

# The Montague Reporter

YEAR 19 – NO. 33

also serving Erving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

\$1

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

JUNE 24, 2021

ANALYSIS

## Precincts, or Census Tracts? Redistricting Fight Underway

By JEFF SINGLETON

**BOSTON** – The state legislature is currently in the throes of redistricting – the process of creating new congressional and legislative districts with equal populations based on the most recent count, in this case the 2020 US Census. A state legislative Joint Committee on Redistricting has been holding hearings, which are expected to end in July, to reorganize Massachusetts’ nine congressional districts, the same number created by the 2010 Census.

But hearings on state-level house and senate districts have not yet begun, and a controversy has developed over whether to use Census tracts or local precincts as the building blocks for the new districts.

Two weeks ago, the Massachusetts house passed legislation changing the timing and basis for creating new districts. The process has traditionally begun with cities and towns creating new local precincts based on the latest Census; the state legislature then maps its new districts based on those boundaries. Thus, for example, one precinct of the town of Belchertown is in Susannah Whipp’s Second Franklin District, and the rest are in the Seventh Hampden, currently represented by the newcomer Jacob Oliveira.

A new bill, H.3863, would change this order by requiring that the legislature first create new districts and then localities to create precincts.

The change was justified primarily due to delays at the Census, see **PRECINCTS** page A8

GILL SELECTBOARD

## Board Backs Dump Truck Debt 2 to 1, Amid Furore

By JERRI HIGGINS

At a longer than usual meeting Monday night, the Gill selectboard voted 2-1 to recommend replacing the highway department’s dump truck, after debating whether to repair it. The board also discussed floor and window replacement at Gill Elementary School, and heard requests from the fire and highway departments, among other business.

Former selectboard member John Ward and finance committee chair Claire Chang joined the meeting to discuss the issue of the dump truck, which will appear on the warrant for the annual town meeting this Saturday. The two boards had agreed at a June 7 joint meeting to recommend a debt exclusion article to borrow \$200,000 for the purchase of a new truck, but since then, the estimate for the repair of its engine was reduced from roughly \$20,000 to roughly \$10,000.

see **GILL** page A4

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

## Turners Softball Thunder Heads to Western Finals



Jade Tyler on the mound, and Liv Whitier at first, as the Thunder rolled to a 12-0 quarterfinal win against Westfield on Monday.

By MATT ROBINSON

**TURNERS FALLS** – Four teams and one individual from the Franklin Tech and Turners Falls high schools competed in MIAA postseason tourneys this week. After two tennis matches, a baseball game, a track meet, and five games of softball, only one is left standing: the Turners Falls Softball Thunder.

That’s the way it is in the one-and-done high school postseason. A team has to keep winning game after game or they’re sent home – unless, of course, they win the state title.

Turners has done just that, and then some. While the sitting Western Mass champions did not get a chance to defend their title last year, they are currently one game away from repeating the feat. And if they win on Friday, they will be two away from taking back the Massachusetts D-III state title.

Baseball

Smith Academy 2 – FCTS 1

The eighth-seeded Franklin Tech Baseball Eagles fell to Smith Academy 2-1 in the D-IV West opening round last Friday.

It was a wonderful, painful game to watch. I arrived in the fifth and the score was a tight 2-1. Players from both squads proceeded to make contact with the ball, but excellent fielding and circus catches kept either from scoring.

With one out in the seventh, coach Daniel Parsol sent in Alex Sulda in relief of Jake Whitney. Sulda and the Eagle D did their jobs, keeping the Smiths from scoring insurance runs, but Tech went out in order in the seventh and were

eliminated from the playoffs.

Technically, it was an upset. But only in the books. “Keep your heads up,” Coach Parsol told his boys as they slunk back to the dugout. “You have nothing to be ashamed about.” After a quiet meeting, the players and coaches walked back to the diamond and shook the other teams’ hands.

Girls’ Tennis

TFHS 3 – PVCIC 2

PVCA 5 – TFHS 0

Last week I wrote that the Turners Falls tennis team might have to travel to Springfield, the Berkshires, or anywhere in between in the first round of playoffs. As it turns out, last Friday’s opening match against Pioneer Chinese Immersion was held at Turners Falls High School.

“We play at the Canoe Club,” one of the PVCIC mothers explained before the match. “On Fridays, it’s members only.” So, the higher ranked team had to travel. Immersion does not provide a bus, so the players arrived in single cars; ten minutes before start time, only four families had found the school. “I don’t expect to win,” Coach Clark Johnson confided to me. “We may have to forfeit both doubles matches.” Then he joked, “But that’s okay – our girls just wanna have fun.”

The fifth girl finally showed, after a brief detour to Sheffield, but Pioneer Chinese still had to cede one match; if Turners could pull off two wins, they would take the match.

I left early for the Tech Softball game. At that time, it seemed like see **SPORTS** page A7



Franklin Tech’s Lauren Ross blasts an outfield hit in the sixth inning, the Eagles’ sole score in Wednesday’s semifinal loss to Mount Greylock.

## Clean Sweep by Zamojski In Board of Health Race

By MIKE JACKSON

**MONTAGUE** – This year’s spring election was a strong year for write-in candidates, with empty spots up and down the ballot and a 6.74% turnout of eligible voters.

Chris Boutwell, who served eight consecutive terms on the board of health, told the Reporter he was “kind of surprised” by his loss to Melanie Zamojski of Montague City, a nurse and nurse educator who had been campaigning since April and secured the endorsement of the town Democratic caucus.

Zamojski challenged Boutwell for the seat the previous time he came up for re-election in 2018, but fell short of the mark, 486 votes to 702. On Tuesday she turned the tables, defeating him 256 to 133. She also swept Montague’s six precincts, ranging from 49% in Mon-

tague Center (where write-ins garnered 13%) to 85% in downtown Turners Falls.

Town clerk Deb Bourbeau said on Wednesday that she had spent the day recording write-in votes, and had not yet called many of the lucky winners. Jennifer Waryas won one of two empty seats on the see **HEALTH** page A2



Melanie Zamojski.

LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

## Police Adopt New Mandates; Town Could Inherit Dam

By GEORGE BRACE

At their Tuesday meeting, Leverett’s selectboard approved a series of police policy updates and additions, set to go into effect by July 1. The state’s newly-created Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) commission has mandated that all police departments adopt and register a standardized set of policies in certain areas, or face decertification. Chief Scott Minckler was on hand to provide an overview of the changes and answer questions.

The lengthy meeting also included discussion of the future of the North Leverett Sawmill property and dam, and continuing talk of the format of the board’s own meetings.

According to the state’s website, POST was established in 2020 “to improve public safety and trust between members of law enforcement and the communities they serve.” Nine members were appointed to the commission on April 1 of this year, and one of their first official acts was to require that all departments adopt certain standardized policies by July.

The updates, which will soon be posted to Leverett’s website, include a ban on the use of chokeholds, deescalation training, reporting requirements on the use of force, new rules covering search and seizure, and regulations concerning school resource officers and bias-free policing.

see **LEVERETT** page A5

GILL-MONTAGUE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

## Power of School Committee Too Much for Most Mortals

By MIKE JACKSON

**GILL-MONTAGUE** – One seat for a Montague resident remains open on the regional school committee after the populace of Gill and Montague failed to elect an appropriate number of candidates this year.

Voters in both towns elect representatives from both towns. Gill held its spring election May 17, but kept the school committee results secret until Montague’s election, which was held Tuesday.

The two successfully elected were Timmie Smith of Gill and Jennifer Waryas of Montague. Smith is a longtime member who quit the committee this spring for personal reasons, then was re-appointed to serve out her term after no one else volunteered. Waryas, a Turners Falls

resident appointed to her town’s finance committee last October, was written in by 19 Montague voters.

The committee held a special reorganization meeting Wednesday evening. Chair Jane Oakes said Montague town clerk Deb Bourbeau had reported that the next runners-up were Chad Cadran and Kathy Lynch, who received four write-in votes each, and that “if it’s a tie vote, then it is declared that there is no winner.”

Montague assistant town clerk Kathern Pierce told the Reporter on Wednesday that Gill’s results had not been shared with Montague town hall. It is unknown to this paper whether anybody has taken it upon themselves to tabulate the two towns’ combined write-ins.

Oakes was nominated as chair, see **GMRSD** page A2

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**SUMMER SCHEDULE**  
**VOL. 19 #34: JULY 8**  
**VOL. 19 #35: JULY 22**  
**VOL. 19 #36: AUGUST 5**  
**VOL. 19 #37: AUGUST 19**  
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## GMRS D from page A1

and Montague members Cassie Damkoehler, Heather Katsoulis, and Mike Langknecht as vice chair, secretary, and assistant treasurer respectively. All were the only nominees; all were approved 6-0. Waryas and Gill's Bill Tomb were not present.

Given the circumstances, Oakes recommended delaying subcommittee appointments, besides one bargaining committee currently in negotiations. This proposal, and the meeting's adjournment, were approved unanimously.

The committee had also met Tuesday night, bidding farewell to expiring members Jennifer Lively and Haley Anderson. "Thank you both so much," Damkoehler told them. "It's taken you away from your own families. Just know that the community is very grateful."

Superintendent Brian Beck reported that a committee to hire a new

high school principal is being assembled, and another has found three finalists for assistant principal.

The school committee delivered a formal annual evaluation of Beck, who himself was hired just as human society was brought to a standstill by a deadly novel respiratory virus, rating him as proficient overall. "He had a lot of curveballs," Lively pointed out.

The committee heard a proposal from high school teachers Megan Bendiksen and Jessica Vachula-Curtis to bring between six and 20 students next March to France and Italy to practice their French and Latin. Members praised their ambition, and warned that the fundraising goal might be difficult to reach.

The school committee is soliciting letters of interest in hopes of appointing a Montague resident to fill the empty seat until the next town election.



## NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

# Half Mil From Feds: "Sweet Deal" for Town

By KATIE NOLAN

The Erving selectboard met Monday night using GoToWebinar remote meeting technology, in accordance with the governor's and state legislature's extension of the authorization to hold municipal meetings remotely until April 1, 2022. Town administrator Bryan Smith told the board that each board or town committee would be able to decide whether to meet in person or remotely.

The board voted to accept \$523,087 in federal American Rescue Plan aid, and to use the money for the former International Paper Mill wastewater pump station and force sewer main and the Arch Street force sewer main projects.

Bryan Smith told the board the application process was simple, and the town could determine how to spend the money, within certain guidelines. "This is a sweet deal," commented selectboard member William Bembury.

The board authorized spending \$4,774 for a communications relay system for the automatic door opener at the Erving Public Library building. Bryan Smith explained that during installation of the door opener, it was discovered that there was a coordination problem between the door-opening mechanism and the control software. He said that the library building project still had enough funds to cover

the cost of the relay system.

Library building committee member Daniel Hammock asked whether a reserve fund transfer would be needed to cover the library's electricity costs, which were higher than estimated. Selectboard chair Jacob Smith and Bryan Smith both assured him that the bills could be paid by moving money between lines in the library budget.

Hammock also said he was concerned about beams which had developed cracks as they dried. The contractor's structural engineer had reported that the cracking was natural, and was not a structural problem. Hammock asked whether the town would have any legal recourse if a problem did arise in the future.

Bryan Smith said he would ask town counsel to review the engineer's letter.

He also told the selectboard that the drainage repair for the River, Warner and Strachan streets project had been successful, and that contractors were completing work by installing signs.

On the recommendation of police chief Robert Holst, the board approved a permit for Christoph Marsh to sell educational materials door to door until October 15.

The board reviewed a draft scope of work for professional community-access TV services, in anticipation of the town putting out a request for quotes.

*Trouble Mandeson, our guest features editor and illustrator, covers the Greenfield beat with this rendering of civic-minded citizen Penny Ricketts, who she spotted collecting signatures outside of the post office.*

*Many thanks to Trouble for filling in these last couple of weeks! Readers should check out her monthly food and cooking column, "The Heartfelt Café," in our MoRe section if you haven't already.*



TROUBLE MANDESON ILLUSTRATION

## Letter to the Editors

# Make Turners Shady Again

A brief note of thanks and recognition for the hard work of the Tree Advisory Committee.

When we moved to Central Street in 1985, there were seven 50-foot maples shared among

four neighbors on each side of the street, just our part of the block. All taken by age, disease, or fears of property damage, the trees (as they do) offered remarkable shade and character to the street.

The Town and a few property owners had planted a few replacements over the last decades, but the large percentage of absentee ownership on Central Street throws shade on expectations for what the street can be once more. The Tree Committee's recent efforts here grows hope for what trees return to the urban landscape.

Jay DiPucchio  
Turners Falls



## HEALTH from page A1

the Gill-Montague school committee with 19 votes; the other seat will remain empty, as second place was a tie between Chad Cadran and Kathy Lynch, who both received four. (See article, Page A1.)

In the only other competitive race on the ballot, with four candidates listed for three seats on the Library Trustees, incumbents Patricia Perham and Gretchen Wetherby and Democratic caucus nominee Elizabeth Swihart were the top vote-getters.

"I was impressed with the number of people that did come out," said Zamojski. "It was a slow day."

Zamojski, who teaches nursing at Greenfield Community College and worked as a contact tracer for the Cooperative Public Health Services during COVID-19, said her top priorities for the board in her first year are to "review the response to COVID" by the department, seek ways to support pandemic recovery, and help the town develop its mosquito control protocol.

She was sworn in on Wednesday, and said she planned to study past meeting minutes before her first meeting. "I am ready to hit the ground running, for sure," she told the Reporter.

"I've been kind of busy – I've been involved in other things," Boutwell said Wednesday night when reached for comment. "I even have signs from previous elections that I didn't put out."

Shortly after turning in his papers for the seat, Boutwell said, he was nominated to serve as president of the Loyal Order of Moose lodge in Greenfield. He is also two-thirds of the way through his fifth term on the Montague selectboard.

"It reaches a point where you can't do everything," Boutwell added. "Someday I may decide to do it again."

Asked if he had advice for his successor after 24 years governing the town's health department, Boutwell encouraged Zamojski to stay updated on regulations. "To be really involved, there's a lot of courses that are involved, which I've taken over the years," he said. "It's changing times, and things are changing every day. You've just got to stay up with it."

"I am thankful to the residents of Montague," Zamojski said, "and I also want to thank Chris, for being a member of that committee for as many years as he's been. He's had a very strong impact on the board, and I've got some big shoes to fill."



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Compiled by  
**TROUBLE MANDESON**

The Emily Dickinson Museum in Amherst will be hosting the **Phosphorescence Poetry Reading Series**, a monthly event to “celebrate contemporary creativity that echoes Emily Dickinson’s revolutionary poetic voices.” The first event is free and online this Thursday, June 24, 6 to 7 p.m. Register in advance at [bit.ly/PhosphoJune21](http://bit.ly/PhosphoJune21), and visit [emilydickinsonmuseum.org](http://emilydickinsonmuseum.org) for future dates of this monthly event.

Wissatinawag Work Days is sponsored by the Nolumbeka Project, whose mission is to preserve sacred sites of Native Americans. You are invited to **come help plant, weed, and water gardens** this Saturday, June 26, 10 a.m. Email [nolumbekaproject@gmail.com](mailto:nolumbekaproject@gmail.com) or call site manager Brent Pitcher at (413) 325-4498 for more information.

The LAVA Center, located at 324 Main Street in Greenfield, continues to offer a **Pop-up Art Salon** on Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The salon features local artists, poets, and writers selling, and sometimes performing, their art.

LAVA is also currently accepting submissions to an **Open Screen Online Film Festival**, with a deadline of Monday, July 5. The festival runs from July 11 to 25 at the gallery. “This festival will function like an open mic,” they say, “in that there will be no competitive selection process – all appropriate films

submitted will be screened!”

Visit [www.localaccess.org](http://www.localaccess.org) for information on both events, and more in-person and online programming.

The annual Orange Solstice Riverfest has been canceled for 2021, but the **Lighted Boat Parade** will go on this Saturday, June 26, from 8 to 10 p.m. Boats will be judged and prizes will be awarded.

There will be live music by the Can Collectors, as well as food, vendors, and half-price boat rentals for those who want to participate in the parade. There will even be a yoga class at 7 p.m., led by Yoga Plus Wellness. The event is hosted by Billy Goat Boats at 25 East River Street in Orange.

In honor of Cinema Week and the release of *F9*, the latest *Fast & Furious* movie, Greenfield Garden Cinema will be hosting a **Car Show** this Sunday, June 27 from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Registration for cars begins at 10 a.m. and prizes will be awarded for Best in Show, Best Muscle Car, Best Pre-1970, Most *Fast & Furious*, and People’s Choice. The \$10 entry fee includes popcorn and a beverage.

The event is free to spectators, who are reminded to please respect the cars and their owners. Matinee tickets for that day’s *F9* showing will be sold for \$6.50.

A southern Vermont nonprofit named Spiritual, Practical, Artistic, Creative Education (SPACE), which invites the public to **work with unseen forces to heal certain**

**geographical locations**, is coming to Unity Park in Turners Falls this Sunday, June 27, at 5 p.m.

RSVP for this unique event, titled “Geomancy – Round #3. Frequency Shifting, Density Lifting, Land Healing,” at [spaceinvermont.org](http://spaceinvermont.org). According to their website, SPACE is “passionate about inspiring people to become complete in powerful and meaningful ways,” through workshops, classes, and events.

The 2021 Coop Concerts **Summer Concert Series** begins July 1 and repeats every Thursday from 6 to 8 p.m. at Greenfield’s Energy Park. The event is free; bring a blanket, lawn chairs, food, and drinks.

“Women Healing Women Healing Earth,” a free **wellness program for low- to moderate-income women**, begins Friday, July 9. Offered by Seeds of Solidarity Farm and Education Center, the program will take place at their 165 Chestnut Hill Road location in Orange. Pre-registration is required, and space is limited. To participate, contact [deb@seedsofsolidarity.org](mailto:deb@seedsofsolidarity.org) with your name and town. For more information on Seeds of Solidarity’s programming, visit [seedsofsolidarity.org](http://seedsofsolidarity.org).

The Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association and Historic Deerfield invite you to celebrate **America’s first African-American poet** during “Lucy Terry Prince Day.” This event is free and takes place on Sunday, July 11 at 10 a.m. Tour the Wells-Thorne home, her former residence, and enjoy various activities throughout the day. Visit [www.historic-deerfield.org](http://www.historic-deerfield.org) for the schedule of events.

**Freedom Music Fest** comes to Franklin County Fairgrounds on Sunday, July 11, from noon to 8 p.m., with local bands, food, and beer from Berkshire Brewing Company. The \$10 tickets will help to fund the “mudslide project,” to address an embankment collapse at the Fairgrounds. Tickets are available at [freedomfest.ticketleap.com](http://freedomfest.ticketleap.com).

Looking for work? The Downtown Northampton Association is seeking **street performers** for a

summer-long arts program. Performers will receive a \$75 stipend, and may ask for tips with signage. To find out more, email [amy@northamptondna.com](mailto:amy@northamptondna.com).

The Ubuntu Arts Community, based at the Lt. Clayre P. Sullivan School in Holyoke, is looking to hire an **artist facilitator and program coordinator** to work with children ages 8 to 12. Details are available at [performanceproject.org](http://performanceproject.org).

“I Remember” is an **online informal writing group** every Thursday from 7 to 8:15 p.m., hosted by Susannah Croluis. art+soul in Greenfield serves as an “incubator for engaging and expanding spiritual imagination, nurturing inner hospitality, and inviting practices of soulful creativity. Participation is free, but love offerings are welcome.” Email [artandsoul.wm@gmail.com](mailto:artandsoul.wm@gmail.com) for this and other offerings.

Slate Roof Press will host an online celebration of “Writing From the Broken Places,” a **poetry anthology by people at the Northern Hope Recovery Center** in Greenfield, on Sunday, July 11 at 2 p.m. “The writing bears witness to the dignity and struggle of those in recovery – and the courage of writers who write to live,” they write. Proceeds from the book support the North Quabbin Recovery Center in Athol. Register at [slateroofpress.com](http://slateroofpress.com).

Come one, come all to a block party on the Greenfield Town Common as we help to celebrate the **60th anniversary of Village Pizza**. The event is free to attend and takes place on Sunday, July 11 from 4 to 9 p.m. There will be music, vendors, beer, prizes and more! The event is a fundraiser for the Food Bank of Western Mass and Shriners.

The Turners Falls Women’s Center will offer an eight-week workshop, “**Writing for Healing**” on Tuesdays, July 13 through August 31, from 1 to 3 p.m. Call Andrea Sears at (413) 824-5387 or visit [womenscenter@mcsmcommunity.org](mailto:womenscenter@mcsmcommunity.org) to register.

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

**HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD**

# Wendell Will Get New Master Plan Committee, New Town Coordinator

By JOSH HEINEMANN

The Wendell selectboard held their first regular meeting after the annual town meeting near the end of a beautiful June 23 day. The meeting was short, and the sky was just beginning to darken at its end.

People attending the meeting still spread themselves out around the meeting room table, but the only person who wore a mask through the entire meeting was Alisha Brouillet, who will be taking over when Nancy Aldrich leaves her position as town coordinator.

Planning board members were there to propose a master plan for Wendell, and a committee to create that master plan.

The impetus comes from overlapping concerns the town faces:

creating a solar bylaw, creating a marijuana bylaw, and a new one, getting batteries for “matching” renewable energy generation, which is irregular, with consumption, which is also irregular but happens on a different schedule.

Creating the master plan can be expensive, and can take up to two years. Planning board member Nan Riebschlaeger suggested a potluck dinner to introduce the idea to townspeople, and answer any questions.

The selectboard voted to create a master plan committee.

The town received only two essays as applications for the two camperships offered to young town residents by Massachusetts Audubon. Both writers, Helen Maiewski and Geo Vular, won. Aldrich read both essays out loud at the meeting.

# MONTAGUE REPORTER



SUBMITTED PHOTO

# ON THE ROAD

Our features editor Nina Rossi has taken a leave to help with a project in the Pacific Northwest. Here she is on the Chuckanut Drive Scenic Byway in Washington State, overlooking the Puget Sound.

Going somewhere this season? Bring us along! Send photos to [editor@montaguereporter.org](mailto:editor@montaguereporter.org).

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OP/ED

# Nature and Culture Lost in Northfield

By LISA McLOUGHLIN

**NORTHFIELD** – Development comes in all forms and sizes. In this case, it means demolishing an historically significant bridge, and turning a forest into a park.

The Schell Memorial Bridge, a very rare type of steel cantilever truss bridge built in 1903, was donated to the town of Northfield by Francis R. Schell in order to obtain easy access from his chalet in downtown Northfield to the East Northfield Railroad Station – which was in west Northfield, go figure. Northfield is the only town in Massachusetts on both sides of the Connecticut River, and until it was closed in 1985, Schell Bridge linked the east and west portions. The bridge had not been adequately maintained, and was closed because it had deteriorated too far for safe use.

In 2004 a private group, the Friends of Schell Bridge, was formed as a non-profit organization. The original plan of the state Department of Transportation (MassDOT) was to simply demolish the bridge. So at first the group advocated for saving the bridge, and many “Save the Schell” lawn signs were displayed, confusing anyone from outside town who had no idea what they meant.

In 2013, at least in part due to the Friends’ efforts, MassDOT proposed replacing the bridge instead of just taking it down. After some (unfunded) study, including by Smith College engineering students, the “Friends” agreed with the state that it would be easier and much less expensive to replace the bridge than save it. Friends of Schell worked with the town to replace the historic bridge with one which would allow bike and pedes-

trian traffic, along with emergency vehicle access, tying it into the state’s greenway system, and hopefully contributing toward Northfield’s tourist trade.

Part of catering to tourists was to make a park at the entrance of the east side of the bridge. What is now a forest will be altered, and apparently not all the tourists will be on bikes, since a parking lot will also be created. Work was to have begun spring 2021.

The Northfield historical commission has started meeting with MassDOT and the federal Department of Transportation, along with the Elnu Abenaki, whose continuing presence in Northfield for about 12,000 years won them consultation status under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The Elnu also have a memorandum of understanding with the town of Northfield to work with the historical commission on anything involving their traditional cultural properties.

It is worth noting that as usual, our Indigenous partners’ consultations with the state were somehow mysteriously put off to the last minute, despite the Elnu’s meticulous adherence to the chain of communications. Those of us familiar with these consultations will not be surprised, but it’s still ugly. It’s just another way culture is – not so mysteriously – lost.

The street that currently dead-ends at the bridge, river, and its surrounding forest has only three houses on one side, and a large meadow on the other. It has been a great habitat for birds and animals, with many wild creatures including bobcats and all kinds of birds crossing there on their way to and from the non-human-inhabited areas.

While the few current human



The Schell Bridge, slated for removal, and its newest mural.

inhabitants of Northfield at town meeting voted unanimously to approve funding to move ahead with the destruction of the historic bridge and its surrounding forest, one artist created a piece designed to bring attention to the voices of the natural world.

This artist, who wishes to remain anonymous, created a site-specific artwork that is a cross between a mural and a banner, 14.5 feet long by four feet high. Made of acrylic paint on canvas, it depicts some of the animals whose homes would be destroyed by this project. The artist and friends hung the mural on the doomed bridge itself, which is “discontinued and barricaded with a steel slab – a magnet for graffiti.”

“I felt that the voices of the wild creatures have not been heard, so I decided to make a visual statement for them – thus the painting,” they said. “Everyone deserves to stay in their home and to live in peace.”

And this is what we end up with. Instead of an historic bridge arching the river, cutting the sky into

triangles with its trusswork, we get a yellowed plan in someone’s drawer collecting dust and some old photographs in black and white depicting Northfield’s once-prosperous past.

And instead of a riparian forest of mature trees with shady paths, we get a paved “greenway” where fit people can whiz by on their bikes, and some picnic tables on tick-infested (or, alternatively, chemically-treated) lawn.

There will also be a plaque where we can read about what used to be there.

Development that neither honors the past nor protects the nature we all depend upon is not progress; it’s destruction. The most important thing we can do for the planet is leave what little forest we have left as forest. And it’s not a bad plan to save unique examples of heritage we have, either – to care for and protect distinctive engineering from the past. Don’t let bridges and forests be victim to the “throw away” culture.

GILL from page A1

Highway superintendent John Miner maintained his position that the truck is not worth an engine rebuild. Its body would also need replacement, he said, and its hauling capacity is limited. The new Class 8 dump truck under consideration, Miner said, would have better plowing capability, and double the sand-hauling capacity as the current Class 7 truck.

Chang recommended the town move away from fossil fuels altogether and only purchase electric vehicles. Selectboard member Charles Garbiel said that vehicles in that weight class are not yet commercially available.

Selectboard chair Greg Snedeker said that the truck had known “blow-by” issues since its purchase in 2015. However, owners are recently learning that engines can be damaged if the diesel particulate filter (DPF) is not cleaned early on, even before scheduled maintenance or any sign of needing repairs.

According to the website *Truck Trend*, “blow-by” occurs “when compressed air and fuel in the cylinder bore is greater than pressure in the oil pan, and gas leaks past piston rings and down into the crankcase.” The leaks can cause noxious fumes to be released into the cabin through the fresh air intake.

Ward said he believed poor communication between the selectboard “and the people who were working on this truck” had caused many of its problems, and expressed his feeling that Miner had been prejudiced about the truck. “My opinion is that you have been against this truck since before the day this truck was purchased,” Ward told him.

“John, we were getting sick in the truck,” Miner responded. “People were getting out, throwing up after driving this truck, since the day we bought it.”

“And we are telling you now how to fix that,” replied Ward. He argued that rebuilding the engine, and cleaning out the exhaust gas recirculation system, oxidation catalyst, and DPF while the engine is out of the truck, could make it usable and safe for several more years.

Ward told Miner that he appreciated all his other work for the department, but would continue to disagree with him by advocating for the truck’s repair.

Snedeker said that “one of the things that keeps [him] up at night” is asking taxpayers to take on new debt when he does not know how they have been economically impacted by the COVID-19 shutdown.

The selectboard agreed to attempt to find a shop that has not yet worked on the truck to offer an independent opinion, but were doubtful it could happen prior to Saturday’s town meeting. Garbiel said that after weighing the vehicle’s history, the economy, and environmental concerns, he would still recommend a new truck. The board unanimously approved a motion to direct that the old truck never be run overloaded.

A second motion made by Garbiel in support of Article 17, to borrow up to \$200,000 to purchase a new truck, was approved two to one, with Snedeker voting “nay.” “I think that there are enough people in the town that would consider it a complex issue,” he said, “and I want it to go down on record that it is not a straightforward case.”

Member Randy Crochier said that he wished the board did not have to make the decision. He asked town administrator Ray Purington to post a selectboard meeting just prior to Saturday’s town meeting, “so that if we get more information this week and we want to change, we could make a selectboard vote, as well as voting as individuals.”

“I do think what we recommend does carry weight,” he added.

## Elementary School

Purington told the board he recommends asking the town meeting to approve up to \$300,000 for capital repairs at the elementary school.

Joanne Blier, business director at the Gill-Montague district, has suggested that Gill add a 10% contingency to the flooring bid, due to “multiple parts of the project that will be going out to bid.”

“This is too important a project to not have adequate funds,” said Purington, who said he had doubled the contingency to 20% to cover any unforeseen overages, and added another \$5,000 for financial advisor services, and money for moving costs and storage. “I think it is a reasonable thing to budget for, and hope that it is not necessary,” he said.

The work is expected to start this summer, and Snedeker commented that having it completed in time for the school’s fall reopening “will be tight.”

By a two to one vote, the board approved \$800 in CARES Act funding towards window hardware repairs and replacement of seven windows at the school.

Asked why he voted “nay,” Crochier said his vote was a symbolic protest of the regional school district’s tendency to underestimate costs. “Historically, in my opinion, they have come in low on their estimates,” he said.

## Other Business

Miner reported on several highway department projects, which were unanimously approved prior to the discussion of the dump truck.

The entirety of Boyle Road will be chip sealed at a cost of \$68,743; a section of Mountain Road

see GILL next page

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**LEVERETT** from page A1

Minckler reported that most of the mandated policies were already in place in Leverett, with some current policies going beyond what was being asked for; others he said he thought were sound, but did not come up in Leverett often.

Board member Tom Hankinson said he felt the policies would be easy to implement as they fell in line with Minckler's ideas of policies anyway, but asked if any of the changes seemed onerous. The chief responded, "No."

Melissa Colbert asked how often Leverett police encounter use-of-force situations. "Five to ten times per year," Minckler replied. "Closer to five."

After Minckler summarized a policy requiring POST be notified when an officer points a taser at someone, social justice committee member Josh Nugent asked if it could be amended to mandate reporting whenever a firearm is pointed at someone. The chief replied that this wasn't a state requirement, but was already town policy.

**Sawmill Dam**

The current owners of the North Leverett Sawmill have offered to donate the property to the town. After some discussion, the board suggested appointing an *ad hoc* committee to study the matter.

Chair Julie Shively said she thought town counsel would not recommend taking on the liability of the dam on the property, nor the responsibility of maintenance, but

that the town helping to facilitate private ownership was a good idea.

Planning board member Richard Nathorst pointed out that the dam is on the town's seal, and a major cultural and historical asset.

Nathorst also said he has been working on a proposal for the creation of a micro-grid to provide solar-generated electricity to town buildings, which could be expanded to include hydro-generated power from the dam. He mentioned the possibility of limited town ownership of the grid through a second municipal lighting plant entity, separate from the one responsible for the town broadband network.

A resident commented remotely that for such an initiative to be successful, "broad representation" in its planning would be required.

The board approved the formation of an *ad hoc* committee, with Shively commenting that they were looking for people with expertise, willing to "walk the walk, and do the work."

**Remote Chance**

Following suit with Massachusetts lifting its state of emergency as of June 15, Shively officially lifted Leverett's as well. "I say it no longer exists," she said.

Discussion turned to the subject of using remaining COVID-related funding to improve remote meeting accessibility, with all in agreement that something should be done, but that there were many factors to consider.

Problems with a "hybrid" meet-

ing model – in which some participants are physically present together, while others participate remotely through video conferencing – were both spoken of and evident at the meeting itself. Multiple attendees noted difficulty in hearing all parts of discussions, and the occasional lack of recognition of raised hands.

Shively and town administrator Marjorie McGinnis expressed their desire to focus on their work at meetings, and not be distracted by the need to monitor communication systems.

Resident Becky Tews pointed out that incorporating remote participation was "the direction meetings are going," and said she thought it made sense to do something while the town has the money for it.

Colbert noted that people have struggled with the system in use during the pandemic. "We have time," she said. "We want to get this right. It's inevitable."

Nathorst offered to bring board members and volunteers to look at the system in use at the life sciences laboratories at UMass, to see how such a system can operate smoothly. He said the system didn't require a lot of tech support, and that you push a button and "it just works."

**Dog Hearing**

The verdict reached in a dog hearing regarding a "meandering" pooch was for the owners to make a commitment to "reliably" follow the town's leash laws, and a recommendation that the neighbors involved in the dispute repair their

## Town of Leverett CONSERVATION AGENT

The Leverett Conservation Commission is hiring a part-time Agent beginning as soon as possible. Duties to include, but are not limited to, reviewing, processing and making recommendations on wetlands applications, responding to public inquiries, recording minutes, preparing for hearing and meetings, working on special projects, maintaining budgets, and organizing the Commission's files. Must be able to work days, evenings and weekends for an average of 5 to 8 hours per week. Pay is \$15 to \$18.00 per hour. A job description and application are available in the Town Hall or at [www.leverett.ma.us](http://www.leverett.ma.us). Questions should be directed to Isaiah Robison, Conservation Commission Chair, at [Isaiahrobison2@gmail.com](mailto:Isaiahrobison2@gmail.com). Applications accepted until position is filled.

Leverett is an AA/EOE.

relationship.

Though the dog in question was said to be friendly, dangers presented to other dogs who may be leashed, injured, or wearing muzzles – along with dangers to motorists, and the dog itself, when it is in the road – were cited as important.

Tension between the neighbors stemming from past encounters regarding the issue led to the board's recommendation that they seek to repair their relationship.

**Water Line Contract**

The signing of a contract with Baltazar Construction to begin work on the Teawaddle Hill Road project to build a drinking water line from Amherst was met with applause.

"It's taken years, and untold hours on the part of a lot of people," said Shively. "I personally am thrilled that you're getting the water that you want."

The selectboard met earlier Tuesday with residents concerned about the waivers they were being asked

to sign. Two, who have not signed the waivers, were given a deadline of "within one month of their lateral extension" to change their minds. The town's contract will need to be redrawn if that deadline is not met.

**Other Business**

The board approved a "pour license" for the Village Co-op, giving them temporary permission to sell alcohol while they file paperwork for renewal of their general license. The temporary measure was made necessary by the recent retirement of their general manager, and needing a current general manager for a normal license.

McGinnis noted that on a recent trip to Boston she learned that the reason citizens raise their right hand when swearing an oath was that in olden days if you were convicted of a crime, your palm would be branded. Hankinson noted that it was interesting McGinnis raised her left hand while telling the story.

**HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

# Popular Book, Retro Linens, Treasure Trove

By JERRI HIGGINS

**GILL** – The Gill historical commission has lots of irons in the fire, from repairs and improvements at the town's historic sites to the tremendous work of sorting through and making decisions on informational and physical acquisitions for their museum and archives. A new venture involves the art of former Country Prints owner Robert Darr Wert; in May, the commission met remotely with a Rhode Island-based researcher interested in his work.

The commission held its June 15 meeting at the Gill town hall, giving those attending more comfortable distance than their regular Riverside Municipal Building space would have provided in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The May release of their latest book, *Jennie Williams Bardwell: Life in Gill 1860-1950*, was a great success, selling all 100 copies of its first print run. Written by commission members Pam Shoemaker and Lynn Stowe Tomb, the book not only features Williams Bardwell's daily life, told through two years of her diaries, but gives readers a glimpse of Gill's center, farms, and family trees during the 1800s. Now in its second printing, the book also includes details about local industry and train travel, and highlights preserved areas and artifacts from that era that can still be seen today.

Each book sold gives the commission "about nine dollars and some change" in profit, according to Tomb, which all goes into the commission's donation account. After paying the printer \$1,300, the commission will have \$3,127.43 in the account, which Tomb said includes a \$600 grant received from the Massachusetts Cultural Council towards the book expenditures.

"We asked for \$500, and they gave us \$600, because they were excited about the project," she said. "We have also had some nice donations along with people buying the books."

The commission plans to bring the Williams Bardwell book, as well as their 2016 title *Riverside: Life Along the Connecticut River in Gill, Massachusetts*, to the annual town meeting this

Saturday, June 26 for sale before and after the meeting. They hope to sell the books at other events planned throughout the year.

**Country Prints**

The commission has also been gathering information, artwork, and photographs for a new project about artist and entrepreneur Robert Darr Wert, who opened Country Prints in Northfield in 1948 and moved the business to Gill in 1950, where it remained until his death in 1966.

Wert's artistry captured the imagination of Pete Mars, an industrial and interior design professional based in Providence, Rhode Island, who came across Wert's art while searching online. Mars presented some of his research at the commission's remote meeting in May.

Mars showed the group "the piece that started the madness" for him, a cloth table runner printed at Wert's River Road studio. "I just stumbled across it on eBay one day, and I was really taken by how these obviously early American items can look so contemporary," he said.

Mars now plans to write a book on Wert and Country Prints, and said he is greatly looking forward to meeting with the commission in person later this summer or early fall.

At the June meeting, chair Kit Carpenter reported that a request placed in the town's spring newsletter had already received many responses from residents who owned products from Country Prints, and that the commission is collecting many stories from a number of residents who had worked there.

**Walking Tour**

Tomb told the commission members about a \$20,000 Mass Humanities "Stories Grant" that Montague planning and conservation clerk Suzanne LoManto is applying for, with Montague historical commission chair (and *Montague Reporter* columnist) David Brule, to create a Penobscot walking tour along the Turners Falls bike path, extending to Riverside in Gill.

Reached by phone, LoManto said that the bike path would be "the spine for the walking tour

project, which will use cell phone technology to connect to personal narratives hosted on a website." Tomb said she is excited about the project, and that if LoManto and Brule's grant application is chosen for funding, she plans to work on a script for the Riverside portion of the tour.

**Binfuls of Memorabilia**

Shoemaker has been cataloging the contents of "several large bins" left over from the Blake family estate, donated to the commission by estate executor Dick French, the Blakes' cousin.

Siblings Clesson Blake and Ruth Cook were both lifelong Gill residents and land conservation advocates who willed their property into trusts to protect their land. The land was granted a temporary conservation restriction in 2008, the same year Cook died, four years after her brother. Through French's efforts, it was granted permanent protection status in 2015.

Shoemaker said she has found many notable items, including WWII travel correspondence, "a treasure trove of old photographs," and some library history from when Clesson and Ruth's mother Alice was a Slate Memorial librarian.

"This is really an incredible assortment of memorabilia that will add to our collection, and to our knowledge," she said.

**Sprucing Up History**

A hundred-year-old wood stove will have a home in the commission's Riverside museum as soon as member Bob Perry finds some help removing rust from the stove. Perry said that a shoulder injury has prevented him from finishing the work himself.

He also said that he has removed saplings that had been growing in between stones on the old Upper ("Red") Suspension Bridge abutment, and will start repairs soon on the kiosk near the abutment.

The Red bridge once spanned the Connecticut River between Gill and Turners Falls, but was too damaged in the 1936 flood for anything but foot and bike traffic. It was finally dismantled for scrap metal in 1942, during WWII.

**GILL** from previous page

by the fire station will get "a leveling course and a topcoat of asphalt" for \$67,747; and Hoe Shop Road, a leveling course with "a small overlay of blacktop," for \$49,396. Two small sections of Main Road will get shim coated, costing \$7,260.

A winning bid of \$5,666.75 to Tri-County Contractors was approved for purchasing a debris blower.

Fire chief Gene Beaubien thanked Miner and his crew for "spending hours of labor" fixing his department's brush truck. "It's back operational," he said. "John and his crew saved us a lot of money."

The board also approved a number of annual purchase orders for the fire department.

A request to allow town employees to carry over more than two weeks of vacation to the next fiscal year was approved. COVID-19 interrupted regular vacation time for first responders particularly, but the motion applied to all employees.

Annual appointments for FY'22 were approved.

James Elwell was granted a one-day beer and wine license, which board members decided to limit to 4 to 11 p.m., for a wedding reception at his residence at the former Oak Ridge Golf Course.

Sandy Brown attended the meeting, "to voice [her] opposition to state subsidy of the biomass plant," and asked that the board oppose using state subsidies meant for "green energy" toward biomass fuel. The board unanimously voted to send a letter to the state climate committee, requesting that no green energy subsidies be given for biomass energy.



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## 2020 Water Quality Report

### Turners Falls Water Department

226 Millers Falls Road  
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We are once again proud to present our annual water quality report, covering all testing performed between January 1 and December 31, 2020. Over the years, we have dedicated ourselves to producing drinking water that meets all state and federal standards. We continually strive to adopt new methods for delivering the best quality drinking water to you. As new challenges to drinking water safety emerge, we remain vigilant in meeting the goals of source water protection, water conservation, and community education while continuing to serve the needs of all our water users.

Please share with us your thoughts or concerns about the information in this report. After all, well-informed customers are our best allies. For more information about this report, or for any questions relating to your drinking water, please call Michael Brown, Water Department Superintendent, or Suzanne Leh, Clerk/Collector, at (413) 863-4542.

#### Community Participation

You are invited to participate in our public forum and voice your concerns about your drinking water. We meet the first Wednesday of each month, beginning at 5 p.m., at the Water Department Office, 226 Millers Falls Road, Turners Falls. Our Annual Meeting of the Turners Falls Fire District is held the third Tuesday in April.

Our Department Board of Water Commissioners: Bruce Merriam, Kenneth Morin, Edward Pelis. Pump Station Operators: Jeffrey Hildreth, Stephen Fitzpatrick, Jason Watroba.

#### Where Does My Water Come From?

The Turners Falls Water Department's main source of water consists of two artesian wells located off Center Street in Montague Center. These gravel-packed Wells #1192000 1G and #1192000 2G pump 1.2 to 2 million gallons of water per day to the filter plant. At the plant, the water is sand filtered for the removal of iron and manganese; the treated, filtered water is then discharged into the gravity-fed distribution system.

The Hannegan Brook Well located near Lake Pleasant can yield 1.44 MGD to meet future water demands. The water quality is good and only requires the addition of water treatment chemicals for pH adjustment. The storage facilities in Turners Falls have a total storage capacity

of 6.3 million gallons. Lake Pleasant and Green Pond are emergency backup surface water supplies.

Please call Mike or Suzanne to answer any questions at (413) 863-4542, email [clerk@turnersfallswater.com](mailto:clerk@turnersfallswater.com), or [www.turnersfallswater.com](http://www.turnersfallswater.com).

#### Important Health Information

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immunocompromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly, and infants may be particularly at risk from infections.

These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. The U.S. EPA/CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by *Cryptosporidium* and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791 or <http://www.epa.gov/drink/hotline>.

#### Substances That Could Be in Water

To ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) prescribe regulations limiting the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water, which must provide the same protection for public health. Drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of these contaminants does not necessarily indicate that the water poses a health risk.

The sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally occurring minerals and, in some cases, radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity.

Substances that may be present in source water include: Microbial Contaminants, such as viruses and bac-

teria, which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, or wildlife; Inorganic Contaminants, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally occurring or may result from urban storm water runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, or farming; Pesticides and Herbicides, which may come from a variety of sources, such as agriculture, urban storm water runoff, and residential uses; Organic Chemical Contaminants, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production and which may also come from gas stations, urban storm water runoff, and septic systems; and Radioactive Contaminants, which can be naturally occurring or may be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the U.S. EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791.

#### Lead in Drinking Water

*How does lead get in my drinking water?*

In Massachusetts, most drinking water sources like reservoirs and groundwater are lead free. When lead is present in water, it is typically due to the water flowing through lead pipes or plumbing in homes with lead parts or solder. Service lines, which are the pipes that connect your home to the water main, could have lead in them. Inside your home, you may have lead pipes, copper pipes connected with lead solder, or brass faucets or fittings containing lead. Lead levels are highest when the water has been sitting in lead pipes for several hours. Hot water causes lead to enter water faster.

*How does lead get into my body?*

In many cases, most exposure to lead is from paint dust, paint chips and soil contaminated with lead. Lead can also get into your body by drinking or cooking with water containing lead. Young children absorb lead more easily than adults, and lead can be passed from a mother to her unborn child. For these reasons, lead in drinking water can be an important source of exposure for pregnant women, young children, and infants that are fed powdered formula.

Lead is not absorbed through the skin. Bathing or showering in water containing lead should be safe.

*What can I do right now to protect my family?*

Run your water before using and use COLD water. Always use cold water for drinking and cooking. Do not use hot water for cooking or baby formula. Hot water usually has higher lead levels than cold water. Running the water before using will usually reduce any lead levels by flushing out the water that has been sitting in lead pipes for several hours.

Boiling water does not eliminate lead. If there is lead in your water, boiling it will increase lead levels.

#### Statement from the Environmental Protection Agency:

If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. The Turners Falls Water Department is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components. When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before using water for drinking or cooking. If you are concerned about lead in your water, you may wish to have your water tested. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline or at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead>.

#### Water Conservation

You can play a role in conserving water and save yourself money in the process by becoming conscious of the amount of water your household is using and by looking for ways to use less whenever you can. It is not hard to conserve water.

Here are a few tips: Automatic dishwashers use 15 gallons for every cycle, regardless of how many dishes are loaded. So get a run for your money and load it to capacity.

Turn off the tap when brushing your teeth.

Check every faucet in your home for leaks. Just a slow drip can waste 15 to 20 gallons a day. Fix it and you can save almost 6,000 gallons per year.

Check your toilets for leaks by putting a few drops of food coloring in the tank. Watch for a few minutes to see if the color shows up in the bowl. It is not uncommon to lose up to 100 gallons a day from an invisible toilet leak. Fix it and you save more than 30,000 gallons a year.

Use your water meter to detect hidden leaks. Write down the meter reading before going to bed at night or leaving for a day. Include all numbers, write down the new reading in the morning and subtract the prior reading. If there has been a change it is probably due to a leak.

#### What's a Cross-connection?

Cross-connections that contaminate drinking water distribution lines are a major concern. A cross-connection is formed at any point where a drinking water line connects to equipment (boilers), systems containing chemicals (air conditioning

systems, fire sprinkler systems, irrigation systems), or water sources of questionable quality. Cross-connection contamination can occur when the pressure in the equipment or system is greater than the pressure inside the drinking water line (backpressure). Contamination can also occur when the pressure in the drinking water line drops due to fairly routine occurrences (main breaks, heavy water demand), causing contaminants to be sucked out from the equipment and into the drinking water line (backsiphonage).

Outside water taps and garden hoses tend to be the most common sources of cross-connection contamination at home. The garden hose creates a hazard when submerged in a swimming pool or when attached to a chemical sprayer for weed killing. Garden hoses that are left lying on the ground may be contaminated by fertilizers, cess-pools, or garden chemicals.

Improperly installed valves in your toilet could also be a source of cross-connection contamination.

Community water supplies are continuously jeopardized by cross-connections unless appropriate valves, known as backflow prevention devices, are installed and maintained. For more information, review the Cross-connection Control Manual from the U.S. EPA's Web site at <http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/drinkingwater/pws/crossconnectioncontrol/index.cfm>. You can also call the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791.

#### Source Water Assessment, Protecting Turners Falls Water Supply:

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has prepared a Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP) for the water supply source serving this water system. This report is a planning tool to support local and state efforts to improve water supply protection. Although the TFWD has many safeguards in place, the overall susceptibility ranking to contamination of the groundwater supplies is high, based on the presence of numerous high-ranking threat land-uses within the Zone II water supply protection areas. The report commends our water system on its proactive approach to source protection. A complete SWAP report is available at the TFWD, the Board of Health office, and online at <http://www.mass.gov/dep/water/drinking/swapreps.htm>. For more information, call the TFWD at 863-4542.

#### Things You Can Do to Protect Our Water Supply

Take used motor oil and other such fluids to the town's hazardous waste collection sites, use fertilizers and pesticides sparingly, and do not use the river beds to dispose of any waste.

## Turners Falls Water Quality Data

During the past year, we have taken hundreds of water samples in order to determine the presence of any radioactive, biological, inorganic, volatile organic, or synthetic organic contaminants. The table below shows only those contaminants that were detected in the water. The state allows us to monitor for certain substances less than once per year because the concentrations of these substances do not change frequently. In these cases, the most recent sample data are included, along with the year in which the sample was taken.

Tap water samples were collected for lead and copper analyses from sample sites throughout the community. Our next round of lead and copper sampling will be in 2021.

Substance (Unit of Measure)	Year Sampled	Action Level	MCLG	Amount Detected (90th %ile)	# of sites above action level	Violation	Typical Source
Copper (ppm)	8/25/2020	1.3	1.3	.033	0/20	No	Corrosion of household plumbing; Erosion of natural deposits
Lead (ppb)	8/25/2020	15	0	1.2	0/20	No	Corrosion of household plumbing; Erosion of natural deposits; Leaching from wood preservation

Secondary Contaminant	Year Sampled	Result or Range Detected	Average Detected	SMCL	ORSG or Health Advisory	Possible Sources
Manganese	8/11/2020	3.6 ug/L	–	50 ug/L	300*	Natural sources as well as discharges from industrial uses.
Sodium	8/13/2020	14 mg/L	–	20 mg/L	–	Discharge from the use and improper storage of sodium-containing de-icing compounds or in water softening agents

\* US EPA and Mass DEP have established public health advisory levels for manganese to protect against concerns of potential neurological effect and a one-day and 10-day HA of 1000 ppb for acute exposure.

### Definitions:

**90th Percentile:** Out of every 10 homes sampled, 9 were at or below this level.

**AL (Action Level):** The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.

**MCL (Maximum Contaminant Level):** The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible using the best available

treatment technology.

**MCLG (Maximum Contaminant Level Goal):** The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.

**Mg/L:** Milligrams per liter.

**MRDL (Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level):** The highest level of a disinfectant allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial contaminants.

**MRDLG (Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal):** The level of a drinking water disinfectant below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MRDLGs do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contaminants.

**NA:** Not applicable.

**ND (Not detected):** Indicates that the substance was not found by laboratory analysis.

**ppb (parts per billion):** One part substance per billion parts water (or micrograms per liter).

**ppm (parts per million):** One part substance

per million parts water (or milligrams per liter).

**SMCL (Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level):** They are established as guidelines to assist public water systems in managing their drinking water for aesthetic considerations, such as taste, color, and odor. These contaminants are not considered to present a risk to human health at the SMCL.

**TT (Treatment Technique):** A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.

**Ug/L:** Micrograms per liter.

**SPORTS** from page A1

Turners might be able to pull off the upset after all. Izzy Farrick was struggling against Pioneer's ace, but Steph Peterson was leading 3-0 on the second court, Maria Labelle playing even in third singles, and Emily Denison and Mercedes Bailey winning convincingly in first doubles.

Peterson's mom later confirmed that Blue had indeed won the battle, and would advance to play Pioneer Christian in, of all places, Springfield.

So the Ladies in Blue headed down 91 on Monday to challenge the second-seeded PVCA Eagles. "We're not doing good," Ms. Peterson told me between innings of Monday's softball game. "Izzy's still playing, but we've lost the rest of the matches."

After the final swing, she informed me that Turners did fall 5-0. Farrick, Steph, Abby Holloway, and Denison & Bailey all lost their contests, second doubles was forfeited, and Turners was eliminated from the playoffs.

But again, that's okay – they were never in it to win the title. The team just wanted to extend the shortened season a little longer before moving on.

**Triple Letterman**

On Saturday Juneteenth, Ryan Duclos traveled to Lunenburg to compete in the Central/Western D-II track meet. He heaved the shot put 39'9" and placed eighth.

Track isn't the only sport Duclos excels in. He lettered in three sports this year, for three different high schools: basketball for Turners Falls, football in Greenfield, and track at Franklin Tech.

Duclos doesn't plan on retiring any time soon. Next year he'll be playing football for the Milford Academy (NY) Burgundy Falcons.

**Softball**

*FCTS 13 – Granby 1*

*FCTS 6 – Mt. Everett 1*

*Mt. Greylock 4 – FCTS 1*

On June 18, the Franklin Tech Eagles mercied the Rams of Granby in Round One of the playoffs. The winless Rams came into the game hoping to spoil Tech's party, but Franklin outclassed them *en route* to a 13-1 drubbing.

The Granby pitcher struggled in the circle, and had difficulty finding the strike zone. But the Eagles wouldn't take the gift and swung at balls well outside or low. Once Tech got runners on base, Granby had no answer. The Franks just kept running and running until they scored or were tagged out.

Lauren Ross had no such trouble. She and the Frank D shut down the Bovines and Granby's lone run came off an error in the last inning.

After Franklin scored three runs in the first, four in the second and two in the third, Coach Gamache sent in his subs. Tech added four more runs to make it a 12-run gap and the game was mercifully called.

Gifford Field does not have a fence, so the Tech power hitters had to settle for doubles or triples. Lilly Ross hit a three-bagger, and Mackenzie Martel and Emily Eastman each clocked doubles. Tech also stole eight bases. Lauren Ross allowed seven hits, struck out seven, and gave up one walk.

In Round Two, played on the first day of Summer, the Mount Everett Eagles came to town. Everett was a tough team to gauge, having only played Berkshire teams this year.

The visitors took a brief lead in the second off a passed ball, but Franklin answered with six runs to take the ballgame 6-1. The runs were scored by six different players: Kendra Campbell, Lillian Day, Martel, Lilly Ross, Faith Smith, and Keira Stephens. Lauren Ross pitched the complete game, giving up four hits, allowing one walk, and K'ing eleven.

The Tech Eagles' playoff hopes were dashed on Wednesday by the Mountaineers of Mount Greylock.

The tone of the game was set in the first inning, when the Mountain Women scored the first earned run Ross had allowed in the playoffs. Her first four throws were all balls, sending the batter to first. Franklin got the next out, but the runner advanced a base on the throw, stole third on a wild pitch, and scored on a RBI double. Ross settled down and struck out the next batter, but the damage had been done, and Tech went to the plate trailing by a run.

Tech batters hit three grounders in their first inning, but each was snagged by infielders and the side was retired in order.

Ross whiffed the next two Mountaineers, and made a throw to first base to end the side. The Franks threatened in the home second. Martel hit a one-out single, and Day advanced her on a sacrifice ground ball. But another grounder stranded Martel, and the Greys came back to the plate still holding the lead.

Greylock's first batter in the third got a base hit, the next hit a triple, and the third RBI'd her in. The Lady Birds were down by three, going into the bottom of the third.

In the Tech third, a base hit by Kaitlin Trudeau was negated by a pickoff, and Tech went back into the field scoreless. Neither team managed to score again until the sixth, when Greylock widened the margin to 4-0.

In the bottom of the sixth, Lauren Ross came up to bat. So far, she had grounded out and was hit by a pitch. Now in her last at-bats of the 2021 season, she hammered the ball into deep left field.

Again, the field has no fence, so Tech's power hitters settle for doubles or triples – usually. This ball sailed into the trees lining the parking lot. By the time the fielder got to it, Ross was heading to third. She stopped at the bag, but Coach Joe Gamache told her to keep running. As the ball was cut off by the third basewoman, the Blue Faithful called "Down!" Ross took a face dive just as the ball reached the mitt, slipped under the tag, and Tech had broken the goose egg.

Tech kept Greylock from scoring in the top of the seventh. In their final chance, Day reached base, and Jillian Crowningshield grounded out, sending her to second. But that's all she wrote. Tech was unable to score, and Greylock held on to win 4-1, ousting the Eagles from the tournament.

Don't feel bad for the Franklin Tech softball program. They've had a remarkable year, not to mention a new League Championship banner for their gym.

Gamache said after the game that he is looking forward to next season, but he lamented the loss of Martel, the team's only senior. And although her leadership will be sorely missed, rumor has it that an eighth grader might have the privilege of filling her shin-guards next year.

Mount Greylock advances to



DAVID HOJITT PHOTO

Courtesy runner Paige Sulda rounds third and Juliana Rode reaches second as the Thunder roared to a 15-0 semifinal win over Mohawk Trail on Wednesday.

the Western Mass finals against top-seeded Turners Falls. The game will be played on Friday.

*TFHS 12 – Westfield Tech 0*

*TFHS 15 – Mohawk 0*

The top-ranked Turners Falls Thunder beat ninth-seeded Westfield Tech in a mercy-shortened game on Monday. This game was interesting, in that Turners didn't score until the third inning. In that inning, Blue took advantage of Westie's errors to build a 3-0 lead.

Meanwhile, pitcher Jade Tyler was keeping the Westfield batters in check.

Turners scored eight more runs in the fourth. Blue stole bases throughout the inning – in fact, even some of the girls who were walked didn't stop at first base, but simply kept running while the Westfield defense hesitated. This put runners in scoring position, and kept the rally going.

Madison Liimatainen drove in the final run in the fifth to give Powertown the 12-0 mercy win.

Tyler threw a no-hit shutout in the circle, allowing no runs, no hits, and no walks while striking out 11 batters and beaming one. At the plate, Julianna Rode hit a triple and two singles, and Taryn Thayer had a double and three RBIs.

Then on Wednesday, a familiar foe came to Turners: the Warriors of Mohawk Trail. Powertown eliminated them 15-0, and advanced to the Western Mass finals.

Mohawk's very first batter ended Tyler's quest to throw a no-hitter. With the runner on first, she struck out the next batter on three pitches.

Time was called. "That was Jade's 100th strikeout," Adam Graves announced over the loudspeakers.

Coach Gary Mullins approached the circle, and saved the ball for Tyler. The next two pitches went awry, and the runner advanced on a passed ball. But she struck out the last batter she faced, ending the inning and giving Tyler her 101st K.

Turners got two players on base in the bottom of the first, but a tag at home plate kept them off the board. Tyler struck out two more in the top of the second.

In the bottom of the second, Rode led off with a single and Liimatainen walked. Cordelia Guerin replaced Liimatainen at first, but the next two batters struck out. Then Hannah Marchefka walked to load the bases. Liv Whittier knocked in Rode and Guerin, and Marchefka crossed the plate to make it 3-0.

Turners scored four more in the third. Tyler led off with a stand-up double and was replaced by courtesy runner Paige Sulda. Rode got another hit, Taryn Thayer walked, Emily Young hit a double, Marchefka outraced the throw to first...

And on it went.

Tyler whiffed two more batters in the fourth, and Turners scored a few more runs in their half to make it 13-0. There is no mercy in softball in the later rounds, so the game went on. Both teams emptied their benches, allowing all the girls to play.

In the home fifth, Liimatainen shot a solo homer to make it 14-0. Blue topped on another run in the sixth, and Liimatainen entered the circle and preserved the shutout.

Big Blue will defend their Western Mass title at home this Friday against the Mountaineers of Mount Greylock. The game starts at 6:30 p.m. See you there!



DAVID HOJITT PHOTO

Franklin Tech's Mackenzie Martel successfully steals second base as Mount Everett's Hailey Liebenow tries to tag her out during Monday's quarterfinal game.

Mount Everett centerfielder Julia Devoti is also covering the play.

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**PRECINCTS** from page A1

which is not expected to release its complete data until the end of September. This made it impossible for municipalities to develop their new precincts by the statutory June deadline, and has pushed the state-level redistricting into late October. That delay, in turn, gives legislators less than two months to finish their work, since candidates must reside in their district for at least a year.

**Battle Lines**

The proposal, which puts legislative redistricting first, was immediately attacked by the state's chief elections officer, Secretary of State William Galvin, who argued that it was mainly designed to protect incumbents. In rhetoric reminiscent of recent Democratic critiques of Republican gerrymandering, Galvin pointed to the Boston district represented by House Redistricting Committee co-chair Michael Moran, which snakes across the city's northern and western borders like an inverted "C".

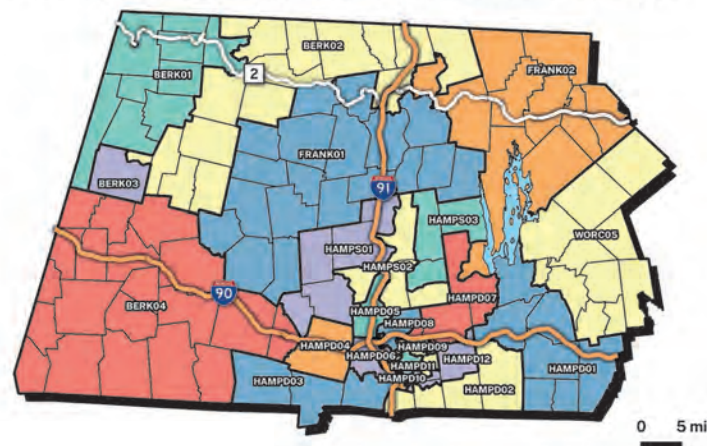
"It's been that way for 40 years," said Galvin, a former representative from Brighton who served in the legislature for a decade and a half. "It was created to get rid of me."

Moran, in turn, told the *Boston Globe* that Galvin's complaints "were not based on any fact whatsoever."

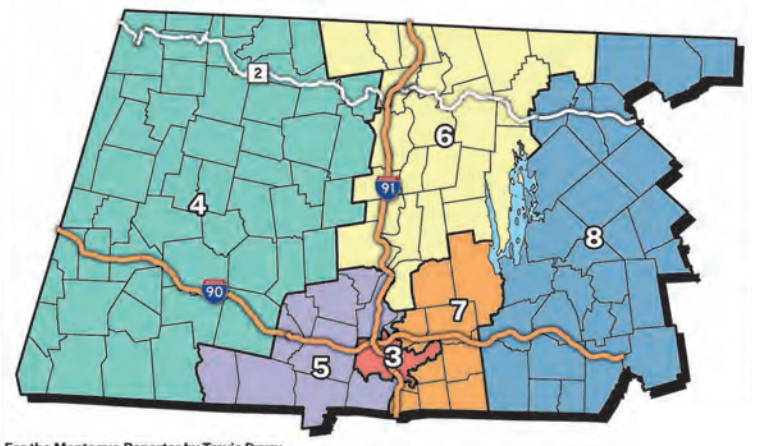
The legislation, which was passed by the house currently sits in the senate, has also been criticized by the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA), the chief advocacy group for the state's cities and towns. "Forcing communities to shape their precincts around new state-set boundaries would lead to significant problems for communities with multiple precincts, especially those with representative town meetings," MMA executive director Geoffrey Beckwith wrote in a letter to the house.

On the other hand, the proposed change is supported by a broad coalition of activist

**Western Massachusetts State House Districts**



**Western Massachusetts State Senate Districts**



For the Montague Reporter by Travis Drury

organizations who see the new process as a mechanism for increasing the political influence of traditionally under-represented groups. "This is purely a voting rights issue, and not an issue designed to focus on one particular incumbent," Lydia Lowe of Chinese Progressive Political Action told the *State House News Service*.

Lowe's organization is part of a broader group called the Drawing Democracy Coalition, which is preparing maps to recommend to the legislature. For example, one coalition member, the Coalition for Social Justice in New Bedford, will hold "twelve different educational events" during the coming months, "with the primary goal of creating a unity map ready for the legislature by the first week of November 2021."

MMA legislative director John Robertson told the *Reporter* that his organization was working with the legislature on a compromise process "that works for everyone."

According to a statement by Britney Franklin, a senior legislative analyst at the MMA, "The Secretary of State's Elections Division is already working to provide technical support to cities and towns in advance of the official census numbers, which are due by Sept. 30. The

Legislature's Committee on Redistricting can start drawing its districts using 'legacy files,' which should be available in mid-August. If the committee believes it will need to split a city or town, the Elections Division can work with that municipality to get local precincts established before that data is sent to the Local Elections District Review Commission."

**Local Impact**

How this will all play out in Franklin County is not entirely clear. Most of the county, including Greenfield and Montague, reside in US Congressional District 2, represented by Jim McGovern. A few towns in the west are in Richard Neal's District 1, which will most likely have to expand eastward to gain sufficient numbers under the 2020 Census.

At the state level, however, the use of Census tracts as opposed to precincts could conceivably make a difference. For example, the towns of Wendell and Erving are currently in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Franklin district, represented by Susanah Whipps, whereas Montague is in the 1st Franklin, represented by Natalie Blais.

The Census divides Montague into two tracts – one encompassing Turners Falls, and the other the rest of the town. Montague,

however, has six local voting precincts, with numbers 1 and 2 on the east bordering Wendell and Erving.

In theory, if Whipps's 2nd Franklin district were required to add population, voters could conceivably be added either from one of Montague's precincts – probably Precinct 2, which includes Lake Pleasant and Millers Falls – or from the Census tract which does not include Turners Falls.

Meanwhile, Erving is comprised of only one local precinct, and it sits in a combined Census tract with the towns of Wendell and Warwick, both of which are in Whipps's district.

Montague town clerk Deb Bourbeau said she doubts that the new process will have an impact on the creation of new precincts, or cause the town to be divided. "I don't think redistricting is going to have an impact on Montague," she said. ("Now watch it happen," she joked.)

Richard Newton, the town clerk of Erving, said he had a similar reaction to the state-level redistricting controversy. "We have such a small population, I do not see them splitting the town," he told the *Reporter*. "On the other hand, we've all seen the legislature do interesting things."



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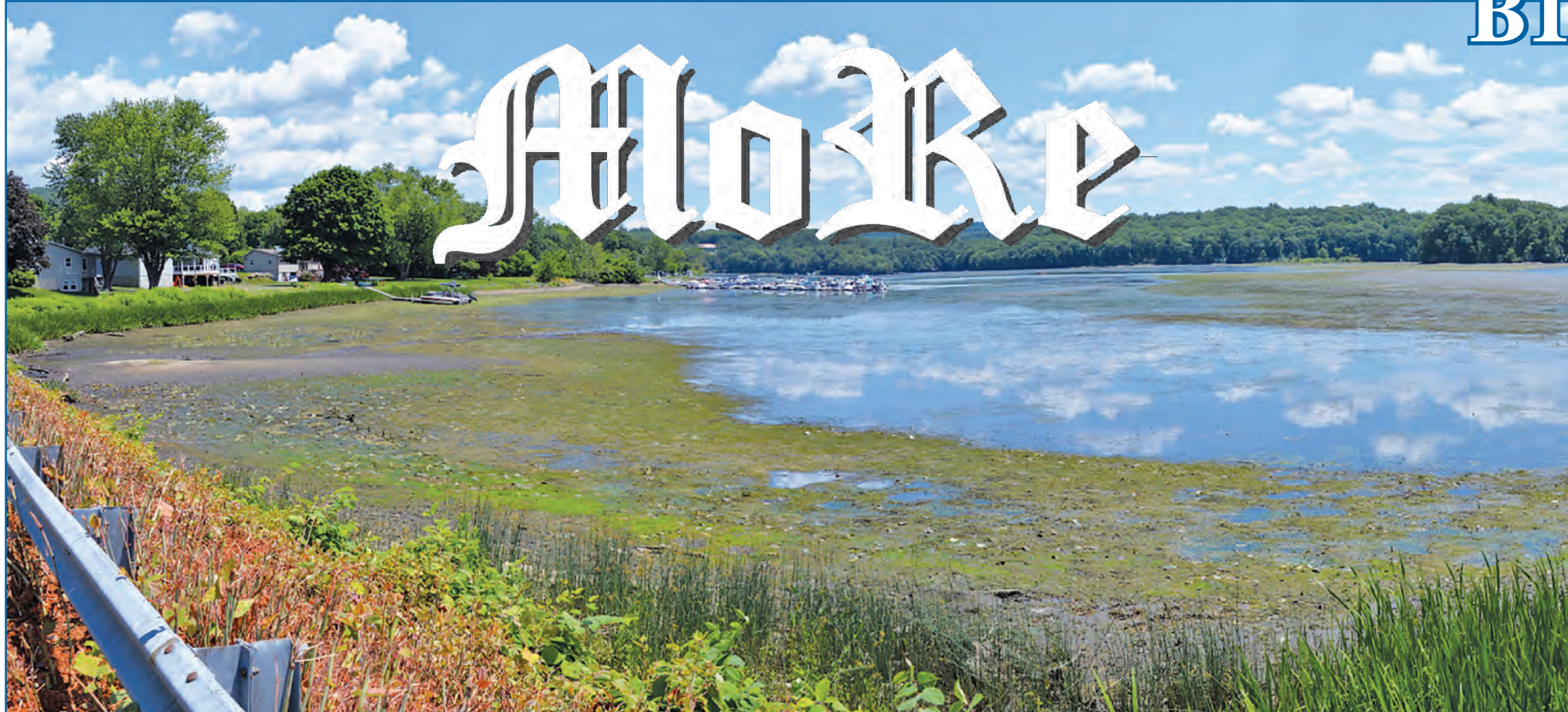
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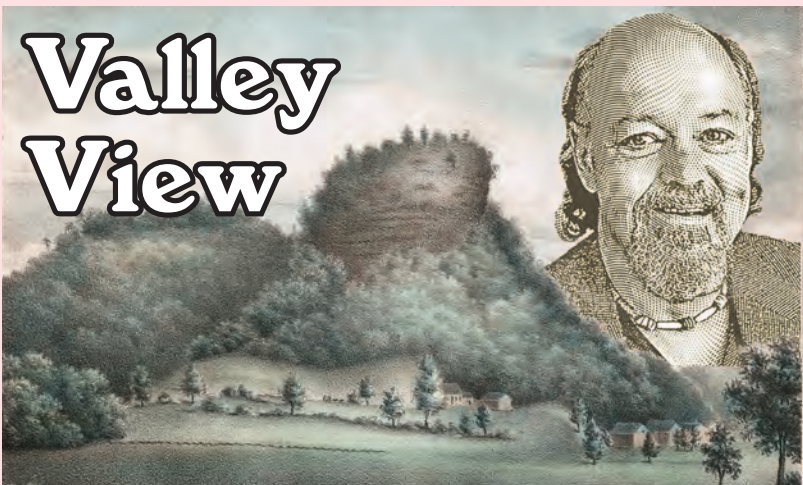


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OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER

JUNE 24, 2021



By GARY SANDERSON

**GREENFIELD** – Dennis Cooley was likely South Deerfield’s first native-born physician – one who, had he stayed put and practiced locally, may never have lived down a dark, macabre stain on his reputation. Like so many others of his time, he started over on what was then the Wild West of the Great Lakes or Northwest Territory, becoming a leading citizen of Washington Township, Macomb County, Michigan, where he died in 1860.

Cooley’s February 18, 1789 birth date presents him as the oldest of 14 children born to Eli and Chloe (Allen) Cooley, whose home stood on the east side of the so-called “county road from Deerfield to Hatfield” in what was then Bloody Brook, now North Main Street, South Deerfield. His grandparents, Azariah and Eleanor (Warriner) Cooley, were among Bloody Brook’s founding families.

Growing up in Deerfield and educated in its schools, Cooley established lasting friendships with heavy-hitting contemporaries like Dr. Stephen W. Williams – a well-known Old Deerfield physician and med-school classmate – and author/educator Edward Hitchcock – an early Deerfield Academy headmaster, Conway minister, and Amherst College president.

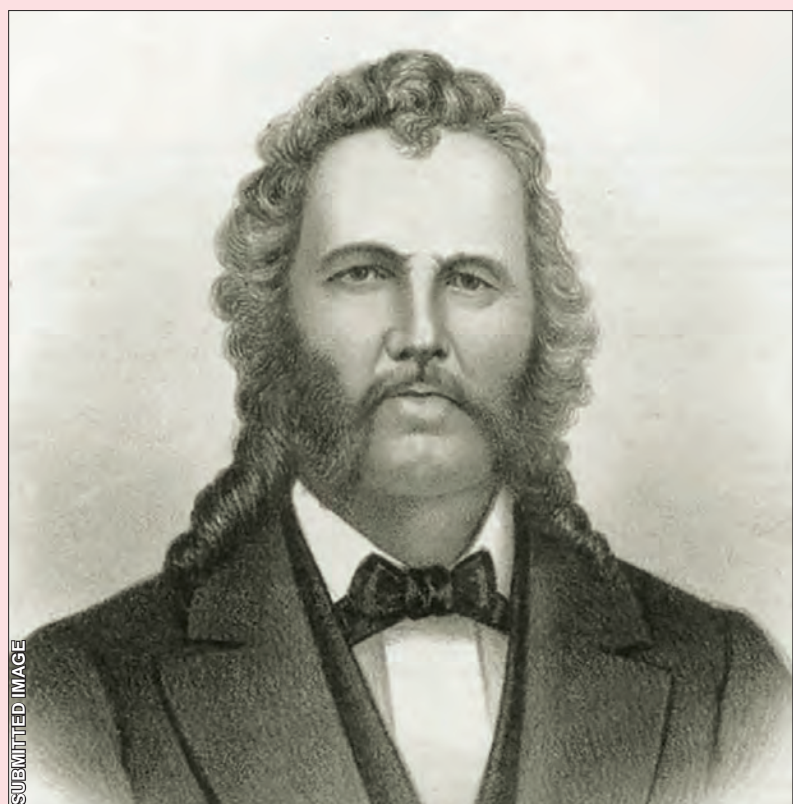
The three friends maintained lively correspondence throughout their lives, no matter where their travels took them.

According to Cooley’s online *Find A Grave* profile, he moved to Georgia and practiced medicine for five years after graduating in August 1822 from Berkshire Medical College in Pittsfield and soon being approved for medical practice by the Massachusetts Medical Society. Despite his move to the sunny South, however, he found time to return to Franklin County at least briefly in the fall of 1824.

That’s when he made a regrettable decision that would stick with him locally for the rest of his life.

In those days, just as today, medical researchers were always on the lookout for cadavers to dissect and study. For just such a specimen Cooley, sometime after November 15, 1824, fixated on the corpse of a Greenfield man who had taken his own life in bloody fashion. The problem was that he secretly exhumed the corpse from its grave in the dark of night, leaving behind an empty casket – which was soon discovered.

Six years later, on a trip home to marry childhood neighbor Elizabeth Anderson, he was arrested, jailed, tried, and convicted by the state Supreme Court. Well, sort of. Because, you see, Cooley see **VALLEY VIEW** page B5



Dr. Dennis Cooley (deceased). Image from FindAGrave.com user “DMW.”

Above: Ed Gregory shared this photo of the extremely low river level at Barton Cove on Sunday, June 13. FirstLight Power has attributed the event to “several overlapping conditions,” including “dispatch of our facility by the electric grid operator at the same time we were spilling water over the Turners Falls dam to meet federally required flows to support fish passage.”

## Striking Up the Anarchestra

By WILLIAM KAIZEN

**GREENFIELD** – Strike up the band. The Anarchestra has arrived.

In January 2000, Andrew Thurlow began constructing a set of unique musical instruments from shopworn industrial materials. For the next twenty years, he kept tinkering until his collection, which he called the Anarchestra, grew to encompass more than 200 different instruments of various types, along with a large body of music that he composed for them.

The instruments, which have a strongly sculptural presence, are designed to be played by musicians and non-musicians alike, typically in medium to large group improvisations.

This spring, Thurlow’s music-making devices arrived at 10 Forward, a performing arts space and bar that was closed because of COVID. Instead of drinking and watching other people perform, anyone could book a private appointment to play music by themselves or with friends on instruments with names like the Kzomyryk and the Nanbarrow.

Now that COVID restrictions have eased, the collection has moved for the summer to Looky Here, a maker space where anyone can drop in and play them.

Thurlow’s name for the project, which is a portmanteau of *anarchy* and *orchestration*, would seem to



The collection of handmade instruments was recently housed at 10 Forward (pictured above), and has now moved to Looky Here.

be an oxymoron, but it’s not. He conceived of the Anarchestra as an explicit critique of Western musical traditions.

The Anarchestra is focused on collective improvisation; Thurlow designed the instruments to function best when played spontaneously. Few are tuned to pitches in equal temperament, or major and minor scales. Many won’t stay in tune for long. Nevertheless, as Thurlow’s own compositions prove, music readily arises from the strikingly unusual sounds his instruments make.

Improvisation has a long history in musical performance. Long before scores were written, all music began as collective improvisation.

Many strains of Western classical music from the Renaissance on included improvised parts. During the early 20th century, jazz musicians made collective improvisation their focus, influencing classical composers like George Gershwin.

Starting in 1940 with his prepared pianos, John Cage brought both improvisation and noise into classical music performance. By midcentury and into the 1950s, many jazz musicians, including Duke Ellington and Miles Davis, furthered the pursuit of mixing improvisation and classical composition.

More radical forms of collective improvisation emerged on the see **STRIKE UP** page B4

### THE GARDENER’S COMPANION

## Unexpected Blooming

put out new growth.

We regret the passing of our Mainer in Owl’s Head, and are thus especially happy that the small beach rose he urged us to dig up is doing well, and is blooming for the first year. There is nothing like the fragrance of these beach roses. There is also one I grew years ago from hip seeds I picked on my honeymoon, thirty and more years ago.

We love having this memory garden of plants from travels and other lives. Two years ago when we were in Rhode Island, we went to the old Trask homestead and brought back a small pine tree. It is thriving here now.

In addition are the unexpected volunteer plants, which this year includes a wild red rose spreading in the upper garden of peonies. Unlike the beach roses it has no scent, but it happily fills the space now that the peonies have gone by.

This is such a lovely blooming season we don’t regret the huge amount of pollen and the consequential sneezing and coughing. I am eager for my next allergy shot in a couple of weeks, but by then the pollen count will have dropped on its own.

The upper yard next to the bike path is framed by the laurel bushes that a specialist at UMass gave to my late husband. We got them as small seeds and they grew into a hedge which gives us some privacy from the bike path which, since the pandemic, has become extremely busy with whole families on bicycles, walkers, and folks unwinding from work in the evening.

We’re the last house on the block, but since the bike path goes all the way up to the railroad yard, it is almost always busy. Happily, it is a joyful noise of kids and families

see **GARDENER’S** page B5



By LESLIE BROWN

**MONTAGUE CITY** – We have planted all of our traditional seeds and plants for the growing season ahead – tomatoes, peppers, and greens, as well as some new experiments, a bucket of herbs which include parsley, chive, rosemary, thyme, and basil.

There are also a few grapevines – the original plant from a few years ago for wine grapes, which is now trying hard to grow up the side of the sunroom – and now some plants for green grapes to be eaten out of hand. These last are mere sticks in the ground just starting to





## RIVERBOAT DISPATCH

# For an Old Paddlewheeler, A Sensible River Haunt

By GALEN HUCKINS

**MILLERS FALLS** – After the successful launch of the riverboat Channel Princess in the Connecticut this week, the crew has been meandering the local waterway to get a feel for life on the water here in the river valley.

Four years ago, when we took the Channel Princess down the Mississippi river, one of our early guides was a Minnesotan shantyboater named Gerty, who gifted us his old navigation charts for the Mississippi. He told us they had been marked with “everything you’re going to need out there.” Later we discovered the only landmarks circled in Sharpie were rope swings and pizza dumpsters, but knowing where the good rope swings are did prove to be a boon to our voyage (see [www.riversignal.com](http://www.riversignal.com)).

For the last few days we’ve been anchored here at Cabot Camp. At the mouth of the Millers River, this site was once a sawmill, and a hewn rock on the north side of the channel is still visible where a wa-

ter wheel was once mounted. Later it became a tavern and gatekeepers’ lodge for the “river rats” and stage-coach drivers.

Now it’s a quiet recreation area owned by the FirstLight power company. The Franklin County Bikeway passes overhead on an old rail bridge, and people come here to fish, or splash in the water.

The current FERC relicensing process has opened the door for the town to make requests of the power company. Montague’s list of priorities for the relicensing includes a variety of very good ideas, building car-top boat launches, waterfront paths, and bike parking.

At the bottom of the list is Cabot Camp; the proposal is to “Activate shuttered ‘camp’ buildings to support river-based recreation.” It seems like a wild card that’s unlikely to get approved this year, but it’s exciting to think what this space could one day become.

For now, it’s enough to appreciate this little outpost in the shadow of the French King Bridge before we pull anchors and head upriver.



HUCKINS PHOTO

## STRIKE UP from page B1

experimental fringes of the rock and jazz music scenes of the 1960s and 1970s. In Europe, groups like AMM, Musica Elettronica Viva (MEV), and Derek Bailey’s Company played completely free improvisations using a mix of acoustic, electronic, and homemade instruments. Similar groups arose in Japan and the US.

Other groups experimented by mixing professional musicians with amateurs. The Portsmouth Sinfonia was organized by English composer Gavin Bryars in 1970 when he was teaching at the Portsmouth School of Art. Open to anyone, it attracted people with a range of talents, from those who never played music before to professional musicians including Brian Eno. (Pros were forced to play instruments that they hadn’t before, including Eno, who played

clarinet!) Anyone could join if they gave it their best shot and showed up for rehearsals. While often mocked, they had hit records, and sold out the Royal Albert Hall.

Around the same time in Japan, Tsutomu Ohashi organized Geinoh Yamashirogumi (Yamashiro Performance Collective), which featured a similar mix of professional and non-professional musicians. Their music was a wonderfully strange, and still ahead of its time, mix of Western and Eastern classical music, prog rock, and proto-world music. The highlight of their career was recording the remarkable soundtrack to the anime movie *Akira*.

During the 1980s, Thurlow played guitar in Demo-Moe, a post-punk industrial band known for holding outdoor bacchanals in *ad hoc* sculpture gardens on the Lower

East Side of New York City. Like many similar bands, their noisy performances included percussion instruments made from scrap metal and other salvaged odds and ends.

Dissatisfied performing in a band, Thurlow wanted to de-emphasize his role as a lead guitarist by allowing others, particularly non-musicians, to become involved in music making. The Anarchestra would bring together the Bacchic spirit of Demo-Moe with group improvisation and the mixing of amateurs and more skilled musicians.

“Music is simply sound and what happens to sound,” Thurlow says in a recent interview. “My instruments are interfaces between human beings and the sound world. They don’t require any special technical knowledge to play.”

While acknowledging that fixed pitch and rhythm often play a very important role in music making, he notes that lots of music-making has happened without them, from serialism to many types of non-Western music.

Thurlow rejects the idea that collective improvisation is only for elites. “My instruments,” he says, “are self-explanatory. Anyone can step up and play them. Regular people can do it without knowing the mysterious language of musical notes, or other technical language. I want music making to be simple and user-friendly.”

As Thurlow describes, the Anarchestra does not hold “performances.” At Anarchestra events, little separates the audience from the performers. What the Anarchestra does, he says, “is not spectacle, but festival. The real meaning of folk music is folks playing music together, in a musical community.”

“Making a joyful noise together is rooted in human existence,” Thurlow continues, “although we may need to relearn this. That’s what Anarchestra is all about – not trying to make a hit single but trying to enjoy the presence of one another, and artistically collaborate. Back when a bunch of people sat around

a campfire making music together, I don’t think they thought ‘I am an artist, hear me roar.’ I think they thought, ‘Boy, this is fun!’”

Thurlow has recently recovered from a stroke. Although he’s nearly made a full recovery, he decided that it was time to find a permanent home for both the instruments and ideals of the Anarchestra, so he established the Anarchestra Foundation.

For more on the Anarchestra, see [www.anarchestra.org](http://www.anarchestra.org).

You can also listen to 35 full albums recorded on the instruments, streaming for free, at [anarchestra.bandcamp.com](http://anarchestra.bandcamp.com).

Thurlow has lived in New England off and on over the years, including several stints in Massachusetts. Former Anarchestra participant Owen W-B stepped up to become the foundation’s director. W-B recently relocated to Franklin County, and was awarded a Massachusetts Cultural Council grant to bring the collection to Greenfield.

W-B said the Anarchestra’s residencies at 10 Forward and Looky Here are a first step in raising awareness about the project and beginning to find it a permanent home.

At 10 Forward, people came in groups and occasionally alone. Over the course of several hours, they would figure out how to play the instruments. A professional sound engineer was there to record any songs or sounds they wanted to save.

A mix of untrained and trained musicians came, including local bands like Home Body and Space Camp. There were 40 sessions in all, all of which were recorded, including a big jam on the last day that culminated in a fully participatory, improvised group composition.

I got to see and play Thurlow’s instruments last weekend at Looky Here. “It was a natural fit for us,” says Looky Here director Hannah Brookman. The space had already been hosting workshops that taught

people about microtonal music and other esoteric musical subjects like making DIY paper synthesizers.

Thurlow’s instruments immediately reminded me of the homemade instruments of Harry Partch and Gunnar Schonbeck, although they were made almost entirely from metal. They were a little harder to operate than Thurlow suggests. I’m an obsessive music fan but have never been much of a musician. While I could easily bang on many of Thurlow’s instruments without fear of damaging them, at first, the little I produced was very satisfying. I even poked my finger on a metal string protruding from one of them, drawing blood. You’ve got to suffer for your art, I suppose.

Several other people joined me in the space. As we began to play together, things changed for the better. One person began tapping out a solid rhythm on a set of “membranophones,” one of the typologies Thurlow assigns to his instruments. Another began to find notes on a tall “chordophone,” which looks like a diddly bow in an upright metal frame.

I plucked away at a glorified thumb piano before switching to a Z’Orb – a metal version of Benjamin Franklin’s Armonica – whose spinning discs could either be struck like bells or vibrated along their edges to produce haunting, long duration tones.

And what do you know? What had previously felt like playing *with* the instruments turned into playing *them* as a groove took hold. We were actually making music!

You can too. Stop by Looky Here on Saturdays between now and August 14, from 12 to 3 p.m. They have a nice selection of Anarchestra instruments to play, mic’d through a mixing board and a small PA, as well a selection of books on music from Thurlow’s library and CDs of his compositions. W-B says that it would even be possible to record there, if you let them know in advance.



PHOTO COURTESY OF OWEN W-B

Open hours at Looky Here are noon to 3 p.m. on Saturdays this summer.

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**VALLEY VIEW** from page B1  
 escaped serious consequences when the court ruled that by the time of his 1830 arrest and prosecution, the two-year statute of limitations had passed.

Who knows what Cooley's philosophical, grave-robbing justification was, or what exactly he intended to do with a pre-embalming-fluid cadaver more than 1,000 difficult miles away from his Georgia home and practice? Did he intend to carve up his pungent prize in an old friend's barn? On a kitchen table? Were there accomplices with shared human-anatomy fascinations? Did he believe the suicide victim was a mortal sinner destined for the fires of hell, and thus free for the taking?

At this point, nearly 200 years later, we'll never know the answers.

Medical research on cadavers was common at the time at medical schools and hospitals. Friend Peter Thomas, former director of the University of Vermont archaeology department, recalls the time he was called to investigate many bones unearthed by construction crews making improvements to the basement of the college's old Pomeroy Hall medical school. Related burial sites were also discovered under an athletic field and on private property owned by a college trustee in nearby Williston, Vermont.

Those buried remains were undoubtedly mostly paupers, many of them immigrants who had lived and died on the streets of New York City, or maybe even Burlington, without the means for a proper

burial. With the state or city stuck with burial costs, such people apparently became much-needed medical-research specimens.

Such cadavers were also common in the elite, Ivy League medical schools of the time, including Harvard, Dartmouth, Yale, Princeton, Columbia, and Penn. In the name of scientific research, this gruesome practice was deemed philosophically justifiable from a utilitarian perspective aimed at understanding human anatomy and saving lives.

As for the Greenfield man who unwittingly "donated" his body to medicine, Mr. Pierce Chase (1775-1824), he was an interesting character in his own right. Relying on Greenfield newspaper reports, the spelling of his first name is inconsistent, varying between Pierce and Peirce. From this point forward, I'll use the traditional spelling P-i-e-r-c-e, which appears in his online *Find A Grave* profile and on wife Abigail (Mott) Chase's (1784-1832) High Street Cemetery gravestone in Greenfield.

Though the suicide victim's own gravesite is unknown, it is assumed that he too was buried at High Street, within walking distance of his Factory Hollow home near the mouth of Fall River.

Although Chase, a miller and property owner with a home and family, was far from a have-not, he seems to have fallen on hard times by his November 13, 1824 suicide at age 47. He ended his life by slashing his neck with a razor, leaving a 40-year-old wife and three young

sons ages 16, 9, and 7.

When Abigail died eight years later, in 1832, Chester Bascom was appointed guardian of minor brothers James, 17, and Lyman, 15. Bascom (1786-1841) came from a long line of Factory Hollow clothiers and fulling millers, and had sold Chase property in Greenfield's industrial northeast corner in 1811.

Soon after Chase's burial, there was evidence his grave had been tampered with and further investigation revealed an empty casket. The community was stunned. The corpse had been stolen. A notice in the *Greenfield Gazette* and *Franklin Herald* speculated that the dirty deed had been done "between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> day of the month." Soon to follow was a notice in the same paper that Greenfield selectmen and 51 subscribers had put up a \$200 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the perpetrator(s). That was a lot of money back then, representing about a year's pay for an unskilled laborer or farm hand.

How and when Dr. Dennis Cooley was outed as the grave robber is unclear from newspaper and Thompson's *History of Greenfield* accounts. Wouldn't it be interesting to read the transcript, if extant, of the two-day state Supreme Court trial presided over by Greenfield Justice Elijah Alvord, Esq.? Perhaps a project for another day.

In the meantime, there you have the forgotten tale of Bloody Brook's Dr. Dennis Cooley. What an unwelcome surprise awaited the doctor upon returning home from

the Michigan wilds for the joyous occasion of marrying an old hometown sweetheart. Likely, by the time legal wrangling was over some seven or eight months later, and he was free to return with new wife to his Washington Township home, his neighbors never heard a peep about any faraway grave-robbing scandal. Dr. Cooley was thus able to live out the final 30 years of his life as an unblemished pioneer

physician and postmaster.

Such men living on the edge were able to hide their sordid pasts, and dismiss any and all hideous rumors as small-town gossip perpetrated by hateful rivals. There was then no Internet or 24/7 cable news to uncover that type of dishonesty and shame. That was the beauty of life on the frontier, especially for those with skeletons in their closet, no pun intended.



**GARDENER'S** from page B1  
 exercising together.

Some years ago, the local paper mentioned the possibility of labeling the riverfront property the "Poplar Street waterfront park." I, for one, wrote in an objection to the plan. When we bought this house over 30 years ago, the only thing that happened down in the dead-end turnaround was nighttime parkers drinking and playing loud music at all hours.

Now we prefer families putting in canoes, picnicking at the beach, and the riverfront guides who put in to help visitors fish and enjoy the river from the water. Sometimes whole groups put in canoes for a trip on the water. Most recently, we were visited by a religious group on their way to Old Seabrook in Connecticut. That's a long ride!

We also had a gentleman who portaged his canoe all the way down our street to the river since, for some reason, the usual portage provided by the state wasn't there at Barton's Cove.

So now the laurel is just past

full bloom, the apricot is in full leaf, and the apples are fully leafed out. We have had visits from deer looking for apples a bit too early, but they check anyway. We have wildlife – deer, bobcat, possum, of course, and raccoons.

The cat is mystified by all this wildlife, and stays close to home. Just as well. We love our cat and would be devastated if she disappeared, a victim of some wild critter looking for dinner.


So we are happy with the joyous families, the fishermen, and the boaters. We, too, have kayaks and canoes and may yet put in and travel downriver to one of the islands and see where we end up.

In the meantime, spring will soon become summer, the crickets chirp in the evening, the midday heat is strong, and we leave the windows open at night.

The seasons move along with no help from us, and we bend with them the best we can. We love all the seasons in New England, and are so glad we are here.



Montv / MUSIK / MOUNTAIN



Part 37: Ralph White

Interview by J. BURKETT

**TURNERS FALLS** – Ralph White is an often overlooked contemporary musician with deep roots in all sorts of musics. He is maybe most well known for being a long time member of the '80s-'90s "punk-billy" band Bad Livers, and as an amazing banjo player. But that's just one small dimension of Ralph.

He is a deep thinker, and is always playing – almost every kind of music you can imagine – and can blend in with almost any kind of music scene. He is an ethnomusicologist, a self-taught left-field thinker, a great storyteller, a tour demon, super positive and giving, old-fashioned in the best way, and a deep listener to stuff from all over the map, and beyond. And just a great guy.

Ralph has quite a few solo LPs out now, and dozens of CDs, and they are all worth checking out. (Disclosure: My own label, Mystra, put out his first LP, *Devil Squir-*

*rel*, which might be a good place to start if you want to do some Ralph "binge listening"!)

**MMM:** What are your earliest music memories?

**RW:** I played some bongos at about 6 or so. I really liked 'em, wish I remembered that stage better. Played coronet in grade school but I have no memory of that either, other than that brass smell.

Hearing Lightnin' Hopkins in my house, and my mom's blues records, made me take up guitar. Also a neighbor's borrowed guitar, one of those little mahogany Martins (shoulda kept it, 'cause they sold it at a garage sale for \$20). Not a lot of music in my family – my brother can yodel like Jimmie Rodgers when he's drunk, but he never drinks.

**MMM:** What is your family's background?

**RW:** Don't know too much

about my family's origins. Grandpa on mom's side came to America at age 13 as a stowaway. Grandma on dad's side was an abandoned orphan, so there's at least a mystery.

I wish I knew more about my grandpa. He was I think an illegitimate child, maybe Jew/gentry/master/serving maid, last name Bergher/Myers. He just had to get out of Germany. From age 13 to 30 he rode the rails. Married the daughter of a farmer he worked for, and got the farm.

My mom was the ninth, and he died in his 60s; I never met him.

**MMM:** Were you in any bands before the Bad Livers?

**RW:** I never played in a rock band, but played in a French trad band before Bad Livers called Bourée Texane.

**MMM:** You moved to Arizona recently, after being in Texas your whole life. How do you like it?

**RW:** Arizona will do. And of course I like it, as I like all lands and peoples when you get to know them. The native Americans here are in abundance, compared to Texas where the genocide was more complete...

**MMM:** What are you listening to these days?

**RW:** Been listening to the Tohono O'odham radio station. Lots of button accordion and fiddle instruments I just happen to play, and those bands I hear on that station are local and cool for sure. And like everywhere else, there's plenty of cool music beneath the radar, I'm lucky enough to hear some of it.

Al Perry of the famous Tucson punk band The Cattle is an Arizona music historian. He turned me on to all kinds of Arizona stuff like Katie

Lee and Tex Allen.

Last thing I listened to recently was the Twinkle Brothers – they're a Polish/dub marriage, with that mountain yodeler Trebya sumptin-or-nuther and those fiddlers. Look 'em up, they're awesome!

**MMM:** Any plans to travel after the pandemic? Any thoughts about all this?

**RW:** I will have to tour after lockdown, and I will like that. Thoughts about the plague? Lots... one being that it's brought everything about our hopeless "based on colonialism" society out in the open, and into a possible dialogue for change.

And change can only work if there's worldwide participation. Which probably means we're fucked.

**MMM:** How is your music going?

**RW:** Getting into the banjos again has been a long slow "look down every tributary" trip, and I'm still not knowing where it's going. Real people more than recordings influenced me to play, and I can't put one above the other. I think that like all instruments, there's a huge amount of mystery and potential in the instrument itself.

It's weird, but I can't favoritize or really "believe" things. It makes conversation hard sometimes, but the longer I've toured and the more I've moved from bars to house-type shows, the more I've enjoyed playing, and hopefully post-pandemic touring will be more of that.

I'm not much good at remembering these days. I could quote some fancy Bad Livers tour, but I honestly don't know whether I enjoyed that any more than I enjoy playing for the saguaros here. It's all good

and bad, too, touring and playing for other beings.

**MMM:** What's your favorite Neil Young LP? I've been meaning to ask.

**RW:** Haven't heard enough Neil Young records to have a fave. I used to own *Harvest* and *Gold Rush*, I think. They were good.

**MMM:** Do you miss Texas?

**RW:** I sometimes miss rain. Pretty much keep in touch with Texas and friends from all around including Missouri, New York, and Kentucky...

**MMM:** Any new jokes or stories? What is the natural world out there like?

**RW:** I can't remember a joke to save my life, and I've heard all the banjo and accordion jokes, I think. If I'm in a particular mood they might be funny, I dunno.

Stories... as André Brink writes, "the universe is made of stories, not atoms." So yea, stories galore. I'm into stories about breaking the spell of patriarchy and narcissism and all this stuff we're addicted to these days. It seems like now or never, which is directly related to the next question.

Arizona, like everywhere else, is experiencing climate change, and there's an amazing landscape of bees, hawks, rodents, insects, a huge diversity of plants, adapting to it. With the people, some aren't doing so good. Lots of fires in the dry season, but the flora and fauna are mighty smart.

So if I learn to listen, maybe I can learn some stories about this place. I already am learning, but can't tell 'em here though, cause I'm about out of battery and they're not done... as in, not cooked, yet.

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## the poetry page

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](mailto:poetry@montagureporter.org)

# Our June Poetry Page

## Oso Negro

I was the fair one among the boys. We all wore white shirts and black pants and promenaded the girls in their white spring skirts around the plaza.

It was always hot. There was always cerveza de barril and Fanta and Coca Cola and limonada and piña and Oso Negro. Not a real black bear but Oso Negro gin.

I treasured, for some odd reason, a small black plastic bear that came entwined around the stubby bottle neck. Somebody gave it to me, and I kept it for years.

Then it disappeared. By the time I started drinking Oso Negro they'd discontinued them. I felt cheated. Nothing's ever as good in the present as it was in the past.

Nothing's ever as bad in the present as it was in the past. Nor as good in the present as it will be in the future. We consume moments the way a burro will drink water

after a long walk through the high desert. Somewhere there must be some present, something as real as the burro I rode through the Coahuila mountains.

Her name was Juana and she was a big mean-spirited thing who sulked and bucked and stopped every few yards to eat the wild oregano growing along the path.

Translated from Spanish by the author.

– Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno  
Turners Falls

## A Self-Centered Life

I'm looking inward.  
I'm worried about my heart.  
I can't see the stars because I am looking down.

### WHAT IF

- I trip.
- I fall.
- I bleed.
- I fail.
- I have bad breath.
- I say the wrong thing.
- I go in the wrong door.

### WHAT IF

- I forget to smile.
- I forget a name.
- I forget a face.
- I forget to flush.
- I forget my dentist appointment...

### WHAT IF

- I forgot WHY.

### WHAT IF

- I forgot my purpose.

### WHAT IF

- I forget how to look UP?

– JE Ingham  
Turners Falls

## Dash Trash



Dedicated to my long-haul trucker and essential worker husband, who can't tolerate a single pencil on his dash.

*To the driver in the next truck over.*  
Can you find your dashboard  
under that trash hoard?

Half empty candy sacks,  
Two full ciggy packs.  
Chips, fruit and sticky maps  
Paper clips and baseball caps.  
Napkins scrunched – a bunch still flat  
Rubber band balls with a dozen snapped.  
Beef jerky and pretzel sticks  
All mixed in with used dental picks.

Chewing tobacco & Snickers Bars.  
A navel lint collection in tiny jars!  
Log book pens and a "post it" pad,  
Something's rotten... STINKS so bad.

The stench wafts in with your diesel fumes,  
My head throbs from your cigarette plumes.

Closing my window and blasting my air,  
I'm really regretting your parking there.

– JE Ingham  
Turners Falls

## Coma

I awoke in Budapest  
hungry for breastmilk  
and the sound of children laughing

I awoke in Singapore  
soul on the tip of my tongue  
as courtesans bled the sky

I awoke in Rhodes  
in a medieval fugue,  
rats trenchant with plague

I awoke in Dubai  
in the presence of Allah  
texting an epiphany

I awoke in Savannah  
in fear for the children  
living in the eye of the storm

I awoke in Paris  
drunk with the night,  
talking to the Seine

I awoke in Calgary  
frozen in a chalice of ancient snows,  
feverish from the heat

I awoke in my bed,  
more chaste than lead,  
hungry for Budapest and  
the sound of children laughing

– G. Greene  
Greenfield


## Contributors' Notes:

Jill Ingham writes about herself: "JE Ingham has lived in many places: Ludlow and Proctorsville, VT; Orange and Springfield, MA; Brooklyn & Manhattan, NY; Philadelphia and Upper Darby, PA; Alexandria, VA; Omaha and Friend, NE; Greenfield and now Turners Falls, MA. She has been married three times, changed careers four times, travelled the 48 contiguous US States, Canada and Vietnam. Passion: Politics (since 1973); Avid Consumer of Global Political News. Hobbies: Bird watching for FeederWatch.org; Care & feeding of two geriatric Cats; Dabbling in all manner of social media; Writing; Deltiology."

Gary Greene is a 2021 finalist for the Poet's Seat Poetry Prize. He recently published *Poems In A Time of Grief*, available through local bookstores and in a Kindle edition at Amazon.

Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno edits this page. *Night Suite*, his new book of poems, will be out this fall from Jensen/Daniels Publishers. His memoir of childhood has been serialized over the last two years in the online review *Witty Partition*.

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# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

## EVENTS

### THURSDAY, JUNE 24

First Congregational Church, Montague Center: *Prone to Mischief*, brass band. 6 p.m.

### FRIDAY, JUNE 25

Shutesbury Athletic Club, Shutesbury: *Rosie Porter & the Neon Moons*. 6 p.m.

Peskeomskut Park, Turners Falls: Movie Night, Music with *Ken and Corki*, 7 p.m.; *Mary Poppins Returns*, 7:30 p.m. Free.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: Screening, *Jean-Michel Basquiat: Downtown '81*. \$ 8 p.m.

### SATURDAY, JUNE 26

Montague Center Ball Park: *Adaskin String Trio*. Free. 12 p.m.

The O's Music Bar, Sunderland: *Caylin Lee*. 6 p.m.

Riverfront Park, Erving: *Bad News Jazz and Blues Orchestra*. Free. 6:30 to 8 p.m.

### SUNDAY, JUNE 27

Belltower Records, North Adams: *Don Bikoff, Wes Buckley, Frozen Corn, Bridge of Flowers, Blues Ambush*. \$ 3 p.m.

Black Birch Vineyard, North Hatfield: *The Suitcase Junket*. \$ 6:30 p.m.

### THURSDAY, JULY 1

Montague Village Store, Montague Center: *Suds & Songs* feat. *Sam Perry*. 5 to 7 p.m.

Energy Park, Greenfield: *R&D, Joe Graveline and Nina Gross*. Franklin County Musicians Cooperative summer concert series. Free. Bring a chair. 6 p.m.

### FRIDAY, JULY 2

Shutesbury Athletic Club, Shutesbury: *The Equalites*. 6:30 p.m.

Northlands, Swanzey, NH: *Warren Haynes*, solo. \$ 6:30 p.m.

Beacon Field, Greenfield: *Fireworks*, vendors, music. 9:35 p.m.

### SATURDAY, JULY 3

Stone Church, Brattleboro:

*NRBQ*. 7 p.m.

### THURSDAY, JULY 8

Montague Village Store, Montague Center: *Suds & Songs* feat. *Lexi Weege, JJ Slater*. 5 to 7 p.m.

Energy Park, Greenfield: *Orlen, Gabriel, & Avery, Boys of the Landfill*. 6 p.m.

### FRIDAY, JULY 9

413 Pub, Easthampton: *Sedagive, Billy Eli*. 7 p.m.

Pulaski Park, Northampton: *Cloudbelly, Lisa Bastoni with Sean Staples*. Free. 5:30 p.m.

### SATURDAY, JULY 10

Shutesbury Athletic Club, Shutesbury: *The Shadow Twisters*. 6 p.m.

Florence Congregational Church, Florence: *Mandingo Ambassadors*. Afro-jazz. \$ 7 p.m.

### SUNDAY, JULY 11

Amherst Common, Amherst: *Freestone or Ooze* feat. *Glenn Jones, Chris Brokaw, Sunburned Hand of the Man, A.P.I.E.*,

*Allysen Gallery, Willie Lane, Mazozma, Toppus Bottomus, 10 Gallon Hat, Frozen Corn*, and many more. Free. 10:30 a.m.

Franklin County Fairgrounds, Greenfield: *Freedom Fest* feat. *Sonorus, Jimmy Just Quit, and No Lens*. \$ 12 p.m.

John Doe, Jr., Greenfield: *Craig Douglas, Liz Tonne & Vic Rawlings, Old Pam*. Free. 2 p.m.

### FRIDAY, JULY 23

MASS MoCA, North Adams: *Kevin Morby, Waxahatchee*. \$ 8 p.m.

### FRIDAY, JULY 30

The Palladium Outdoors, Worcester: *Bright Eyes, Lucy Dacus*. \$ 7 p.m.

### SATURDAY, JULY 31

Peskeomskut Park, Turners Falls: *Sam Amidon*, folk singer and banjo player. Free. 5 p.m.

### MONDAY, AUGUST 2

Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: *Japanese Breakfast, Mannequin Pussy*. \$ 8 p.m.



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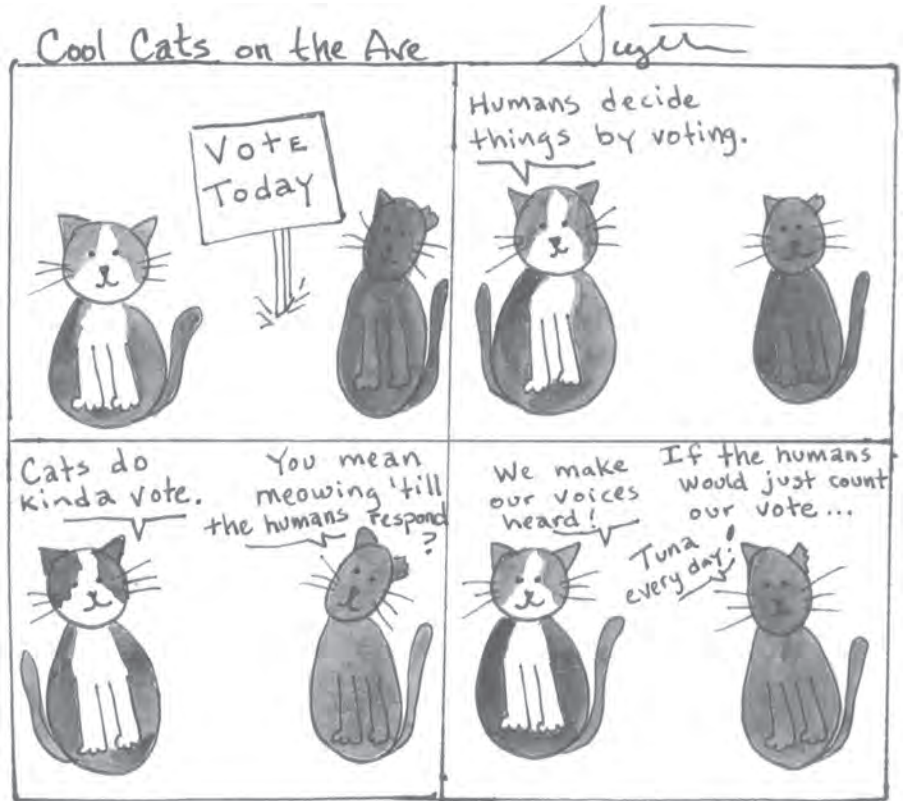
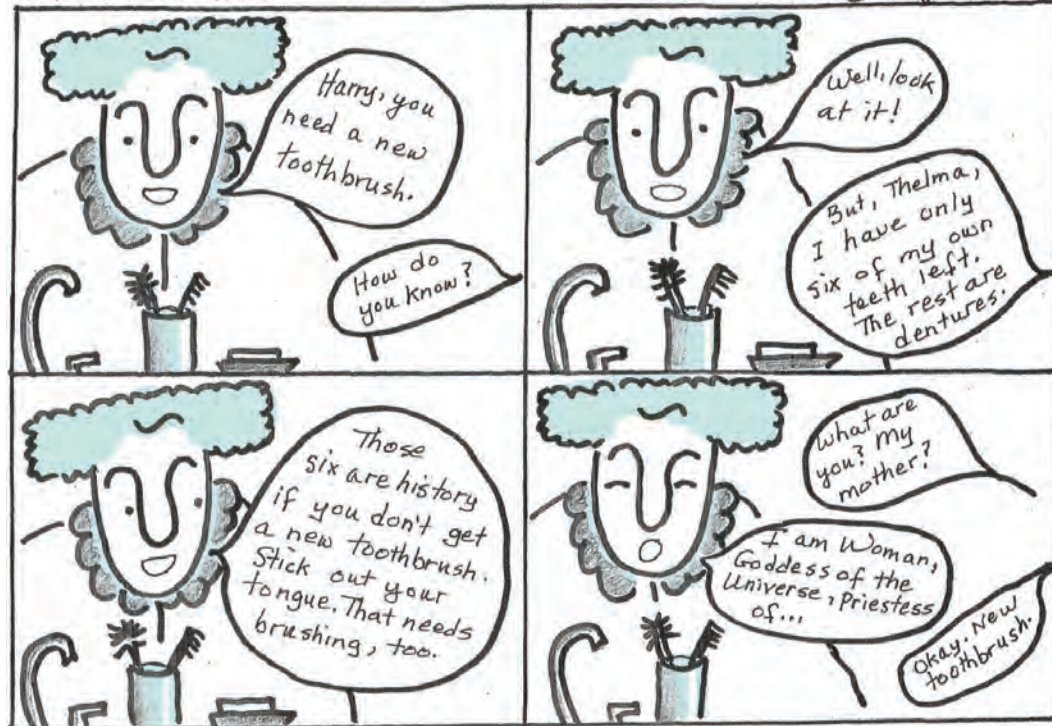
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## The Montague Reporter Podcast

# GREAT FALLS APPLE COLUMN

By ANNABEL LEVINE

**TURNERS FALLS** – For this week’s column we are sharing a landscaping superlatives page of sorts, a list of inspiration if you’re looking to add beautiful plants to any garden.

In my travels through town bureaucracy and public opinion, I’ve found that the words “edible landscaping” bring to mind similar worries for those involved with keeping spaces looking presentable. A nut tree compromises lawn equipment. A fruit tree means mess, and wasps, and liability.

Luckily, edibility stretches far beyond your backyard apple tree. Many options are already popular landscaping plants, and there are some rarer ones that still create an aesthetic impact while also tasting delicious.

Without further ado, here are some of our recommendations.

*Tree, Edible Flowers:*

**Linden** (*Tilia Americana*).

If you’ve got the space for a tree, a linden is a beautiful addition to a landscape. De-



LEVINE PHOTOS

*Lindens are a great landscaping choice, and the town of Montague agrees: this baby tree with spent flowers on Fifth Street is one of many new Linden trees in downtown Turners Falls.*

pending on the variety, these trees can grow up to 60 or 80 feet tall, and have large, attractive, heart-shaped leaves.

The leaves make an edible salad green when young, but the real prizes are the early summer flowers, which can be eaten raw and make a delicious and medicinal tea.

There is a row of large lindens by the Peskeomskut Park playground, and you’ll see quite a few new ones peppering downtown tree belts as a result of the town’s current shade-tree planting project.

*Tree, Fruit:*

**Juneberry** (*Amelanchier*).

One of the finest examples of an edible tree that has broken through to the landscaping mainstream goes by many names, including juneberry, serviceberry, shadbush, and Amelanchier. Longtime readers of this column may remember us featuring this native tree before, as there are six of them near the Unity Park Community Garden, and each year they produce delectable fruit.

The juneberry has some of the first flowers of the season, erupting with floppy white-petaled blooms in April. And once those flowers are gone, the fruit sets in. It hangs on little stems like cherries, and turns from red to purple when it ripens in late June.

The fruit tastes sweet and mild, like an apple crossed with a blueberry. The seeds are also edible, and taste like almonds. If you find a juneberry laden with fruit, keep a close eye, because you may be racing birds to the harvest!

Then, in the fall, their leaves turn a showy orange/red. A showstopper in all seasons. Juneberry plants can come in a variety of sizes, but tend to be smaller, so they are a great choice for a corner, or a space under wires.

**Kousa Dogwood** (*Cornus kousa*).

For this category, I had to follow my heart, and couldn’t pick just one.

Another plant featured in the early days of this column is the Kousa dogwood. This tree is a popular landscaping plant, and you can find examples of this tree dotting Avenue A, including several specimens alongside the Great Falls Discovery Center building, two by the fountain at Peskeomskut Park, and some in front of the Greenfield Savings Bank and United Arc.

In June, showy white or pink petal-like leaf bracts appear. From the middle of these leaf bracts comes a little fruit, round and multi-faceted, which I lovingly referred to in a previous column as looking like an “alien soccer ball.”

The fruit ripens in September and October, with bright orange flesh and an out-of-this-world tropical flavor. There are a number of seeds, depending on the tree, but they’re worth the seed-spitting practice!

*Bush, Edible Flower:*

**Native roses**, including **Swamp rose** (*Rosa palustris*), **Carolina rose** (*Rosa carolina*), and **Virginia rose** (*Rosa virginiana*).

Last weekend I was in the Boston area for a friend’s bridal shower. It was held at her mother’s house, in her backyard, and at a certain point in the day I noticed these beautiful magenta roses and went to take a sniff. There was no scent! I went to visit my friend’s new house the next morning and she had the same roses, and once again, no scent!

I learned that many hybrid roses don’t smell when I tried to make rosewater for the first time a few summers ago. When I went to look up the procedure, I came across a warning not to use roses from a conventional bouquet. It turns out that many of those bouquets only smell like roses because they are covered in perfume!

A number of native roses have simpler flowers, but their scents are unmatched. No one can argue that a rose doesn’t make a gorgeous addition to a landscape, and they offer food for many native and endangered bees to boot.

*Herb, Edible Leaf and Flower:*

**Bee Balm** (*Monarda*).

While many herbs could be featured here as a beautiful garden plant, today I want to showcase monarda, commonly known as bee balm. Bee balm is a perennial, and grows to be about three feet tall, with pointed leaves that taste like a spicy oregano.

The flowers look like a psychedelic double crown of petals, and come in different varieties and colors like magenta, light purple, and red. Another name for this plant is wild bergamot, because the flowers make a delicious, Earl Grey-like tea.

Being a member of the mint family, bee balm grows in a clump and will spread slowly,



*A bee visits a cup plant flower last fall in the author’s front yard.*

which is great for edge spaces and wildflower gardens. True to its name, this plant will attract a number of native bees and butterflies.

*Just For Fun:*

**Cup Plant** (*Silphium perfoliatum*).

This last plant has no edible use for humans that I know of, but it is a fan favorite of the birds and bees of my backyard, and has become a staple bird-watching option for us in the fall and early winter. The cup plant is not as well known as some of the other plants on this list, but once you plant one, you’ll wonder how your garden ever lived without it.

Cup plants are named for the “cup” that is formed where the leaf meets the stem, allowing water to collect there after it rains.

Each spring the plant starts as a rosette, then sends up a stalk, which can grow over ten feet tall. In the late summer, the plant produces multiple showy yellow flowers out of the top of this stalk.

These plants would make a great border, or a dramatic centerpiece of a perennial garden. There are two clumps of cup plants on the Prospect Street side of the Apple Corps’s “church lot” sidewalk food forest garden at the old St. Andrews Church. One of the plants there is edging towards six feet tall already – check it out!

*The Great Falls Apple Corps is a community group advocating for edible landscaping and all kinds of community gardening.*

*We run a weekly free table every Saturday from 12 to 3 p.m. at Unity Park where we give away produce, meals, clothing, toiletries, and other useful items.*

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