

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 19 – NO. 29

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

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EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

MAY 27, 2021

Bike Shop Booted for Tasting Room

By SARAH ROBERTSON

TURNERS FALLS – Down-town bike shop Sadie's Bikes received notice this week from its landlord that the business will have to vacate its Canal Road location by September 1.

"I want to stay until I have a more comfortable way of moving. This whole out-by-September thing is a real bummer," said owner Nik Perry. "Our season is about to pick up."

Curtis Sherrer, the building's owner, announced his decision to end a rental agreement with Perry

via a certified letter delivered to the shop on Tuesday.

"The space now occupied by Sadie's is going to transition into the cidery tasting room and bar, which has been the business plan before purchasing the mill," Sherrer told the *Reporter*. "The projected opening of the cidery, to be named Third Eye Cider and operating under Great Falls Spirits with the goal of opening this Fall."

"I am glad that I was able to give Sadie's a very affordable leg up on starting their dream business," he added.

"Never once was it communicated to me that I would be moved out once he was ready to open the cidery," Perry said. "If it was an incubator space, or a starter space for businesses, that needs to be very clear."

The 42 Canal Road property was owned until 2018 by the Franklin

see **BIKES** page A6



MIKE JACKSON PHOTO

Nik Perry says he was surprised by the notice Sadie's must vacate the building.

Bookmill Circles Toward Normalcy

By WILLIAM KAIZEN

MONTAGUE CENTER – Like many people in the area, The Bookmill complex has been one of my family's most beloved destinations in the Pioneer Valley. Before COVID, we would regularly go book hunting at the Bookmill and eat lunch at the Lady Killigrew. I'd sneak off to buy records at Turn it Up. Our kids would look at the waterfall while my wife and I bought gifts at Sawmill River Arts. More than anything, we miss date nights at The Alvah Stone, when we'd leave the kids at home with a babysitter and have some adult time.

Last spring, when I rode my bike up from Amherst with a friend, we found the entire complex empty. All the businesses were closed because of the COVID pandemic. As we sat alone on the Alvah Stone's deserted deck having a mid-ride break, it felt post-apocalyptic. We jokingly worried that zombies were going to round the corner and get us.

I returned a few times later in the summer when the businesses in the complex began reopening. Curious about how they've been doing ever since, I spoke with several of their owners to see how they survived and are planning to move forward now that Governor Charlie Baker has eased most COVID

see **BOOKMILL** page A5



NINA ROSSI PHOTO

The Bookmill complex is abuzz with activity, and the owners of its retail businesses are once again navigating safety questions as statewide restrictions are scheduled to lift.

High School Sports Week: Tech Support!

By MATT ROBINSON

TURNERS FALLS – "It's the Tech Girls," Turners tennis coach Victor Gonzalez said as I passed by the courts last Thursday. "That's why our roster is so deep." Coach went on to explain that although the blended team has a losing record, he expects to field a full slate of players for years to come thanks to the girls from Franklin Tech. The ladies will raise their rackets this Friday, May 28 for a home-match against the Pope Francis Cardinals.

Another Tech/Thunder blended team is girls' outdoor track, but even with the addition of the Tech Squad, their numbers remain critically low. "We have 12 girls on our entire squad," coach Ron Hebert explained. "We've also had injuries, so we can't even field a 4-by-4 relay team."

The Thunder-Eagles hosted Mohawk on Tuesday. Before the meet, Hebert spoke about his strategy against one of the best teams in the region. "I was honest. I told them that Mohawk will outscore us, so just concentrate on your own events. Don't worry about the final score."

And Blue did manage to place and show in individual events. Linley Rollins took second in the discus (50'10") and third in the javelin (58'5"), Kaylin Voudren finished second in pole vault with a jump of 6'6", and Jolene Dunbar put the shot 18'10.75" for third place.

The third FT-TF hybrid spring sport is boys' track, see **SPORTS** page A8



DAVID HOIT PHOTO

Turners Falls senior Kaylin Voudren earned second place in the pole vault during last week's home track and field meet against the Mohawk Trail Warriors with her vault of 6'6".

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Town Buildings Will Reopen As Cases Continue to Drop

By JEFF SINGLETON

"If you could have 100,000 people in TD Garden, on May 29 we should be able to have 10 people in town hall," said Montague selectboard member Michael Nelson during a conversation about lifting restrictions on public use of town buildings. Nelson, when later informed that TD Garden, the home venue of the Boston Celtics and Bruins, only holds 19,500 people, responded, "That's still a lot of people."

Town administrator Steve Ellis agreed, and noted that this number of people in town hall would probably violate the fire code.

The amusing exchange came in the midst of a lengthy discussion at

the selectboard's May 24 meeting about how to respond to a decision by Massachusetts governor Charlie Baker to end many of the state's COVID-19 emergency regulations on May 29, and end the state of emergency itself on June 15.

It also came in the context of a report from health board director Daniel Wasiuk that Montague's two-week count of new COVID cases now stood at only 14, and that the percentage of residents in Franklin County with at least one dose of a vaccine had reached 60%.

The board voted to reopen the water pollution control facility, public safety complex, parks and recreation office, and the new see **MONTAGUE** page A6

Town Meeting Passes Everything, Restores Full Police Funding

By MIKE JACKSON

MONTAGUE – The annual town meeting was held outdoors at the Franklin County Technical School grounds last Saturday, and a quorum of town meeting members passed all 29 articles on the warrant, but not without some argument.

A number of holds were placed on various lines of the town budget for discussion, though the full budget of \$10,775,731 ultimately passed.

Police spending, as expected, was a topic of controversy. Last year, town meeting voted 38 to 35 to freeze the department's budget at \$1,652,537 rather than raise it to \$1,698,119. The FY'22 request

came in at \$1,761,945, restoring most lines that had been cut and continuing personnel growth locked in by union contracts. Moderator Chris Collins discouraged the conversation from straying from the budget, and urged police chief Chris Williams to stay near the microphone.

Finance committee member Francia Wisniewski noted that the fin com had recommended the request before the town had received the reports of the police advisory committees. Williams said he hoped residents would bring questions and concerns about the police to ongoing forums. "I hope we have room for open dialogue," he said.

see **TOWN MEETING** pg A2

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Erving to Use Trash Stickers In Effort to Stem Piracy

By KATIE NOLAN

On Monday night, the Erving selectboard decided to institute a modified pay-as-you-throw (PAYT) system for the town's trash pickup and disposal, starting this summer. The town's curbside trash hauler will only pick up bags with town stickers, and each residence will be allotted three free stickers per week. Additional free stickers will be available by application.

Selectboard chair Jacob Smith characterized this system as "free-as-you-throw."

Franklin County Solid Waste

District executive director Jan Ameen presented the board with statistics showing that Erving, which has offered free curbside pickup, sends approximately 40 tons of trash per month for disposal, while Gill, a similarly sized town which charges \$3 per trash sticker, sends 13 to 17 tons.

Ameen said she is "99% confident" that the 40 tons per month is not all Erving's trash. She asked the board to "try [PAYT], and see where your trash numbers go."

"I think the time has come for us to adopt pay-as-you-throw trash to see **ERVING** page A5

GILL-MONTAGUE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Schools Loosen Mask Rules

By MIKE JACKSON

GILL-MONTAGUE – The regional school committee held an emergency meeting last Thursday to rescind the district's official mask policy, and empower nurse leader Melissa Bednarski and superintendent Brian Beck to adjust mask protocols as state and federal guidance evolves.

As of this week, students will be allowed to go mask-free when they are outdoors and can socially distance, including at recess and during sports.

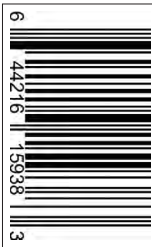
"If they can't be at least six feet apart, then they should be masked,"

Beck explained of the current rule. Masks will be worn during outdoor classes held under tents.

Bednarski said the district is still going "above and beyond" the state's current guidelines.

The school committee unanimously approved rescinding the official policy.

At the regular meeting Tuesday night, Beck reported that the pandemic response advisory committee will send a survey home with students "to see if we can sensitively gather some information about how their home lives have changed" during the pandemic, "and what see **GMRSD** page A4



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The Montague Reporter

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Technical Administration

About Face Computing

Founded by
Arthur Evans Harry Brandt David Detmold
August 2002

TOWN MEETING from pg A1

In response to a question about mental health emergencies, Williams said that residents in mental crisis belong neither in a cell nor at the hospital where police drop them off, and that he hoped a new co-response pilot program with Clinical and Support Options will be able to expand its hours.

Rachel Stoler moved an amendment to again level-fund the budget.

Sheree Bloomberg of Precinct 1 said that she had voted to level-fund it last year, but urged members to vote against the amendment. Precinct 3's Kristi Bodin praised the department for "maturing and improving." "There's not a big rug to sweep things under in this town," she said.

The amendment was eventually defeated by a majority.

"I voted in favor of the amendment to level-fund the budget last year," said fin com chair Jen Audley. "What they've asked for this year is what it costs to run a department – the way that they are currently running it, the way that they are currently staffing it – and there has not been a credible proposal to change that structure. It takes more than one year to do that."

The largest cost on the warrant, the Gill-Montague regional school district assessment of \$10,950,854, also came in for debate. Rich Ducharme asked why the district was suffering from school choice losses. Gill-Montague business manager Joanne Blier said that besides losses during the pandemic, the trend had been slowly improving.

Kathy Lynch of Precinct 1 condemned the district at length, saying that her experience as a parent was "horrifying" and that she would be sending her child to a private school. "It's not just about equity – there is a serious culture of disrespect and non-care and blame-shifting that happens in the culture of this district," she said. "It doesn't change."

Lilith Wolinsky asked whether the motion could be amended to make the appropriation contingent on the establishment of an oversight committee, but town counsel advised that this was not proper procedure.

Fin com member Jennifer Waryas compared the discussion to that of the police budget. "The issues have a right to be heard," she said, "but what is the process by which people would participate earlier in this discussion, so that when we got here to vote we had most of our questions answered?"

In another discussion, David Jensen of Precinct 2 pointed out that the \$4,000 stipend for the coordinator of the Montague Economic Development and Industrial Corporation (MEDIC) was intended for work done "outside of normal work hours." "I'm just wondering how that's going," he said.

Town planner Walter Ramsey, who is receiving the stipend, gave a long list of the MEDIC's ongoing projects.

"MEDIC and Planning are murky subjects – they overlap quite a bit," said Jensen. "This is a raise.... If we're promised the extra time, is it getting monitored?"

"We are trying to grow this community toward prosperity, and turning those heavy stones over in the canal district, and in the former dump area, they are requiring a lot of extra time," town administrator Steve Ellis replied, vouching that Ramsey was doing separate overtime work.

Article 6 put the Highland Cemetery in Millers Falls under the ownership of the town. "It's a good opportunity," said cemetery commissioner Judith Lorei, noting that the plan is to provide a section of the land for green burials.

"I find this article a money pit," said Mark Fisk of Montague Center. "All the private cemeteries are in need of care, because their members are old, and there's no younger generation coming along, but... it's just a lot of money. Funerals are very scarce."

Wisniewski said the fin com liked the proposal, and Millers Falls resident Gretchen Wetherby noted that green burials are popular. The motion passed unanimously.

Other items of debate were appropriations from the new cannabis stabilization fund (including \$80,000 for the schools and \$7,000 for police trainings), authorizing the selectboard to join the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District, and a symbolic condemnation of subsidies for biomass-burning power plants.

A Phase II environmental study of the former highway department building, which the town hopes to market for redevelopment, was also authorized.

The final two articles created a public tree bylaw and a revolving fund to hold fees extracted from the bylaw's violators. An error on the warrant spawned a procedural morass, and some members called for the items to be tabled, but the meeting struggled through and the bylaw was enacted.



NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION



Dan Hunt gets ready to warm up the grill for another day at his Whistle Stop cafe in Millers Falls. He's open Wednesdays through Sundays from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. with homemade baked goods, soups, and breakfast and lunch specials. Noodle on the house guitar while you wait!

Letters to



the Editors

Biomass Vote a Good Start

On Saturday, May 22, Montague town meeting, by an overwhelming voice vote, declared the Town in opposition to state subsidies for biomass electricity generating plants. Montague joins Leverett, Springfield and others in opposition.

On April 2, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection officially revoked the Final Plan Approval necessary for the construction of the Palmer Renewable Energy proposed 42-MW biomass (or wood-burning) electricity generating plant in Springfield. This was a victory for the people of

Springfield, and all around Western Mass., who fought this plant for over a decade. It is also a victory for our climate.

But Governor Baker's Department of Energy Resources continues to push for a change of rules that would qualify biomass energy to receive subsidies that are intended for real clean energy alternatives like wind and solar. If they are successful, this rule change could possibly give the Palmer plant new life and would encourage development of other inefficient and polluting biomass plants in the state. Biomass

electricity plants are not economically viable without subsidies.

There's lots wrong with biomass:

- Burning wood emits an awful lot of carbon into the atmosphere, accelerating global warming.
- Trees sequester lots of carbon so cutting them down hurts the climate even more.
- Lots of other toxic pollutants are released in these plants.

I encourage other towns to pass similar resolutions.

Ferd Wulkan
Montague Center

Sign the Wrong Shape

We notice that the new stop sign at Canal Street and the Green Bridge is on a square sign so that motorists at the other corners cannot tell that it's a stop sign. Maybe the four corners of the square sign

can be cut off on the diagonal to turn the sign into the recognizable octagon stop sign shape?

Richard and Ann Seely
Greenfield

Criticism Criticized

We were quite appalled to read the review your paper published of the film *Nomadland* in the April 29, 2021 issue. Couldn't decide if the reviewer had gotten up on the wrong side of the bed, had not watched the whole movie, or was just trying to rack up cool points by dissing an impressive movie.

Having read other reviews of the film, we went out of our way to watch it and were not disappointed. That spurred us to read up on some of the background behind the story covered here.

We don't see the need for all that

condescension. Poverty in our society is usually made so invisible that any new angle of looking at it should be encouraged, rather than sneered at. A whole lot of points unrelated to the movie are piled up and maligned including the father of the movie maker ("he is a *steel magnate* for f...k's sake"), without letting the reader into the story or the acting. We are big *MR* Fans, but this snide review was rather disheartening.

Jude and Martin Wobst
Leverett

CORRECTIONS:

At least three things were wrong in our May 20 edition!

A Letter to the Editors about Montague's police review groups stated that "all but one of the committee members of color left the process early on." The authors have notified us that this was incorrect – two residents of color served on the community engagement committee throughout the process. They apologized for the error, and we apologize for not catching it.

Op ed writer Ariel Elan listed an incorrect email address to be reached at. Please use planet.hugger77@gmail.com.

And the local Brotherhood of the Spirit commune was featured in *Look* magazine, not *Life*, in 1970. Whoops!

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By NINA ROSSI

Enjoy your Memorial Day weekend – the weather looks like it will continue to be glorious. Those looking to **rent a canoe, kayak, or paddleboard** to get out on the Connecticut River above the Falls may do so starting this Saturday, May 29 at the Barton Cove Boat Rentals at 82 French King Highway (Route 2).

It's a big tag sale weekend as well. You may support community gardening and edible landscaping projects in Montague by shopping at a **benefit tag sale for the Great Falls Apple Corps** in the garden at 161 Avenue A, Turners Falls, located next to Rist Insurance company and across the street from Riff's North.

The sale runs Friday, May 28 through Monday, May 31 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day. There will be "lots of cool and useful stuff for art, home, garden, and body," says Edite Cunha, who is hosting the sale. You may park on the Avenue or in the town lot between Fourth and Fifth streets.

If you want to learn the **business end of writing**, Assets for Artists is offering a workshop for Massachusetts residents called "How to Successfully Research and Submit to

Literary Journals, Publishers, and Agents" with poet, essayist, and critic Kristina Marie Darling on Wednesday, June 2 at 2 p.m.

A 2021 Visiting Scholar at the University of Cambridge, Dr. Darling is the author of thirty-five books, editor of several anthologies. Register at www.assetsforartists.org.

Join *Montague Reporter* Sex Matters columnist Stephanie Baird at her **online poetry book debut** on Thursday, June 3 at 6 p.m. Baird released her first book of poetry, "Duets, Love Poems and Prayers" in 2020 but COVID delayed the official kick-off reading. Artwork from the book by her husband Ben Sears will be shared during the event. One copy of the book will be randomly given to an attendee.

Find the event on Facebook: "Poetry Reading: Duets, Love Poems and Prayers."

An **update from the LAVA Center** in Greenfield about their Open Screen Online Film Festival advises that it has been postponed to July 11 through 25. Links to submit a project are up on their website, www.localaccess.org.

Offerings from LAVA include online writing cafes, book discussions, playwright critiques, plus an in-person, Saturday morning salon showing arts and crafts in their gallery.

Get ready for the beginning of dragonfly emergence in June! Find out how to **observe and identify Dragonflies and Damselflies** with Athol Bird and Nature Club president Dave Small on Tuesday, June 8 at 5:30 p.m.

Beginner and experienced observers may find out about the origins and life history of the Dragons and Damsels and take a look at where to find them locally during this free, online presentation. Pre-registration by June 7 is required at www.bookeo.com/northfield.

The Charlemont Forum kicks off with a focus on **Soil Health, Food Justice and Nutritional Wellness** on June 9. Exchanging perspectives on the issues will be Jeff Tkach of the Rodale Institute, and Jessica O'Neill, executive director of Just Roots.

"Our conversation will center on the intersection of people, planet and food," says program host Mary Purdy. "We need to realize that the health of the individual, the health of the environment and a just, balanced agricultural system are all dependent on one another and will ultimately each benefit the other." Register on the Charlemont Forum Facebook page, or fb.me/e/4aTNUH2QA.

Check out another **play reading by Silverthorne Theater**, this one in person at the LAVA Center on Friday, June 11 at 7:30 p.m. Northampton playwright Ellen Meeropol's GRIDLOCK is set in a small western Massachusetts town and tackles issues of climate change and radical activism as two sisters reunite after a fifty-year separation.

There will be an audience discussion afterwards about this work-in-progress.

The reading is free and open to the public, but seating capacity is very limited, so reservations are advised by calling (413) 768-7514 or writing to silverthornetheater@gmail.com. Attendees must be fully vaccinated. The event will also be online; find out more at silverthornetheater.org/special-events.

The Shea Theater and CouchMusic.Live present a **family-friendly virtual concert by Carrie Ferguson** celebrating the release of her album, *The Grumpytime Club*, on Sunday, June 13 at 6 p.m. Her band features members of The Gaslight Tinkers plus additional special guests. Pay-what-you-can admission from \$10 to \$25. Find out more at www.sheatheater.org.

Also on Sunday, June 13: **Mohawk Trail Concerts Season Opener** featuring string sextets by Dvorak and Brahms, in a collaboration of the Adaskin String Trio and the Elm Chamber Players. There will be two outdoor concerts, one at 12 noon at the Montague Center ball field and one at 5 p.m. at the bandshell at the Buckland-Shelburne School in Shelburne Falls.

This is the 51st summer concert season, and features eight concerts that will all be held outdoors, at three locations. All information, including last-minute details regarding weather, are online at www.mohawktrailconcerts.org.

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

OPED

Village Ball Field Needs You to Pitch In!

By CHRIS PINARDI

MONTAGUE CENTER – I am writing today to request your consideration in helping to fund a renovation of the Montague Center ball field. I am a lifelong resident of the village and an ardent supporter of my community.

In 2019 my wife and I donated to the Common Hall roof project. The building has served the village in numerous capacities over the years, and currently (pre-COVID) holds many family friendly events. We feel strongly that these are opportunities that allow our residents to come together in a time when life is pulling us apart.

The ball field project is another opportunity to do just that, and is why my family has stepped up to spearhead this capital campaign and kick it off with our own donation.

I went to school across the street from the Village park. Over the years this park has been an important place for townsfolk to gather and enjoy activities.

Back in my day events were regularly held at the field and surrounding area. One of my fondest memories is the annual showing of a movie classic, on a white sheet hung from the backstop. Mr. Ross, my bus driver and also the school custodian, would bring out the reel-to-reel projector from school and show movies. I sprawled on the grass and watched with family and friends all around.

The ball park hosted its own town teams, who competed against the other villages. Baseball and later a men's league led to the co-ed leagues we have today. Kids could sit and watch their parents and neighbors turn a double play or hit a bomb out into the school pond. You could get a drink from the bubbler and even cook burgers and dogs on grills at the end of the first base line. During the summer you could easily get a pickup game of baseball, softball, or even kickball.

Not much has changed on the diamond in the 50-plus years I've been around. The same old backstop that I watched movies on as a kid is still there. Granted, the fencing is a little more tattered. The bubbler has stopped bubbling, and the little field house with a one-stall bathroom is empty now. Gone are the dugout fences and the old wooden benches for the teams.

I came back to the old field last year as the pandemic was just getting underway. My daughter's tournament softball team had suspended practice and we were all struggling to figure things out. One thing we could do was hit the ball down at the old field. So three days a week, she and I would grab a couple of buckets of balls and head down to the field, just as I had done at her age. I pitched, and she smacked the ball, forever aiming to get one into the school pond.

As time went on, the pandemic regulations changed, and the tournament team needed to explore ways to practice for what we thought would be a season of softball for the girls. I contacted Jon at the Parks and Rec, who allowed us to use the field and kept us abreast of the latest pandemic regulations.

One Saturday morning my wife, daughter, and I went to the park with rakes, shovels, and a tractor to weed and dress the diamond. We spent all Saturday and most of Sunday, and by the end of the weekend we had a usable field! During the next few weeks the girls came and practiced, much to the delight of the neighbors. A number of folks stopped to watch and comment on how great it was to see the girls playing there.

Unfortunately, it was short-lived; new pandemic protocols forced us to suspend the season again. About six weeks later we got the all-clear to resume play. Again I went to the field only to find the grass in the diamond thicker than ever. We spent another day prepping the field, and again the girls were able to "play ball"!

Ultimately there were a few safety concerns that forced us to stop using it again.

Therefore, what has brought me here is to ask for your help in resurrecting this important local gem. Without proper dugout fencing, the girls were exposed to line drives. Because the field was originally made to play baseball, the infield grass created some dangerous hops, as did the mound. The lower portion of the backstop fencing is so ragged that it's dangerous. After much discussion, we decided in the interest of the girls' safety we would forgo playing there.

With the field's rich history – and its current state – in mind, I come asking for your help to resurrect the field and make it a safe place for kids to play and people to gather. Working with the Montague Parks and Rec Department, Jon and I have identified the things that will make the field safe and usable for years to come.

The estimated cost to complete this project is \$5,000. While we expect to utilize all these funds on the renovation, any monies not used on the ball field would be given to the Parks and Rec Department for other Montague Center Park improvements.

It is my hope that you will be willing to help with this capital campaign. The field has been a very important part of the village for many years, and I'd like to see future generations have the same opportunity to create the memories my family has – and to hit the ball into the pond!

Donations checks can be made out to the "Town of Montague," with "Montague Center Park donation" in the memo section. Please mail them to: Jon Dobosz, Director, Montague Parks & Recreation Dept., 56 First Street, Turners Falls, MA 01376. All donations are tax deductible.

Chris Pinardi is a lifelong Montague resident, and a 1985 graduate of Turners Falls High School.

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AT LARGE

Pine Meadow Project Wins Special Permit

By CHIP AINSWORTH

NORTHFIELD – Joe Graveline didn’t stand a chance of keeping Big Solar from coming to Northfield, but it didn’t stop him from pleading his case to fellow planning board members on May 20. The proposed installation by BlueWave Solar of 26,000 panels on three parcels of land off Pine Meadow Road will cover over 70 acres. That’s about the same size as 14 New York City blocks or 53 football fields.

“We have a bullseye painted on us,” Graveline said of the precedent-setting vote. “We’re being asked to alter a community on the pretense you can do things with dual use solar. I’ve heard residents ask what do we get out of it? They get nothing to address their solar needs, not one electron.”

The solar development gold rush has been spurred by government subsidies, and “dual use” panels are a loophole to get around the ethics of using prime farmland for solar industrial development. The panels are small enough to give sheep and chicken the space to graze, but don’t provide enough sunlight for corn or potatoes to grow.

The best and the brightest have hopped on the solar energy bandwagon. According to *owler.com*, BlueWave was co-founded in 2010 by Eric Graber-Lopez and Trevor Hardy. The former helped manage

an \$8 billion investment portfolio for Putnam Investments, and the latter graduated from MIT on a Fulbright scholarship with masters of science degrees in design technology and real estate development.

The company has about 90 employees and generates \$81.3 million in revenue. Managing director and chief strategist Larry Aller holds a BS in mechanical engineering from MIT and an MBA from Stanford. Prior to joining BlueWave he worked for Next Step Living, a company that was founded by Geoff Chapin in what *bizjournals.com*’s Galen Moore called “a mission to change the world by becoming the Amazon of home energy installation.”

Aller grew Next Step’s revenues from \$1 million to over \$100 million but in 2016 the company was shuttered, 200 people lost their jobs, and Aller joined BlueWave.

Other BlueWave power players include John DeVillars, a former state Secretary of the Environment and New England Administrator of the EPA under Bill Clinton, and lead counsel Lynda Freshman, who got her degrees at Penn and Stanford and worked for state Attorney General Maura Healey until she joined BlueWave.

As for avant-garde job titles, “Director of People” Denise Barr has a masters in ecopsychology, which according to Theodore Roszack in *Psychology Today* dis-

cerns “the emotional bonds between humans and the earth.”

This isn’t your grandfather’s multi-million dollar company. It’s new age with old-fashioned principles: put people on the payroll who can influence policy and get votes, be it in the State House or at small-town planning board meetings.

The land is owned by Gene and Bonnie L’Etoile. Their son Nathan handled his end of the solar plan by using connections he’d cultivated as the New England regional director of the American Farmland Trust and former Deputy Commissioner at the state Department of Agricultural Resources.

Aided by government subsidies, BlueWave and the L’Etoiles will make a hefty profit (specific figures haven’t been divulged). The town’s take will be a payment in lieu of taxes.

“I want to get on the same page with the public, because there’s a lot of misunderstanding with what’s going on,” said Graveline, who is pro-solar to the extent he has \$70,000 worth of panels on his own property.

Graveline was the town’s token vote of conscience, and it took courage for him to stand up to planning board chair Steve Seredynski. “What point are you trying to make, Joe? Is this going on much longer?”

“Seredynski squashed me about a dozen times, but I’d done my

homework,” said Graveline, who estimated he spent about 40 hours researching and concluded, “This project is too big to be in a residential neighborhood.”

The presentations for each of the three solar arrays were made by Beth Greenblatt of Beacon Integrated Solutions of Boston. Seredynski said on record that although Greenblatt was representing the Town of Northfield her \$20,000 fee was paid by BlueWave Solar, a cozy arrangement akin to letting the Red Sox name the next Yankees manager.

“Beth knows the name of game, but she’s whispering the important stuff and she’s hoping we don’t hear it,” said Graveline.

The closest the board came to breaking ranks was when Homer Stavely said, “I take Joe’s ‘bullseye’ seriously. If we approve this, then other farms with flat southern-exposure land may be coming to us.”

“I agree with that Homer,” said vice chair Meg Riordan.

Ultimately the board voted 4-to-1 to give BlueWave its special permit to use the L’Etoiles’ property for solar development. BlueWave and the L’Etoiles got what they wanted, but it wasn’t the cakewalk they expected.

Chip Ainsworth writes sports for the Greenfield Recorder and commentary for the Montague Reporter. He lives in Northfield.

OP ED

Something Other Than Policing Needed

By DEBORAH FRENKEL
and MADDOX SPRENGEL

MONTAGUE – At the town meeting this weekend, town meeting members decided to increase the Montague police budget to its requested level. In coming to that decision, there was a very productive discussion about the fact that armed response is currently the only option available to address challenges arising in the community. It was made clear that the community is committed to continue to explore the role the police play in Montague.

Importantly, the discussion made it clear that it is time to invest in understanding the gaps in our infrastructure, in regards to responding to requests for assistance, and in understanding the greater needs of the community.

Much of the discussion was driven in response to the reports of the two advisory groups that the selectboard had convened, the “Police Equity & Use of Force Advisory Group,” and “Police Community Engagement Advisory Group.” The narrow framing of the advisory groups’ charges reflected a predetermined conceptualization of policing. At its core, this project reinforces the idea that reforming policing practices will provide a more equitable experience of being policed and potentially reduce some harm to “key sub groups.”

Modern policing reform efforts date back to the 1960s and yet, in 2021, we see that injury, trauma, and death remain outcomes of policing that disproportionately impact people of color. For example, according to an analysis by *The Guardian* of 2015 police killings, “racial minorities made up about 37.4 percent of the general population in the US and 46.6 percent of armed and unarmed victims, but they made up 62.7 percent of unarmed people killed by police.” Importantly, the maintenance of and increase in policing has not changed the social conditions from which community challenges arise.

The needs of our communities have not been met by policing. This is due to the fact that policing is not designed to produce material changes to the conditions of people’s lives.

A large part of these committees’ charge was

to consider how MPD policies and practices relevant to equity might improve. This would suggest that having written protocols and procedures will translate into changes in how people of Montague are policed. These efforts fall flat, and reproduce two dominant narratives: first, that equitable policing is even possible, and second, that policing is necessary. This kind of recommendation fails to acknowledge that violence, force, control, surveillance, and punishment are inherent in the history, ideology, and practices of policing at its earliest inception. These elements of policing are rooted in racist practices of protecting the “property” of wealthy white men – black people who were enslaved – and controlling these humans for the benefit of white economic, political, and social power.

By focusing on policing the community, an opportunity was missed to evaluate how the town of Montague can, or should, address systemic and institutional inequities that create the social conditions affecting the wellbeing of its people.

One example of this reliance on policing to solve all perceived problems is the allocation of marijuana “impact fee” to training local officers to identify marijuana intoxication. This comes across as an extension of the harmful War on Drugs campaign, which has disproportionately affected people of color, and is recognized to have been unsuccessful and harmful to communities. It is especially dangerous due to the fact that no accurate test exists which informs whether a person is currently high, or has consumed marijuana within the past several weeks. We are training officers to identify and enforce in a situation where the outcome is purely subjective and cannot be proven.

Given that the MPD leadership has explicitly stated that they try to avoid bringing residents into the criminal justice system if avoidable, the decision to participate, and to pay for this training, is misguided. This money would be better spent elsewhere.

In retrospect, forming the two advisory committees to evaluate whether the police in Montague adhere to equitable practices and policies – and whether they are perceived as friendly – may have been short-sighted, since it falls short

of addressing the underlying causes for relying heavily on an armed response to requests for assistance. For the time being we rely on armed officers to play the role of mental health counselors, mediators of minor disputes, and transport services, among other social services.

Montague would be wise to consider how we can direct resources toward the reasons people are calling the police in the first place – domestic disputes, mental health concerns, substance abuse concerns, landlord or property concerns, etc. Using policing as a response to these challenges does not support the changes needed to reduce their origins. Rather than policing, life-affirming resources, support, and institutions could create a new set of conditions in which people live.

Deborah Frenkel lives in Lake Pleasant, and Maddox Sprengel lives in Turners Falls. Both served on the Equity & Use of Force Advisory Group.

GMRSD from page A1

kind of supports they might need.”

A vaccine clinic was scheduled Wednesday at the high school for children 12 and up.

The committee discussed the governor’s announcement that the state of emergency would end June 15, which would require them to return to in-person meetings.

Beck said governor Charlie Baker had introduced a bill that would extend the provision allowing local boards and committees to hold meetings remotely until September 1.

The committee approved an application to the Massachusetts School Building Authority for funding to replace the Gill Elementary roof, a request that has been rejected multiple years running, as well as a new 20-year lease with the town of Gill for the building.

“Somebody else will have to remember, because I will not be here,” business manager Joanne Blier said of the 2041 renewal deadline.

They approved a second exception to the busing policy for a Gill Elementary student see **GMRSD** next page

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BOOKMILL from page A1

restrictions. (Attempts to reach the owners of the Alvah Stone restaurant and Lady Killigrew Cafe received no response as of press time.)

Starting May 29, Massachusetts will lift almost all face mask requirements, and most businesses will be allowed to resume operating at 100% capacity. Baker made this decision because Massachusetts leads the country in vaccination rates. According to the state’s interactive COVID-19 data dashboard, there have been no new deaths from COVID-19 in Hampshire or Franklin counties for at least a month, which is as far back as the site shows that information.

In March 2020, when Baker declared a state of emergency, all of the businesses in the Bookmill complex closed. “It was rough,” says Susan Shilliday, owner of the Bookmill. “It was the only time the Bookmill closed for an extended period since it opened in 1987.” She worried about the financial hit that she knew her business would take. To keep the Bookmill running in some capacity, she and her daughter took orders over the phone and email, shipping books to their loyal customers who preferred to buy locally rather than through online retailers.

Christine Mero, founding member of the Sawmill River Arts, described how the co-op gallery members also responded with distress and then resilience. Rather than close completely, the members created fanciful window displays with art-packed gift bags that people could buy, “reinventing the idea of window shopping,” she says.

Patrick Pezzatti, owner of Turn it Up Records, had to close all three of his store locations, in Montague, Northampton and Brattleboro, Vermont. When he decided to reopen in early summer, he and his daughter were the only people working at the Brattleboro store. “Many of my employees were hesitant to come back at first,” he says, “But they almost all returned. We only had one employee not come back to work. Now they’re all vaccinated.” All three locations were open by the summer with limited capacity.

By last summer the other businesses in the Bookmill

complex had also reopened. Pezzatti describes the new safety measures Turn it Up had to put into place, including plexiglass screens and contactless payment. “We had to quarantine the used records that people were trying to sell us for three days,” he says, “given the fear of surface transmission. We even had customers leave records they were using at our listening stations in a special ‘to-be-cleaned’ bin.”

The Bookmill, which also sells items that customers love to put their hands on, had similar policies. Both businesses relaxed these practices as the transmission of the virus became better understood.

The Bookmill complex business owners I spoke to all said that the bright spot during COVID has been their customers. “We didn’t consider closing,” says Shilliday. “We have a loyal following and we just knew people would come back. I’ve been so touched by how grateful people have been since we’ve reopened. It’s been really special and not something that I’ve ever encountered before in my professional life – to know how much the business I run matters to people.”

Pezzatti concurs. “The customers have been fantastic. We lost money early in the pandemic, but business has been ticking up lately. We have lots of older people coming in to sell their records, who are really surprised that young people still want to buy vinyl.”

None of the retail businesses have decided yet how they will handle the state’s lifting of COVID restrictions. Pezzatti says Turn it Up will be very cautious. He is planning to keep their capacity at 50% to ease his employees’ anxiety, and will continue to have an indoor mask requirement despite the federal and state guidance. Neither the Bookmill nor Sawmill River Art has decided on what their policies will be once restrictions are lifted.

As of Memorial Day, the Bookmill will be open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., seven days a week. Sawmill River Arts is open Thursdays through Mondays 11 to 5. Turn it Up is open noon to 5 on Saturdays and Sundays. I look forward to getting back to all of these, and the restaurants as well.

I’m sure the crowds that will return this summer will keep all the zombies at bay.



ERVING from page A1

take effect as soon as possible,” said selectboard member William Bem-bury, “or we’ll be having the same conversation again next year. I think it’s time, I think it’s past time.”

Jacob Smith said that PAYT would allow the town “to get a handle” on the increase in trash picked up in town, and that he was “in support of doing it.” He asked to have the town’s trash pickup data analyzed in six to nine months.

Ameen said she and highway superintendent Glenn McCrory would work on ways to implement PAYT in Erving and bring plans back to the board. “I can be creative,” she said.

Ameen also reported that the “Almost Anything Goes” bulky waste pickup that was completed on May 8 disposed of 101.75 tons of waste, at a cost of \$31,000.

Town administrator Bryan Smith said the town had estimated 90 tons, and budgeted for a cost of \$26,000 to \$27,000.

Bem-bury mentioned complaints about poorly stacked waste, unacceptable items including construction debris in the waste piles, the commingling of different types of bulky waste, and messy piles blocking sidewalks and roads. He proposed new bylaws prohibiting burning construction debris, and requiring it to be disposed of properly.

Bryan Smith suggested tying proper disposal of debris to building permits, and Jacob Smith recommended writing a better definition of “construction debris.”

“Look at why you are doing this program,” Ameen told the board. “Your streets are porous,” she said, allowing out-of-town items into the residential bulky waste piles. She said she felt Erving should develop “a system or program where there’s accountability.”

Jacob Smith replied that a major question was “Do we want to bear the cost?” of unlimited bulky waste disposal. Answered his own

question, he said he thought many residents would support the town paying much more than \$31,000 for the opportunity to dispose of more bulky waste items.

McCrory suggested surveying residents for opinions on “Almost Anything Goes,” and Bryan Smith said he could draft a survey.

COVID-19 Reopening

Governor Charlie Baker has announced that the COVID-19 state of emergency will be lifted on June 15. Bryan Smith told the board that unless legislation extending permission for remote municipal meetings is passed, in-person board and committee meetings must resume.

During the emergency, Erving has closed its town hall to the public; many employees are working remotely, and they have been required to wear masks when working on town property. Considering the end of the state emergency, and recent federal guidance that vaccinat-

GMRSD from previous page

who has no safe sidewalk route to the school. The exception was recommended by Gill police chief Chris Redmond.

“If we continue to get these, there’s going to come a time when we can’t approve them,” warned Montague member Cassie Damkoehler, who noted that she has had to drive her own children to school in Turners Falls.

The committee will formally review Beck during June, and he made a presentation about his first year on the job. The process is highly structured according to state law. Much of Beck’s self-evaluation described responding to unusual conditions posed by the pandemic, and he acknowledged that “[t]here has not been very much time to address school choice marketing.”

Blier said the state budget for FY’22 includes “significant increases” in charter school expenses and reimbursements. “I’m a little bit worried about the number of students we’re going to see at charters next year,” she said.

Assistant high school principal Tom Gaffigan is retiring, and the school committee approved a new job description that increases the position from 210 days a year to 260.

The committee read, but did not vote on, a job description for a new transportation coordinator position.


Pupil services director Dianne Ellis reported on progress made toward planning a summer learning program, which families will be able to opt into for two, four, or six weeks, mornings or full days. “Everyone I know in special education, and in districts right now, are really struggling to pull off summer programming,” she said. “It’s been a hot, hot topic.”

A number of donations were accepted, including \$20,000 from the “Bourdeau Family” and \$25,000 from former teacher and coach George Bush to create scholarships for college-bound seniors.

The committee’s next meetings are on June 8, and on June 22. Montague will hold a town election on June 22, and the committee will hold a special meeting on June 23 to reorganize itself.

No one is running for Montague’s two empty seats, and Valeria “Timmie” Smith is running for reelection unopposed from Gill. Residents from both Gill and Montague vote for representatives from both towns. Gill has already held its election, but the school committee results are held secret until Montague votes.





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town’s COVID-19 policies at its next meeting on June 14.

Other Business

The board approved a new contract with chief Wonkka, which lasts until June 30, 2023. Contract negotiations were conducted in several executive sessions over the past month.

James Paulin plans to retire from the highway department as of July 29. The board decided to promote Thomas Duffy to the position of equipment operator/building maintenance/grounds maintenance, and to sponsor him in getting his commercial driver’s license.


The town will be hiring a replacement for Duffy.

The board conducted the second of three required reviews of a town policy on making Juneteenth Independence Day (June 19) a holiday for town employees. The Massachusetts legislature created Juneteenth as a state holiday in 2020, joining in a national effort to recognize the 1865 legal abolition of slavery.

Jacob Smith said the final review would be conducted at the June 14 meeting, but town employees should expect “likely adoption at that time.”



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NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Leverett Weighs the Responsibility Of Leading Larger Police Region

By GEORGE BRACE

Leverett’s police regionalization project was the major topic discussion at the town’s May 21 select-board meeting, as the town gets closer to finalizing a joint-policing agreement it entered into with the town of Wendell last year. The new structure was initiated due to the retirement of Wendell’s police chief in 2020, but board members and residents had their eyes on national, state, and local policing concerns as they continued to move forward with a permanent agreement.

Chair Julie Shively reported that Leverett and Wendell are fine-tuning a draft, and there will be a public meeting for comment on the project soon, possibly in early June. The meeting will be similar to the one held on Facebook a year ago when the project began.

The prospective permanent agreement includes an “on-ramp” provision spelling out how other towns could join the new district. “Why is Leverett becoming a leader in police regionalization?,” asked resident Shannon Gamble, saying she was not sure it is right for Leverett.

Shively responded that Leverett began the project at Wendell’s request due to their chief retiring. Shively said there were lots of regulations involved, and the best approach was to have one town take the lead. Then late last year, the state mandated an end to part-time policing as of July 1.

Several residents commented that this change was likely to mean the end of many small-town departments who can’t afford full-time officers. Shively said she is hoping Leverett can get grant money to hire consultants to look into additional towns joining the district, and several have already made inquiries. Among other contacts, Shively said the town of New Salem has asked for her and police chief Scott Minckler to meet with them in July to discuss the situation.

Resident Becky Tew wondered if policing in its current form is the best way to respond to the mandate, given the national conversation on the subject, and also asked who would oversee the arrangement and make decisions.

Shively responded that there will always be conversations on how to run police forces, going on later to comment that what’s happening nationally is a move toward a community policing model that Leverett is already committed to. On the question of adding mental health or social workers to the mix, Shively said that if Minckler needs professional assistance he gets it, but no one is permanently on staff.

Resident David Rice commented that if the district became bigger, Leverett would be in a better position to bring that kind of model to a larger regional police force.

Shively agreed that it would be an advantage in small towns getting rid of part-time officers and joining districts. “I don’t think it’s increasing policing,” she said. “It’s towns working together.” She added that Minckler, who was on vacation at the time of Monday’s meeting, should be present for such discussions.

As to who would make deci-

sions in a regional district, Shively said the current agreement technically gives Leverett complete control, but the practice is to bring concerns before each town’s selectboards, and that quarterly district meetings will be held.

Rice commented that regional policing will happen whether Leverett likes it or not, but the model being considered puts Leverett in a good position to set policies; if state or countywide police were to respond to calls, Leverett and other small towns would have no such oversight.

Abriete Medore said she wondered if Leverett would be in a better position to create alternative-focused policing that addressed national police brutality issues, and Richard Natthorst commented that regionalization was probably the best way to both achieve the town’s social justice goals while maintaining a viable police force given the state mandates.

“It’s one of the biggest decisions we’re going to be making,” said resident Aaron Buford. Buford said it was important to set a date as soon as possible for the meeting to finalize the agreement, so as to get it in the town newsletter and increase public participation. He volunteered to help brainstorm ways to encourage the public conversation.

Bug Patrol

Members of multiple committees reported on the status of the town’s application to opt out of a statewide aerial mosquito spraying program. The board had previously voted to opt out of the hastily-announced program, and Monday’s discussion was centered on improving the chances Leverett will be approved to opt out.

Board member Tom Hankinson suggested including the Friends of Leverett Pond’s active management of the invasive milfoil weed, as it has been cited in studies as creating stagnant water breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

Member Melissa Colbert suggested including the board’s intention to discuss joining the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District. Work on a local plan to control mosquitoes was also discussed.

Fire and Animals

The selectboard voted to hire assistant chief Brian Cook as Leverett’s new fire chief, contingent on salary negotiations.

Questions were raised about the application process, which only advertised the position in-house for seven days, but the board’s familiarity with Cook, his credentials, and the high praise he received from numerous sources led the board to stick with the decision. Hankinson said that if he’d seen any second-guessing, he might think differently, but he did not see the need to form a hiring committee or seek outside candidates.

Cook has been with the department since 2016, and has lived in Leverett for the last two years with his wife and two young children.

A recent incident in which resident Diane Crowe was unable to contact animal control officer Roberta Bryant to deal with a groundhog prompted a complaint. Crowe described the encounter with the

animal as “like a horror movie,” and reported that it came into her yard, attacked her dogs and chickens, and paraded around as if to say “This is great. This is good. It’s mine now.”

Crowe contacted police officer Meghan Gallo for assistance. She assisted Gallo in flushing the animal out, and Gallo shot it.

“You really need to get an active person,” Crowe said regarding Bryant, adding that she had been afraid to leave her house.

Shively said she wanted to postpone further discussion on the matter until she’d had a chance to talk to Bryant.

Water Pipe, Dirt Pile

Town administrator Marjorie McGinnis reported that bids had come in lower than expected on the project connecting several Teawaddle Hill residents to Amherst town water to resolve a long-standing issue with contaminated runoff water from a closed landfill. Leverett had appropriated \$2.3 million for the project, and McGinnis said the low bidder came in at only \$1.3 million.

McGinnis said Amherst public works superintendent Guilford Mooring had checked that the bid from Baltazar Contractors had met state requirements, and also spoke well of the company. Leverett highway superintendent Matthew Boucher also spoke highly of them.

McGinnis and Boucher both reported Baltazar had a reputation for working quickly, and that construction might begin as soon as June or July.

McGinnis also reported that she had received a packet of information from the Franklin Regional Council of Governments on the question of the legal status of a piece of Old Mountain Road, which contains a large pile of dirt that some neighbors want removed and others would prefer be untouched, but she said the information wasn’t conclusive. At issue is who has the authority to make a decision about the pile.

Boucher said the state’s Chapter 90 highway program lists Old Mountain Road as ending right at the foot of the pile. He added that he believes the town has an inactive right-of-way on the section of road in question, but thinks there may be more to it, and further investigation is needed.

Exclusive Bridge

Hankinson reported that he met with state representatives at the bridge on Millers Road, which the state notified the town a year ago needed fixing. He said he wondered why the state would want to fix a bridge that serves only two houses, when bridges with more traffic are in need of work, but the meeting convinced him it was a good project as there was no good alternative for access to the homes.

He reported neighbors had questions on the placement of guardrails, and the need to discontinue a town right-of-way that led to a resident’s front door.

It was noted that the state-funded repair project is projected for 2024, so the town would be able to take any necessary votes at next year’s town meeting.

MONTAGUE from page A1

public works building on May 29. The town’s new policy will eliminate restrictions on entry and mask-wearing, but will “maintain physical barriers to clerks, and things of that nature,” in Ellis’s words.

After consulting with library director Linda Hickman, the board agreed to continue present restrictions at the Carnegie, Millers Falls, and Montague Center libraries. Hickman said she would “ideally” open the Carnegie for normal hours on July 1, but added that the libraries may continue to require masks “until children can be vaccinated.”

Hickman said the public restroom at the Carnegie will open on July 1 and she plans to rent a large outdoor tent for children’s programs during the summer. “We don’t want to have children really close together for extended periods of time,” she said. “We have also found that Zoom programs are not that effective or popular with our population.” The libraries may also keep a cap of half-hour for computer users.

Senior center director Roberta Potter said her agency will be “dispensing with social distancing, and the cap on the number of people in the building, next week. By the middle of June, we should have most of our programs – particularly the fitness programs – up and running.”

Concerning town hall, Ellis said discussions with directors and staff have produced consensus on some issues, such as mask requirements, but disagreement on whether access should continue to be limited. Nelson said he was “struggling” with keeping restrictions on access, and fellow selectboard member Chris Boutwell said he was “torn” since restrictions would produce different policies for different town buildings.

The board discussed the advantages and disadvantages of continuing to screen those entering the town hall building. Ellis pointed out that screening and limiting access helps avoid long lines at certain departments (such as the treasurer and town clerk), but would also require hiring new staff, if the goal was to return to normal hours.

In the end, the board voted to open town hall for normal hours on the first business day after May 29. The public will be required to wear masks, but masking is optional for employees unless they are meeting with the public. The town will also take measures to “enhance awareness of the need to social distance.”

Ellis then told the selectboard that the state Attorney General had recently announced that the special regulations allowing boards to meet virtually would expire with end of the “emergency” on June 15. “That leaves a lot of questions unanswered, to be honest,” he said. “Does this means boards would be able to meet, let’s just say in town hall, but not have the public come in?”

There followed a lengthy discussion of the pros and cons of continuing remote meetings, moving to fully in-person meetings, or trying to implement “hybrid” meetings with the board at town hall but the public attending via Zoom. Ellis said the latter could be implemented, but there might be some “growing pains, in terms of having those kinds of hybrid meetings.” The board appeared to favor the hybrid concept.

Noting that the town’s information technology coordinator would not be in his office this week, Ellis recommended that the board delay its decision until its next meeting on June 7.

see MONTAGUE next page

BIKES from page A1

County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority, when it was sold to Sherrer, the only bidder at an auction, for \$12,735.

Town planner Walter Ramsey said the housing authority vacated the property, located on the island between the power canal and Connecticut River, because it needed “significant repairs and upgrades.”

“He had indicated to the town his plans were to develop a cidery and event space there, and obviously he has not followed through,” Ramsey said. “He has converted what was once the office spaces of the housing authority into two retail storefronts.”

Ramsey said the building’s aging septic system “has been a limiting factor” in the building’s redevelopment. Montague has secured a \$2.1 million MassWorks grant for a planned project that would provide sewer hookup and new pedestrian access to the island via a new bridge. Ramsey said the town’s application included a “strong letter of support” from Sherrer for the initial proposal.

Sherrer called publicly in 2019 for the town to sell the abandoned Sixth Street bridge to a nonprofit that he would form in order to create a tourist attraction he suggested naming the “Bridge of Lights.” The bridge is instead slated for removal in the 2022 project.

Sherrer has refused the town a temporary right-of-way for the construction. “All other easements for the project are being donated,” Ramsey told the *Reporter*. Last Sat-

urday, Montague town meeting authorized the temporary taking of the right of way by eminent domain, at an estimated value of \$700.

“[T]he primary beneficiary benefit of those improvements,” Sherrer said on Wednesday, “[is] the old Strathmore mill.” Sherrer argued again for the preservation of the Sixth Street bridge “as event space and tourist destination,” arguing that it could cost Montague less than the planned improvements.

“The town is in the position of trying to make it possible for investment in that property by providing sewer and pedestrian access to downtown,” Ramsey said. “We’re hoping to set the stage for the level of investment we’d like to see in that property.”

Tenant Troubles

“The town should be more cautious relying on a single person to turn these properties around,” said Perry, a commercial tenant in a building he describes as falling into disrepair.

Despite opening during a pandemic, Perry said the business is now sustainable and growing steadily. But Sadie’s will now be the third tenant to leave 42 Canal Road under Sherrer’s ownership.

“That building, and it’s been said over and over again, has such potential – endless potential,” said Alex McGuigan, who renovated the canalside space for her vintage clothing shop, Buckingham Rabbits, which opened in April 2019.

McGuigan described months of

see BIKES next page

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MONTAGUE from prev. page

The board agreed, and also voted to direct Ellis to advocate for state legislation to allow town boards and committees to continue remote meetings after the emergency has ended. The motion also included a request to continue licensing flexibility for establishments serving food and alcohol outdoors until November.

Summer Events

In related news, parks and recreation director Jon Dobosz told the board his department planned to run youth summer camps “about as normal as we can.” From June 28 to August 13 there will be full-day camps at Unity Park and Sheffield Elementary School. “They changed [the guidelines] again, and they will probably be changed additional times,” Dobosz said.

The board agreed to allow Dobosz to work with the board of health and parks and recreation commission to develop safety guidelines for the camps.

There followed a discussion of the potential need to continue regularly sanitizing park structures, which was strongly advocated by selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz. “The kids have their hands in the mouth all the time,” he pointed out. Dobosz agreed to research the additional cost of sanitizing when the parks are fully open for events, and bring an estimate to the next meeting.

Assistant town planner and RiverCulture director Suzanne LoMano reviewed 14 events, including a movie series she is coordinating in Peskeomskut Park for the summer. She asked that the selectboard grant RiverCulture “group permission” for all these events, presumably rather than requesting individual applications, calling this a “stream-

lined way to get a lot of things happening downtown.”

Kuklewicz recommended that the board investigate why Peskeomskut Park is not officially part of the “town’s park system,” under the direction of the parks and recreation department. Ellis pointed out that it is still a town park, which was apparently reclaimed from an abandoned property years ago by a volunteer campaign.

The board approved several event requests for the summer and fall, including a mid-day classical music concert series at the Montague Center ball field on June 13, 19, and 26 and the annual Great Falls Festival (formerly Pumpkinfest) in downtown Turners on October 23.

Development

Several requests by Brian McHugh of the Franklin Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority to approve payments to the contractor and design firm working on restoring Spinner Park on Avenue A were approved. The selectboard also extended both firms’ contracts until June 30. McHugh said the project was taking longer than expected because “they ran into some problems laying out the footings,” but was “on track” to be completed by the end of June.

Ellis reviewed a letter he had written at the selectboard’s request providing Montague’s input on a regional Transportation Improvement Plan, which recommends state priorities for infrastructure improvement projects. Montague’s priorities, which the board decided at a previous meeting, include the dangerous intersection at the corner of Routes 63 and 47 southeast of Montague Center and the partially closed bridge on North Leverett Road. Ellis

also requested removing two bridges across the power canal at Sixth and Power streets when the state builds a new bridge at that location. The board endorsed the letter.

Ellis also reported that a new grant opportunity had appeared on a state-administered “portal” called “Community One Stop for Growth,” and requested permission to apply for a grant for partial demolition and stabilization of the former Strathmore Mill on the power canal.

“Sounds like everyone’s in agreement that we should keep moving forward on that,” said Kuklewicz, without calling for a formal vote.

Other Business

The board heard a request by Ellis and town clerk Deb Bourbeau to approve a memorandum of understanding with the National Association of Government Employees union to upgrade the responsibilities and salary of the assistant town clerk. The board approved the request. Kathern Pierce currently serves in the position.

During the “town administrator’s report,” which generally comes at the end of each selectboard meeting, Ellis asked that the board thank Franklin County Technical School which hosted the recent outdoor annual town meeting last Saturday. The board thanked the Tech School for its “hospitality.”

Nelson noted that the police budget, which was approved, was the “biggest conversation” as expected, and that the meeting “desired to continue the process we started.” “Exactly what that means will obviously be up to this board in the coming months,” he said.

The next Montague selectboard meeting is scheduled for June 7.



LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

Leverett Conservation Commission

The Leverett Conservation Commission, in accordance with the Wetlands Protection Act (MGL c.131 §40), will hold a public remote hearing on June 7, 2021 beginning at 7 p.m. to review a Request for Determination of Applicability **two sheds at 23 Cider Mill Road**. The public can participate by emailing the Conservation Commission for the link to the GoToMeeting (ConCom@leverett.ma.us). The link will also be posted at the Town Hall on June 3, 2021. The application is on file and available for public inspection in the Conservation Commission Office by appointment at (413) 548-1022 ext. 3.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Town of Wendell, Massachusetts

Notice is hereby given that the Wendell Planning Board will hold a public hearing on Monday, June 7th, 2021 at 7:30 p.m. on Zoom regarding two moratorium proposals to halt large-scale solar and large-scale battery developments (if approved at town meeting). The proposed moratorium would not apply to residential solar installations now allowed by right. The moratorium would allow the planning board time to investigate and craft possible bylaw changes to address the impact of these types of projects on the Wendell community and environment.

Join Zoom meeting: www.tinyurl.com/WPBSolar
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Or by phone: 1 (301) 715-8592

NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

School, Mosquito Districts

By MIKE JACKSON

The Gill selectboard’s Monday night meeting began with a detailed presentation by Carolyn Shores Ness, who serves on the Deerfield selectboard, about the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District (PVMCD), which Deerfield started and many area towns are now considering joining as an alternative to statewide aerial spraying. It ended with a meeting with the fin com, where approval of the Gill-Montague school district’s FY’22 assessment led to a conversation about a possible new regional school district.

“We’re trying to cope with climate change, basically,” Shores Ness said of the mosquito problem. “Bird migration patterns are changing.... there’s going to be more disease load, and Zika’s coming.”

The Zika virus is carried by the newly arrived Asian tiger mosquito, which Ness said is the 52nd species of mosquito that show up in traps the PVMCD sets up in member towns and sends in for testing. The cost to a member town is officially \$5,000, though Shores Ness noted that towns can join for less if they must. “It’s just one more shoestring operation,” she said.

Shores Ness said that thanks to the PVMCD’s testing and targeted eradication of habitat, Deerfield was free of West Nile Virus for the first time in 2020. She added that her own town had not opted out of the new statewide spraying program.

“You don’t want to take your options off the table in case you need them,” she said. “If there truly is a widespread emergency, the state will declare an emergency.”

After she left, the selectboard voted unanimously to submit Gill’s application to the state to opt out.

The meeting was the first for newly elected member Charles Garbiel, and the board voted to reorganize with Greg Snedeker as chair and Garbiel as clerk. Garbiel admitted to being mechanically inclined, and may end up as the liaison to the machinery committee, as former member John Ward had held that position.

The board discussed its options for returning to in-person meetings, and cable advisory committee member Janet Masucci suggested broadcasting live on Greenfield Community Television.

Town administrator Ray Pu-

rington was authorized to begin reopening town buildings to the public as he sees fit. Purington recommended a “cart and plexiglass shield” in the town hall lobby to separate staff from civilians.

Selectboard member Randy Crochier suggested signs “thanking the people who are not vaccinated for wearing their masks.” “You’re going to get the amount of compliance that you get,” he said.

Fire chief Gene Beaubien and fire engineer Bill Kimball reported that the department’s 1986 military surplus brush truck had suffered a “major failure” related to its radiator, a custom part not easily replaced. “Putting any additional money into this now, just to have additional items fail, is not cost effective,” Kimball said.

Various options were discussed before the topic was tabled.

Beaubien was approved to spend \$6,000 out of existing lines in Gill’s current year budget to repair the heating system in the fire department training room.

The board was joined by the finance committee to discuss the Gill-Montague school assessment.

“We generally are riding a roller coaster,” Purington said. “We’re really lucky this year that it’s down.... That serves to mitigate the increase that we’re seeing at Franklin Tech – our enrollment continues to grow at Tech.”

The committees voted to recommend the assessment. Town meeting is scheduled for June 26.

Fin com member Sandy Brown noted the district’s school choice deficit, which led to a general discussion of Gill-Montague’s ongoing enrollment woes, compounded by the pandemic. “I have a strong sense from the public media around here that the district isn’t doing well,” her fellow fin com member Tupper Brown said.

Snedeker reported on the progress of the six-town school district planning committee. Consultants are “in a crunch,” he said, to make projections for the Gill-Montague and Pioneer districts. “It’s kind of a mixed bag, financially speaking,” he said. “Programmatically, you can see how it would definitely improve the education.”

“The instincts of people around here are not to join up,” Tupper Brown noted.

BIKES from previous page

work put into the renovations. “I thought we were on the same page for so long, and I was trying to not make it an adversarial relationship,” she said. “I gave him the benefit of the doubt over and over again.... I think he’s struggling.”

McGuigan also described shifting negotiations with Sherrer. “I resorted to hardball discussions,” she said. “We were kind of backed into a corner, and frustrated.”

When a storefront opened up on Avenue A in February 2020, McGuigan moved her business.

Jocelyn O’Shea, who opened Local Yoga Joint on the river side of the building in the spring of 2019, felt similarly. She told the *Reporter* that after she spent around \$3,000 on renovations, which she believed would be reimbursed by Sherrer, he attempted to terminate what would have been a ten-year lease.

The two settled in court, and O’Shea opened her studio – for a year. “If it hadn’t been for the pandemic I would not have moved out – I would have just stayed and continued to deal with him,” O’Shea said. “It’s too bad for the town, because that could have been the anchor of the whole canal district.”

All three tenants said they felt uncomfortable or unsafe at the building at times.

“Every time I’ve communicated with him, it’s an argument,” Perry said. “He’s created a power dynamic where I have no leverage in the situation at all.”

Perry said Sherrer ignored for months at a time his requests to

replace a window, fix a leaky ceiling, fix the building’s roof, and address a sinkhole in the parking lot. Phone calls and text messages often went unanswered, Perry said, and email communication was inconsistent.

Sadie’s Bikes has been paying \$915 per month to rent the store, some storage space, and a small office. Perry said Sherrer wanted an informal agreement, but he insisted on a lease requiring three months’ notice. Tuesday’s letter introduced an additional \$325 rent on the storage space, starting June 1.

“We opened right when COVID stuff happened, and now things are reopening again,” Perry said. “It put a huge damper on what would otherwise have been a celebratory moment.” He and his partner are now looking for another space in town, and he says they’re com-

mitted to staying locally. First, though, they are moving bicycles out of the storage space.

Regarding the cost of repairing the building, Sherrer said it is “premature at this point in time to pursue rehab funding as so much is in flux here on the Canal.” He said he is counting on investment driven by Turners Falls’ “Opportunity Zone” designation, and the building’s status on the National Register of Historic Places, to develop the cidery.

“[F]inancing will not be an issue,” he said.

When asked whether he would consider selling the property, Sherrer replied, “There have never been nor will there ever be plans to sell the building.”

Mike Jackson contributed additional reporting.



Perry has said he wants the bike shop to be a community hub and a space for education as well as a retail business. For now, he is seeking a new location.

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SPORTS from page A1

competing under the banner of Franklin Tech. On Monday the Blue Eagles took on the Mohawk Trail Warriors. Although the Warriors won the meet, coach Roman Tsipenyuk’s squad is a little deeper than their female counterparts. Eleven different boys scored points in the meet, and five scored in multiple events.

Ryan Duclos placed first in the shot put and second in discus; Cooper Bourbeau finished second in javelin and the 400m; Brayden McCord had two third-place finishes in the triple jump and the 200m and took second in the 100m dash; Owen LaValley finished second in the 400m hurdles and third in the pole vault; and David Damkoehler placed second in the pole vault and third in the 100m.

Single-event scorers were Noel Kenny (first, 110m hurdles), Patrick Connell, Jr. (first, 400m hurdles), Alexander McKay (third, 2-mile), Brody Williams (third, shot put), Greyson Rollins (third, javelin), and Joey Valvo (third, 800m).

The boys in dark blue travel to Greenfield On June 1, and finish their regular season at home against Frontier June 14.

Softball

FACTS 1 – Mohawk 0 TFHS 13 – Mohawk 2
TFHS 13 – Frontier 1 TFHS 26 – Mahar 0

After watching the opening events of boys track, I traveled to Franklin Tech to watch the Lady Eagles take on the Mohawk softball team. This was a defensive game through and through. The only run came in the first inning when Lilly Ross stole home on a wild pitch. Fittingly, the inning ended on a pick-off at third base.

Ross struck out the side in the top of the second inning. In the bottom of the second, Mohawk orchestrated a double play to send Tech back into the field. Franklin returned the favor in the third. With bases loaded, Mohawk hit a ground ball. The throw was to home. Catcher Mackenzie Martel stepped on the plate and whipped it to first to turn the double play and keep Mohawk off the scoreboard.

The game went on like this until the seventh, when Mohawk had a runner at second with one out. Center fielder Emily Eastman caught a high fly and threw the ball to Kaitlin Trudeau, who tagged the runner and ended the game. In the circle, Ross recorded 10 strikeouts in the shutout, and scattered six hits.

The Eagles next travel to Palmer this Thursday to play the Pathfinder Pioneers.



Turners’ Jolene Dunbar puts the shot 18’ 10¾” for third place in last week’s meet against Mohawk. At right, Zoey Kus awaits her attempt.

The Turners Falls Softball Thunder is on a mercy streak. After defeating Franklin Tech 13-0 on May 14, the Thunder Ladies traveled up the Trail to beat Mohawk 13-2 on Tuesday. This allowed Coach Mullins to have eighth-grader Madison Liimatainen pitch in the later innings.

Last Thursday, May 20, the team mercied the Frontier Red Hawks under the lights at Bourdeau Field. But it almost didn’t happen. Turners jumped out to a 6-0 lead in the second inning against the Birds, and hurler Jade Tyler struck out five of the first six Hawk batters.

It seemed that Frontier would be the next float in the mercy day parade, but it wasn’t that easy. Frontier is a crisp team, and in the first inning when Liimatainen hit a double, Taylor Murphy was thrown out at home. Blue did manage to score one run on an error, and after one inning, it was a tight 1-0 contest.

In the second, Powertown exploded. With two outs, Turners loaded up the bases and Olivia Whittier batted in Holly Myers. Then Jade Tyler came to the plate and cracked a grand slam to put the Hawks in a 6-0 hole.

Frontier then proceeded to climb back up. In the top of the third, a base hit, an error, and a bunt loaded the bases, and Tyler beamed the next batter to make it 6-1. (The batter was unhurt, by the way.) Then, with two outs and bases loaded, the next Red Hawk smashed it into deep center field. Myers backed up and lifted her glove above the fence to rob the Hawks of their own grand slam.

With this threat behind them, Turners took no chances. They scored six more in the bottom of the third, and in the fifth inning Tyler batted Whittier home to give Blue the 13-1 mercy win.

Then on Tuesday the Mahar Senators came to town. Mahar is not a great team, so Coach Mullins used his backup pitcher in this contest. While Liimatainen hurled, Myers took over catching duties, and Tyler played first base.

The Powertown starters built a 15-0 lead after two innings, and Mullins emptied his bench in the third. But the backup players continued to score. In the fourth, Mullins retired Liimatainen and sent Myers to the circle. The backup players stacked the lead to 26-0 while Liimatainen and Myers combined for a no-hit shutout.

Baseball

Belchertown 5 – TFHS 2

On Tuesday, I watched the first few innings of the Turners baseball game against the Belchertown Orioles before returning to the track and then to the softball diamond.

Belchertown is a good team while Turners has yet to win its first game. But on Tuesday, Blue kept the game knotted at two runs each until the sixth inning, when the Birds took a 3-2 lead.

There is a hockey term called “chirping,” and during Tuesday’s game the Orioles tried this verbal technique to throw Blue off their game. They sounded like the girl from *The Exorcist*. But this did not work to any great effect, and Blue kept the game even into the late innings.

Pitcher Alex Quezad walked four batters while striking out four, and had two hits at the plate. Cam Burnett accounted for Powertown’s other hit.

The boys travel to South Deerfield on Thursday to play the Red Hawks.



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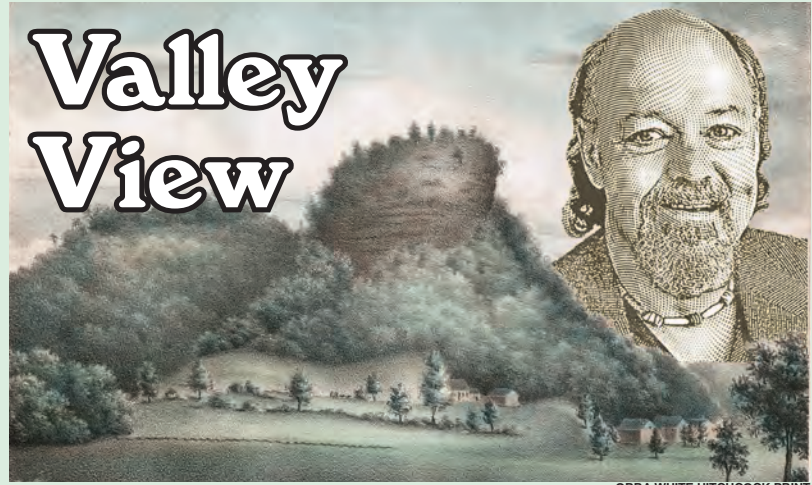
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SUZETTE SNOW-COBB PHOTO



By GARY SANDERSON

GREENFIELD – In recent years an intense spotlight has focused its beam on the Falls Fight of May 19, 1676 – the bloodiest day in the history of our splendid slice of the Connecticut Valley.

Much federal money has been and will continue to be spent trying to pin down exactly what happened before, during, and after this so-called “battle,” which historians generally identify as *the* event that turned the tide of King Philip’s War (KPW) in the colonials’ favor. The predawn attack on a sleeping Native fishing camp along the north shore of the falls in what is now Riverside, Gill dealt a severe, unmerciful blow to Native people celebrating nature’s spring bounty.

Hopefully, ongoing “Battlefield Grant” research will, by the time all is said and done, put its definitive stamp on not just the Falls Fight but also the other major local battles leading up to it. If so, the mission will begin with the August 25, 1675 Swamp Fight mentioned in my previous column. The first Connecticut Valley engagement of the war, this morning skirmish unfolded on a sandy-plain site overlooking Hopewell Swamp from the west on Mount Sugarloaf’s southwestern skirt. Following it in rapid succession were the ambushes at Beer Plain (September 2) and Bloody Brook (September 18).

Because the three primary Swamp Fight chroniclers never set foot on the site, including even Hatfield’s own minister, Rev. John Russell, a cloud of uncertainty has hovered over it for more than three centuries. Then, to make matters worse, a self-published book written by a South Hadley author who rode a publicity tour through local historical societies exacerbated the confusion by throwing a bizarre new wrinkle into the public square in 2009.

This author – who five years earlier had written a book about 19th-century Whately pottery – took it upon himself to defy prevailing wisdom by moving some two or three miles west not only the most-traveled 17th-century Native path through our part of the valley, but the long-accepted sites of the Swamp Fight, the Bloody Brook Fight, and even Poplar Spring, a well-known spring that crossed the

indigenous trail near today’s intersection of Christian Lane and Long Plain Road in East Whately.

Compounding the confusion, two respected Connecticut Valley historians of the highest order put their stamp of approval in bold black letters on the back cover of the spiral-bound softcover. First, a respected female Forbes Library reference librarian saluted the work as “A ground-breaking piece of research.” Then, a male New England scholar often affiliated with Old Deerfield, now dead, opined that, whether or not one agreed with all of the author’s conclusions, “the sheer volume of early documents and later historical writings consulted with respect to the topographical history of our immediate area here in Deerfield” was impressive.

In defense of the reviewers – both of whom I’ve met and hold in the highest regard – they were reacting to a topic that sat on the periphery of their expertise. Although the reference librarian’s knowledge of Northampton history and Connecticut Valley genealogy is truly remarkable and reliable, she’d be the first to admit she’s not a KPW scholar.

Ditto for the other reviewer, an effete researcher whose bailiwick was early New England architecture, material cultural, and genealogy. He would have been 86 and slowing down when penning the requested review.

The three 17th-century historians to document the Swamp Fight were Rev. William Hubbard (1621-1704) of Ipswich, Rev. Increase Mather (1639-1723) of Boston, and the aforementioned Rev. Russell (1626-1692) of infant Hadley. All three of these learned men relied on second- and third-hand reports to come to agreement that this inaugural battle took place at a site above Hatfield village near Sugar Loaf Hill.

Later, the consensus among devoted 19th- and 20th-century Connecticut Valley historians was that the battlefield sat about a quarter-mile south of Sugarloaf Brook. There a steep, triangular ravine juts out into the plain, pulling a trickling spring into the swamp.

This ravine was identified as the site from which Native warriors ignited the skirmish by firing

see **VALLEY VIEW** page B2

Above: Suzette Snow-Cobb of Turners Falls spotted an entire family of Canada geese – from left to right, an adult, a gosling, another adult, four goslings, and two more adults – on the canal at Migratory Way, and captured this photo of the elusive animals.

Down by the Old Mill Stream

Historians Explore Foundations on the Sawmill River

By DONNA PETERSEN

LEVERETT – One of the Leverett Historical Commission’s jobs is to inventory, evaluate, and preserve all the town’s historical places. To that end, the commission sponsored a virtual tour of an old mill site in town. According to Eva Gibavic, local historian and commission member, it can “inform us today, and be an inspiration in recognizing the incredible industry” in each part of town that supplied the residents’ needs.

Gibavic and local historian Pleun Bouricius presented a slide show as part of a project entitled “A Sense of Where You Are: Finding and Interpreting Mill Foundations in the Landscape” this past Sunday, May 23. Both presenters have a strong background in these local historical sites and offered insights into what you are seeing as you drive along a local stream or river with old stone structures on the banks or in the stream itself.

For this event, we visited the remains of the Federal Mill off of North Leverett Road on the Sawmill River that runs down from Shutesbury into Leverett and then Montague. The striking slides show what is left of the old dam that backed up



PLEUN BOURICIUS PHOTO

The site of the old Federal Mill in Leverett.

the river into a mill pond that then provided power to do the mill work. Studying and researching the site and old records, Gibavic and Bouricius were able to make some determinations about how the old dam and mill structures functioned.

The slides show a pretty impressive dam wall that still stands, spanning some of the river. It’s about 10 feet tall on the down river side, and quite wide at the top. The dam would have had a wooden gate at the top, but that is long gone. Gibavic suggests the remaining wall looks like it “will stand forever!” It withstood

the flash flooding that hit Leverett and Montague in 1996 that took out bridges and roads. One can still see the holes built into the wall that could release water when levels became too high. When the dam functioned, the dammed water would have been about 12 feet higher than the mill wheel so it could fall on the wheel and power it.

Some of the remains of the dam and the mill can be seen, but with the help of old maps and other materials the historians were able to piece together more about the

see **SAWMILL** page B4

THE AUTHORS’ CORNER: TRACY WOLFF

By IZZY VACHULA-CURTIS

TURNERS FALLS – Happy May! I recently finished reading *Crave* by Tracy Wolff, and I fell in love with it. In today’s article, I am going to be reviewing *Crave* and interviewing Ms. Wolff. I hope you enjoy!

Crave is about a girl named Grace who goes to a fancy boarding school in Alaska: Katmere Academy. Grace is not expecting her experience at Katmere to be a happily ever after; the whole reason Grace is going to Katmere is her mom and dad passed away in an awful car accident, so she is traveling to her Uncle Finn’s mysterious boarding school. Grace not-so-quickly realizes Katmere Academy is not your everyday school, and not because of the awfully cold climate or the august cliques.

Grace quickly is introduced to Jaxon Vega, who is the most popular boy at Katmere, and unlike everyone else. Grace swiftly finds herself falling for Jaxon, even when everyone says that he is dangerous and she should stay away from him as much as possible.

I am so in love with *Crave*! It reminds me a little bit of a more romance-y version of *Fablehaven*. I love magical creatures and love stories, so this book was perfect for me. *Crave* is simply magical! The whole time I was reading, I felt like I was in the story, which I love. I adore all the romance sections in *Crave*, and I also love the parts where you learn about magical creatures – I think it’s super fun to believe in magic and unicorns and fairies and everything, and *Crave* makes magical creatures seem like they are real, which is so amazing!

I interviewed Ms. Wolff, and asked her a little bit

about magical creatures, too.

“I’ve been a huge paranormal fan for years, so I knew the basic tenets of all the different creatures going into

see **AUTHORS** page B3



IMAGE COURTESY IZZY VC

Our correspondent displays a new favorite.

Pet of the Week



“LOLA”

Calling all Labrador people! Lola is a gorgeous young Lab with all the typical energy of the Energizer Bunny. She’s got some training under her belt – sit, paw, down, and she plays fetch. However like most adolescents, she has the attention span of a – oh look, a speck of dust! If you have the energy level to match this gorgeous lady, best let us know before she gets scooped up! Lola’s most successful home will be one that has had dogs that

like to bounce off the walls. She has no idea she’s 74 pounds, and she would be fine with younger kids as long as you are looking for a way to toughen them up. Interested in adopting? Animals at Dakin are available only in Springfield currently. Contact adoption staff at springfield@dakinhumane.org and include your name and phone number. For more information, call (413) 781-4000 or visit www.dakinhumane.org.

Senior Center Activities MAY 31 THROUGH JUNE 4

GILL and MONTAGUE

The Gill Montague Senior Center will be resuming aerobics and chair exercise classes on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 10:15 a.m. and 11 a.m. respectively beginning on June 14. The weekly knitting circle at 1 p.m. on Mondays will resume on June 7. Monthly Brown Bag on the first Thursday of the month, Foot Clinic on the second Wednesday, and the Western Mass Food Bank Parking Lot Pantry on the third Wednesday have continued through the pandemic and are all ongoing. Drop-in hours, other regular programs, and meals may be added by the end of June. Un-vaccinated guests and participants will be required to wear face masks.

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

ERVING

Senior Center director Paula Betters writes: “Erving Senior Center is still

closed to the public. We are here daily taking calls and doing outreach work for seniors and their families. Call with any questions or concerns, need help with SHINE, SNAP. We are also taking calls to help seniors sign up for their COVID vaccine. We are here to help make a difference.” Paula can be reached at (413) 423-3649 or paula-betters@erving-ma.gov.

LEVERETT

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

WENDELL

Wendell Senior Center is open for a foot care clinic the first-Wednesday of each month. Call Katie Nolan at (978) 544-2306 for information or appointments. Otherwise, there are no activities. The Senior Health Rides is also suspended until advisories change. For more information, call Nancy Spittle at (978) 544-6760.

Senior Grocery Hours

(Call ahead – this information is old and may be inaccurate!)

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
Green Fields Market: Senior hours from 8 to 9 a.m. Monday-Saturday and 10 to 11 a.m. on Sunday. Curbside pickup available. Order by 8 p.m.; order ready for pickup between 1 and 5 the following day. Delivery also available. (413) 773-9567
McCusker’s Market: Curbside pickup only 10 to 11 a.m. Order between 12 and 1 p.m. for pickup the following day. Email pickup@franklincommunity.coop (413) 625-2548
Stop and Shop: Senior hours from 6 to 8 a.m. (413) 774-6096

VALLEY VIEW from page B1

first shots at pursuing English soldiers. That opening salvo pulled the soldiers into pursuit through the swamp, where a tree-to-tree skulking battle continued for three hours, resulting in the death of nine English and an estimated 26 Native warriors. It’s likely that Native rear scouts kept track of their pursuers’ progress and, losing ground, set up an ambush to give women, children, and elderly a chance to escape.

Leading the English troopers in pursuit of the Natives were Captains Richard Beers and Thomas Lathrop. The Natives were fleeing to save their firearms, which were to be confiscated. Beers and Lathrop would soon die in similar ambushes – Beers in Northfield (September 2) and Lathrop at Bloody Brook (September 18).

Among the English killed at the Swamp Fight were Richard Fellows of Hatfield, Azariah Dickinson of Hadley, and Samuel Mason of Northampton. Relatives and descendants of the fallen and those who lived to tell about it, as well as family and friends of Bloody Brook Battle participants, would surely have known the battle sites. Not only that, but you can safely assume they pointed them out in passing. Battlegrounds where family and friends, neighbors and parishioners lose their lives are not forgotten in the collective memory.

Which brings us to Rev. J.H. Temple of Whately, who wrote the first *History of Whately* in 1872 and placed the starting point of the Swamp Fight on J.C. Sanderson’s land a short distance west of his River Road homestead, where today the J.M. Pasiecznik Farm Stand and 5J Creamery stands.

Temple was so certain he had the site pegged that he hired an Ashfield artist to grace his book’s frontispiece with a sketch looking up the ravine

from which the first shots were fired. Clearly, he harbored no doubts about the spot, and he had good reason for his confidence. His information was gathered from aged members of his congregation who dated back to the days before Whately split off from Hatfield in 1771. Some of those sources would have had grandparents who knew King Philip’s War veterans.

Temple published his book at a time when Franklin County was abuzz with historical curiosity about its KPW battle sites, and roadside monuments were being erected to mark them by the side of roads. This community project was perpetuated by Old Deerfield antiquarian George Sheldon, best known as the author of the *History of Deerfield* (1895). Sheldon fueled a local-history renaissance during the final third of the 19th century by founding the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association (PVMA) after the Civil War. The PVMA assembled a cadre of like minds and stirred public interest with a steady stream of historical and genealogical data printed in the Greenfield and Turners Falls newspapers.

Myself, I rely on family tradition to buttress my confidence that the Swamp Fight unfolded where Sheldon, Temple, and the vast majority of historians before and after them say it did. My great-grandfather, Willis Sanderson, was born and lived next door to his grandfather, aforementioned J.C. Sanderson, for the first 16 years of his life. So, he would have worked and played on the contiguous farm acreage surrounding Hopewell Swamp.

I learned of a mysterious battle before Bloody Brook from my great-aunt Gladys (1895-1989), Willis’ daughter, who in conversation about Bloody Brook would note “a lesser-known battle occurring a few weeks before Bloody

Brook on Father’s farm.” I don’t think she even knew its name. Gladys was my grandfather’s spinster sister. We called her “Antie,” and like many other unmarried women of old New England families, she was the unofficial keeper of family records, photos, and memories.

“Antie” had deep roots in South Deerfield. Her grandmother was a member of the Arms family that was among the first settlers there in the late 18th century. In the village first called Bloody Brook, Arms homes were clustered around the Bloody Brook Monument before and after it was erected in 1838. So, you can take it to the bank that Bloody Brook and KPW was a common topic of conversation in her household. The monument stood but a couple hundred yards east of the home where “Antie” was born and died. Her Arms kin were even closer, situated right on the Bloody Brook battlefield, where my widowed mother still lives.

Too bad I took a focused interest in the local KPW battlefields *after* “Antie” died. It was her Woodruff family Bible, with handwritten names filling in the genealogy page at the front, that nudged me toward further genealogical and local-history research. Oh, how I’d love to speak to “Antie” today about a whole host of topics dear to me.

But isn’t that the way it seems to go? Always a day late and a dollar short. Woulda, coulda, shoulda. The way it is.

So, sorry, fellas, but I can’t buy the 2009, loose-leafed, spiral-bound softcover’s hypotheses surrounding Bloody Brook and King Philip’s War. I believe Temple and Sheldon and, most of all, my own family’s oral tradition.

I have blood in the game: family lore based on collective memory. How can you beat that?



Part 2: We’re In a Marathon, Not a Sprint

AMHERST – It’s amazing how far research has come since 20 years ago in terms of what we can do for cancer patients, and it is amazing to think about how far we will be 20 years in the future. We have come a long way in terms of what we know and what we can do, and someday we will have a cure for cancer.

For now, however, I am in a marathon. Not a sprint.

I’m not going to lie that it isn’t difficult to watch my hair fall out, and feeling extra tired at the end of the day does remind me somewhat about what is going on inside of me to heal me. But there is still life to live, and happiness and joy to be found.

Today, I took my son to Shelburne Falls, one of my favorite places to sit and relax. We got a table at a small but powerful restaurant called Baked and watched Joy from Enjoy set up her tent sale outside. My son sucked down about three lemonades when all was said and done, and I really enjoyed just sitting outside and relaxing.

I’m doing the best I can to have some fun with this. I have not one, but five different wigs in three different colors and a few different hair styles. Most of them are \$20 off on Amazon, and very replaceable if something should happen. One is real hair and more expensive.

I’ve stopped worrying about what people might think of me on a day-to-day basis, with blond hair one day and black hair the next day. It’s fun to be able to switch up my hair color and hairstyle based on what I’m feeling and what I want to look like that day. I can justify that now, and it’s one of the lighter sides of what is happening.

One hard part about this is that I’m not used to being sick. I was pretty healthy otherwise before my diagnosis, and running all the way up and all the way down

Mount Toby pretty easily. I’m not used to being tired, or used to having to think twice about how I’m feeling moment-to-moment. I’ve always taken good care of myself and I am continuing to take good care of myself by adjusting my workout, eating healthy, relaxing, and being kind to myself. It’s definitely an adjustment and I am lucky that I can continue to be active during this time.

The moments when I am truly able to relax are precious. Those hours here and there where I’ve found my equilibrium again, when the fear dissolves and I am able to live in the moment, are so valuable. The fear of the future should not take away my present.

Tomorrow isn’t promised to anyone. I’ve learned that over and over again in my life. I really try to live in the moment as much as possible now and to appreciate the people around me and the time I have to just breathe. We all have worries and fears and life gets hard at times, then it gets easier, then it’s back to hard. I really think learning to be in the moment is one of the best ways we can all get through life a little better.

How long will it take to completely cure all cancer? I don’t know. I believe we have the technology and the power to do it, and at some point every single cancer patient will be able to hear that their cancer is curable in some way. We will find a way to do it. Scientists and doctors are working hard to help patients with cancer to survive and conquer their diagnosis.

It’s truly a team effort between different kinds of doctors and the patients that come into their practices. I’ve always believed that a team can accomplish much more than any one individual. I really believe that in my heart.

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AUTHORS from page B1

Crave,” she said when I asked her if she did any research about magical creatures before writing *Crave*. “But I did do a ton of research on the different species, so I could know what different cultures myths about them were.

“Gargoyles were the hardest, as there isn’t a lot about them in our common lexicon, so in the *Crave* series I’ve used the basic ideas about them (water manipulators, turning to life and to stone, etc.) and let my imagination run wild with what powers I could grow out of the basic belief system about them. I also did a deep dive into dragons, vampires, and werewolves (where they come from, myths that surround them, etc.) so that I could create versions that had the characteristics I felt were most important.”

I also asked, if she could be any of the magical creatures at Katmere Academy, which one she would choose.

“That’s a tough one, as I love all the magical creatures at Katmere,” she said. “But if I have to choose, I would probably be a dragon. The flying thing is totally cool, and I love the ancient treasure hoards and being able to breathe ice or fire.”

I also asked her if she believes in magical and fantasy creatures. “I don’t think they actually exist, but I love thinking about what if they existed,” she told me. “What if the guy next door is a vampire, or the girl across the street is a dragon? How fun would that world be?”

I think that everyone who likes love stories, fantasies, and mysteries would like *Crave* so much! I asked Ms. Wolff what her favorite sections of the story to write are – romancey, mystery, magical, etc. – and she replied, “I love writing the romance and the action parts. The aurora borealis scene was my favorite scene in the whole book and it is the first one that came to me. I wrote the whole first two-thirds of the book trying to get to that scene.

“But I’ve also always loved writing action adventure. I love the fight

scenes and the racing against time scenes. The Ludares game in *Crush* was another of my favorite scenes, as were the prison scenes in *Covet*.”

I am also almost finished reading *Crush*, which is the second book, and Oh. My. Goodness. I love *Crave*, but *Crush* is like a million times more amazing, which I didn’t know was even possible because I loved *Crave* so much!

I am not going to go too much into detail about the story for the second book, but I wanted to share one of my favorite scenes, because it is described so prettily and I am in love with it:

So yeah, definitely magical is the consensus, and that’s before we discover a waterfall and hot springs that seem to appear out of nowhere and cast an eerie light within the crater. It’s like the water itself is enchanted, its soft blue depths glowing so brightly, the entire area is lit like early morning, revealing trees, tall and green, with big strangely shaped leaves that look more like they belong on a tropical island than this close to the Arctic Circle.

I love this particular section, because it is so magical, and it feels like you are in the book!

Finally, I asked Ms. Wolff in what ways she thinks non-magical schools cliques are similar to the ones at Katmere Academy.

“I think we tend to find the group that we feel like we belong in and stay there as long as we can,” she replied, “all four years sometimes, in fact. While there is definitely safety in doing so and you get the chance to build amazing friendships within that small group, I do think – like in the *Crave* series – even more fun and exciting things can happen when you venture out of your small group and explore new things and new friendships.”

Thank you so much to Ms. Wolff for answering all my questions! If you decide to read *Crave*, I hope you love it. Happy reading!



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Animal Injuries; Clamor At Lady K; Vulgar Music; Knife Fight Arrest; Soda Drinker Reported; BB Gun

Monday, 5/17

6:44 a.m. Caller from Our Lady of Peace Church reports an injured rabbit in the roadway. Officer located animal, which may have been struck by a vehicle; advises animal has been placed in a box and will be brought to the PD for the animal control officer.

12:46 p.m. 911 caller from Sunrise Terrace requesting assistance for an injured bunny. Provided with number for ACO.

2:04 p.m. ACO advised he checked on a report of an injured goose. Goose had a broken leg which has since healed. The goose is limping but is OK.

8:19 p.m. 911 caller stating someone is trying to start a fight with him at Unity Park. Involved male picked up by his mother and her boyfriend; no further services requested.

Tuesday, 5/18

2:34 a.m. Caller states she can hear a male yelling what sounds like “help.” Caller states she might see him walking down Second Street toward Unity Park and that he may have had a bike or a dog. Officer spoke with male who did have some kids shooting BBs in his direction. Nobody appears to need any assistance.

12:12 p.m. Employee at Lady Killigrew Cafe states that an intoxicated male is inside screaming and refusing to leave.

A 54-year-old Montague man was arrested and charged with disturbing the peace; disorderly conduct; and resisting arrest. 5:07 p.m. Report of male panhandling at Seventh Street and Avenue A. Officer located male party and moved him along.

Wednesday, 5/19

3:52 p.m. Caller advising that nobody is stopping for the new stop signs at the Canal Bridge. Referred to an officer.

4:45 p.m. HR department at Greenleaf Foods requesting to speak with an officer re: a terminated employee who has been told not to return to the property but continues to be seen there; stated male rides an electric skateboard to and from the property. Male party has three active warrants. Unable to locate party at this time. Officer requesting that all units do extra checks in the area until party located.

6:34 p.m. Officer out at Davis and Dell streets with two male parties who were arguing. Parties were upset about a traffic dispute. Parties separated; peace restored.

7:41 p.m. Caller from Montague City Road requesting officer to speak with downstairs neighbor who has been taking pictures and videos of her children while they are outside. Caller states there is an ongoing issue with the neighbor calling in noise complaints about her children. Officer spoke with both parties. Male admitted to taking photos; said he wanted proof that the children are unsupervised while outside. Agreed to stop taking photos.

8:46 p.m. Caller requesting officer to unlock gate on Migratory Way so he can leave. Services rendered.

9:40 p.m. A 29-year-old Turners Falls man was arrested on a default warrant.

Thursday, 5/20

10:43 a.m. Motorcycle accident at Seventh and K streets; operator has already called Rau’s, but they are not on scene yet.

2:36 p.m. Caller from Walgreens reporting fake prescription that they received via fax. Caller has already notified physician listed on script. Officer will follow up.

2:44 p.m. Report of two males arguing on Fourth Street; one displayed a knife in his right hand and started swinging it. Caller has a video of the incident. 911 call reporting that involved parties are at Unity Park and that one party has a knife. Multiple additional calls received for fight in progress on Fourth Street between same parties. A 21-year-old Turners Falls man was arrested and charged

with assault and battery (domestic) and intimidating a witness/juror/police/court official.

3:10 p.m. Caller received complaints from parents about people walking their dogs off leash at Sheffield Elementary School. Not in progress. Logged for officers to be advised.

3:22 p.m. Caller reporting loud music and screaming coming from a location on Griswold Street. Officer clear; could hear music and someone singing, but no screaming.

3:43 p.m. Caller from Griswold Street reported that her neighbor started to bang and scream loud obscenities after the officer left the area. Officer advised that they spoke with a female party who was listening to music and injured her foot. No medical assistance needed.

5:26 p.m. Caller reported people drinking at Peskomskut Park. Officer spoke to a party at the park who was drinking a soda.

7:25 p.m. Caller reports he was struck by a vehicle at Second and L streets while riding his bicycle. No medical services needed; would like officer to take report. Citation issued.

Friday, 5/21

12:32 p.m. Officer reporting truck on fire on Lake Pleasant Road. Officer later advised fire is out; confirmed on side of road, not threatening any structures. Shelburne Control advised; TFFD still responding.

12:42 p.m. Report of newer bike left in grass on Migratory Way; no one around.

12:42 p.m. Caller inquiring whether horses are allowed on the bike path; advising two people were riding horses earlier in the day. Horses were under control and no issues arose. Officer advises no known signage prohibiting horses on bike path; any further complaints will be referred to DCR.

4:47 p.m. Caller reporting that the blue house on the corner of Newton and Franklin streets is playing very loud and vulgar music. Officers on another call; officer advised.

7:41 p.m. Caller reported a woman dressed in black carrying bags of cans screaming and yelling at a male on Avenue A. Area search negative.

8:53 p.m. Several calls reporting three gunshots in Bridge Street area. Another caller reported seeing fireworks coming from the brick building across from Carroll’s. Area search negative.

Saturday, 5/22

1:36 a.m. Officer reports damaged stop sign at Industrial Boulevard and Millers Falls Road; re-

quested day shift dispatcher contact DPW on call staff to have them determine if they need to come out.

9:54 a.m. Caller from Federal Street requesting number for Environmental Police to report that a bear attacked one of her animals. Number provided.

12:27 p.m. Caller reports that someone broke into his unlocked vehicle on Migratory Way within the last hour. Caller’s phone was the only item taken to his knowledge. Report taken.

9:02 p.m. Caller from G Street states that about six males are yelling at two females across the street and are becoming more vulgar and aggressive. Quiet upon officer’s arrival.

9:51 p.m. Caller states that there is loud music coming from somewhere around Paradise Parkway. Determined to be a graduation party with a DJ. Advised of complaint. Homeowner stated that party would be done by 11.

10:02 p.m. Caller from G Street states he saw someone in dark clothing run through a neighbor’s yard. Party was an officer conducting an investigation in the area.

11:22 p.m. Caller reports finding a note in her mailbox from an unknown party making reference to the caller having an intimate relationship with another party. Investigated.

Sunday, 5/23

9:27 a.m. Caller requesting numbers for ACO and Environmental Police to get assistance with baby bunnies that are under his porch. Mother has not been seen in 12 hours. Caller states a local vet recommended he have them relocated. Numbers provided.

9:50 a.m. Party into station to report that two weeks ago he was on the sidewalk on Fourth Street and felt something hit him in the head; believes it was a BB. Advised of options.

10:45 a.m. Caller from Old Northfield Road reports that someone set off fireworks in his mailbox last night. No damage to mailbox. Report taken.

12:21 p.m. Caller reporting three loud booms coming from house across Turners Falls Road. Officers advise source was a small novelty cannon.

9:26 p.m. Caller states that she was threatened by another female while parked at Cumberland Farms and that the boyfriend of the girl who threatened her took video of the interaction with a phone. Caller was advised that there is no expectation of privacy while out in public and was advised of court options.

TV REVIEW

Amazon Prime’s *Underground Railroad*

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – I found I like the last alternate-history TV series I saw, so I decided to go online to check out one called *The Underground Railroad*. It is literally the story of the Underground Railroad, which was used to help slaves escape to freedom, only in this version, it’s a railroad with real conductors.

This series is based on a book by Colson Whitehead which won a Pulitzer. It premiered on Amazon Prime on May 14.

The first episode made this seem like just a regular historical drama involving escaping slaves. It unfortunately featured things that really did happen to the slaves in the actual history – one example being slaves hung on a post and whipped. A character called Ridgeway who is a slave catcher is introduced in the episode. At one point later in this series, we will learn a bit of backstory on this man. I got this info from one of the episodes that are available for viewing after this.

Two other characters named Cora and Caesar end up taking the Underground Railroad together in this episode. The people behind it still keep a record of the people who undertook the journey, like they did in the real-life history. One thing it shows which might be hard for some people to believe is there were really slaves who learned to read. Caesar is one such example in this series.

The book we see Caesar reading in the first episode is rather fitting to be presented in this show.



It’s *Gulliver’s Travels*. It is fitting because these two are on a journey together, and the book features a man on one, too. This man encounters strange things and lands, which is probably a fair way to compare what these two will encounter after getting on the Railroad – some things will seem just as strange to them as what Gulliver came upon. From what I saw in a preview after the episode it looks like I might be right about that.

The book won a Pulitzer, so if they are going to use other things from the book it will be a hit as well. I think the whole concept of the Underground Railroad being a real-life railroad is cool. We get a glimpse of it at the end of the first episode.

Ridgeway describes people taking the Underground Railroad as slipping through to another world. From the glimpse of the real railroad I saw in the preview, it’s a perfect way to describe it. I can’t wait to see an actual scene or two featuring that railroad and its conductors. That idea is what drew me to check this series out.

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SAWMILL from page B1

sawmill and dam. First, there was the question of what exactly was milled there. Bouricius explained that a sawmill had to be twice as long as the longest logs that would be milled. Logs have to be fed into the saw and then come out the other end. Besides records, clues on the ground, and LiDAR technology helped determine the approximate footprint of the mill.

LiDAR is a kind of satellite radar that provides imperfect but

useful images of the ground itself, not the vegetation or current structures. Past disturbance can be identified, and from that, the mill foundation footprint indicated a long, narrow building. And also, maps and records indicate a saw mill, although there had been stories from citizens past that (gun) powder was stored there, or that it was an armory. The armory idea may have been because at some point someone with the name of Amory bought into the mill.

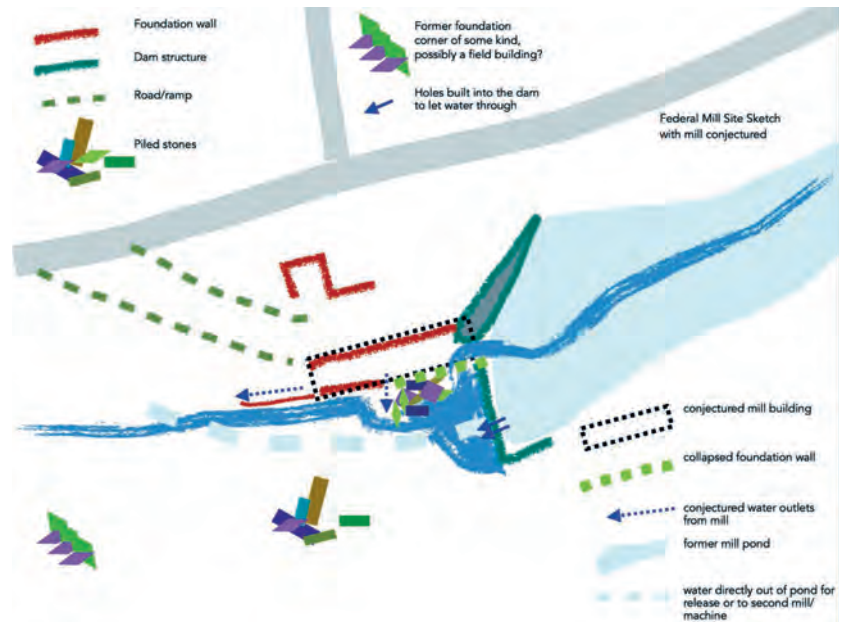
When exactly the mill was built, how long it operated, and when it stopped operation seems a little fuzzy. It is not on a map from 1794, but may have been built prior to 1805, and is mentioned in correspondence in 1820. It is shown on an 1858 map.

It was enlightening to see how someone with specific expertise can take obscure clues and recreate the story and history of a place. One clue to the age of something like the mill is the presence or absence of cement, which was not used in the US until after 1875.

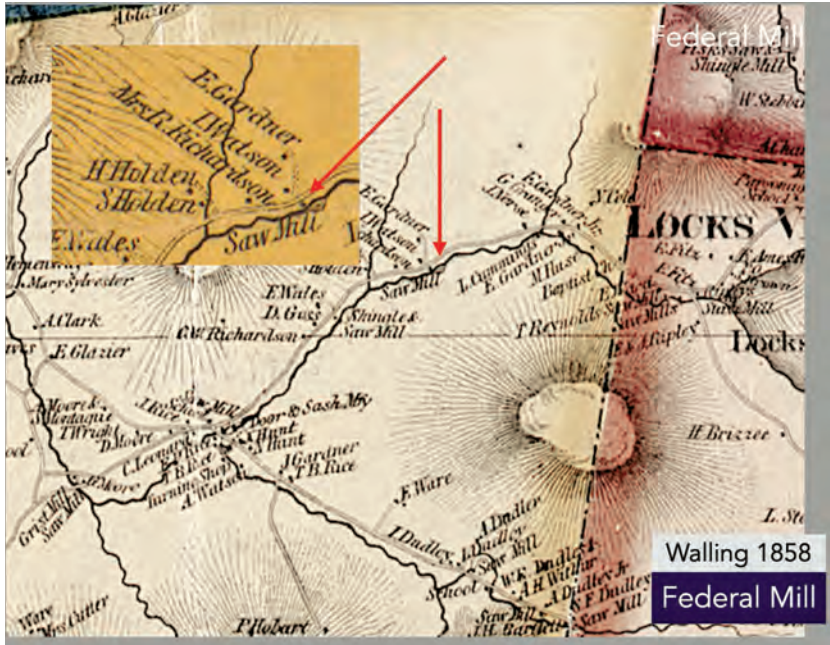
Another clue about the mill comes from the comment of a logger who told of going home across the street to eat lunch while a large log was sawn. An up-and-down saw would allow a lunch break, while a circular saw was too fast to munch down your sandwich or chicken leg at home.

The mill was sold in part over the years and seems to have been in decline starting as early as 1830. Some maps show the mill and pond, but the 1884 tax records indicate no mill present at that time.

The site where the dam wall still stands is part of the Paul T. Jones Working Forest, owned by W.D. Cows Company. They allow ac-



A plan of the Federal Mill site provided by Pleun Bouricius.



Detail from Henry Walling's 1858 state map.

Montague Community Television News Market Watch

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – Visit the Great Falls Farmers Market, and check out the video from last week’s event at Peskeomskut Park! The Montague annual town meeting aired live this past Saturday and will be available on Vimeo this week. The Montague selectboard, the finance committee, and the Gill-Montague Regional School District school committee all have new meetings available to view online.

All our videos are available on the MCTV Vimeo page, which can be found linked to the MCTV website, montaguetelevision.org, under the tab “Videos.” All community members are welcome to submit their videos to be aired on Channel 17, as well as

featured on Vimeo.

MCTV is always available to assist in local video production as well. Cameras, tripods, and lighting equipment are available for check-out, and filming and editing assistance can be provided.

The MCTV board is looking for new board members, specifically someone interested in filling the role of treasurer. The station is also looking to hire a producer to make Spanish-language content. Please email infomontaguetelevision@gmail.com with a resume to schedule an interview!

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 infomontaguetelevision@gmail.com.

Learning to Fly Fish: Part VIII

Ariel Jones, who recently passed away, penned a series of 14 articles in the Montague Reporter in 2005 on her experiences learning to fly fish. This is the seventh in the series. Jones was a pioneer of the local art scene when she moved to Turners Falls from NYC and opened a photography studio on Avenue A in 2000.

By ARIEL JONES

THE OZARKS – It was sunny, sixty degrees and climbing, and I had already forgotten the raw chill at home in Massachusetts. Luck, so far, was with us. Arriving at the dam, I was stunned by the beauty of the North Fork River. Wide and clear, with trees in blossom along the banks, plenty of room to cast, and a comfortable depth for wading; I had arrived in Paradise.

Clint and Jack eased the driftboat into the river and we were off. Immediately we saw fish rising everywhere. This is one of those sights that always makes a fly fisher’s blood race. Getting over-excited at this beginning stage can be disastrous to catching fish. Slow down, take a deep breath, and wait.

Nymphing With Scuds

Before we began casting, Clint scooped some rocks off the riverbed until he found what he was looking for: small, about three-quarters of an inch long, wormy-looking creatures he called scuds, crawling busily over the rocks. I did not find them to be especially appetizing, but we soon discovered that Rainbows, Browns, and Brookies all love them.

When the trout are feeding below the water’s surface, which is most of the time, one can fish with flies loosely known as nymphs. There are hundreds of patterns for nymphs, each tied to imitate a multitude of flies that live underwater during a particular cycle of their



Clint Wilkinson helps Ariel Jones to put another scud on. Note the dark spot on her sleeve: she had just fallen in the river.

life; i.e., before they mature, rise to the surface and fly away. That is, unless they are eaten before hitting the air. Living a nymph’s life ain’t for sissies.*

I climbed out of the driftboat and into the gently flowing North Fork River.

I had only fished with dry flies until now, which meant that I could see what was happening on the surface of the water – usually. While the rises were tempting, I decided to follow Clint’s advice and learn to fish with nymphs.

To help me get started Clint put a strike indicator at the end of my leader. This is a small, foamy, (environmentally-friendly) lightweight material that you can press into your leader. At the end of the leader is tied a very delicate line called a tippet. The nymph is knotted to this final, tapered end and its weight pulls the tippet below the surface of the water. When a fish strikes, the floating indicator is pulled under the water. A good thing, because the strike is often so subtle it takes a lot of experience to

*Also sometimes known as “girlie men.” I do not know the term for sissie women.

learn its feel and respond in time.

She Who Hesitates is Lost

I cast out at a slight angle upstream and immediately got a hit. I was so stunned that I just stood there and looked at my line, while Clint was shouting, “Get ‘im, Get ‘im!” Looking back at him, I hope my mouth wasn’t hanging open. The last time I had a strike so quickly was nearly a year ago.

As soon as a trout realizes that what attracted him isn’t real food, he spits it out faster than a blink and you have lost him.

OK, this was hardball. No more watching the birds and daydreaming, I had to get focused. I cast out again, let the scud drift and soon had another hit. I could hear Clint’s “Get ‘im! Get ‘im!” from the boat, but managed to keep control of what I needed to do to land this fish. I was settling down, and the concentration paid off.

I landed a lovely rainbow and experienced a new level of confidence that I could do this thing. It was, simply put, exhilarating.

The Montague Reporter Podcast!

May 25. **Big picture A1 news: redistricting and police advisory group feedback.** Sarah and Mike discuss the news from late May. Mike also talks about an unexpected story that he published online.

May 13. **Bonus episode: transparency in the Massachusetts House of Representatives.** In this episode we take a deep dive into Massachusetts state politics. Sarah discusses Davidson Carroll and Matt Barron, proposals to increase public access and transparency of the goings-on in the Massachusetts House of Representatives.

May 2. **Is dual-use solar coming to Western Mass?** Mike and Sarah discuss a proposed project in Northfield to allow dual-use solar on a farm. The discussion also turns to Mike’s experiences reporting long-form interviews, and the current (good!) state of the newspaper. Plus – speculations on the role of artificial intelligence at the paper.

March 30. **Late March highlights from A1 and beyond.** Join Sarah, reporter Sarah Robertson, and managing editor Mike Jackson in a discussion of the newspaper’s recent reporting on goings-on in Montague and surrounding towns, as well as Sarah Robertson’s reporting on housing and the environment.

March 22. **Bonus episode: deep dive into Connecticut River ecology and FirstLight relicensing process.** Join us for a deep dive into Sarah Robertson’s (and the *Montague Reporter*’s) reporting on the FirstLight Power relicensing process for power production on the Connecticut River. Scientists Ken Sprankel (US Fish and Wildlife Service with the CT River Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office) and Rodger Gwiazdowski (Department of Environmental Conservation; UMass Amherst) join us for a discussion on environmental impacts on the river.



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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LEVERETT POLICE LOG

Mailboxes, Et Cetera

Thursday, 4/1

3:19 p.m. Caller reported mud in the road by the S curves on Shutesbury Road. Small amount of mud, not a hazard.

Friday, 4/2

1:50 p.m. Caller from Shutesbury Road reported an orange truck with "Schneider" on the side struck a telephone pole and a guardrail and continued on. State police asked for a cruiser to go to Leverett Road in Shutesbury on lookout for the truck. At 2:01 p.m., MSP and LPD said they are off with a tractor trailer unit. Advised Eversource to have pole #46 checked on Shutesbury Road. Damage to trailer appears to be under \$1,000. Right rear tire had scuffs and a scratch on the side of the trailer from contact with the pole.

Saturday, 4/3

8:08 a.m. Alarm went off on Montague Road. 3:34 p.m. Responded to medical emergency on Still Corner Road. Young male had an allergic reaction. Amherst en route. Multiple 911 calls. PD and rescue arrived on scene to handle.

Monday, 4/5

11:05 a.m. Took fingerprints for a Leverett resident on Montague Road. 8:01 p.m. Caller requested a welfare check for resident on Rattlesnake Gutter Road.

Wednesday, 4/7

7:53 a.m. Alarm went off on Long Plain Road. Alarm company reports party on scene gave proper passcode. 1:11 p.m. Caller involved in a two-car crash at Bull Hill and Long Plain Road; airbags deployed.

Thursday 4/8

8:38 p.m. 911 call from Hemenway Road. Cell caller advises his phone is messed up and accidentally dialed.

Saturday, 4/10

1:18 a.m. Caller from Shutesbury Road just woke up to the sound of someone smashing mailboxes in the neighborhood. Caller transferred to unit.

8:50 a.m. Officer in Shutesbury reported multiple mailboxes being damaged in Shutesbury and believes Leverett was also affected. 9:07 a.m. Caller from Shutesbury Road advises his mailbox was smashed sometime overnight.

9:17 a.m. Caller from Amherst Road reported mailbox vandalism. 9:55 a.m. Caller from Shutesbury Road advises her mailbox was

smashed.

12:44 p.m. Out-of-control brush fire reported on Cave Hill Road. Permitted burn. Assisted FD with arriving vehicles. 1:23 p.m. Command advises fire contained. Extensive mop up.

1:46 p.m. Caller advises his son came home to find a male party 18 to 25 years old on the porch, looking in the windows. Male party stated he was out for a jog and 10 miles from home looking for water. Caller advises male party is between 5'6" and 5'8" wearing black bandana and black shorts, with tattoos on his chest in the shape of circles. Caller last saw him 5 to 8 minutes ago on Route 63 near Center Street in Montague. Caller spoke to Montague dispatch and they will send an officer to the last location. Caller reports the male party filled his water bottle and left the area. Later saw him in Montague at a residence when he appeared to be looking to fill his water bottle again.

3 p.m. Landscaping company reported a damaged mailbox on Shutesbury Road. Owner is in Africa; will attempt to contact tenants later in the day.

3:30 p.m. Caller from Depot Road reporting mailbox damaged overnight.

3:40 p.m. Received a report of apartment building mailboxes on Cushman Road being knocked to the ground. When checked all mailboxes appear to have been placed back in the original spots. Little to no damage.

3:45 p.m. Report of mailbox smashed and knocked down on Shutesbury Road.

11:05 p.m. Officer reported a black Nissan with three young people on Pelham Road near Leverett Road. Officer concerned because of the vandalism of mailboxes the previous evening. Vehicle may be in Shutesbury instead of Leverett.

Sunday, 4/11

10:16 a.m. Caller from Camp Road reported some type of wire hanging down on a pole into the leaves. No sparking, arcing or fire. Fiber line off roadway. 4:57 p.m. Motor vehicle accident, no injuries, on Hemenway Road.

Tuesday, 4/13

4:23 p.m. Motor vehicle accident with no injuries on Shutesbury Road. Tractor trailer unit vs. guard rail and pole. 20-minute ETA

for the power company. 5:27 p.m.: Company will send a tech down to try to repair the truck on scene.

Wednesday, 4/14

3:49 p.m. 911 call transferred from Montague PD reporting an Amazon driver parked in a bad location at the Co-op.

Thursday, 4/15

7:51 a.m. Caller from Long Plain Road reports a dead deer on the side of the road. Not a traffic hazard. MassDOT notified.

Friday, 4/16

11:18 a.m. Branch on primary lines on Montague Road. Road completely open.

11:23 p.m. Received a call from a distraught female near Cider Mill and Long Hill roads. Female voice could be heard, and possibly a male voice. Officer determined female was being comforted by a male, and both have left the area. Did not find.

Sunday, 4/18

10:10 a.m. Received a report from North Leverett Road of six-month-old experiencing an allergic reaction to eggs. Parents initially expressed wish to transport him privately, but agreed to remain and let the ambulance respond. Stayed on the line until Leverett FD arrived. The reaction seemed to be dissipating, so suggested photographing reaction to show to the ambulance crew and physician.

3:40 p.m. Caller from Shutesbury Road reported a tree possibly on wires and some tree limbs in the road. 3:51 p.m.: Found tree across the primaries, and one lane of the road blocked on a bad corner. 3:57 p.m.: 40-minute ETA for the power company.

Tuesday, 4/20

12:39 p.m. Large tree branch down in roadway of Cave Hill Road. 2:45 p.m. One car off the road into shrubs on Bull Hill Road. Driver cited for driving while intoxicated, driving outside designated lanes, and speeding.

7:31 p.m. ACO notified about possible rabies exposure to cat on Long Plain Road. She will follow up with the owner.

Thursday, 4/22

6:04 p.m. Caller from Broad Hill Road advises there is a loose grey dog, wearing a t-shirt, friendly but nervous. Officer will be checking. Another officer stated that the owners called and left a message and they will look for the dog. Informa-

A Blue Dragon Turns Green!

TURNERS FALLS – Nestled within the Great Falls Harvest and Market at 50 Third Street in Turners Falls is a new source of herbal medicine. Sage Green Botanicals, formerly the Blue Dragon Apothecary of Greenfield, is a full-service herbal dispensary and clinic specializing in custom formulated herbal prescriptions.

The many shelves covering the walls of the clinic are filled with an extensive collection of high-quality herbs and tinctures, including hundreds of organic and ethically wildcrafted herbs.

Proprietor Laura Torracco spent seven years studying herbs with mentor Chris Marano at Clearpath Herbs in Wendell, as well as with a variety of other herbalists. She points out that although herbalism is loosely certified at this point, she has over 800 hours of training, 200 hours of clinical shadowing with a certified herbalist, and 80 clinical hours of practicing on her own as an herbalist.

Torracco is also a registered member of the American Herbalist Guild, an association of herbal practitioners whose mission is to promote clinical herbalism as a viable profession rooted in ethics, competency, diversity, and freedom of practice. The guild works to support access to herbal medicine for all, and to advocate for excellence in herbal education.

At some point Torracco also plans to go back to college to study psychology, with an emphasis on trauma-informed practices. There is so much trauma being experienced everywhere, she notes, particularly in these times of the pandemic. She believes that herbal medicine can play an important role in addressing PTSD in combination with other evidence-based modalities.

We live in a hyperactive culture, she points out, and something



Laura Torracco measures herbs at Sage Green Botanicals, an herbal apothecary in Turners Falls.

as simple as settling down to have a cup of herbal tea can help reduce stress. Herbal medicines can also provide an array of benefits through phytochemicals, the active part of herbs that nourish and/or shift energy in the body.

Sage Green Botanicals is focused not only on providing herbal remedies, but also on teaching clients about the herbs prescribed and promoting healthy behaviors. The educational component has not been fully activated at this point because of the pandemic,

but Torracco says they are planning to resume their teaching clinic as soon as it becomes possible to have in-person classes.

While she is the owner of Sage Green Botanicals, Torracco does not like to be thought of as "the boss." Her work, she says, relies on a team of like-minded professional herbalists and supportive community partners. She strives to be transparent in her decision-making and to create a work environment that is respectful and supportive of team members' needs and interests. Creating a healthy work space, she points out, is essential in bringing healing to the community.

Sharing space with the Great Falls Market is an example of an innovative partnership that Torracco hopes can become a model for other businesses trying to survive and thrive in these challenging economic times.

To arrange for a professional herbal consultation and/or to order herbal medicines, call (413) 863-0033, email sagegreenbotanicals@gmail.com, or contact through the website www.sagegreenbotanicals.me. Pick up hours for herbal products are Wednesdays from 3 to 5 p.m. and Fridays between 3 and 6 p.m.



The apothecary is set up inside the Great Falls Market, attached to the Great Falls Harvest restaurant at 50 Third Street in Turners Falls.

tion passed along to ACO.

Saturday, 4/24

10:12 a.m. Caller from Long Plain Road reported a pocketbook stolen sometime yesterday morning at the parking area for the Roaring Brook Trailhead.

3:44 p.m. 911 call from Sprinkle Road was disconnected. On callback the phone went to voicemail. 4:08 p.m.: Spoke with resident who confirmed the call was accidental.

9:13 p.m. Caller from Cider Mill Road reported she lost \$1,000 through eBay try-

ing to buy a camper trailer. Appears to have been a scam, and eBay suggested she get a police report.

Monday, 4/26

3:48 p.m. Officer on Shutesbury Road reported a vehicle stuck after pulling off to the side of the road. The officer and a passerby were able to free the vehicle from the soft shoulder. No damage to vehicle.

7:45 p.m. Received motor vehicle complaint from North Leverett Road.

Wednesday, 4/28

6:37 p.m. Conducted an in-

vestigation for the Town of Leverett.

6:40 p.m. Delivered police report in hand to citizen on Cider Mill Road.

Friday, 4/30

10:35 a.m. Responded to report of a disabled motor vehicle on Cave Hill Road. Operator was turning around when he slid off the road into a drainage ditch. 11:33 a.m. Officer followed up on investigation on Long Plain Road.

4:54 p.m. Caller from Long Plain Road notified PD that her 13-year-old Labrador

has wandered off. Checked area with caller.

6:49 p.m. Amherst Public Safety took a 911 call reporting a tree limb on fire on Montague Road. 6:57 p.m.: Received second report of a tree down across the road, with wires and a shattered telephone pole. 6:58 p.m.: Found tree and wires across the road and a sheared pole. 7:02 p.m.: Eversource notified. 7:12 p.m: Montague Road around the Leverett Elementary School was shut down.

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

- William Carlos Williams

edited by Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno
Readers are invited to send poems to the
Montague Reporter at: 177 Avenue A
Turners Falls, MA 01376
or to: poetry@montagureporter.org

Our May Poetry Page

Three Poems from *Almost Love*

XXXI

my love is a lie spoken in an undertone
my lover knows that solitude does not exist
that there are separate and neglected bodies
in the lair of night
between the hands of the dawn

XXXII

proclaim then the day's truce
this life sullied with dirt
the past that haunts us
or even worse the distance
between a pale body and a voice of dust
forgotten in a corner like a rag

my lover is astonished
and doesn't breathe

XXXVI

"It is not true that the words..."
I wanted to tell you this
my love!

but life in itself
is not enough either
it is vainly constructed
withholding all the facts
it trembles
as the stone
that bounces twice
on the surface of the water
and then disappears

- Pierre Lepori
Lugano, Switzerland
Translated by Peter Valente

Alvin Abercrombie Goes to Africa

Alvin Abercrombie,
Son of a wealthy zombie,
Planned to visit Africa and catch the Furious Frumpet
Alvin, please proceed with care;
The jungle's very dangerous, so do beware
Alvin's mother, Dimpy,
Decreed his sportswear skimpy,
So she dressed him warmly, and bestowed her son a trumpet
Alvin, sound the regal call;
Wilderness awaits, and there's no time to stall
Alvin left the homestead,
Beef stew and ice cream cone fed,
With a look of grandeur which befits the proud aggressor
Alvin, set to stalk his prey,
With camouflage, machine gun, and a bale of hay
Forty eons later,
The young and courtly raider
Reached his destination, with a loud and cocky gesture
Alvin, keen to make his kill,
With butter brickle molars and an iron will

To and fro, he wandered;
Ecstatically, he sauntered;
Now, he knew, he'd earn the trophy of his poor heart's yearning
Alvin, reaching for the hay,
Placed it out as bait for the triumphant day
Machine gun locked and loaded,
He clutched the horn he toted,
Swelling with resounding pride, his diaphragm a-churning
Alvin, days have turned to years,
And age is wreaking havoc with your hunting gear
Fervently, he waited,
With sportswear worn and faded,
Salivating for the moment when he'd be rewarded
Alvin, anxious and prepared,
Took to hiding in a dense, secluded lair
Slipping into slumber,
He sawed a ton of lumber;
Frumpet visions filled his head, while Alvin snored and snorted
Alvin, get sufficient rest;
Soon, you will be put to an enormous test

Awakened by a rustle,
He thought, "What's all the tussle?
Could it be I've finally found the grand, elusive Frumpet?"
Alvin, struck with valiant glee,
Slithered up behind a vast, protective tree
Peering at the meadow,
He saw a moving shadow;
Alvin, overcome with bliss, paraded like a strumpet
Alvin, strutting toward the hay,
Isn't quite prepared for the ensuing fray
As he neared the hay pile,
Brave Alvin flashed a grand smile,
Eager to procure his prize and bask in victor's passion
Alvin, could it be you've erred?
It's another hunter, with his rifle bared
Alvin's journal entry:
"This astounded sentry
Surely thought that Frumpet was the source of shadowed
fashion."
Alvin, seems you're not alone;
Other captors seek the treasured Frumpet's home

Arguments proceeded,
Belligerent and heated,
Topic of the pair's debate concerning Frumpet's taker
"Alvin, Snaljee is my name.
Hunting is my sport, and Frumpet is my game."
Alvin told contestant
That his abode was distant;
Leaving empty-handed would prove he a shallow faker
"Alvin," Snaljee told the lad,
"Trespass on my ground, and you shall make me mad."
Alvin's words were bitter;
He would not lose the critter;
Anger fumed in Alvin's eyes, as he denounced Sir Snaljee
Alvin - you too, Snaljee - look!
Something is approaching, and your geese are cooked
Twas the Frumpet nearing,
Demonstrably appearing
In a state of crimson wrath, immersed in mud and algae
Alvin, and your well-clad foe,
Frumpet is revengeful - there's no place to go
Frumpet grabbed its victims
And, in its fury, fixed 'em,
Cracking open both their skulls with merciless destruction
Alvin, guess you're up the creek;
Seems your fickle sport has turned the other cheek

So we end this story
Of crushed and thwarted glory,
Packaged in cohesive rhyme and metrical construction
Alvin, and your futile friend -
Hunters are the hunted, at the fable's end.

- Kevin Smith
Turners Falls

Contributors' Notes:

Pierre Lepori, poet, playwright, translator, novelist, is the author of more than a dozen books. He writes in both French and Italian. His newest book of poems *Quasi Amore (Almost Love)*, will be published in English later this year in Peter Valente's translation. Valente is a poet, filmmaker, and prolific translator from French and Italian. He previously translated Lepori's *Whatever the Name* (2017).

Kevin Smith, a frequent contributor to this page, writes about his poem: "It's my tribute to Homer, I guess. Or Homer Simpson. Or Homer Sapiens. Or whatever."

ALEXANDER ROTONDO PHOTO

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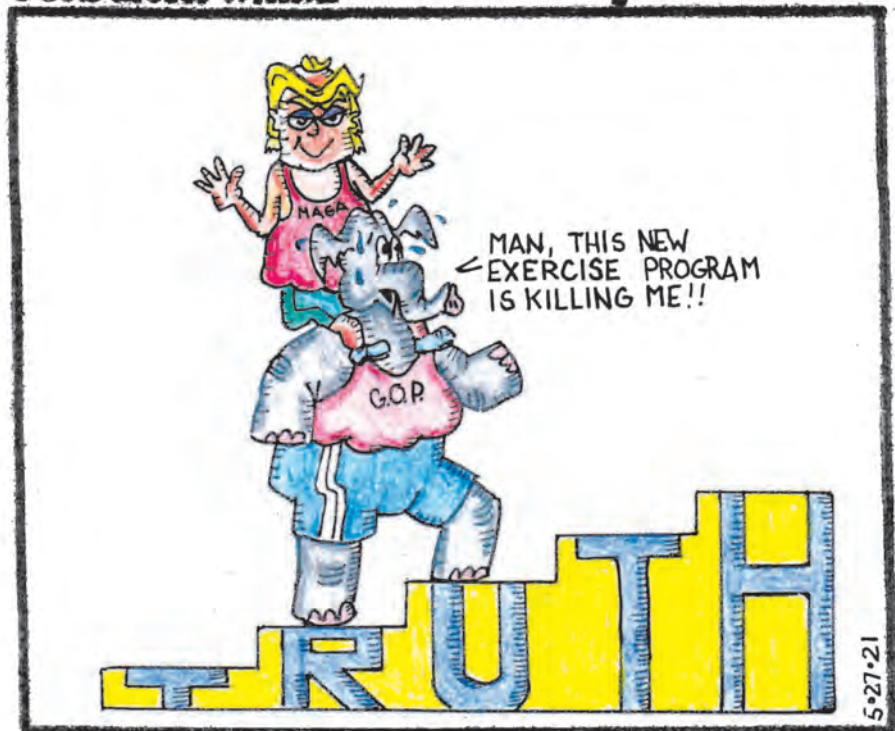
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PERSONAL INJURY, WILLS & ESTATES, WORKER'S COMP

Comics and Puzze

JOEL PAXTON ILLUSTRATION

by denis bordeaux



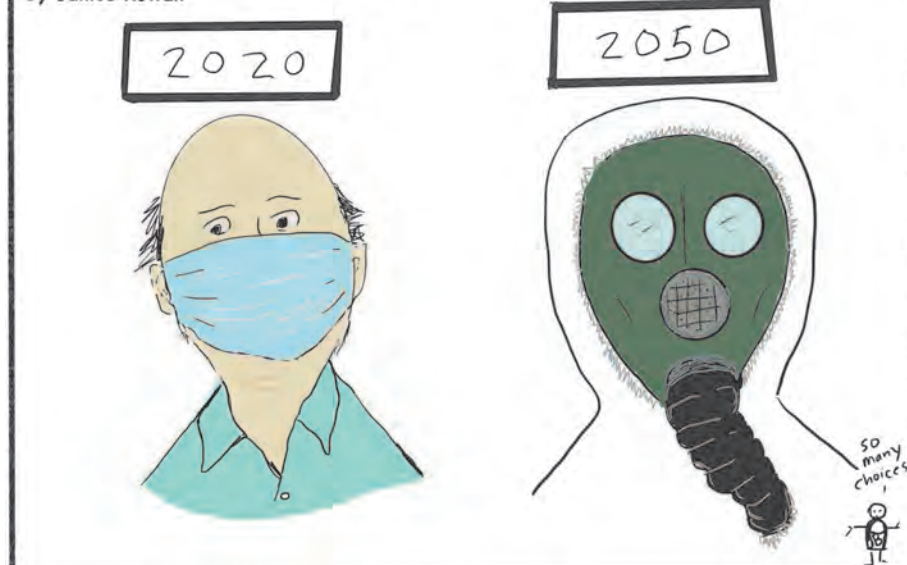
Carolyn Clark



Sept



By Janice Rowan

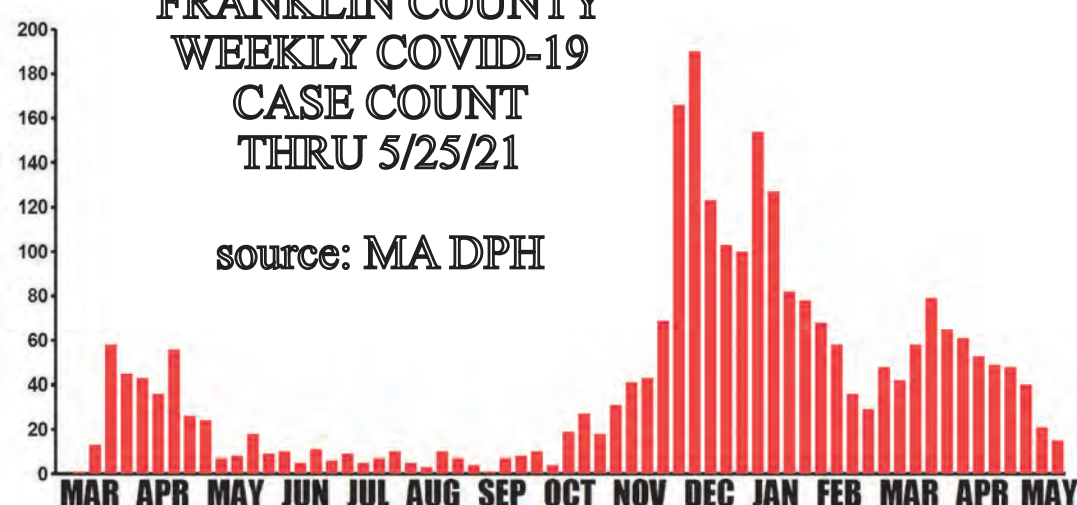


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- CASTAWAY OLLIE

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FRANKLIN COUNTY WEEKLY COVID-19 CASE COUNT THRU 5/25/21

source: MA DPH



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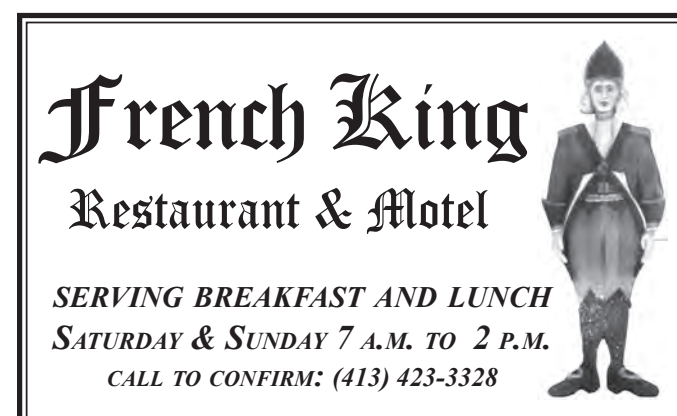
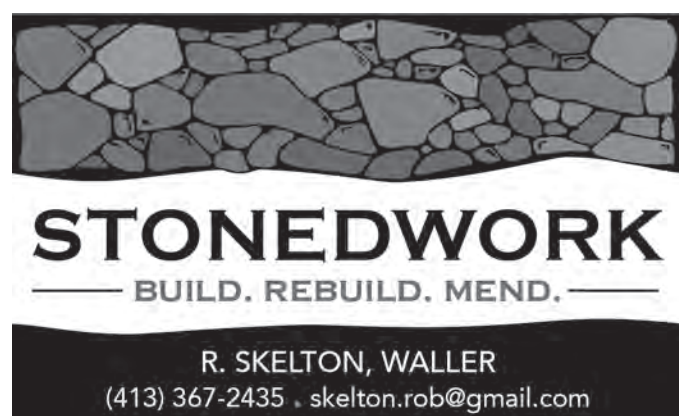
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Submit your comics and puzzles to editor@montaguereporter.org. Original & local creations only, please!

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GREAT FALLS APPLE COLUMN

By ANNABEL LEVINE

TURNERS FALLS – When we moved into our house five years ago, our front yard looked like a conventional lawn. There were some pockets of life, like the old bridal wreath spirea along the sidewalk which, as I write, is currently awash in white and tea-stained blooms like it was covered in an old victorian lace tablecloth. While daylilies and some other wildflowers filled two small garden beds by the house, the majority of the front lawn was just that: lawn.

That first season I let the grass grow. I wanted to see if there were any wildflowers or any plants other than grass hiding in the thicket. I let the grass grow high, but no other plants emerged.

I didn't have time to come up with a plan because my decision came pre-packaged in a letter from



An overwintered collard grows tall with blooms on the Seventh Street side of the “church lot” sidewalk food forest.

the health department. My long grass was a “hazard,” and needed to be mowed. A lack of action would cost me in the form of a \$150 fine. I didn't want to pay, and as no wild plants had emerged out of the meadow anyway, I decided to cut the grass.

The second summer I came into the season with a plan: I was going to mow edges and paths, so that even if parts were still wild, it would be clear there was no neglect. Unfortunately that summer it rained for almost a month straight in July, and on one of the first dry mornings, as I finally headed outside to mow, I found a second letter from the health department in my mailbox.

Though they never told us directly, we're pretty sure it was our neighbors who made the complaint. If it wasn't them, it would be pretty strange that three years after the first complaint, “MowYourLawn” is still the name of their wireless internet.

I don't share this to bring shade to my neighbors. We live in a world with a very narrow sense of what is appropriate, good, or nice. There is a lot of intense pressure to live up to these standards. Year after year people expend their own time and sweat (or pay for the time and sweat of others) to mow their lawns because they think they have to. I understand how seeing someone reject what is thought to be a universal truth can be jarring.

I share this because my experience, while particularly colorful, is not rare. I am not the only one to run into obstacles, both social and bureaucratic, because of choices of how or what to grow. I also say this because I spend a lot of time in this column advocating for some concepts that aren't always comfortable for everyone, and want to acknowledge that there can be, and

often is, pushback.

In this case I feel comfortable saying that while I see value in having access to open space, I think a vast majority of lawns are not used, and are not the best or most beautiful way to maintain a property. I'm not alone either, as more and more folks are waking up to the idea of a lawn as an outdated and classist construct whose persistence in our landscape is directly affecting our health and the wellbeing of the creatures around us. If you are interested in reading more on this topic, I highly recommend checking out the book *Lawn into Meadows* by friend of the Apple Corps (and chair of the Montague planter committee), Owen Wormser.

I'm not here today to share statistics, because sometimes a look at the results is better than any logic. I have been spending more and more time in the front of my house because as the yard matures, it's looking increasingly beautiful. A variety of wildflowers have taken up residence in the lawn, with clumps of Queen Anne's lace, daisy fleabane, mullein, milkweed, and violets working to crowd out the grass. Raised beds grow a variety of vegetables, herbs, and flowers. Bare root fruit trees have survived being nibbled and snapped, and have established themselves along the edges.

I see this patient beauty in the Apple Corps gardens, too. This is our fourth season at the Unity Park Community Garden and the same slow transformation is taking shape. We've planted an edible hedge along the side that already has fruit, wildflowers are jumping from the edges to the pathways, and more engagement from gardeners across the board means that even so early in the season the beds are full of flowers and food.

At the “church lot” food for-



LEVINE PHOTOS

Bridal wreath spirea growing in the front yard garden, just past peak bloom.

est (at the corner of L and Prospect streets), trees and bushes are happy and highly visible from the road, and there are whole patches of wildflowers where only one was planted a few years back. We have collards that have self-seeded for the second year in a row, and we're on track to have quite a few handfuls of strawberries if the creatures don't get to them first.

If you need some inspiration, take a look at one of these gardens, or maybe just find a meadow of wildflowers on the side of the road. We hope with a little inspiration and advice, our readers will

also transform unused areas of their lawn, despite the opposition. Patience will win out, and in the meantime, if you need me, I'll be out front with the flowers!

The Great Falls Apple Corps is a community group that advocates for edible landscaping and community gardening here in Turners Falls. We run a weekly free table with food, clothing, and other useful items every Saturday from 12 to 3 p.m. at Unity Park. We also still have seeds for distribution! To get in touch, please email us at greatfallsapplecorps@gmail.com.

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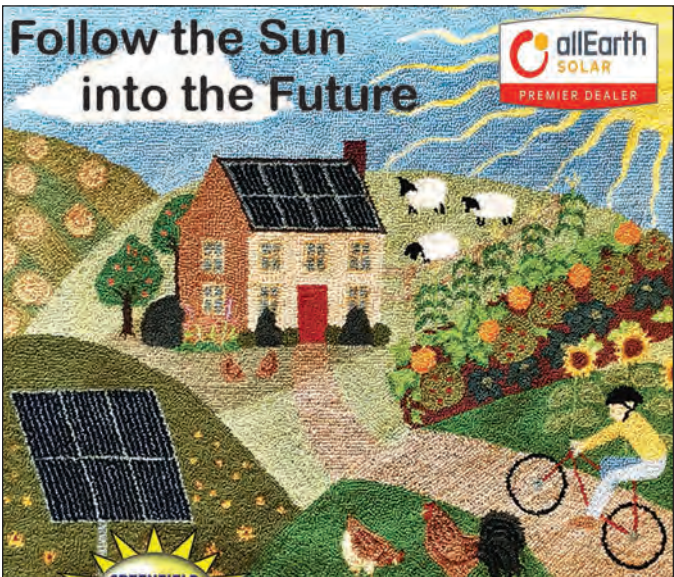
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