western Bohemia, made the move to Massachusetts.

One of the most prominent Bohemian families to settle in western Massachusetts was the Schulda family. Originating in the tiny farming community of Koryta, near Klatovy, the first Schuldas arrived in 1867. Over the next 25 years, more than 80 members of the extended family settled in the village of Turners Falls.

One complication with research into this family is the spelling of the name. In the old Czech records the name is spelled a number of different ways, including *Shulda* and *Sulda*. For the sake of consistency, I have used the spelling *Schulda* in this article, which my branch of the family adopted.

The story begins with the family of Joseph and Anna (Němeček) Schulda, who lived in house #22 in Koryta. Although neither Joseph nor Anna ever left the place of their birth, four of their eight children would one day emigrate to the United States with their own large families. Eventually 38 of Joseph and Anna's grandchildren, and 188 of their great-grandchildren, would call western Massachusetts home.

The leader of this move to the New World was Joseph and Anna's son Joseph, born in 1817. He married Mary Bílý and they became the parents of 14 children, all born in Koryta.

see BOHEMIA page B5



The only known photograph of Joseph and Mary Schulda. Photo courtesy James Bridgeman.

## ArtBeat

by Trish Crapo

# Lahri Bond's Diverse Creations

**GREENFIELD** – Drive down Wells Street in Greenfield, nip into the Franklin County Community Development Corporation's parking lot at #324, and you'll find Lake Pleasant artist Lahri Bond's newest project: a brightly colored, three-sided mural that wraps around a solar water storage tank.

Reached by phone the other day, Bond said that the elements of the mural, which depicts the diversity of agricultural production in the Pioneer Valley, grew out of "knowing the CDC's mission. Knowing they were committed to putting forth the idea of diversity in how we produce our food."

Bond submitted his design proposal, including detailed sketches, to the CDC in May, back "when we were more or less getting used to the fact that we weren't going back to normal," he said.

Because of safety concerns during the coronavirus pandemic, he and his wife, Deborah Bazer, had canceled the summer's sessions of their long-running children's art



DEBORAH BAZER PHOTO

Lahri Bond and Madeleine Beaubien work on the mural at the Franklin County CDC's offices on Wells Street in Greenfield.

program, "Kids, Art & Nature." It was the first summer in 20 years that they hadn't held the popular series of weeklong classes, most recently based on the Hampshire College campus in Amherst. Bond thought the mural project would provide a safe, outdoor work opportunity for the summer months.

Then in June, he broke his ankle badly while hiking, and spent the summer with his leg in a cast. He wasn't able to begin work on the mural until September, after months of recuperation and what he termed "excellent physical therapy."

In order to convey the idea of see ARTBEAT page B4

# Pets of the Week



CHRISTOPHER CARMODY COLLAGE

## “SUNNY & AZULA”

Meet Sunny and Azula! These 5-year-old budgies should go home together. Sunny is missing the feathers on his chest and back but is otherwise healthy. We have treated them both with Ivermectin, but Sunny may benefit from seeing an avian veterinarian to determine the exact cause of the feather loss.

They will need a large cage (32" wide, 35" tall, 21" deep) to make sure that their stress is kept to a minimum to discourage plucking. They could

also benefit from daily enrichment to keep their minds busy and happy.

Send us an email at [springfield@dakinhumane.org](mailto:springfield@dakinhumane.org) to learn more about them! Please include your previous experience with parakeets. Call (413) 781-4000 or see [www.dakinhumane.org](http://www.dakinhumane.org) for more information.



MARY AZARIAN WOODBLOCK PRINT

By LESLIE BROWN

**MONTAGUE CITY** – Bright, blue skies. Strong sun and turning leaves: red, golden and orange.

We like to brag on our foliage in New England. One year we invited a niece up from Rhode Island. We took her up to the Bridge of Flowers to admire the color on the river. We laughed to hear the voice of a New Yorker remark that the color here “wasn’t much.” Perhaps, they said, they had better go to Vermont.

True, each Fall is different. Some are more brilliant, but all are beautiful.

Our blueberries are deep red this year, the maples orange and yellow. Our ash tree, which is the first to leaf out, is also the first to shed. Its branches stretch for the sky.

We are enjoying late blooming on the dahlias. We bought them this summer at a farmstand as tiny plants, so naturally our flowers are just starting to show up now. Luck-

ily they are perennials, so we’ll enjoy them even more next year.

Our only harvest left is of the tomatoes and peppers. A few nights ago, I made stuffed peppers with both green and red fruit. These were all grown as sweet peppers, but I found the red ones to be quite hot, burning my tongue and fingers. Seems I have especially sensitive taste buds, as no one else found them to be especially hot.

We are still getting tomatoes since we have not yet had a killing frost here by the river. An elderly farmer in Hatfield told me that if you watch for frost warnings, you can wrap any remaining green tomatoes in newspaper and they will turn red. They will indeed, but unfortunately the end product will be more like a hot-house tomato than the preferred juicy, vine-ripened fruit of summer.

The daylight is already shortening. By three it is darkening, even though we do not officially change the time until November 1.

The cat’s body-time is much more accurate. She is wide awake at five in the morning and already tucked into her favorite chair by four-thirty in the afternoon. As the days move along, she will awaken

later and go to bed earlier.

She also spends more time in the cellar by the wood stove. We get the stove hot before we retire in the evening, and she can be found on her rug in front of it. As the fire cools down in the early hours, she will join us on the bed for body warmth. Then she wakes us when her body says it’s time for breakfast. Who needs an alarm clock?

We’ve stacked our last pile of wood, all from a huge oak. There are two full carts stacked down-cellar, and more outside. We will get one more delivery from our woodman and then will feel ready for whatever the winter will bring.

There are two full moons in this long month: the full Harvest moon on the first, and the full Hunter’s moon on the thirty-first – or also, as it is known to many, All Hallows’ Eve.

Happy fall season, happy Halloween, and splendid full moons to all.

*If you wish to live and thrive,  
Let a spider run alive.*

– from *The Old Farmer’s Almanac*, 2020

## PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

### Campaign for Public Comment on Ed. Funding

**LEVERETT** – The Leverett Education Foundation (LEF) is encouraging community members to send comments to the Department of Revenue (DOR) and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to express their concerns about the state’s current formula for providing education funding to small towns and the negative impact that Proposition 2½ restrictions are having on the ability of towns to meet their schools’ needs.

“Healthcare costs, transportation costs, and special education costs are rising every year,” says LEF president Steve Weiss, “but the state has a funding formula in place that grossly penalizes small, rural towns like Leverett that have lower school enrollments and that rely solely on property taxes to pay for town services. Meanwhile, Prop 2 ½ places an arbitrary limit on what the town can do to close the ever-widening gap.”

Explaining why LEF decided to take the initiative on

this issue, Weiss said that “We know that many people in Leverett are deeply troubled over the fiscal crisis facing our elementary school, and we wanted to help them share their concerns and ideas with state officials.”

To do so, LEF has posted announcements with links to materials related to education funding on Leverett Connects, the town’s list serve, on the LEF website and on LEF’s Facebook page, along with suggested lines of argument that town residents can draw on.

“The flawed state response to the Commonwealth’s education needs is not just Leverett’s problem,” observed Weiss. “The municipal contribution cap, for example, disproportionately burdens low- and middle-income towns.” Noting that efforts by western Massachusetts legislators like state Senator Jo Comerford and State Representative Natalie Blais to get changes to the state funding formula are vital, Weiss says “we just felt it was also time for the people’s voice to be heard.”

## MR Wrapping Paper Edition Artist Profiles: #6

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 newspaper, meant to wrap presents in. Seven pages will feature the work of local artists chosen from the proposals we have received, with an in-house, MR-themed design as the outer page.

We announced our seven winners in last week’s paper. They are: Lahri Bond (Lake Pleasant); Hannah Brookman (Turners Falls); Emma Kohlmann (Northampton); Cecely Ogren (Turners Falls); Peter O. Zierlein (Northampton); Steve Schmidt (Amherst); and Jeanne Weintraub (Montague Center). The themes they proposed range from Christmas Chard to Holiday Botanicals to Grandma Moses does

Turners Falls!

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. Steve Schmidt proposed “Christmas Chard” for his



design, and answers our questions this week.

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

**SS:** I’d like my paper to say “Eat well, be glad for beautiful color and shape, how amazing a leaf can look like a tree!” I’d like it to feel satiny and luxurious!

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

**SS:** I made this image from organic rainbow chard I got from our CSA. So I’d love to get fresh green organic produce in my Christmas Chard paper! Or if not that, a rainbow! Or maybe chocolate cupcakes.

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

**SS:** I love getting the *Montague Reporter* every week. It’s a great gift to receive quality small-town independent writing!

## Senior Center Activities OCTOBER 19 THROUGH 23

### 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](mailto:coa@montague-ma.gov) by email.

### ERVING

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

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

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

Paula can be reached at (413) 423-3649 or [paula-betters@erving-ma.gov](mailto:paula-betters@erving-ma.gov).

### LEVERETT

Leverett senior activities are currently canceled. Further updates are being distributed via TTY telephone and email. For more information, contact the Leverett COA at (413) 548-1022 x 5, or [coa@leverett.ma.us](mailto: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](mailto:pickup@franklincommunity.coop) (413) 625-2548

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

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# Montague Early Voting Hours

The Town of Montague will be offering **Early Voting** for the November 3 General Election. Early voting will take place at the Gill-Montague Senior Center located at 62 Fifth Street in the village of Turners Falls.

Early voting hours are as follows:

**Week 1:**

- Saturday, October 17: 8 a.m. to noon
- Sunday, October 18: 8 a.m. to noon
- Monday, Tuesday & Thursday, October 19, 20 & 22: 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Wednesday, October 21: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Week 2:**

- Saturday, October 24: 8 a.m. to noon
- Sunday, October 25: 8 a.m. to noon
- Monday, Tuesday & Thursday, October 26, 27 & 29: 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Wednesday, October 28: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Election Day Voting**, November 3: polling hours are 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. at all precincts.

A **Ballot Drop Off Box** is located at the front door of Town Hall located at 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls. It is brand new, safe, and secure for voters voting by mail who wish to hand deliver their ballots instead of using the mail. The box is checked daily throughout the day.

## 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](mailto: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](mailto:infomontaguetv@gmail.com) between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. We'd love to work with you!

## MEDIA CRITICISM

# Devils in the Details

By **MELISSA WLOSTOSKI**

**GREENFIELD** – I once said in a review of the TV show Lucifer that people have always had fascination with the Devil in TV, literature, and movies. Now I shall look at portrayals of him done in that TV show and two other movies.

I have seen the Devil portrayed in Keanu Reeves' movie Constantine, where he's a man who battles the supernatural and demons. Ironically to me, Reeves was also in the movie The Devil's Advocate, where he played a lawyer who meets and begins working for the Devil, played by Al Pacino in the movie, who has his own high-end law firm. I am just saying, it's not the first time for him doing this sort of movie.

Another source of irony is in this film; his name is John Milton, the author of Paradise Lost. That book is the story of the Devil's fall from Heaven. That explains the irony pretty well. I have read that book, and follow the story pretty well in terms of British literature.

Constantine is a fantasy movie, where an appearance from the Devil is a perfect thing to occur in the movie. The appearance of him in the thriller The Devil's Advocate works reasonably well for a fit too.

However, the look of these individuals is different. Al Pacino's Devil looks like a human being for most of the film. At the end of it,

he has more of a slight supernatural feel to him. In Constantine, the Devil has a supernatural feel in all of his scenes. He even has tar on the bottom of his feet, for some reason. He wears a white suit.

The Lucifer TV show, which I have seen and now is on Netflix, has this actor named Tom Ellis be in the makeup – and other things – that probably give him the look the Devil is supposed to have after he falls from Heaven. At one point, he has angel wings on him.

You could accurately say, at least on this show, it's being realistic and accurate when it comes to the look of the Devil. It's an interpretation out of the book; it's not a new and different one.

Constantine's Devil acts like a cocky individual who enjoys his torment. In The Devil's Advocate, Al Pacino just acts like a lawyer who does business with people. In one scene in the film, he appears to enjoy the sin of Vanity as his favorite. That is one similarity between the two.

The Devil from the TV series acts like an individual who enjoys partying and going to clubs. Like the Devil is supposed to do, he makes arrangements with people – or, as he says, does "favors." He also likes making smart aleck remarks.

I can honestly say these films and this show all portrayed the Devil very nicely, and in ways that make for good film and TV, along with making it very enjoyable to watch.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

# Food Altered In Oven; Brother Against Brother; Big Storm; Concerns About Unwanted Parties; Gathering; Driveway Fire

**Monday, 10/5**

2:08 p.m. Caller from G Street reporting that a female party gave him a snowblower last year and this morning she took it back. Caller advises that the snowblower was given outright and he did not give the neighbor any money or barter for the item. Advised of options. Subsequent call requesting officer to stand by in area so that male party can pick up snowblower. Officer standing by in area. Snowblower picked up by male party.

4:21 p.m. Report of three kids vandalizing Unity Park. Caller states kids have left the park and are headed toward Town Hall. Units advised. Unable to locate.

**Tuesday, 10/6**

11:51 a.m. Report of a youth, approximately twelve years old, riding an electric bike or scooter that darted in front of a car at G and Eleventh streets and was nearly hit head on. Caller advises that this has happened several times. Referred to an officer.

12:50 p.m. Caller reporting ongoing threats/harassment from his brother, who lives in the same apartment building. Parties were feuding over someone being called a name while playing Xbox. Advised of options. After speaking with caller, officer en route to residence. Simultaneously, caller called back on 911 reporting that his brother was outside of his apartment a few minutes ago yelling, but has since stopped and may not be outside the door now. Officer spoke with both brothers; peace restored; advised of options.

1:05 p.m. Report of fire in front of Crestivew Liquor on Unity Street. Caller reports everyone has evacuated. TFFD and PD units advised.

**Wednesday, 10/7**

8:50 a.m. Officer on a detail received a citizen complaint that Verizon has three trucks working without a detail on Crocker Avenue. Verizon detail shut down; they will do some other side work today with their utility trucks, and call later to set up a detail for tomorrow on Crocker Avenue.

5:04 p.m. First of dozens of reports of damage due to windstorm: trees, poles, and wires down all over town, blocking roads and train tracks and damaging property. Several roads closed. TFFD and Eversource responding to multiple locations.

10:22 p.m. Caller from Montague Street states

that there is a strange animal wandering around his home, possibly a coydog or coyote. Delay in response due to storm-related calls; nothing seen or heard by officer at this time.

**Thursday, 10/8**

2:34 a.m. Officer out with two suspicious vehicles at cemetery on Turners Falls Road. Parties are playing Pokemon Go.

6:50 a.m. Report of transformer on fire at Randall Road and Turners Falls Road. TFFD and Eversource advised.

1:59 p.m. 911 caller from East Main Street states that a package was stolen from him yesterday, and another one this morning. Officer advised caller to have packages delivered to his building's property management office next door.

5:56 p.m. Caller from James Avenue stating that there has been an injured cat on her front porch all day. Referred to animal control officer.

6:20 p.m. Caller would like it on record that when she returned home from a walk, she realized that her dinner which was cooking in the oven had been tampered with while she was gone. Caller states that she left the door unlocked while she was out. No police response requested. Caller called back to advise that she realized what happened to the food, and confirmed that nobody entered her residence.

8:14 p.m. Report of two-car accident at the intersection in front of the police department. No apparent injuries. Both units on another call; officer requesting mutual aid. Gill PD responding. TFFD reports no injuries. Report taken.

**Friday, 10/9**

1:03 p.m. Caller states that her twelve-year-old son ran away and may be heading to his father's workplace in Greenfield. Greenfield PD advised to be on lookout. Officers checking downtown area. Child located on Canal Street. Mother notified and is coming down to get him.

3 p.m. Motorist reporting that the stop sign at

South Prospect Street and Mormon Hollow Road is on the ground. DPW notified.

4:34 p.m. Report of used needle by the dumpster in the parking lot of Hillcrest Homes. Officer collected needle and properly disposed of it.

5:53 p.m. Officer requesting that DPW be advised of a large amount of wood that is crossing over the white line and possibly impeding traffic south of the Environmental Police building on Turners Falls Road. DPW advised.

5:56 p.m. Caller from Ripley Road states that the road should be shut down due to the wires still being down; states multiple cars have been turning around in her driveway. Officer advised and checking barricades in area. Eversource advised that road is clear to pass until they are able to repair the wires. Officer states crew is in area to clean up; requests DPW put more barricades in the area. DPW advised.

6:32 p.m. Greenfield PD requesting MPD to be on lookout for a possible kidnapping; involved vehicle was seen leaving CVS on Federal Street in Greenfield with children in the back stating that they had been kidnapped. While attempting to enter call, Shelburne Control advised they had located the vehicle close to the registered owner's residence; requesting one unit from MPD to assist. Request canceled while officer was en route.

**Saturday, 10/10**

10:49 a.m. Report of cones blown over partially obstructing travel lane at Turnpike and Turners Falls roads. TFFD will put cones back into position.

4:33 p.m. Report of what sounds like gunshots coming from the houses behind the boat ramp at Cranberry Pond in Sunderland. Shelburne Control advised.

4:34 p.m. Report of stop sign turned in the wrong direction at South Prospect Street and Mormon Hollow Road.

5:24 p.m. Report of a

lot of cars from various states in the area of Avenue C, possibly due to a large gathering. Advised caller that COVID-related calls can be referred to the Board of Health.

8:38 p.m. Report of possibly disabled pale yellow motorcycle parked on West Main Street for the past two days. Unable to locate.

**Sunday, 10/11**

8:56 a.m. Caller requesting to have on record that someone entered her unlocked vehicle in the Third Street alley overnight and stole \$35.

11:41 a.m. Caller from Third Street advising that an unwanted party returned but has since left on foot; also advised male may be in possession of her food stamp card. Advised of options.

12:03 p.m. Report of motorcycle with no plates on side of Mormon Hollow Road for past few days. Note on bike says it overheated and they will be getting it towed. Motorcycle is off road, not a hazard.

12:24 p.m. Report of male who has been sleeping in a motor home on the side of Masonic Avenue for the past few nights; caller is concerned that the party will stay there for an extended period of time if not moved along. Officer spoke with party and moved him along.

1:29 p.m. First of three additional reports of unwanted party returning to Third Street address. Subject moved along.

4:17 p.m. Caller states that male party is back on Masonic Street with his motor home; would like him moved along. Officer spoke with party, who stated that he was given permission by another officer to stay until Monday because the motor home is broken down. Motor home is legally parked; confirmed with other officer that owner was given permission to stay.

9:20 p.m. Anonymous caller states that his neighbors on Park Street are having a fire in their driveway and it is very close to the residence; requesting somebody to make sure it's safe. TFFD advised.

# Clarification

Some of you let us know you were very confused about our Montague police log headline last week, which mentioned a "Porn Complaint."

The entry in question accidentally got lost somewhere in all the cutting and pasting! We apologize to anyone we may have confused or scandalized. Here it is, for posterity's sake:

**Saturday, 10/3**

1:48 p.m. Caller from K Street would like it on record that the neighbor next door was watching pornography very loudly and that her kids could hear it. Advised caller to call back if it happens again.

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**ARTBEAT** from page B1

agricultural diversity, the mural depicts people of different ethnicities, ages, and gender, who are also using different farming methods and equipment. There's a modern tractor in one of the fields, and a row of state-of-the-art windmills in the background, but there's also a horse-drawn plow. Bond says he added an older man in a straw hat cultivating the soil from a wheelchair after his summer in a cast made him realize that people with disabilities or with limited mobility are too often underrepresented in public art. (He denies that the figure is based on himself – as many have suggested – but if you look at the accompanying photo, it's easy to see how the misconception got started.)

Throughout the project, Bond has been assisted by Madeleine Beaubien, currently a student at Massachusetts College of Art and Design. Though she's been a student of his since she was 11, this is their first collaboration, Bond said.

"The arts can occasionally feel like a solitary endeavor, and it's nice to have someone there actually painting with you," he added. There's also an "interesting translation" that occurs when someone else helps to transfer your ideas and sketches to a large-scale project, such as the mural, and he enjoys the

new energy generated through that.

His six-year-old granddaughter Karianna Bond has also helped, painting sunflowers on a panel that faces the loading dock. Another panel, which faces the CDC offices, features their office cat and, as Bond puts it, "official receptionist," Amelio, who died in September.

**Fish in the Street**

The CDC mural is not Bond's first. Locals may remember the 6- by 16-foot mural Bond created in the crosswalk of downtown Turners during the summer of 2012. Using the same heavy-duty paints used for road markings, Bond brought to life a school of six fish, all native to the Connecticut River, swimming within the frames of a filmstrip.

This structural element was a nod to the Shea Theater's beginnings as a movie theater in 1927 and to Hallmark Institute of Photography's presence in the area, but it also called to mind, at least for this viewer, the windows of the nearby Turners Falls Fishway. The repetitive bars of the filmstrip frames also seemed a fun riff on the striped patterns of traditional crosswalks.

Unfortunately, a particularly harsh winter brought snow

and ice, and the freezing and thawing and increased plowing and scraping all but obliterated the mural by the next spring. Photos, some of which can be seen on Bond's website, are all that remain of this RiverCulture-sponsored project.

In addition to his public works projects, Bond has had a long career as a professional illustrator and magazine art director. He did this latter work for 20 years for *Dirty Linen: The Magazine of Folk and World Music*, and currently for *Voice Male*, a pro-feminist, anti-violence magazine.

Browse his website to see the range of techniques and styles he employs in his illustrations, posters, CD covers, and paintings – a range that includes woodcut, art deco, '60s psychedelic, and highly detailed pen and ink drawings he created using a traditional crow quill pen dipped in India ink.

One of my favorites is a design for the Northeast Organic Farming Association's 2010 conference, depicting a golden-feathered hen turning to look (with surprise, I assume) at the egg she's just laid, an ovoid facsimile of Planet Earth.

**Learning to See**

And as if all this weren't enough for one artist, Bond also teaches through Holyoke Community College and Artspace in Greenfield, where he is on the board. A new six-week course offered through Artspace, "Vision, Perception and Art: An Exploration of Visual Media," consists of a once-a-week, hour-long exploration of "the mechanics of vision and the enigma of perception." The first class was held October 14, but Bond says it's not too late to register through the Artspace website and join for next week's session.

The course grew out of a popular lecture series Bond taught previously at HCC. Bond says it covers "how we actually, physically see – the mechanics of how our eyes work – and how media and our surroundings affect the way we see things. How color works and how light works. We, as human beings, see things uniquely compared to any other creature on the planet."

Through taking the class, he said, "You become more aware of the process of seeing. A lot of people look at the world, but they don't really see it."

The difference between looking and seeing really comes into play when we do self-portraits, Bond said. We all look in the mirror at least once a day, some of us more, but our perception of ourselves changes when we have to really see ourselves to draw ourselves, he explained.

He added, "Everybody should draw, as far as I'm concerned. Everybody *can* draw. They just don't know it."

For Lahri Bond's website, with examples of his work, see [lahribondgraphics.com](http://lahribondgraphics.com); for Bond and Deborah Bazer's summer arts camp, see [kidsartandnature.com](http://kidsartandnature.com); and for information about ArtSpace classes, see [artspace-greenfield.com](http://artspace-greenfield.com).



Mural by Lahri Bond at the Franklin County CDC offices on Wells Street.

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**VALLEY VIEW** from page B1

their universe. Plants, animals, mountains, springs, and even some stones have spirits that must be included in cosmological council.

Heath forester Bill Lattrell, a man of aristocratic Native American roots, understands such belief systems. Of Eastern Algonquian and Cherokee ancestry, he's a proud descendant of Grey Lock, the famous, displaced Woronoco (Westfield) warrior who, during the first third of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, wreaked havoc on what is now called the Pioneer Valley from his Lake Champlain Abenaki village. The man deeply resented the foreign interlopers who drove him and his people from their place.

I contacted Lattrell when lingering questions about the tree, its cause of death, and its age kept surfacing during telephone conversations. I needed expert consultation and, though I had never met the man, felt like I knew him from email correspondence concerning past columns I have written. I finally reached out by Facebook Messenger, and he agreed to visit the site and age the big elm on one of his trips through Greenfield.

We finally connected last week, when we met in front of the Deerfield Inn. Dassatti joined us on our way to the site, all of us arriving in separate vehicles in compliance with social-distancing recommendations.

I was in the lead as Dassatti

joined us in-route down Broughams Pond Road and into the North Meadows. When we arrived at the T a quarter-mile away, I took a left onto Little Meadow Road and allowed Dassatti to take the lead the rest of the way. The tree and grassy lane leading to it were on private property, and he was friends with the landowners. We traveled a short distance, took a quick right before a barn, and followed the lane along a barb-wired pasture holding cattle, parking 50 yards north of the tree.

When we exited our pickups and before introductions, Lattrell, looking directly at the tree, gave us a knee-jerk estimate, given what he could see from where we stood.

"Looks like about 175 years old," he said.

We climbed under the fence and walked to the edge of the pond basin in which it stood. Able to see the entire tree from that vantagepoint 15 feet away, its massive base sitting eight feet downslope, he knew his initial age estimate was low.

"Wow," he said, in awe of its girth. "What a magnificent tree. It's older than I thought."

Standing and chatting a short distance from the dead elm as Dassatti circled us taking photos, our private discussion entered into trees, nature, and worldview. It was then that he shared valuable advice his Abenaki grandfather had once imparted while observing him as a 5-year-old

whipping a tree with a long stick for no particular reason. Though his grandfather knew it was harmless kid's play, he was uncomfortable with it. He calmly intervened, telling his grandson that was no way to treat a tree, that trees were living beings who should be treated with affection, the same as you'd treat an uncle, a cousin or grandparent. Trees bled, breathed, drank water and provided important resources. We should be thankful for trees, he was told, and at all times treat them with kindness and respect.

Lattrell remembers thinking, "Huh? What is he talking about?" But he never forgot the sage advice and, over time, evolved into a like-minded forester.

We were still chatting when Dassatti returned from his photo shoot. We walked down to the base of the tree, where I pinned the end of a 200-foot tape measure 4½ feet up the massive trunk (called "breast-height") as Lattrell walked it down and around the tree. Measured at 17.2 feet around, the forester dug out his calculator, converted the circumference to 206.4 inches, and plugged it into a complex formula involving  $\pi$  and the tree's growth factor to arrive at an estimated age of 276 years, give or take.

In summation, Lattrell doesn't believe the giant elm fell victim to a pathogen or poison. The life expectancy of an American elm is



DENNIS DASSATTI PHOTO

*The elm was estimated to have lived to about 276 years of age.*

about 300 years, and he thinks it had simply run its course in fertile isolation and died of old age.

We can now only ponder the historic events this grand old tree witnessed. The computed age of 276 years brings us back to 1744, 19 years before the end of the final French & Indian War. So, the elm definitely heard gunfire from the South Meadows' Bars Fight below on August 25, 1746. Who knows? It's not out of the question that the tree had even sprouted in time to witness the infamous February 29,

1704 Indian attack of Deerfield. Yes, unlikely, but not impossible.

Now the wise old sentry is dead, his reign ended without progeny to bear future witness. All that's left is a conspicuous skeleton standing as a temporary gravestone. Maybe it'll soon be a stump whose rings will reveal its exact age, whose cordwood will provide warmth for many winters.

Yes indeed, old *Ulmus Americana* had a good life in a great place, no richer soil anywhere on the planet.

**BOHEMIA** from page B1**Coming to America**

By the late 1860s, Joseph and Mary Schulda were making plans to leave the home of their ancestors. Their reasons for doing so may never be known for certain, but there can be little doubt that they would have been primarily economic. They had eight sons, and these sons would one day need homes to raise their own families. Although one son could take over his parents' house, the others would find it much more challenging to find housing and land to farm.

Furthermore, by the 1860s, the world was changing rapidly due to industrialization. Reports in the newspapers of "streets paved with gold" in America tantalized poor families. Most of the newspapers of Europe in the mid-19th century regularly ran articles describing life in America. Advertisements for ships taking passengers to the United States appeared in almost every issue.

At the time that the Schuldas made the decision to leave Bohemia, Joseph was 52 years old and Mary 49. It is clear that they were making the move more for the benefit of their living children than for themselves. No matter how much better life in the United States sounded, however, it had to have been wrenching to leave the home of their ancestors.

The first family members to make the move to the United States were Joseph and Mary's daughter Mary, and her husband, Anthony Engerman. They were the scouting party for the rest of the family.

Upon their arrival in the United States, they headed straight up to Deerfield, where Anthony found work at the John Russell Cutlery company. At that time the cutlery was still located along the Green River in the northern part of Deerfield, but it would soon be expanding and moving to nearby Turners Falls. Anthony worked hard, saved money, and sent reports back to the rest of the family in Bohemia that the cutlery would soon be hiring hundreds of workers at the new plant.



*Sign entering Koryta, 2011.*

**The Exodus Begins**

Encouraged by the optimistic reports, the first large contingent of the family, led by Joseph and Mary Schulda themselves, emigrated to the United States in the fall of 1869. This entourage contained 17 people: Joseph and Mary Schulda, their seven youngest sons, their eldest daughter and her husband and five children, and Mary Schulda's unwed sister Anna.

The family group traveled by train to the harbor city of Bremerhaven in Germany. On October 30, 1869, they boarded the *S.S. Main*. After a grueling two-week voyage traveling steerage, the ship arrived at the port of New York City on November 15, 1869.

Since the Schuldas came to the United States before Ellis Island opened, they landed at Castle Garden in lower Manhattan. From New York they took a train up to Greenfield.

By the third week of November, the family was settling into life in Deerfield. The men and older boys – Andrew (18), John (16), Vaclav (14) – immediately found work in the cutlery. The four younger boys – Joseph (12), Charles (10), Ambrose (8), and Emanuel (6) – attended the local public school. The women adapted to providing food for the family without access to their own gardens. The entire family struggled to gain a rudimentary knowledge of English.

Most importantly, everyone eagerly anticipated the opening of the new cutlery plant in Turners Falls.

John Russell had started his cutlery on the banks of the Green River in 1834. This was supposedly the first cutlery in the United States and would in time become strong competition for the famous Sheffield cutleries in Great Britain. By the time the Schuldas arrived in the United States, the John Russell Cutlery had been in business for 35 years. Having outgrown its current buildings, the proprietors were erecting a vast new plant on the Connecticut River in Turners Falls. By the summer of 1870, only six months after the Schuldas arrived in town, the Russell Cutlery transferred its operations to the new plant.

Turners Falls was a new village in 1870. Conceived on paper as "an industrial village in a rural setting," the town was designed and planned by wealthy industrialists who recognized the value of the waterpower on the Connecticut River. The John Russell Cutlery was the first business to buy into the new industrial village.

The physical plant of the new building was impressive. Designed to employ 1,200 men, it was believed to be the largest cutlery in the world, even though it would employ only 950 workers during its peak years. Nevertheless, the cutlery would eventually employ over one-third of the population of Turners Falls, and was the mainstay of the village for over half a century. Newly arrived immigrants – Germans, Poles, Bohemians, Irish, and French Canadians – made up the majority of the employees.

Joseph Schulda, his eight sons, two sons-in-law, two brothers-in-law, several nephews, and eventually numerous grandsons would all find work in the John Russell Cutlery. The

Schulda family was associated with the cutlery from 1867 until the factory closed its doors in the late 1930s.

Members of the family held almost every kind of blue-collar job provided at the factory, from forger to grinder to polisher to department foreman. The cutlery provided the Schulda family with a source of income, a place to live, and a social network of friends and relatives. Sadly, however, the poor air quality in parts of the factory was a source of chronic illness and early death for many members of the family.

**The Third Street Block**

Faced with a shortage of housing for their employees, the proprietors of the John Russell Cutlery Company, almost immediately after the completion of the new factory complex in 1870, began construction of a large tenement building on Third Street. This three-story Dutch colonial style building with a mansard roof stretched several hundred feet along the north side of Third Street. It would serve as home for several generations of cutlery workers and their families.

Joseph and Mary Schulda and their children moved into the "Third Street block" as soon as it was ready for occupancy, and most members of the family spent the rest of their lives there.

The apartments in the Third Street block were up-to-date with the standards of the time. Each apartment was basically the same, consisting of four main rooms: a kitchen, a parlor, two bedrooms, and its own private bath, which was a luxury for most of the poor immigrants who lived there. The rent was quite reasonable at \$2 per week for ground floor units and \$1.50 per week for upstairs units. Each tenant was responsible for the upkeep of his own apartment.

Despite the conveniences, conditions in the Third Street block were cramped. The two-bedroom apartments often housed up to eight or ten people – children, parents, grandparents, unwed aunts and uncles – with four or five people sleeping in each room. By our standards today, the overcrowding and lack of privacy would have been unbearable. However, in the eyes of the immigrants, who had lived under similarly crowded conditions in the small cottages back in Bohemia, the Third Street block felt modern and convenient, and was a step up from life in the village of Koryta.

According to the 1880 US federal census, 87 members of the extended Schulda family were living in Turners Falls just over 10 years after the family started arriving in this country. Almost 70 of them lived in the Third Street block.

*Part II of this article will describe what life in early Turners Falls was like. This is an abridged version of an article originally published in the September 2020 issue of Naše Rodina ("Our Family"), the quarterly journal of the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International, and is reproduced here with their permission. For more information on this organization, see their website at [cgisi.org/cgisi-quarterly-journal](http://cgisi.org/cgisi-quarterly-journal).*



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# The Children's Page

YONDERNOD ILLUSTRATION

## ODD THINGS TO DRAW

How many things can you draw, using ten straight lines and a circle? Below are some examples. See if you can draw other things beside these, using ten straight lines, no more and no less, any lengths, but straight; and a true circle, any size you wish.

These illustrations are from the October 1917 issue of *John Martin's Book: The Child's Magazine*, published monthly at Garden City, New York.

Selected by BEVERLY KETCH



WHEN Summer goes, the Autumn grieves; The tears she sheds are falling leaves. Here are four leaves, the tears of Fall; Now see if you can spell them all.

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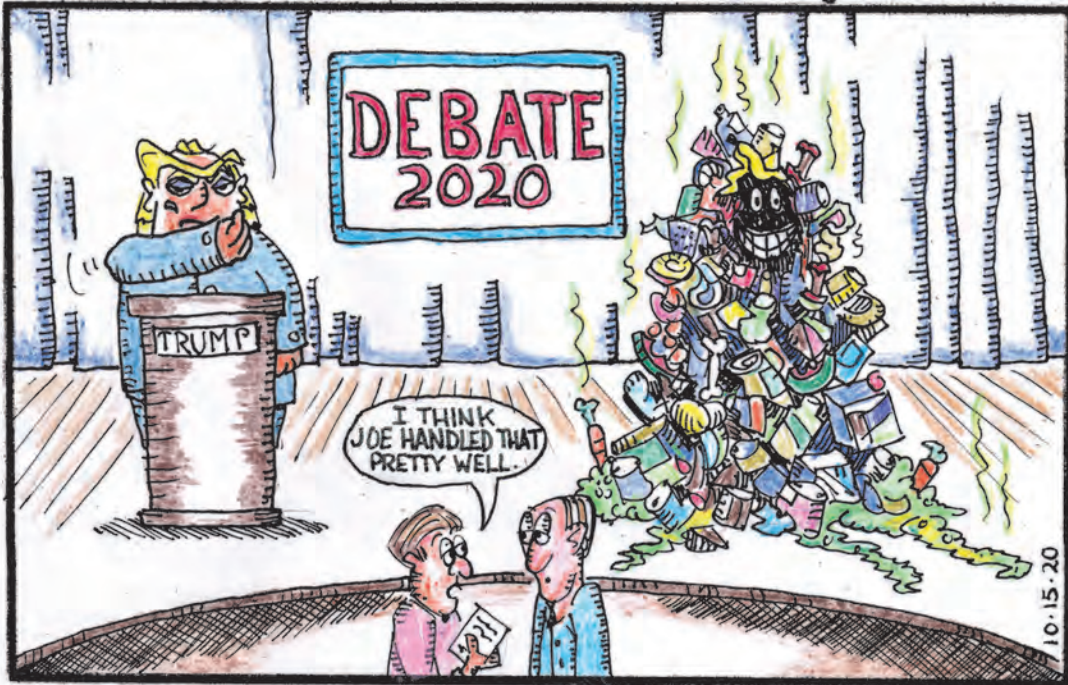
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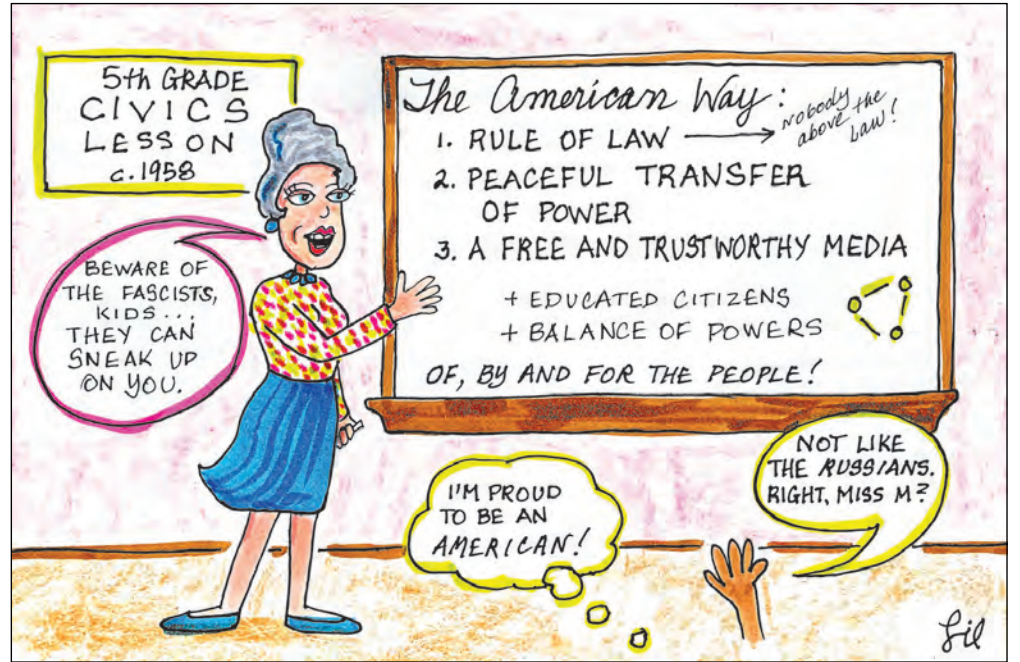


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# FABRIC BY THE YARD, SKILLS BY THE HOUR!

By KAREN GUILLETTE

**TURNERS FALLS** – Do you have a great idea for a Halloween costume, but could use some help making it a reality? Or are you in need of an idea for a fantastic costume? Look no further than Swanson's Fabrics on 106 Avenue A in Turners Falls to help you with unique stand-out original costumes.

Kathryn Swanson, the owner, is not only the daughter of a costume designer, but also a former Props Artisan for Center Stage Theater in Baltimore, Maryland. She can provide an hour of consultation to help you create or develop your idea, design your costume, and plan out how to gather the materials needed to put the piece together.

For example, one good foundation for a costume is a hoodie. Kathryn points out that you could attach arms, legs, teeth, horns, and a tail to the hoodie, and whatever else your imagination determines that the costume needs. If you don't have a sewing machine, says Kathryn, hot glue will work just fine.

The store holds a wide variety of materials; the space is filled nearly floor to ceiling with shelves full of recycled vintage cotton cloth in many colors and patterns. There are lots of dance fabrics, as well as bolts of fabric found in a Broadway costume designer's warehouse. If you need leather or a feather boa for your costume, or buttons, tulle, trim, beads, ribbon, or sequins, Swanson's probably has what you need.

On the remaining Sundays in October, Kathryn will provide hour-long consultations for \$40 on making a Halloween costume. Since all the fabric in the store is offered at \$4 per yard, with 5 yards of material and a consult, you can have a clear

plan and the materials you need to create your costume for \$60.

There is another good reason to get your Halloween costume designed and planned at Swanson's Fabrics. The store and its offerings are based on a value system that cherishes community and environmental health. As Kathryn points out, the fabric industry in the United States has been largely exported overseas, frequently utilizing unfair, unhealthy, and unsafe labor practices and environmentally harmful production methods in the creation of fabrics that are not of the same quality as that produced 50 years ago in this country.

Most of the fabrics for sale at Swanson's are upcycled. They have been rescued by Kathryn from the basements and attics of retired sewers. Many are made of high quality cotton materials. As she points out, "vintage fabrics are by far nicer, and more often made of natural fibers, than newer fabrics."

By creating a costume – or any sewing project you have in mind – with these fabrics, you can feel good about the fact that you are not purchasing material made overseas in ways that impact negatively on the workers and the environment. Instead, you have helped to rescue these high-quality upcycled fabrics from languishing in people's homes, and saved wonderful sewing stashes from ending up in the landfill.

### Teaching Craft

Swanson's Fabrics is dedicated to teaching the craft of sewing as a way to empower individuals to transform themselves and their environment. Kathryn says she wants to encourage a more sustainable American lifestyle, in part by facilitating the passing-down of sewing and fibercraft wisdom and

resources to others, especially to children. As a former elementary school teacher, she is committed to fostering the love of fabric arts in the next generation.

After-school and homeschool classes are available at the store, where students can rent-to-buy used sewing machines. A bin of free fabric remnants is available for youth under the age of 18.

There are also myriad opportunities for adults to develop or improve fabric arts skills at the store. Go in for advice on any idea or project – you don't need to be making a Halloween costume to avail yourself of Kathryn's expertise in design and construction.

A sewing consultation with Erica Wolenczek is another offering at the store. Erica's sewing skills can help you bring your project to fruition, or perfect your tailoring.

Do you need a new mask or do you want to make one for someone else? A private consultation with Star will help you make a uniquely creative and comfortable mask.

How about making a rug? Swanson's is offering a rug braiding-in class on Thursdays. Rug braiding-in is a different technique than regular braided rug creation. According to Kathryn, "it's the perfect craft for using the less appealing fabrics, especially polyester and other synthetics, old bedsheets and curtains, *et cetera*." The materials are braided into themselves as you go: over, under, and through, rather than sewing the braid to the body of the rug. This process makes the rugs more durable and washable. Few tools are needed, and you can learn the process in less than an hour.

Last but not least, Swanson's Fabrics hopes they are helping put Turners Falls on the map. Just this past weekend the store was visited



GUILLETTE PHOTO

Kathryn Swanson models a costume made on Broadway using fabric available at her Avenue A shop.

by sewing enthusiasts from near and far, from Northampton to Vermont, the Berkshires, and beyond.

For more information on registering for classes or booking a consultation with Kathryn, Star, or Erica,

check out the website at [www.swansonsfabrics.com](http://www.swansonsfabrics.com).

The store is open Wednesdays through Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Attendance is limited to six people in the shop at a time.

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