

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 19 – NO. 30

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

\$1

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

JUNE 3, 2021

COMMENTARY

Northfield Mountain: The Backstory



McLOUGHLIN PHOTO

What was promised in exchange when Massachusetts handed control of the river to the power company?

By LISA McLOUGHLIN

NORTHFIELD – In 1970, Charles H.W. Foster wrote a paper about how the land for the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage facility came to be transferred from public ownership to private. As the Massachusetts Commissioner of Natural Resources at the time, he saw the transfer as an example of “the acceptable balancing of economic and environmental issues,” which he considered “the fundamental issue of the next decade.”

Foster, whose report was published as *Paper No. 19* by Harvard Forest (Petersham), framed this land transfer as a counterpoint to the New York Storm King pumped-storage facility’s story, as written by a Dr. Calvin W. Stillman in 1965. That project was blocked by environmentalists’ “application of a conservation ethic,” and remains an important successful battle to save a river, its aquatic inhabitants, and the dramatic views of the mountain.

Foster’s paper, written from his point of view as someone who facilitated and approved of their triumph, was meant to explain how in the case of the Northfield pump station, Northeast Utilities prevailed.

Part of Dr. Foster’s argument as to why

Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage was a good idea seems to be that this reach of the river was not natural anyway due to existing dams, locks, and canals. But beyond his brief analysis of the technical possibilities for further use of the water for electric power generation, his main focus was an economic one. Pumped storage was chosen partly because it was considered to be the most economical way to “create” electricity, because it took advantage of the infrastructure already developed by the dams, although the dam at Turners needed to be raised five feet, deepening the “pool” of the river and “necessitating additional land takings.”

“The Turners Falls facilities, of course, represented merely one development in a series of projects along the entire four hundred mile course of the Connecticut River,” Foster wrote. “Some twenty-four major hydroelectric stations, collectively generating more than 700,000 kilowatts of electrical energy, were helping build the Connecticut’s reputation as the hardest working river in the nation.”

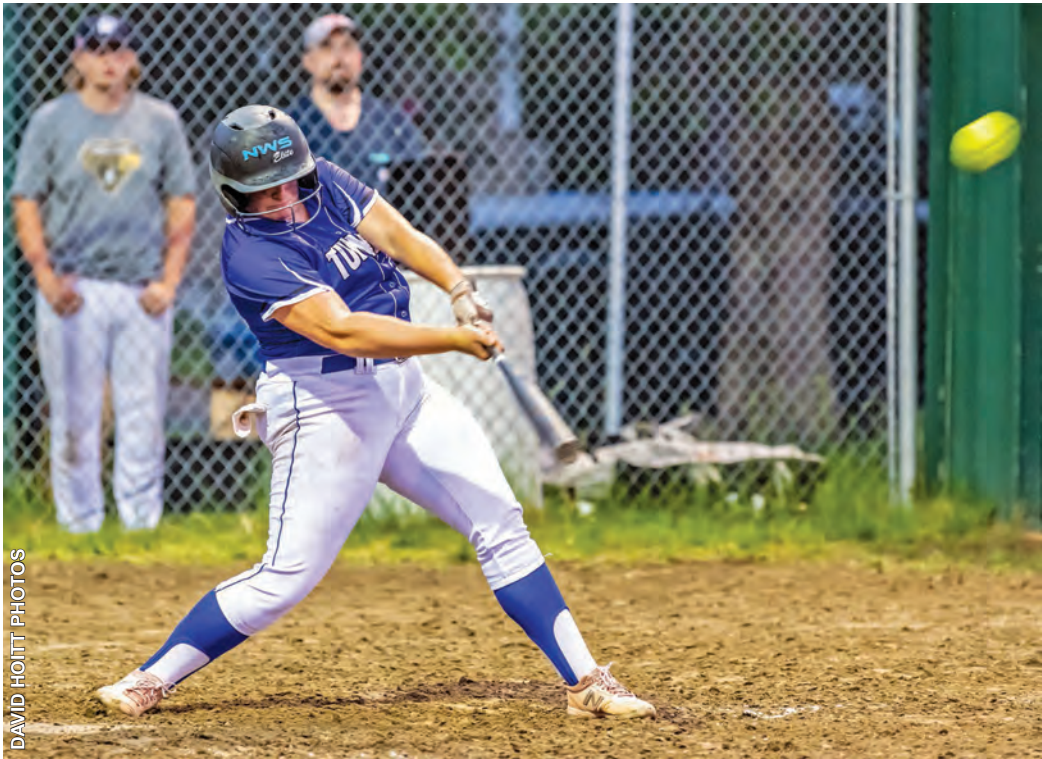
Foster’s outlining of the situation then switched gears to the political, namely the unique situation of his commission. The

see **BACKSTORY** page A6

High School Sports: No Mercy!

By MATT ROBINSON

The Turners Falls softball team failed to force a mercy stoppage this week. Tuesday, June 1 was the first time that Powertown saw a sixth inning since May 11 when they beat Greenfield 7-4. The Ladies in Blue faced the Green Wave again on Wednesday, and again, neither team cried Mercy.



DAVID HOLTT PHOTO

Turners Falls’ Jade Tyler blasts a grand slam during the 6th inning Wednesday night against Greenfield.

TFHS 13 – Athol 0

Last Thursday, May 27, Big Blue played the Athol Red Bears at home. Athol is one of the clubs that Turners has had difficulty with. Turners won the teams’ first meeting, played on May 10 in Athol, 7-2. In that match-up, the Thunder Ladies shot out to a 6-0 lead, but the Bears clawed their way back up to

see **SPORTS** page A4

Parkside Taco Truck Launches Second Street Lot Development

By MIKE JACKSON

TURNERS FALLS –

The shipping container, dumpster, and porta-potty sitting on a vacant lot at the end of Second Street are the most visible signs yet of new developments planned at the edge of Unity Park. Nova Real Estate LLC, which purchased the lot in November 2019 for \$45,000, plans to build a 5,000-square-foot building on its north section and has signed a two-year lease with Santo Taco to run an outdoor restaurant on the southern half.

Ivette Mateos and Eric

Dew, who ran the Mexican street food business on a pop-up basis before the pandemic, say they may be able to open in a matter of weeks or a month. “I think our grand opening is going to be a good party,” said Dew.

The Wendell couple are

converting a horse trailer into a food truck, and have ordered picnic tables and umbrellas for the site. They purchased the container for storage and refrigeration.

“We are definitely going to keep doing the tacos,” said

see **TACO** page A5



JACKSON PHOTO

Santo Taco plans to open its food truck within weeks.

Legislators Consider Allowing Virtual Meetings This Summer

By JEFF SINGLETON

BOSTON – Governor Charlie Baker has filed legislation with the state Senate to allow public meetings to continue to be held “virtually” while the legislature and his office consider changes in the state’s opening meeting law to allow virtual meetings. In a letter dated May 25, Baker wrote that the virtual meeting option was “primarily intended to allow state and local boards and committees to continue to conduct their work safely during the pandemic, but both the public and members of these public bodies have found these virtual

meeting options to be beneficial.”

The origins of this legislation lie in Baker’s decision, announced the previous week, to end most COVID-19 emergency restrictions, including on indoor gatherings, on May 29 and to end the state of emergency itself on June 15. The state Attorney General subsequently announced that the end of the emergency would mean an end to virtual meetings, which violate the state Open Meeting Law because they allow a meeting to take place without a quorum “physically present.”

This produced widespread concern from

see **VIRTUAL** page A7

WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Selectboard Meets Face to Face

By JOSH HEINEMANN

On the evening of May 26, as the Wendell selectboard held their first in person meeting since March 2020, a thunderstorm passed through town and ended a long dry spell. Rain continued through the night and frogs took their chances crossing Wendell’s roads as board members and others drove home.

The chairs of three other town boards were also there: Phil Delorey of the highway commission, Barbara Craddock of the board of health, and Doug Tanner of the finance committee.

As its first order of business the selectboard voted to opt out of all state-sponsored spraying for mosquito control, giving an alternate plan for avoiding Eastern equine encephalitis (EEE). Town coordinator Nancy Aldrich certified the vote as required after board members worked through the state ap-

plication form. The basic plan is education and personal protection.

Craddock said she “wrangled 50 bottles of lemon eucalyptus repellent, “ the only natural repellent certified to be effective, from Walmart, and the board of health plans to sell them at a discount to residents.

Craddock told board members what guidelines she worked out with town moderator Katie Nolan and town clerk Anna Wetherby for the annual town meeting, which will be held on the common at 10 a.m. Saturday, June 12, with six-foot distancing. (The rain date is June 13.) Volunteers, including selectboard members, will come early to set up the spacing. Masks will not be required.

The Wendell Country Store and the library still require patrons to wear a mask. Craddock said she saw no reason to hurry opening of town buildings to the public, saying local

see **WENDELL** page A7

Leverett Couple Celebrates Twenty Years of Free Flowers

By SARAH ROBERTSON

LEVERETT – This weekend’s storm did not dampen the mood as Eva Gibavic and Cheryl Howland worked through the cold rain to give away thousands of homegrown flower and vegetable starts. Saturday, May 29 marked two decades of a tradition that began with a thoughtful birthday gift.

“We both look at this as a titling or a mitzvah, or a native American form of give-away,” Cheryl said. “People look at me funny when I say I’m giving this stuff away, but the people in the community get all excited. Freebies

are nice but this isn’t really about the freebie as it is about the giving. And gosh, they really enjoy it. We do too.”

For Cheryl’s 50th birthday

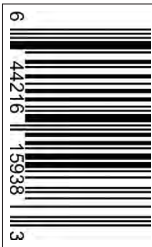
in 2001, Eva raised a large hoop house on their property at the southern end of Rattlesnake Gutter. Every year

see **FREE** page A5



ROBERTSON PHOTO

Eva Gibavic (left) and Cheryl Howland (right) gave away thousands of plant starts over the long weekend.



We Never Do Seem To Learn

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The Montague Reporter

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Correction and Clarifications (?)

As this edition was being prepared for press, a number of people including the *Reporter's* editors received a 1,705-word email from Curtis Sherrer, owner of the mill at 42 Canal Road featured in a news article in our May 27 edition (page A1, "Bike Shop Booted for Tasting Room"). Mr. Sherrer expressed his criticism of the article, objecting to "numerous inaccuracies and half-truths, if not outright lies" and sharing that he "look[ed] forward to reading the retractions and corrections in the *Reporter*."

The majority of Mr. Sherrer's letter is dedicated to contesting characterizations of the situation made by three commercial tenants in the building who were quoted sources, as well as by the town planner.

We are dedicated to fostering a factual understanding of events by the public, and will of course be happy to give Mr. Sherrer space to rebut these characterizations in a coming edition, though his word count will need to be reduced significantly to fit the printed page.

For now, we have identified among his points at least one erroneous statement made by our reporter which merits immediate correction, and two issues which deserve clarification.

We wrote that 42 Canal Road "was sold to Sherrer, the only bidder at an auction, for \$12,735." Mr. Sherrer points out that it was in fact purchased by River Child LLC, whose members are Sherrer and one April Woodard; he says Ms. Woodard "checked out" early on, leaving him "physically and financially responsible for moving the projects forward."

We apologize to Mr. Sherrer and our readers for the error.

Mr. Sherrer objects to the article's assertion that "Sadie's Bikes has been paying \$915 per month to rent the store, some storage space, and a small office"; he clarifies that Sadie's Bikes was paying \$750 per month for the store, its owner Nik Perry was paying an "extra" \$165 per month outside the lease for use of an office space, and that storage space for bikes was donated.

And lastly – for today – he also objects to our printing the statement that "All three tenants said they felt uncomfortable or unsafe at the building at times."

"[N]ot enough is reported to understand, on its face, the circumstances involved in these incidents," he writes. "There were instances when locals would wander onto

the property or into a shop. This is Turners Falls known for heroin addicts and alcoholics. To operate in Turners is to embrace the local population. All of the renters are well aware of where they were renting."

We made an editorial decision to word that sentence in minimal terms so as to accurately cover statements given by all three tenants, but for the record, two were talking about guests of Mr. Sherrer.

On a side note, we cannot understand Mr. Sherrer's several claims about his business position:

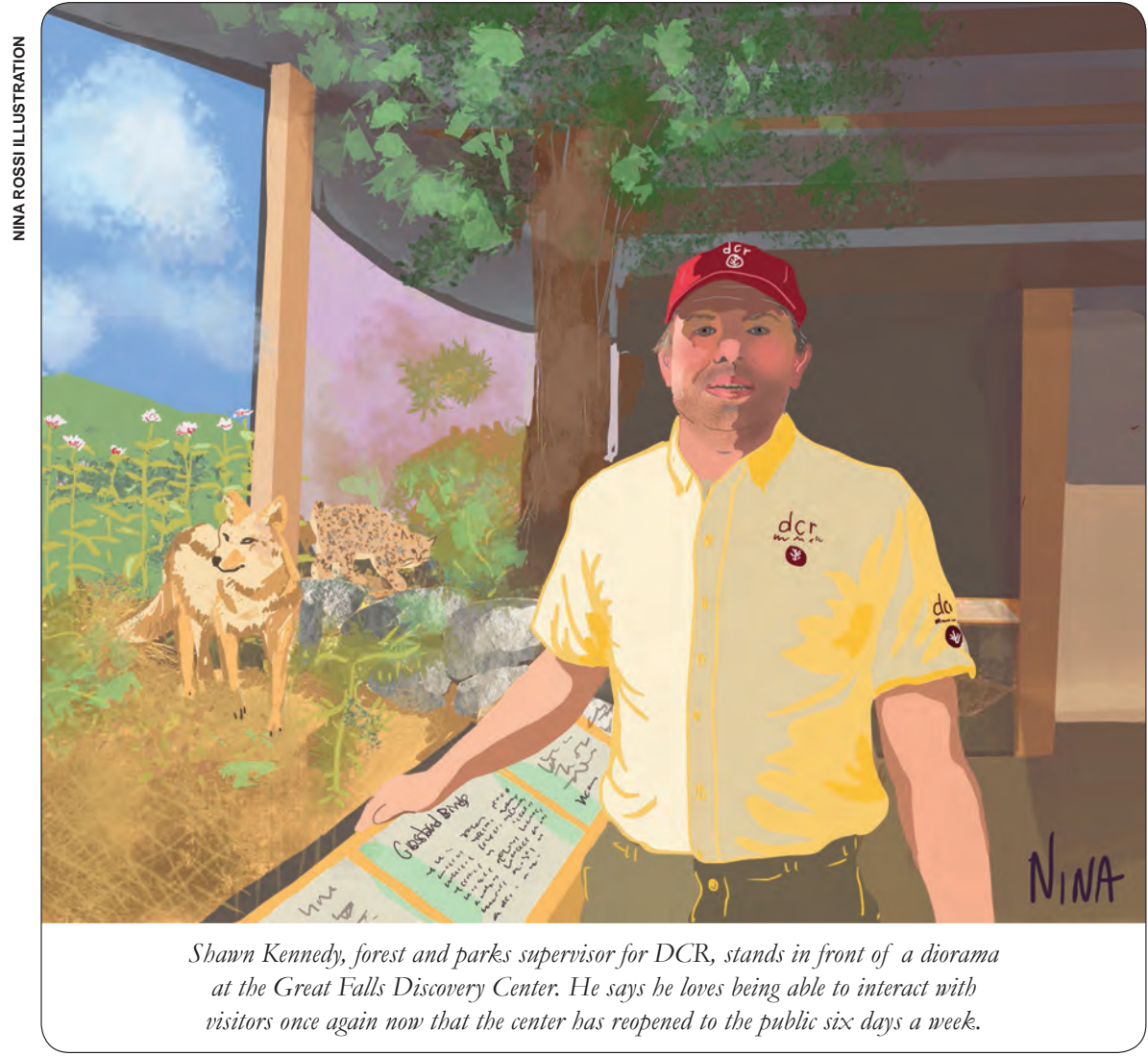
1. "Until there are assurances from the Town that adequate parking and convenient sewage will be available, only minimal maintenance will be performed on the property."
2. "Sadie's only pays \$750 for rent (which is below market).... It is noted that the rental fee is below what is commercially available anywhere."
3. "As a landlord I generate rentals to pay for overhead of heat, water, taxes, etc. Otherwise, I am out of business; the building is sold, and the renters are out on the street."
4. "I am tired of playing the nice guy and getting reamed for it. I get painted as some extreme personality who can't get along [with] tenants when they continually go outside of their leases."

The building is privately owned, but its redevelopment (alongside the Strathmore, Southworth, and Railroad Salvage Annex buildings on the island in Turners Falls) is currently the goal of public investment. This may place Mr. Sherrer's business decisions under unfair public scrutiny.

That said, it is unclear how the "market" rental value for space in the building would be calculated, if not through an iterated series of exchanges with tenants.

This newspaper would not have found his non-renewal of the lease with Sadie's Bikes nearly as newsworthy had Sherrer not told us that the space "is going to transition into the cidery tasting room and bar, which has been the business plan before purchasing the mill."

If the development of Great Falls Spirits is indeed underway, we wish Mr. Sherrer success, and hope that his misadventures as a commercial landlord will soon be water under the bridge. If it is not, we hope that he can find collaborators who see eye to eye with him as to the building's present value.



Letters to



the Editors

(Gently) Bug Your Neighbors...

Here's the headline this newspaper used for its Montague police log 14 months ago (March 19, 2020): "Residents, Undaunted by Coming Pandemic, Continue to Bug the Heck Out Of One Another."

I'm here today to encourage you to continue to bug the heck out of folks you know who are "vaccine hesitant." It will require you to squirrel away correct information, ferret out specific objections, bat away misconceptions, bone up on conspiracy theories (wisely, like an owl), and to kindly badger your family, friends, and neighbors to outfox their resistance.

In February, right after my first shot, a neighbor told me "no-way-not-ever-not-me-or-my family." But still I persisted... Fast forward to a week ago: he finally let me make him an appointment and drive him to Walgreens for his one-and-done jab. The very next morning, he took the other two adults in his household to be vaccinated as well. Nice ripple effect.

Meanwhile, after weeks of trying: success with another neighbor. Her resistance slowly turned to hesitancy until she finally decided to come with us to get vaccinated. She said, "I'm so relieved I'm safe myself and can visit my grandmother at last." She's now encouraging her partner to get his.

Third success: while waiting at the pharmacy, I struck up a conversation with a stranger in his 60s – and somehow immediately convinced him to get his shot then and there – which he did. Not sure which of us was more surprised.

A quick internet search on overcoming vaccine hesitancy will give you more, but here are my top tips: listen, listen, listen. Respectfully.

Empathetically. Patiently. Share your own personal positive experiences with vaccines. Be knowledgeable about both the science and the misinformation that's rampant. Offer help with appointments and transportation. Know who takes walk-ins and which vaccines are offered.

And in some cases, try promising a small cash reward, a couple hours of free babysitting, or some homemade chocolate chip cookies.

Governor Baker said, "COVID is on the run." Vaccines work: in this country, deaths are way down and so are hospitalizations. But the only way to keep making progress and guard against new variants is to get those vaccines into as many arms as possible.

Who could you gently convince?

Maggie Sadoway
Turners Falls

More on Neighbors and Bugs

In regards to reading the minutes from last week's Leverett Selectpersons' Meeting about Mosquito Control: Please inform Selectman Tom Hankinson, in regards to his inclusion of "The Friends of Leverett Pond" in Mosquito Control, of the merits of leaving Bladderwort alone. Bladderwort is a carnivorous plant that assists in Mosquito larva reductions, yet its targeting for removal by FLP by Mitch Mulholland and of course, the president of this organization, Tom Hankinson, strikes me as short-sighted and spurious. It makes no sense.

In my opinion, it is also worth mentioning at this time that while the recreational and property enhancement promoted by Tom Hankinson for himself and his neighbors is a conflict of interest in government. While not in violation due to the town's population numbers, it is an ethical violation.

Fact: the area of water in front of Selectman Tom Hankinson's property is stagnant, as it was never part of the original area of the pond's natural size, and is a long shallow littoral zone (the area where most aquatic plants grow). The milfoil does not grow to make the water there stagnant. It grows there because the water there *is* stagnant, and the previous soil underneath is full of nutrients.

I am aware that there is information that in some cases, such as in areas in the Southern States, such removal activity may be of limited use for mosquito reduction, but the reality is that Leverett has many wetland areas where insects of all sorts breed.

With the combination of fish, amphibians, macro-invertebrates, two species of Bladderwort, Bats, Barn Swallows, Tree Swallows, and Swifts, Leverett Pond has already got the population under control.

A personal note: I work year around at the pond at various properties, and also am frequently kayaking on the pond. I have never had to use repellent.

Macaylla Silver
a Friend of Leverett Pond (even have the T-shirt)
Ducks Unlimited member; Life long environmentalist
Leverett

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By NINA ROSSI

Join Musica Franklin tonight, Thursday June 3, at Peskeomskut Park in Turners Falls for a free Community Night Showcase of student and faculty talent. The 5:30 p.m. event at the park bandstand features Musica Franklin students performing string and vocal arrangements of American spirituals. Musica Franklin faculty will also perform from a variety of genres. Audience members are asked to sit in family or friend pods, and wear masks when outside the pod. Bring lawn chairs or blankets.

This Saturday, June 5 at 10 a.m. there will be a **Pride Bike Ride** starting at Unity Park in Turners Falls. The ride is open to LGBTQIA+ people, families, youth, and allies that want to ride together. This is the third community ride, and organizers encourage rainbows, flags, and other “Pride magic.” The ride is about five miles round trip on the bike path, and participants are invited to picnic at the park afterwards. RSVP to shiftgearcycles@gmail.com.

The **Leverett library is now open** for browsing without an appointment, on Thursdays from 3 to 6 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Masks are still required for ages 5 and up.

The **Great Falls Discovery Center** is now open after being closed for over a year! The Center hours are Tuesdays, 12 to 4 p.m. and Wednesdays through Sundays

10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

An exhibit in the Great Hall that was cut short in 2020, “Fertile Ground – Corn, Cranberries, Tobacco and Artists,” remains on view through July. The exhibit explores connections between the local agricultural landscape and generations of artists in the Fuller family of Deerfield. Admission is free.

The Great Falls Farmers Market is offering “**Free Kids Yoga with Jackie**” every Wednesday in June from 3 to 3:30 p.m. at Peskeomskut Park. Come out for some fun movement for kids of all ages!

History buffs may also enjoy a **June Summer Evening Stroll** series in Old Deerfield on two Sundays, June 4 and 20, from 4 to 5 p.m. Explore the Arts and Crafts Movement in Deerfield at the turn of the century during this guided walk along Old Main Street. Fiddler Anna Wetherby will play authentic tunes. Learn more and purchase tickets by calling (413) 775-7217 or emailing ccarlson@historic-deerfield.org. Tours are \$10 per person.

Check out the next **Healthy Living Summer Workshop** from LifePath starting next Thursday, June 10 at 3 p.m. This free, live, remote workshop is called “A Matter of Balance: Managing Concerns about Falls.” Learn about coping strategies that can reduce the fear of falling, risk factors in your home, and exercises that can increase your strength and balance. Contact Andi Waisman at (413) 773-5555 ext. 2297 or email awaisman@LifePathMA.org to register.

isman@LifePathMA.org to register.

A **play reading by Silverthorne Theater** is coming up on Friday, June 11 at 7:30 p.m. at the LAVA Center in Greenfield as well as live-streaming on Silverthorne’s YouTube channel. Ellen Meeropol’s play *Gridlock* tackles issues of climate change and radical activism as two sisters in their 70s reunite after a fifty-year separation.

Meeropol’s play is loosely based on characters and events portrayed in her recently released novel *Her Sister’s Tattoo* (Red Hen Press). The reading is free, with limited seating for fully vaccinated attendees. Reserve a seat by calling (413) 768-7514 or emailing silverthornetheater@gmail.com. Find out more at silverthornetheater.org/special-events.

The “**Rattlesnake Gutter Second Saturdays Market**” starts this Saturday, June 12 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Leverett Village Co-Op. Rain date is Sunday the 13th.

“A monthly arts, crafts, and flea market featuring live music, local wares, nonprofits and lots of good vibes,” the notice reads. Booths are \$20 (or 10% of sales), cash preferred; interested vendors can contact rattlesnakeguttermarket@gmail.com for more information.

The **Franklin County Musicians Cooperative** is coming back this season to the Energy Park in Greenfield with their usual summer concert series. The events feature musicians in the Coop and will take place Thursday evenings at 6 p.m. for seven weeks, beginning July 1. Bring lawn chairs, blankets, and your own picnic. (For the schedule, watch our newly revived A&E listing in the B section each week!)

An **apprentice program in the sheet metal industry** is taking applications starting next Monday, June 7 through Friday, June 18. Ap-

plicants must be at least 17 years old and be a high school graduate, or be graduating this year, physically capable of performing the work of this trade, and have a valid driver’s license. A mechanical aptitude test will be given.

Call the business office of the Sheet Metal Workers Local #63 between 8 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. to get an application, (413) 733-8332.

The Greenfield Community College **Annual Student Art Exhibit** has always been a popular spring event, because of the high quality of the art displayed, and because there are many local GCC fans (including adults such as myself) who enjoy attending.

This year the exhibit is going online at gcc.mass.edu/annual-art-student-exhibit. Students taking online art courses during COVID experienced unique challenges in completing their courses. Show support and enjoy the fruits of their labors!

News from MASS MoCA about a new **James Turrell light installation** called *C.A.V.U.* makes the institution quite a destination for this artist’s work. This is Turrell’s largest free standing piece, measuring 40 feet in diameter and 40 feet high, made out of a repurposed concrete water tank.

During mid-day, the dome of the tank with its circular cut-out of the sky will be sealed and the space will be transformed into a tightly-controlled multisensory environment, with light projected across the interior walls and domed ceiling, and with sound altered by the contours of the architecture.

On certain days at dawn and dusk the ceiling oculus will be open, but you must make a reservation for those special viewings, as space is very limited. Do it now at massmoca.org.

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.



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OP ED

Candidate Statement: Montague Board of Health

By MELANIE ZAMOJSKI

MONTAGUE – Hello to the Residents of Montague! If I have not met you yet, I would like to introduce myself, and tell you a little about why I am running for a seat on the Montague Board of Health.

My husband and I have lived in the town of Montague for about 18 years. We have two adult children, as well as our dog Ben and cat Rueban. We enjoy camping, gardening, and hiking. My family comes from a line of community service. My father was a volunteer firefighter and one of the first EMTs in Connecticut. He was also selectman in our rural town. I think that my ideas of service and commitment come from his example.

I graduated from an agricultural school, studying forestry and large and small animal science. I became a volunteer Emergency Medical Technician shortly after graduating from high school and moving to the Franklin County area. I continued to volunteer for 22 years. In the meantime, I worked in the area of veterinary medicine, then working as a professional EMT-Paramedic providing care throughout Franklin County.

In 2006, I graduated from Greenfield Community College, becoming a nurse. I continued my education, ultimately obtaining a Master’s degree in Nursing Education. I have worked as an Emergency Department nurse for many years, and I have seen the health needs and gaps in our community.

In all these positions, I have met many people in our community in frightening, sad, and sometimes happy times. I have been able to work closely with community services, finding solu-

tions to provide continued care and resources, and closing the gaps.

For the last ten years, I have worked at GCC as a nursing educator. I have been privileged to coordinate Service Learning opportunities for the nursing students, again working with community groups and researching how we can work together to sow the seeds of learning, trust, and better health.

When the pandemic hit, I assisted with area contact tracing in Franklin County. I followed state guidelines, made contact with those that tested positive for COVID-19, contacted those who were given as their contacts, and offered information and provided resources and help to those isolated and quarantined.

So now, what can I bring to the Board of Health? I have 35 years of experience working in our local communities. I understand the strengths and the limitations of our community services and of our healthcare system. Being a nurse is so much more than the physical care of the sick. Like many nurses, I have experience in resource utilization, education, community resources, public health, community nursing, advocacy, and legislative awareness – and we do need to know about the human condition.

The need for healthy food, safe housing, and clean water is paramount to our citizens. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought the need for strong public health into public awareness.

Decisions about COVID were made on best knowledge at the time, but I have had numerous citizens tell me that while they were isolated or quarantined, they did not have contact with anyone local. They did not have updates, and were

not able to talk to anyone who knew what they needed, or how our community is shaped and what is available here. When food became scarce, some had to leave their homes, even knowing that they shouldn’t, to bring home food to their children. People also continued to work when they shouldn’t because they didn’t have a choice to take time off. Others were not contacted at all after learning that they were in close contact with someone who had tested positive.

This lack of local involvement with our citizens led to misinformation, potential further infections, and limited active resources to our Montague citizens.

While the decision to utilize the state-recommended Community Tracing Collaborative may have had advantages at the time, it did not uphold the promises that were given. Now is the time to review what went wrong, and plan for the next public health crisis.

We need to know what went wrong in order to avoid these mistakes and be better prepared for the future. Our priorities should include reviewing the problems that came up during pandemic; revising our plan for a public health emergency; setting priorities for Montague’s reopening; locating more public health funding sources; and setting priorities for the Department and our Public Health Nurse.

I hope that you will agree with me, and feel that it is time for a change on the Montague Board of Health. Montague Town Election is June 22. I would appreciate your vote.

Melanie Zamojski lives in Montague’s Precinct 6, and is a candidate for the Board of Health.

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SPORTS from page A1

make the final score 7-2.

This time, Turners again built an early lead against the Bears, scoring eight unanswered runs. But there was no miracle comeback for the Bears. In the home third, Turners scored four more runs off a couple of well-placed hits and a two-run homer by Olivia Whittier. Blue plated another run off a Taylor Murphy RBI in the fourth, and in the top of the fifth, Athol went 1-2-3 giving Powertown the win via the mercy rule.

Jade Tyler threw a no-hitter against the Bears, struck out nine, and gave up one walk. Offensively, Murphy had three hits while Tyler and Whittier each hit home runs.

It was Powertown's fifth mercy win in a row, but to quote Mr. Harrison, All Things Must Pass, and the Turners Falls Mercy Streak came to an end on June 1 courtesy of the visiting Pioneer Panthers.

TFHS 10 – Pioneer 0

The Panthers game began normally enough. Jade Tyler whiffed two of the first three batters, and Holly Myers chased down a high fly to right. But the top three Thunder batters went down in order in the bottom of the first, failing to hit the ball out of the infield.

Tyler struck out two more batters in the second, while the infielders took care of the other out, and after one and a half, the score was still tied at zero.

The Turners Falls Softball offense has more than three weapons. In the second inning, the bottom six batters started a rally that didn't end until the top three came back to the plate. In that inning, Blue recorded seven hits – including doubles by Madison Liimatainen, Emily Young, and Whittier – and after three complete, Blue was up 5-0.

Young batted in Myers to make the score 6-0 in the third, and in the fourth, Turners almost broke it open. With runners at second and third, Liimatainen rocked a hit over the fence, but it was just foul, and Blue went into the fifth with one more chance to end the game early. Turners threatened but couldn't capitalize, so the fans had to sit for at least one more inning.

Powertown made the best of their last at-bats. Tyler hit a sacrifice to score Murphy, Liimatain-



A job well done: Jade Tyler rounds the bases after her grand slam during Blue's 9-6 win over the Green Wave.

en took a base on balls, and then Myers homered to make it 9-0. Not to be outdone, Julianna Rode stepped up to the plate and hit a solo home run to make the final score 10-0.

In the circle, Tyler allowed one hit, gave up a walk, and K'd 14. Blue cracked a combined 16 hits offensively, and although they failed to mercy the Cats, they kept their record perfect.

TFHS 9 – Greenfield 6

Then on Wednesday, the Green Wave gave Turners a run for their money. Six runs, to be exact.

The Greenfield game began in familiar fashion, with Whittier and Murphy hitting back-to-back doubles, but the next three hitters struck out and Blue came up empty.

Greenfield took full advantage in their half of the first. Two hard hits and a sacrifice put them up 2-0, going into the second. Blue got a hit in the second, but a circus catch dashed their hopes, and they went back into the field still trailing 2-0.

Greenfield continued to hit in the second inning, but a pickoff by Liimatainen and two more K's for Tyler kept the deficit at two runs.

Turners took back the lead in the third. Murphy socked another boomer, and landed on second. She proceeded to steal third and scored on

a Myers sac. Then Liimatainen walked to put two runners on base, setting the table for Rode. With two strikes, and two outs, she rocketed the ball over the fence for a three-run home run, and Blue went up 4-2.

Greenfield wasn't done, however. They scored two runs in their third to knot the game at 4. Blue went 1-2-3 in the fourth, and Greenfield nosed their way ahead to take a 5-4 lead after four.

In the fifth, Rode tied it up with a deep shot to score Myers, but a home run off the top of the fence put Green ahead once again.

With only five outs left in the tank and Turners trailing 6-5, Tyler hit a grand slam. Both teams got runners on base in the seventh, but neither scored, and Turners took the game 9-6, preserving their perfect record.

Wednesday's softball game was part of a Greenfield/Turners Falls triple-header which also included baseball and girls tennis. By the way, the tennis team won their first match of the year – but more on that next week!



Turners' Steph Peterson applies a powerful overhead forehand stroke during her doubles game with teammate Maria Labelle as Greenfield hosted the Thunder for a tennis match on Wednesday.

OP ED

Ideology Masks Reality of Policing in Montague

By JEFF SINGLETON

TURNERS FALLS – As someone who attended many of the meetings of the police review committee on equity and the use of force last winter, and has reviewed the minutes and recordings of meetings I did not attend, I feel compelled to respond to the barrage of criticisms of that committee coming from several of its members. To me this is the triumph of ideology over the reality of policing in Montague, which is generally very progressive, as well as over the constructive work of two police review committees.

Deborah Frenkel and Maddox Sprengel both participated in the committee meetings I attended. They helped develop the agenda for that committee, and both helped write and voted for the final report. I enjoyed working with them, and thought the feeling was mutual.

Now, in two letters that have appeared in the *Montague Reporter*, they suggest that the entire process was imposed on them by the Montague selectboard, violated the message of the 2020 annual town meeting, and was flawed because it did not produce a plan to reduce police funding. (In fairness, the second letter was a bit more nuanced than this.)

Deborah and Maddox also sat through a public input meeting about the reports on May 17 that devolved into strident attacks on the police reports and the committees that produced them for containing a "white bias." These unfair

ideological attacks were directed at colleagues with whom Deborah and Maddox had been constructively working for months.

The notion that there was a consensus at the 2020 Annual Town Meeting that voted to level fund the police department is not supportable. The final vote to level fund was 38 to 35, hardly a consensus, and a broad range of opinions about local policing were expressed during the debate. Most members were probably hoping for a review of the department's use of force practices, which had driven the Black Lives Matter protests. That happened.

The two committees created to address policing in Montague took nearly three months to form. There was plenty of opportunity at open meetings to shape their agendas. At a meeting on September 22, selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz reviewed the "charges" of the committees, making it absolutely clear that the process was flexible and implementation would be up to the committees themselves.

By early November, both committees had settled in, with the equity/use of force committee focusing on a detailed analysis of police policies and data, and the community engagement committee focusing on a survey of local attitudes and experiences re policing. Deborah and Maddox both helped shape the former committee's agenda during this period.

Though not a member, I participated in most of the equity com-

mittee's meetings this past winter, which consisted of labor-intensive discussions of policies and data with police chief Chris Williams and Lieutenant Chris Bonnett. Deborah and Maddox appeared to be engaged in this effort, which seemed to be a great learning experience for all. Again they both helped write the final report in April and voted for it without strong criticism.

I understand that it is difficult to change the direction of a committee once you are on it and want to be a constructive member, but the solution is not to blast the process after the fact.

For its part, the community engagement committee conducted a survey of the opinions and experiences of town residents. The committee never pretended to use standard survey techniques, such as random sampling and weighting for demographic characteristics. For this it was accused of having a "white bias," but in fact the final sample of 412 people was relatively large, and the percentages of Black and Hispanic respondents were both higher than in the population as a whole. One gets the impression that the critics were upset because respondents had a positive view of local police.

I have a similar response to the complaint that this committee did not focus enough attention on those who did have complaints about the police. The committee solicited follow-up comments and received 26 responses, but in the end, none chose to meet with committee

members. This hesitancy is certainly understandable but at some point the police department or an oversight committee can not address complaints if they do not hear them. This problem is one of several loose ends that need to be addressed in the coming months.

A realistic budget proposal from the movement to cut police funding is another loose end. We have a police department of 17 full-time officers, two of whom serve in and are primarily funded by the school districts. This means that we generally have two officers on duty each shift.

Deborah, Maddox, and their allies seem to believe that two officers per shift, which many of us think is inadequate, should be significantly reduced, and the savings directed toward human services. It is time for those advocating this position to avoid the ideology and give us some preliminary proposals with numbers showing how this would work. We do not need another appointed town committee to do that. We have a good budget process that will begin in the fall of 2021.

By the way, I am also perfectly willing to discuss the current anti-racism ideology, which hangs over this issue like the proverbial elephant in the room. We do not need a selectboard-appointed committee for that, either.

Jeff Singleton lives in Turners Falls, and regularly works as a reporter for the Montague Reporter. The opinions expressed here are his own.

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FREE from page A1

since then they have grown an abundance of flowers to give away, for free, to anyone interested. Last year, prompted by the pandemic, they started adding more vegetables.

“I don’t mind making the investment in the community, I think it’s very important and wonderful,” Cheryl said.

About 16 volunteers helped with various aspects of the event from planting, potting, moving, sorting, and labeling plants, to collecting donations and directing traffic. On the first day they gave away around 5,000 pots of annual and perennial flowers, herbs and vegetable starts. By the end of the long weekend, Cheryl said, 12,750 individual plants found new homes, an estimate based on an average of three seedlings per pot.

“In the end, it was a hell of a lot of plants,” Cheryl said.

“I don’t think we’ve been crazy enough to ever estimate how much time we’ve put in,” said Eva. “It’s never been this big before. Last

year it was close, but this year was the biggest.”

In a near catastrophe this year, thousands of printed labels were made illegible by peeling and fading, but volunteers assembled to re-make every label with markers and popsicle sticks in time for the weekend giveaway.

“We were just tremendously relieved,” Cheryl said. “It was really good on so many levels.”

Cheryl said over 100 people stopped by to pick out plants throughout the weekend, many of them friends and community members. Nearly all the vegetable starts found new homes, except for some extra turnips.

“The absolute goal was to make sure, if we were giving away seeds, that folks who were food-insecure got something to plant,” Cheryl said. “We need bread, but we need roses, too.”

Looking to the future, Eva and Cheryl say they hope that a group of volunteers can continue their tradition so they can scale back the

amount of work that goes into growing thousands of flowers and vegetables from seed. They plan to meet with friends in the coming weeks to talk about the possibilities.

“I think the idea here is that it is a lot of work, it’s a lot of fun, and for us to keep this going we would need more help,” Cheryl said. “This could be the last time, because it’s a lot of work.”

Both women grew up in families that cherished gardening and had careers in education – Cheryl at UMass Amherst, Eva at the Collaborative for Educational Services – before they retired. Eva has been working the same land her whole life. She grew up next door, and turned an old barn of her parents’ into the house she and Cheryl live in today.

The original homestead was bought with an interest-free loan named after the benefactor, Charlotte “Lotta” Mignon Crabtree, through UMass’s original Stockbridge School of Agriculture. Two crab apple trees dedicated to the wealthy Gold Rush-era dancer and actress still stand on the property today.

“This kind of feels like it’s a continuation, in a different realm, of her gift,” Eva said.

Now in her free time Eva recreates digital 3-D maps of colonial landscapes used by Native Americans, matching the moon, sun and night sky with particular rock placements. She and Cheryl also make and sell their own honey.

“We both have been very lucky in our lives,” Cheryl said. “It’s not to say we haven’t struggled, but we’ve both been very lucky being able to give back. That is really a value that we hold.”



Customers browse the starts last Saturday.

TACO from page A1

Dew. “There’s also a possibility we’re going to do a Mexican brunch on Sunday mornings, with *chilaquiles* and *licuados*, which are similar to smoothies.”

“We have a new machine for *tacos al pastor* that has a spit,” added Mateos, who is originally from Mexico. “That’s the way that they made it in Mexico City, so it’s the real thing.... We want to have other food trucks as guests, once or twice a month, so maybe we can have more food options.”

The site is surrounded by Nova Motorcycles, in the former Williams Garage, which hosts the shaved-ice parlor Nice on weekends; Unity Skatepark; a softball field; and Pioneer Valley Brewing, which also offers outdoor seating.

“We’re happy to have their customers come over and get tacos, and people who come to us can go get beer,” said Dew. “It’s really turning into this second sector of downtown – there’s all these things happening in that relatively small area, and it’s really cool to be part of that.”

Sayre Anthony, who co-owns Nova Motorcycles and Nova Real Estate with his business partner Peter Chilton, said Santo Taco’s search for a stable location fell squarely into the company’s vision for the zone. “We want to put a building up, and then have the rest of it open for organic growth,” he said. “We worked with an architect to sketch up some ways to tie what we want to do here all together, so it’s not piecemeal.... These guys literally showed up in the middle of these plans.”

Nova’s original lots came with five buildings, and their current tenants range from Fire+Embers Hot Yoga to Upper Valley Cabin & Cottage, which builds tiny houses. Anthony said the company is now ready to move forward on its plans for the new building across the street, a single-story wooden structure comprised of large commercial spaces.

“It pencils out, and the town is very excited about it,” Anthony said. “Building costs are crazy right now, and who

knows if they’re just going to keep going up – so that could be something that sinks it – but we’re pushing ahead.”

All three entrepreneurs said Montague town officials have been encouraging of their ideas thus far. “I haven’t felt any obstacles – it’s been quite the contrary,” said Dew. “They always



Nova Motorcycles co-owner Sayre Anthony.

end everything with ‘Okay, let us know how we can help.’”

At Second Street and Avenue A, an ambitious proposal to erect a four-story building has recently been reduced to two stories, reportedly for lack of financing. Residential units on the top two floors have been eliminated from the plan.

Anthony said he does not anticipate environmental problems with Nova’s building site, as it is not believed to have been in or industrial use; a social club once located on the lot burned down years ago. The new building would be built on a concrete slab.

The food truck section of the lot was originally paved for a temporary skatepark which preceded the construction of the current park; it was then used as a storage lot by sculptor Tim DeChristopher, who sold it to Rich Becker in 2013 along with the Third Street building which now houses the brewery.

“There’s a lot of energy to do good things here, but now that I’m becoming a landlord – landlords are crazy, and they all want to be passive income absorbers without doing any work,” Anthony, who grew up in Greenfield, told the *Reporter*.

“You don’t want to develop and gentrify, right? But how do you develop without gentrifying? One of the answers to that question is if there’s people doing things, not just sitting here – we’re not just making luxury housing so people from Amherst can come up here and make the rents go up. If there’s small activity, if there’s business, then that’s a good driver of the micro-economy in the town.”

Future plans, he added, include extending the Nova Motorcycles building to the rear – to open up the front as a retail space and lobby, serving as a “stop-off” for motorcycle tourists – and perhaps, “ten years down the road,” to build again on the food court lot.

As for Santo Taco, Mateos and Dew envision expanding in their second year to serve gourmet hot dogs. They have already selected a local pickle company to provide the toppings.



TOWN OF LEVERETT

Notice of Liquor License Hearing

The Select Board of the Town of Leverett will hold a hearing at the request of the Village Cooperative Corporation (Village Co-op) for a restaurant license to serve wine and malt beverages on Tuesday 22nd June 2021 at 7 p.m. at the Leverett Town Hall. All interested parties may question or give testimony at this time. Written comments will be received by the Select Board at PO Box 300, Leverett, MA until June 21st 2021 at 5 p.m. and will be opened, publicly read, and incorporated into the minutes of the hearing.

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BACKSTORY from page A1

head commissioner was “chosen by and responsible to a five-man citizen Board of Nature Resources, not the Governor, and hence as independent as any state agency could possibly be.”

Engineers and power company reps met with the MDNR in 1964 and candidly suggested the Commonwealth turn over the area they wanted for the upper reservoir. At first MDNR said that wasn’t their mandate, but WMECo officials, while “admitting the commercial nature” of the project, stressed that they would be better at developing recreation opportunities than the state, and that “the company was prepared to entertain any reasonable possibilities in this direction.”

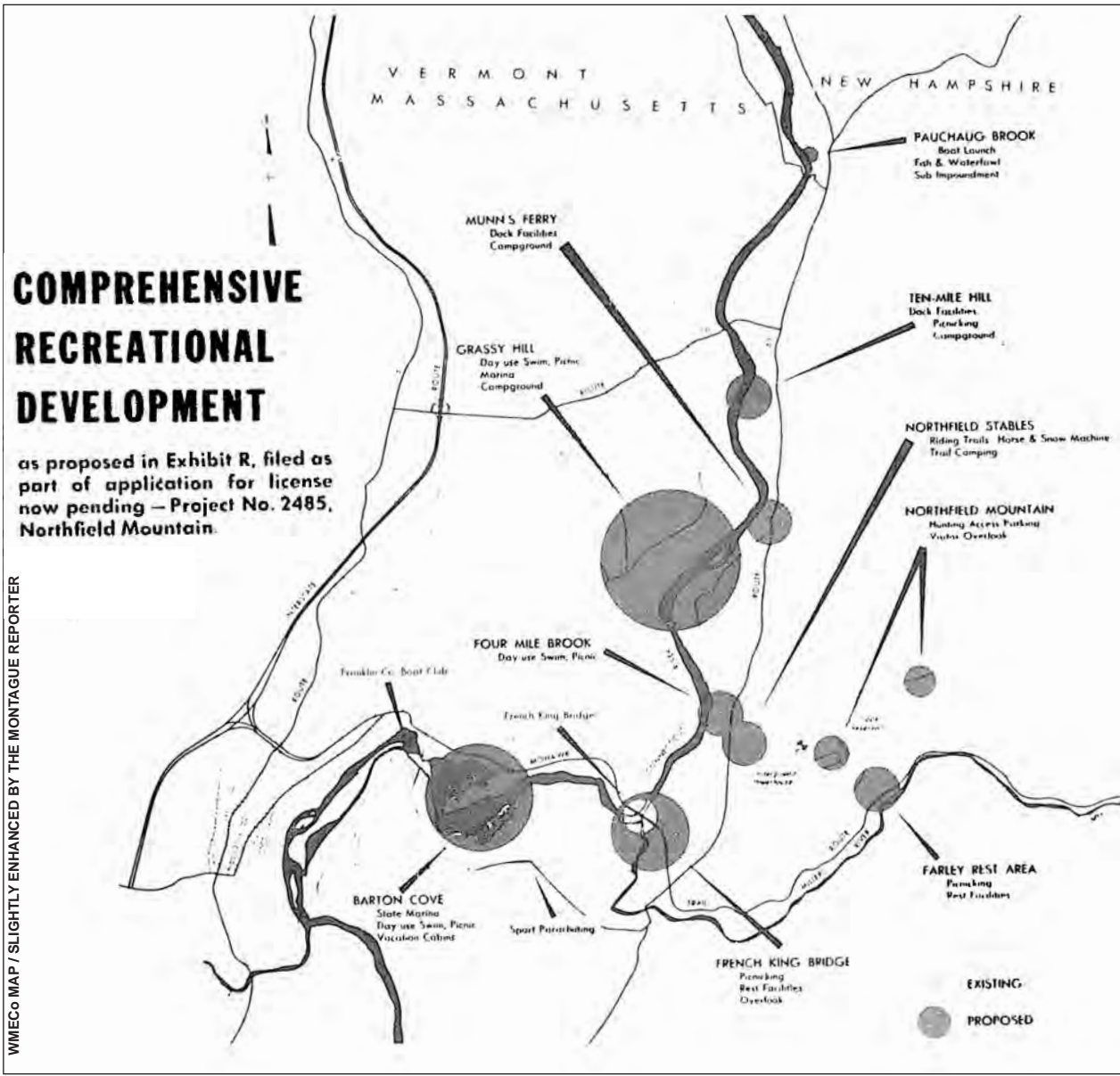
It seems that this argument – that a private company would be able to better develop recreational resources along the river – was convincing to MDNR. WMECo hired a Boston firm to make a “comprehensive outdoor recreation plan and report” for the “entire upper section of the Connecticut Valley.”

At the time, as now, there was a “major need for improved swimming, camping and picnic facilities in the region.” They proposed a complex of facilities including “scenic overlooks, riverside boat camping areas, municipal recreation facilities, fish and waterfowl impoundments, boat launching areas, wilderness, hiking, bridle and skimobile trails, day-use facilities, and one major new state park overlooking the Connecticut River” on lands they would “make available” [...] “to the Commonwealth, either by gift or long-term lease.”

Charles T. Main, Inc., the Boston firm hired to make this study, was a mechanical engineering firm, the same one designing the dams.

Northfield and Erving welcomed the project as additions to their tax base. John North, president of the Connecticut River Watershed Council – even then considered to be “the leading citizen group in the valley concerned with natural resources” – also spoke in favor of the project.

Another appealing part of the plan was that it would serve the



Foster's article reprinted this map from "Exhibit R," the power company's original proposal for recreational facilities in the Northfield Mountain region. These included a dock facility and campground at Munn's Ferry, a day-use swim and picnic area at Four Mile Brook, stables, riding trails, and trail camping at the Mountain itself, vacation cabins at Barton Cove, rest facilities at French King Bridge, and a marina, campground, and swim area upstream at "Grassy Hill."

water needs of Boston by moving water from the river to the Quabbin reservoir. This proposal, although never approved, seemed important in getting other state agencies, such as the Massachusetts Water Resources Commission, on board with the plan.

In short, the discussion became about net benefits to Boston, rather than what it should have been: a more nuanced discussion about weighing the public good against private gain by a corporation, and weighing a benefit to humans at a cost to the river.

Political Spin
MDNR was aware of the “un-

comfortable possibility” that it “could be accused of having been ‘bought’ by the utility with its enticing recreation and water supply proposal,” Foster wrote, so they needed the land to be transferred “under a separate but related land exchange.” They found one in Colrain: Catamount Hill, which they had been trying to get for a while but with no luck. WMECo’s skilled negotiators stepped in and convinced the owner to sell, and so the exchange was made.

Anyone wanting to figure out if it was an economically advantageous exchange wouldn’t be able to using just this paper, as here Foster’s numbers get a bit vague. He gave the original purchase price of the Northfield/Erving pump station land at \$5 per acre in 1923, but gave the current (1965) value of the land the state would receive in Colrain.

He included the revenue from the timber the Commonwealth would cut in Northfield and Erving, and concluded enthusiastically: “On all counts the proposed exchange would be advantageous to the Commonwealth!” (This will sound a bit familiar to those interested in how the Commonwealth exchanged state land in Sandisfield with Kinder Morgan not too long ago.)

Equally fuzzy was his assessment of the cost to the public for these recreational gains: “Ultimately, of course, either the consumer or the taxpayer bears the financial burden. In the case of the recreation improvements, for example, public bond issues supported the state development expenses; in the case of the utility expenditures, these could be counted toward the eventual rate base calculations.”

So we don’t think we got anything for free, and if you were a landowner on the edge of the river, you were subjected to those additional land takings to deepen the river-as-holding pond, too.

Because it was filed before electronic records, we have been unable to locate the original “Exhibit R,” the recreational plan first put forth by WMECo, except we know it was never carried out. In 1982 (*Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Reports*, Vol. 18 Par. 62,467), FERC ended up letting WMECo off the hook for boat access, among other things.

The downward revision of this part of the plan is what we are all dealing with now as we continue to negotiate for river recreation access.



Commentary
In reviewing this document, I feel there are a couple of essential points to make. The first is that these decisions about licensing and relicensing are important in their effects, so it’s also important to pay attention to the ways the decisions are framed.

There are other ways of looking at the use of the environment than economic. Foster himself credited the success of the Storm King environmental advocates to their framing of the argument as one for “environmental ethics,” what David Korten has called “the living economy.”

Juxtapose that approach with

what happened in Northfield, which seems to me to be a case of a corporation imposing their view of only money, and its pursuit, having value. The issue here is not, as Foster asserted, a matter of environment versus economics, but more an issue of reframing the conversation so that economics is not the only way to measure the value of everything – including the environment – in our lives.

Second, this case study, written as a guide for how more of these projects could be achieved, shows how much citizen input matters both on the level of advocacy, and on the level of political procedure. In New York, the Storm King pumped-storage unit was defeated, and the river retained its more wild state, because people cared enough to intervene on its behalf, and had the means to do so. In the Northfield case, FERC denied an appeal to its license decision, further shutting down the process.

It also shows especially the importance of voting people into office who share our values. This tale of how a state agency helped usher in a plan its chair felt was advantageous shows how much of what goes on in government goes on behind closed doors. As the recent industrial-scale solar array proposal at Four Star Farms also shows – Nate L’Etoile, as a paid lobbyist, sat in on meetings and helped the state write the laws that would later make it possible for his family to benefit from dual-use solar. This is not illegal, and from these two examples, seems to be how things get done.

As citizens, whose main representatives on the ground are unpaid members of small town boards, how can we hope to have enough time and energy to undo these deals at their end points? We can’t. We need to do better at choosing and holding accountable our politicians, and the processes that occur at the federal, state, and town levels – and bring out in the open what happens behind those closed doors in Boston.

Finally, I think a main point is that in the end, the corporation made an agreement, but didn’t stick to it – WMECo got out of the requirements of its license. It promised to develop recreational opportunities better than the state could, it failed to do so, and then it was let off the hook by the federal government (our friend, FERC).

Luckily, in Northfield and other river towns, we have dedicated citizens who have the time, inclination, and thick shells needed to take on the job of representing the interests of townspeople, and the health of the river.

As volunteers, these citizens take on tasks like researching erosion, attempting to protect archaeological sites, and proposing alternatives to the destructive water level flux that traps fish on the downstream side, and makes being around the dams and other river infrastructure so hazardous to people who would like to boat, fish, swim, and otherwise enjoy our river.

I hope if this article has done anything it has shown that the Northfield Mountain facility, and all the corporations that have made money off it and intend to in the future, owe us. They have a debt to pay from 50 years ago. It’s our river, and our relationship with the river, that are at stake.

Let’s not let them off the hook a second time.



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WENDELL from page A1

boards of health may be stricter than the state requires. The town hall will be open during the town meeting, however, to allow access to bathrooms.

Dump Capping

Wendell’s transfer station, the WRATS, was established in the 20th century in front of the town’s old landfill, which is still uncapped, its contents unknown and undocumented. Massachusetts has not been aggressive in pursuing the closure and capping of the landfill, but DeLorey said the town will need to do something with it. The good part, he said, is the Commonwealth’s patience; the bad part is the cost.

Brush and trees will need to be cleared from the top and from the perimeter. DeLorey recommended local loggers, the Fisher brothers, for tree work.

The perimeter will need a road, which must be surveyed and bulldozed, and Wendell does not own a bulldozer. Monitoring wells are also needed, both up-gradient of the landfill for a control and down-gradient to find what, if anything, is leaching from its contents. More holes will need to be drilled from the top to find the contents, and the depth to those contents.

Aldrich added that there will be an annual cost of monitoring the test wells.

Road Crew

Because the road crew was short one worker, road supervisor Rich Wilder has worked overtime and not taken his authorized vacation time. Town policy states that vaca-

tion time may not be accrued, but the board voted to allow this one-time exception.

Pay for Wendell’s road workers has fallen behind that of comparable neighboring towns. New hires earn less during their 90-day probation period. DeLorey said the starting pay should be raised to the regular pay to encourage people to apply and work here.

Tanner agreed, “if we can find a way.”

Tanner also said the recycling picture is changing, and now 85% of the \$90 per ton trucking cost is offset by payment for recycled materials.

Police Oversight

Selectboard chair Dan Keller proposed a police services oversight committee that would meet quarterly with three representatives from Wendell and three from Leverett, which is now covering policing for both towns.

Selectboard member Laurie DiDonato suggested that Leverett have four representatives, to give the committee an odd number and to reflect Leverett’s higher population. As a member of Wendell’s police succession committee, Keller offered to represent the selectboard on the oversight committee and provide some continuity.

Windows and Sign

The historic commission had no objection to proposed new windows for the town hall. Money for the project will come from money returned to the rehab repayment account from new lights at the town hall, and from the solar array that was authorized but not built on

the office building. Town meeting approval is needed.

The selectboard approved a request from the North Quabbin Community Coalition to place a small sign on the common for people to photograph as a stage of a scavenger hunt that will be held in August.

Annual Town Meeting

Board members signed and approved for posting the annual town meeting warrant.

The warrant for Wendell’s annual town meeting on June 12 would authorize a FY’22 operating budget of \$3,184,997, as well as \$165,847 in payment for debt service on the town building construction, Mahar rehabilitation, broadband construction, a backhoe, a bucket loader, and a dump truck/sander.

It would put \$195,154 of free cash into stabilization, and take \$160,000 from stabilization to reduce the tax rate.

Article 6 would set the amounts in revolving funds for the wiring inspector, plumbing inspector, recreation committee, recycling, as well as a newly created town hall kitchen revolving fund.

Articles 26 and 27 would authorize putting money left from replacing the town hall lights, and money not spent putting solar panels over the office building roof, back into a rehabilitation account.

Article 28 would take \$9,500 out of that for replacing town hall windows.

Article 32 would create an elected municipal light plant board, and Article 33 would eliminate the current appointed board.



VIRTUAL from page A1

local officials, among others, who say they have found virtual meetings to be more transparent and lead to more public participation than the traditional in-person public meeting, or who may still have concerns about public indoor gathering.

The Governor’s bill, currently before the Ways and Means committee in the state Senate, would extend the modifications of the Open Meeting Law allowing virtual meetings until September 1. It would also extend until November 29 relaxation of the state permitting process that allowed restaurants and bars to expand their outdoor seating during the pandemic.

Finally the bill would also extend current restrictions on so-called “balance billing” – bills from health care providers to patients for the difference between a service charge and an insurance reimbursement – for COVID-related health services until January 21, 2022. Baker called the controversial practice “surprise billing.”

In a letter to the legislature, Geoffrey Beckwith, executive director of the Massachusetts Municipal Association, endorsed the Governor’s bill. “With many residents yet to be vaccinated, and immuno-compromised, officials and members of the public unable to achieve full protection from the coronavirus, it is imperative that we continue the remote meeting option for local government,” he wrote.

Beckwith went on to urge the state to make the virtual meeting option permanent. “With your support, Massachusetts can act on the innovations and lessons learned during the past 14 months, and use them to improve government operations, transparency, and public engagement to ensure a swifter recovery for our communities,” he wrote in testimony sent to the Senate Ways and Means Committee.

Local reaction to the state-level debate over extending virtual meetings varied. At the Montague selectboard meeting on May 24 there was an extended discussion about the town continuing the virtual option, returning to public meetings, or implementing a “hybrid” of the two. Town administrator Steve Ellis suggested that the town may have the capacity to go to hybrid meetings, but warned there would be “growing pains.”

The board directed Ellis to send a letter to the town’s representatives in the state legislature urging them to support continuing the virtual option

after June 15.

Ray Purington, the Gill town administrator, noting that the selectboard would be holding its first in-person meeting in months with the finance committee Wednesday night, told the *Reporter* that the board had not discussed extending the virtual option. “I think our board would support that,” he said, but added that he feared new legislation could also create more “regulations and guidelines.”

“We need to keep the [final] decision at the local level,” Purington said.

Wendell selectboard chair Dan Keller said the selectboard had recently met in person, and “all were happy to be back together.” The board did not discuss the state legislation, but Keller said that “I don’t feel any inclinations from the boards to extend the time on virtual meetings, and I personally would strongly oppose changing the open meeting law to allow virtual permanently. I wouldn’t be surprised if it does come up in the future.”

The narrow timeline for approving the extension of the virtual option could become a problem. The Ways and Means committee held a public input session on the Governor’s bill on Tuesday, and on Wednesday, and a joint committee on state oversight held a hearing on related legislation that may require cities and towns to implement a hybrid option for public input, even if they go to in-person meetings.

The latter bill would require towns to apply for a “hardship waiver” from the Attorney General if they are unable to provide remote access to the public, just the sort of new mandate officials like Purington and Keller say they fear.

This also raises the possibility that bills with differing provisions could pass the House and Senate, which could require a so-called “conference committee” to iron out the differences. If the result differed significantly from the Governor’s proposal, that could lead in turn to more negotiations and votes by the legislature.

Any legislation must be passed and signed by June 15, less than two weeks away. According to state senator Joanne Comerford, “Concern about the timeline is well founded. The Governor announced the June 15th date, [and] the legislature is reacting as quickly as possible to a timeline created by the Governor’s announcement.”



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LOOKING BACK:
10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here’s the way it was on May 26 and June 2, 2011: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Third Community Garden
Approved in Turners Falls

Green thumbs scored another small victory in downtown Turners Falls as the selectboard voted to approve the use of a plot of town-owned land near the former Williams Way in Unity Park as a new community garden on Monday. The two existing community gardens downtown are currently full to capacity with waiting lists.

Parks and recreation director Jon Dobosz and a small group of gardeners came before the selectboard to present the plans for the new space. Chair Mark Fairbrother said he was under the impression the garden was going to be built on top of a paved area and would require special drainage, but the maps presented showed the area as a patch of ground recently cleared of debris to the west of Williams Way by the department of public works.

Town planner Walter Ramsey said though the area was not paved, it was at one time used as an industrial right of way, and town administrator Frank Abbondanzio mentioned some previous soil testing had revealed petroleum in the area.

Dawn Montague, who coordinates the existing garden at Third and L streets, said plans for the new space include raised beds to address drainage and soil quality issues.

Powered By Sunlight,
Pickle Biz Turns Ten

Local entrepreneurs Dan Rosenberg and Addie Rose Holland, of Montague, are celebrating a decade of pickling locally grown vegetables today as their business, Greenfield-based Real Pickles, turns ten.

Rosenberg and Holland are also commemorating the tenth anniversary by “flipping the switch” on their production facility’s brand new solar power system, a move they say compliments their

social values and commitment to sustainable operation.

Real Pickles offers a variety of organic pickled vegetables, including Dill Pickles, Garlic Dill Pickles, Sauerkraut, Ginger Carrots, Organic Beets, and Tomatillo Hot Sauce. Their products are found on menus of local restaurants.

Half of Wendell State Forest
To Be Exempt from Logging

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation recently announced proposed new zone designations for its forest holdings. Under the proposal, 60% of DCR’s holdings would be exempt from logging. This departure from its previous orientation comes after a Forest Futures Visioning Process carried out by a panel of experts and a public committee, including public hearings last fall.

In Wendell, the proposed zones would include “Parkland” at the Ruggles Pond Recreation Area, the newly cleared northern end of Wickett Pond, and a piece of state forest at the Jerusalem Hill lookout. Parkland would be managed for active recreation, with careful attention to “ecosystem services.”

“Reserves” would include a broad swath of state forest in the northeast part of town, and a parcel across the road from the Wendell Recycling and Transfer Station a quarter mile toward New Salem.

The rest of the land in Wendell State Forest would remain categorized as “Woodlands,” harvestable under “excellent management practices” that aim to maximize certain species of wildlife. The woodlands zone would include all the southwestern areas of the Wendell State Forest.

Members of the recently formed citizens group the Wendell Forest Conservation Alliance wrote they “would prefer all of Wendell State Forest to be held in Reserve status. But in consideration of other views in town, we are proposing Reserve status at least for the entire northern block of the Wendell State Forest, everything north of Farley Road.”



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FACES & PLACES



Above: Joe R. Parzych took this extra-close-up shot of Northern Construction Services' crew making progress on the General Pierce Bridge last month. The workers were preparing to work on scaffolding on the side of the steel-truss bridge. Below: Ed Gregory captured the "White" bridge undergoing an under-deck inspection on May 22. "After the upper or 'White' suspension bridge (1872) was destroyed by the flood of 1936, a replacement/temporary bridge was erected in its place in 1937... the bridge you cross today," Ed reminds us. Thanks to both photographers for their ongoing efforts to document the bridge work taking place around us this season, and sharing it with our readers!



ED GREGORY PHOTO

Blake Town Forest (Gill, MA)

QUIET ENJOYMENT

In 2009, the Franklin Land Trust acquired 173 acres on Hoe Shop Road in Gill from the estate of Acilio R. Sandri. After permanently protecting most of it with a conservation restriction, the land trust gifted 162.5 acres to the Town of Gill. This scenic and ecologically diverse property is now known as the Blake Town Forest.

A brochure and trail map are available at the kiosk at the main parking area at 76 Hoe Shop Road.

Red: Wetland Trail

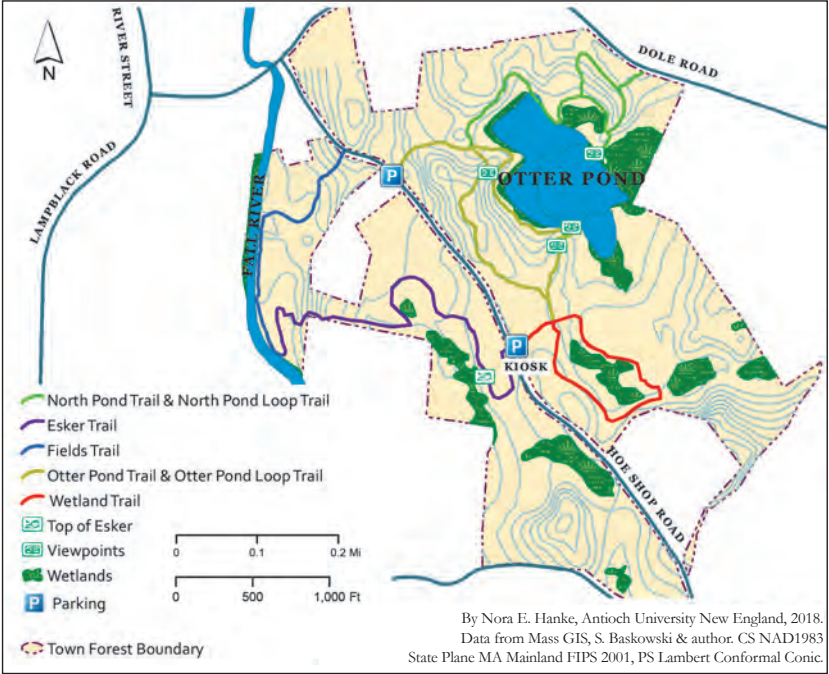
Easy walking; 0.5 mile. Starting at the kiosk parking area, walk behind the gate and proceed along the old access road.

This trail is a loop that can be entered from either of two trailheads on the right side of the road. From the trailhead further from the gate you can see a meadow to your left and a view down to Otter Pond. A home was once situated here, and you can find a large old sugar maple, a catalpa tree, and a Chinese chestnut. The forest you traverse is made up of pine, hemlock, and hardwoods, with mountain laurel bushes an added draw when they flower in late spring.

Gold: Otter Pond Trail and Otter Pond Loop Trail

Includes hills; 0.5 mile and 0.3 mile, respectively. A short walk from the gate at the kiosk parking area takes you to the entrance on the left. Proceed up a piney woodland trail. The loop trail branches off from your left side before you reach the height of land, and passes through forest that includes American chestnut saplings, remnants of great trees killed about 100 years ago by the chestnut blight.

The loop reconnects to the Otter Pond Trail at a junction with the North Pond Trail. The Otter Pond habitat showcases water lilies, cat tails and beaver lodges. You may



By Nora E. Hanke, Antioch University New England, 2018. Data from Mass GIS, S. Baskowski & author. CS NAD1983 State Plane MA Mainland FIPS 2001, PS Lambert Conformal Conic.

see an otter or a beaver, waterfowl, or a red-tailed hawk. Notice the beaver-carved hemlocks and beech, and on a steep hillside between the main trail and the loop, a stately stand of American beech.

If you continue out to the road, a short, 1/10-mile walk takes you to the start of the Fields Trail (blue on the map).

Green: North Pond Trail & Loop

Steep hill on main trail, hilly loop trail; 0.5 mile and 0.4 mile, respectively. From the junction of the Otter Pond and Otter Pond Loop Trails, this route takes you north-eastward. Near the first summit, an impressive, old American chestnut snag leans by the trail. The tree died around the 1920s from introduced chestnut blight, but the wood is very rot-resistant. Before the blight, this species constituted about 1/4 of the trees in Eastern woodlands.

Descending the hill, notice many tall, old pines with crooked trunks and numerous lower branches: signs they grew in full sunshine. You next enter a hemlock stand and the pond-side. A loop up the esker

extends your forest walk, and connects to Dole Road.

Purple: Esker Trail

Several steep stretches; 0.6 mile. Start from the trailhead across the road from the kiosk on Hoe Shop Road. You approach and traverse an esker: a winding ridge of stratified sand and gravel, remains of our last glaciation 10,000 to 12,000 years ago. From the trail's high point, a wetland is visible downhill to the west. The big, old white pines provide nest sites for large birds, and denning sites for mammals. A single, old Sugar Maple at the property boundary (a "wolf tree") attests to a previous pasture that was there.

Please be careful to stay on the trail, which makes several twists and turns, especially as it lies close to private property in places. After crossing a short bridge at the bottom of a hill, the trail enters a field which you skirt to access the Fall River, a gentle creek in this location.

Map courtesy Nora E. Hanke. Text modified from a Gill Town Forest Committee brochure.

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FEATURES@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER JUNE 3, 2021

Above: Long-time Montague Center residents Lillian and Allen Fiske – a Navy veteran and Army nurse – were remembered for their military service and local contributions during the village’s Memorial Day ceremony on Sunday. With temperatures in the high 40s and a steady rain, 38 folks attended. Speakers, the placement of flowers, and a wreath honored veterans.

ArtBeat by Trish Crapo
Forty-Five Years Of Making

BRATTLEBORO – Jackie Abrams walked into a shop called the Basket Shop in Chesterfield, Massachusetts over forty years ago, and it changed her life. Abrams fell in love with the beautiful, functional baskets that owner Benjamin Higgins made using hand-pounded white ash splits. She loved everything about it – the look of the baskets, the tools used to create them, even the smell of the shop.

After convincing the 81-year-old Higgins that a girl could make baskets (she was 26 at the time), she apprenticed with him for six months, learning the techniques he had learned from his father, and that his son-in-law still uses to this day.

Abrams spent the next thirteen years creating functional baskets. Then, she began to explore the livelier colors, less traditional materials, and non-functional forms that have become iconic to her work, which has gone on to be included in important collections, including at the National Museum of Scotland and the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, DC.

Jackie Abrams: 45 Years of Making, a retrospective exhibit of her work, runs now through July 4 at Mitchell-Giddings Fine Arts in Brattleboro. There are many pieces of work on display, and more in the gallery’s storage. All the work, with pricing, can be viewed on the gal-



The Precarious Shelters series by Jackie Abrams was inspired by the many precarious living arrangements she witnessed while traveling to teach basketry skills around the world and in the US. Ten percent of the proceeds from each Precarious Shelter sale goes to Groundworks Collaborative in Brattleboro.

lery’s website.

“These are, for the most part, my favorite pieces that I kept for myself,” Abrams said.

The exhibit includes samples from the many series Abrams has worked on over the years, as well as work from three different collaborative projects: “Untitled,” with fiber artist Marilyn Moore; “Material Conversation,” with glass artist Josh Bernbaum, and several pieces Abrams made with artist Diedre Scherer.

“Collaboration benefits everyone,” Abrams said. “Working collaboratively expands my thinking.”

As well as learning about other people’s processes, thoughts, and materials, she often realizes new possibilities in her own materials and techniques as she sees them through another’s eyes.

“Together we develop a piece that would not have existed with either of us working alone,” Abrams said. “One plus one equals three.”

see **ARTBEAT** page B8

Reflections on Encountering Judah the Prophet

By DAVID JAMES

LAKE PLEASANT – With a proverbial heavy heart I read with great interest Rob Skelton’s front-page story in the May 6 edition of the *Montague Reporter* about the physical death and dismantling of Montague Farm, a place I paid many a visit to in 1969-’70 and formed fast friendships over the following multiple decades, particularly with the late Steve Diamond and the very much alive and publishing Tom Fels, now of southern Vermont.

From 2001 to 2008 I wrote a regular column for the *Greenfield Recorder* focusing on people, places, and religious/spiritual practices in the Franklin County area. The original version of this piece, about meeting one of the most memorable characters encountered in my 79 years on earth at Montague Farm, was published in 2003.

The story is also contained in a book I am about to self-publish, entitled *Alternate Routes to Paradise... from Western Massachusetts to Infinity*.



NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION

“God is the spirit in man... If I see the light I know where I am and where I am going.”

– Count Leo Nikolayevich Tolstoy

Thirty four years ago I came to Franklin County, Massachusetts, as a founding member of a “mini commune.” We were a small group, first of five, and never more than 10, including several children. Our base was a house and two barns, 40 acres, but no mule, rented from a music professor at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. It was located in Warwick halfway between the dairy and pig farm of the late Arthur Bowers, the contrarian scourge of his community, and a now defunct minimum-security state prison camp.

As was customary then at communes sprouting in this area like proverbial weeds – to the amazement and chagrin of residents of host communities – home-and-home exchanges were common for the communards. Because of proximity and because one of our members was involved with a young woman from Hatfield in neighboring Hampshire County who had a sister involved with

see **JUDAH** page B4



WEST ALONG THE RIVER
JUST CALL IT SUMMER

By DAVID BRULE

ERVINGSIDE – It’s been a busy month of May down here on The Flat, our little neighborhood on the edge of the west-flowing river. It’s been spring, fall, and summer all rolled into one.

All the flowering trees, dogwood, cherry, crabapple, the heritage Baldwin, are flowering at the same time. The blossoms billow in the warm winds coming up from the south.

But weeks ago back on May 4, chill October weather made us wonder if the spring would ever come! Cold rain, heavy wool sweater, a roaring fire on the hearth. The caprices of early May caught us by surprise. Cold spring had lurched back again from the promises and hints of the coming summertime.

That cold mood didn’t last long and within days we were gazing amazed at how the landscape was being transformed in front of our eyes, without having to lift a finger. New life flowers all by itself with little coaxing other than a light warm rain from time to time, a little sunshine too, and then, transformation!

Eagle wings overhead. Our tribal friends tell us he is taking a message to the Creator, as if He hadn’t yet gotten the news of the springtime Resurrection. The lilacs let me in on the secret, the catbird whispered it in my ear, and then cut loose with a string of her quirky malarkey bird imitations.

This month of changes flows swiftly by. How to count such glorious days and why bother? The dogwood has been flowering for

a record three weeks, as have the Doug Smith lilacs seemingly rising from the dead. We call them the Doug Smith lilacs since we got them from Uncle Doug’s yard the summer he had passed away and his neat house and lawn up on Pleasant Street were sold out of the family for good.

Even the Montmorency cherry tree is putting out an unexpected riot of blossoms. This tree is celebrated in this house for its past productions of cherries destined to be preserved in vodka. The jars will be put up on a shelf until its time for a Christmas treat. In late December we will open the lid to savor a whiff and tasty reminder of distant past spring. And this May, without a late killing frost to damage cherry blossoms, another bumper crop is on its way.

May’s morning brought out the virtuoso singing of our wood thrush, back from the rainforests of Central America, and ready to set up housekeeping in our dense greenwood just beyond the garden’s grass. The red-eyed vireo too provides the *intermezzo*, but someone should clue him in that he needs to respect the rest symbol on his page of sheet music.

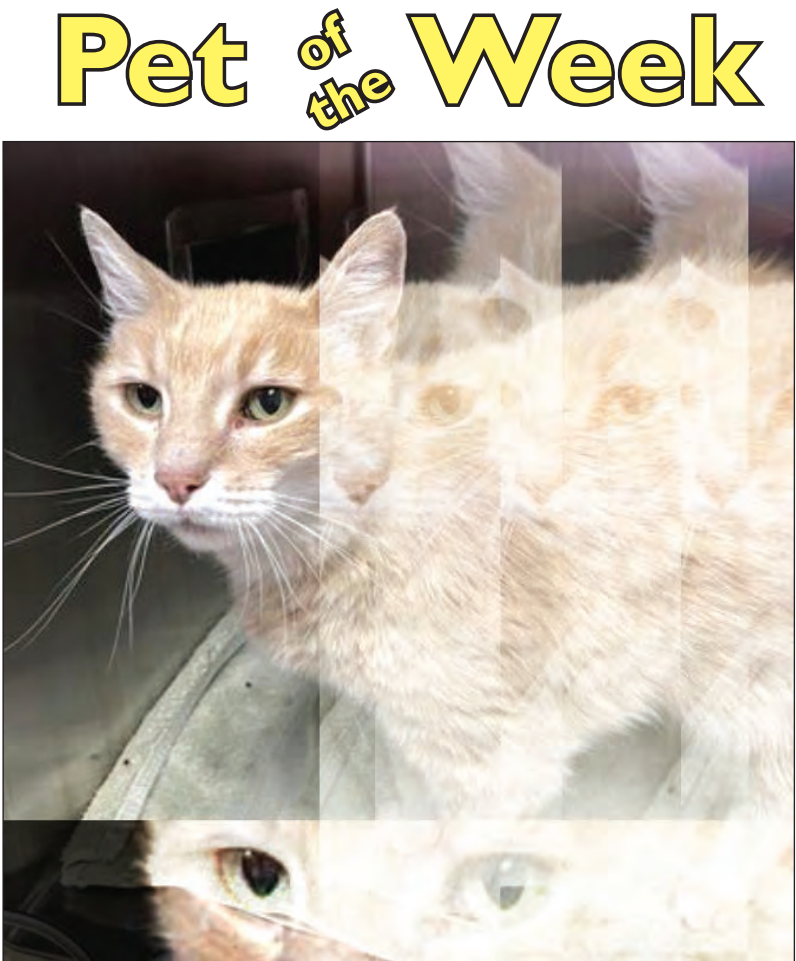
His breathless inspired singing will last all summer, wafting down from the high treetops. The great crested flycatcher stately moves from bare black locust branch to clothesline, back too from the rainforests to survey his summer domain.

The Blue Peter rhododendron has just opened, adding busy Mae West flounces to the flowering

see **WEST ALONG** page B2



Great crested flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*).



“BRISTOL”

Bristol is a sweet older gal. She is described as affectionate, kind, and calm. She loves pets and likes to talk to you with her little old lady meow! She loves going outside, so would most likely enjoy a home where she has access to the outdoors as well as inside.

She has never lived with cats, but has shown a strong dislike for them here so would prefer to be your only cat. We do not know if she has lived with dogs, but may prefer a home

without them as well.

Change is hard, after all, and being an older girl she is set in her ways. Don't miss out on this cute little cat!

Interested in adopting? Animals at Dakin are available only in Springfield currently. Contact adoption staff at springfield@dakinhumane.org and include your name and phone number. For more information, call (413) 781-4000 or visit www.dakinhumane.org.

Senior Center Activities

JUNE 7 THROUGH 11

GILL and MONTAGUE

The Gill Montague Senior Center will be resuming aerobics and chair exercise classes on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 10:15 a.m. and 11 a.m. respectively beginning on June 14. The weekly knitting circle at 1 p.m. on Mondays will resume on June 7.

Monthly Brown Bag on the first Thursday of the month, Foot Clinic on the second Wednesday, and the Western Mass Food Bank Parking Lot Pantry on the third Wednesday have continued through the pandemic and are all ongoing. Drop-in hours, other regular programs, and meals may be added by the end of June. Un-vaccinated guests and participants will be required to wear face masks.

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

ERVING

Senior Center director Paula Betters writes:

“Erving Senior Center is still

Senior Grocery Hours

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Senior hours from 7 to 8 a.m.

(413) 772-0435

Foster's:

Senior hours from 7 to 8 a.m.

(413) 773-1100

Green Fields Market:

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(413) 773-9567

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Senior hours from 6 to 7:30 a.m.

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WEST ALONG from B1

exuberance of the colorscape. The catbird bathes in a birdbath *baignoire* of floating dogwood petals. What luxury! No one enjoys a deep bath like a summery catbird near the end of May.

Grandmother Hannah's peonies rise up, vigorous and thriving as every spring, the same as when she planted them in 1930. She's been gone for more than fifty years, but her peonies still remind us of her name and her faraway look of Irish melancholy.

When you live in your ancestral home, where generations going back to the 1880s have done the best they could to get by, the place is alive with the voices of those who have gone before. But it is not sad. I feel surrounded and wrapped in what they all left here and in the thoughts that still linger.

Then the rosebreasted grosbeak, all black and white and red, snaps me back from such spiritual musings. The oriole flashes by, so close that wings push a breeze across my right ear, a message from Hannah. "Enjoy all this, before it's a hundred years from now, and you're not here anymore!" The thrush begins again. This will be a good day.

So in spite of the cold drizzle this Sunday, I say Just Call It Summer regardless of what the calendar, the Almanac, and thermometer say. The stage is set, the players are all in their places, lines are rehearsed, and

we're all waiting for the curtain to rise on June. Have you noticed or does someone have to point that out to you? In a way, that is my self-appointed task, for which I am paid absolutely nothing. Except for the pleasure of leading you out here to see what you're missing.

If you do get up from your chair and venture out, and now without a mask, you will see for yourself what I'm talking about. Get an early start on it now, enjoy it now, summer is here for the asking, right outside your door!

*Ever'thing you hear and see
Got some sorto interest...
Mr. Bluejay, full o' sass,
In them baseball clothes o'his...
Sportin' round the yard
Like he owned the premises...*

*When June comes – clear my throat
with wild honey...
Whoop out loud! And throw my hat!
June wants me, and I'm to spare!*

– James Whitcomb Riley (1849-1916)

Check out David's website at riverstoriesdavidbrule.com.

By LILITH WOLINSKY

MONTAGUE CITY – While I live in the tiny, ever-so-slightly hilly, and almost water-bound village of Montague City, Denver, situated solidly on the vast, dry, and pale yellow of the Great Plains, with jagged mountains looming in the background, is my hometown. It has been called the Queen City, but when I grew up we were unaware of this status, and used the words “sleepy” and “cowtown” instead. Its sprawling, flat grid hearkens back to its agricultural past, complete with a huge annual stock show and rodeo, which began 115 years ago, and lends the town a fresh manure smell for sixteen days straight in the bitter cold of January.

For decades, people from Wyoming, Nebraska, and Kansas came to Denver to eat in sophisticated restaurants, stay in nice hotels, get their cultural fix via plays and museums, buy fancy clothing and cars, and purchase elegant pastries with which to stuff their freezers for the upcoming year.

For those who lived there, it was an easy and affordable place to go to school, try new things, and discover who you were. It wasn't flashy, and it didn't have the large clusters of art or cultural diversity that big coastal cities have, but whatever you wanted you could find, in some capacity. Immigrant communities including Hmong, Russian, Mexican, Eritrean, Japanese, Iranian and Greek, and large and vibrant Black and Chicano communities brought diversity to our schools and workplaces, and enriched our culinary and busi-

ness landscapes. Sexual minorities flocked there from the more rural and conservative surrounding areas and Denver had its first gay bar in 1939.

There were enough Jews for multiple synagogues, plus a mikvah; 24-hour bus service up Colfax Avenue; public adult education; '70s-style co-ops where you actually bagged beans and rice as your ticket to admission; tree-lined streets; art cinema; good new and used bookstores and record shops; really horrible first-wave vegetarian restaurants; and funky galleries in dilapidated buildings at the edge of town, available in exchange for “fixing the place up,” if you were lucky. Designer parks, big pink and orange sunsets, and an abundance of historic homes, built with the proceeds of the 1860s Gold Rush, completed the ambiance.

Denver, with its renowned friendliness, outdoorsy culture, and 300 days of sunshine per year, began to be “discovered” about 30 years ago as those seeking refuge from their crazed and expensive edge-of-America existence flooded into its sunny affordability. Entire new neighborhoods and multiple stadiums were built, as highways were widened, and skyscrapers climbed ever faster and higher.

In 2012, marijuana was legalized, and an additional influx of people and cash surged through the state, consuming all that remained that was sleepy and easy and gentle about this place. Property values and taxes soared, and those who called Denver home for generations could no longer live there, including my family, who have been Color-

dans for over a century. The Klan, present in the 1920s and claiming the governor, the mayor, both the State House and Senate, and multiple judgeships, couldn't chase my family away, but dereliction of duty via urban planning did us in.

I just got back from a whirlwind taking-care-of-family-business vacation, and have Denver on the brain, which, right now, is a little like having water in my ear – uncomfortable, and I just can't shake it. The city I knew like the back of my hand, and which has been changing steadily for decades, is now almost unrecognizable to me.

Cottages with flowering yards are gone in favor of dense, multi-story buildings called slot homes – no street frontage, built right to the sidewalk, painted in gloomy shades of dark green and gray, and casting long shadows over those down below. These homes, the antithesis of human-scale architecture, have now been forbidden, but too late for the multiple neighborhoods, predominantly those inhabited by poor and working-class people of color, whose character and community have been irretrievably altered.

Homelessness has soared, and tent cities abound in and near downtown – white and gray nylon bubbles tightly packed between shopping carts, cardboard boxes, clothing strewn about, and the other accoutrement of life on the streets. It is painful to see those gathered there: stooped and gray-haired, wheelchair bound, young people with the wear and tear of addiction on their faces. These “cities” are shuffled around during “sweeps” at the behest of the town, making the provision of services to those who live within them almost impossible, as inept and very likely amoral town leaders apply the standard of immediate profit to all decisions.

Denver, that sunny place of my youth, the indelible print upon me, has sold itself to the highest bidder. It has gone from being a place with a dusty, somewhat worn, but truly diverse social fabric, to a place where beauty, youth, and energy, and the profit to be gained from each, are the only valued currencies. I dream of the town it used to be, and mourn what it has become.

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Montague Community Television News

Day of Remembrance

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

GREAT FALLS – The Nolumbeka Day of Remembrance took place at Peskeomskut Park on May 16, and MCTV was there to record the beautiful songs and speeches. The Nolumbeka Project also produced a video of their Mishoon project, in which they create and launch a traditional dugout canoe.

Both of these videos and more are available on the MCTV Vimeo page, which can be found linked to our website, *montaguetv.org*, under the tab “Videos.” All community members are welcome to submit their videos to be aired on Channel 17, as well as featured on Vimeo.

MCTV is always available to

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

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

Something going on you think others would like to see? If you get in touch, we can show you how easy it is to use a camera and capture the moment. Contact us at (413) 863-9200 or *infomontaguetv@gmail.com*.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Handing Things To People; Small Brush Fire; Bear; Cleaning Lady Undistressed; Fountain Found Foul

Monday, 5/24

3:01 p.m. State police advise they took a call for an erratic operator on Route 2 who just went over the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge into Turners; advised they were not staying in correct travel lane. Referred to an officer.
4:23 p.m. Caller reporting a two-car accident on Millers Falls Road. MPD officers and TFFD responding. Officer requesting Rau’s for both vehicles; advises both operators have been transported to Baystate

Franklin Medical Center. Citation issued to one operator for failure to use care in stopping.
5:15 p.m. Report of suspicious gray station wagon outside Connecticut River Liquor and Wine selling dope; caller states it is the same car that was there last week. Referred to an officer.
8:06 p.m. A 46-year-old Turners Falls man was arrested on a probation warrant.

Tuesday, 5/25

12:37 a.m. Caller from Avenue A states it sounds like a possible domestic incident or fight next door; states it sounds like the people in the upstairs apartment are drunk and yelling and screaming. Quiet upon officer’s arrival; no answer at door.
9:22 p.m. Alarm company reporting resident on Park Villa Drive requested an officer and believes someone is trying to get into their home. Area checked; no one outside; advised caller to call back if she sees anyone.

Wednesday, 5/26

7:47 a.m. Caller from Turners Falls Road reporting that her neighbor just returned home, slammed the door on her way inside, then turned her music up very loud. Caller advises music is audible in caller’s apartment as well as outside. Ongoing issue. Delay due to call volume. Advised caller that an officer would be sent; also advised to report to her landlord.
9:31 a.m. Caller from Hunting Hills requesting to have on record that a bear came through her property last night. No damage; no livestock injured. Caller has already contacted Environmental Police.
9:45 a.m. Annoying/harassing phone calls received by dispatch.
10:44 a.m. Party into station complaining of unregistered vehicles and boats on neighbor’s property on Meadow Road, as well as other junk items that are visible from the reporting party’s property which abuts the property in question. Advised of options. Party has already been working with the board of health, has consulted with his attorney, and has put up “No Trespassing” signs on his property.
11:15 a.m. Report from Bridge Street of small reddish-tan dog who appears to be neglected. Caller advises dog’s fur is badly matted and the dog is severely emaciated. Caller has seen the owner walking the dog around the neighborhood, most recently yesterday. Animal control officer checked on dog, who is OK; the dog

is 15 years old. Owner has dog’s vet records from Dr. Brown’s office.
2:20 p.m. 911 hangup call mapping to Turners Falls Road received by Shelburne Control. Upon callback, party said “Oh, s**t” and hung up. Officer spoke with Bernard Construction employee; accidental dial.
2:32 p.m. Report of suspicious male handing things to people on Fourth Street. Delay due to call volume. Officer advised he will pass info along to narcotics detective.
4:16 p.m. Two-vehicle accident with injuries, fluids, and airbag deployment. One party has a burn to her arm from the airbag. Shelburne Control and PD units advised. Rau’s requested for one vehicle.
5:55 p.m. Report of large tree limb hanging over Masonic Avenue; one lane still passable. All units tied up; officer requests call be placed to DPW. DPW tree warden advised.
6 p.m. Multiple callers reporting brush fire on Turners Falls Road; one caller estimated 15 feet by 15 feet. Shelburne Control and MPD officer advised. Original caller called back advising he was able to put out the fire; still smoldering, but flames are out at this time. FD still responding.
6:17 p.m. Report of smoke coming from the top of a utility pole on Paradise Parkway. Shelburne Control advised.
9:38 p.m. Caller from Montague City Road reporting that his upstairs neighbors are being loud, thumping on the floors. Caller advises he is trying to sleep. Ongoing issue. Referred to an officer.

Thursday, 5/27

6:13 a.m. Caller reporting tree down blocking Ferry Road. DPW advised.
6:55 a.m. Annoying/harassing phone calls received by dispatch.
4:58 p.m. GPD requesting MPD officer for person search for a female prisoner. Services rendered.
6:45 p.m. Report of a loud motorcycle that travels on Spring Street daily. Referred to an officer.
7:29 p.m. Report of two younger parties without a vehicle who are knocking on doors on Bulkley Street, possibly soliciting. Caller states they have some kind of employment badges. Referred to an officer.
7:45 p.m. Cleaning lady accidentally pressed emergency button in Colle Opera House elevator while wiping down the buttons. Negative signs of distress.
Friday, 5/28
7:18 a.m. Seven annoying/harassing phone calls received by dispatch.

8:21 a.m. Report of foul odor, possibly sewage, coming from the fountain in Peskeomskut Park; also a film or foam on top of the water. Officer will drive by and check; possibly accumulation of pollen on top of water; will advise and request message be left for DPW to follow up during business hours (closed Fridays).
3:23 p.m. Report of suspicious parties and vehicle at caller’s neighbors’ house on High Street. Neighbor is not around. Caller approached males, one of whom became argumentative. Males got back into vehicle and headed down L and Seventh Streets toward downtown. Officer located vehicle in Food City parking lot and spoke with parties, who provided a story that was determined to be false. All parties advised and told not to return to residence.

Saturday, 5/29

1:55 a.m. Officer reports that a vehicle appears to have come from Montague Street, gone straight toward the MPD building and onto the lawn between the sign and a small tree, and continued on. Will have cameras checked at a later time.
6:57 a.m. First of multiple annoying/harassing phone calls received by dispatch.
4:28 p.m. 911 caller reporting tree leaning on electrical wires on Center Street; wire is smoking and appears to be on fire. MCFD toned out by Shelburne Control. Ever-source ETA 30 minutes.
9 p.m. Motorist locked inside gate on Migratory Way. Services rendered.
9:58 p.m. Caller states that a candle is burning outside of an empty apartment on Third Street and they believe it is a fire hazard. Shelburne Control toning out TFFD.
10:45 p.m. Caller from Montague City Road states that the children upstairs are being loud. Referred to an officer.
Sunday, 5/30
8:41 a.m. Caller states that an RV has been parked at Montague Machine for the past few days and that they have electrical cords plugged into the building, stealing electricity. RV was plugged into a pole with outlets on it. Vehicle operator advised of complaint and will be moving along.
11:37 p.m. Caller states that she walks her dogs on Power Street and feels like cars are driving too fast on that road; wondering if rumble strips or paint lines or something could be added to help slow traffic down. Referred to an officer.



Ariel Jones, holding a rainbow.

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

BY ARIEL JONES

THE OZARKS – Most of the fish I caught that day were rainbows averaging one and a half pounds. Twice I lost much larger ones. Both times I let them run out and took my time bringing them in, only to lose each just before netting them. One leaped into the air next to my legs, then shot off into some logs beneath the water nearby, eventually unhooking himself.

The other began swimming around my legs. I thought to myself, “This fish is tying me up!” I was so surprised I lost control of my line. Before I could transfer my rod back around my body to unwind from this ridiculous position and divert this clever trout, he was off.

I saluted him and pondered the meaning of a million years of instinct for self-preservation. It was clear I needed to develop my own cunning to keep up.

It was an amazing day of fishing. Every so often we would get back into the boat and travel a ways downstream to fish another spot. I caught 20 rainbow that day, and Jack caught something over 35 (he lost track), including some browns.

Catching so many gave me a lot of experience in how to land them and safely release fish back into the river. Releasing trout without taking them out of the river was especially satisfying. Not only is this the safest way to release fish, but it showed me I was calming down enough to handle them better.

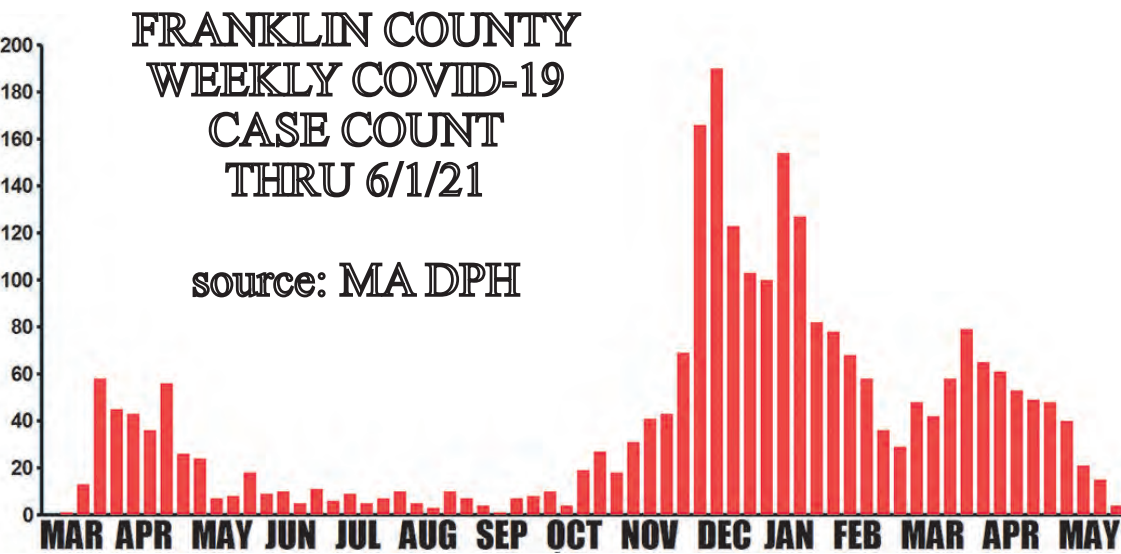
We did, however, take five rainbows home for dinner that night.

Having a guide who knows the river, and who is a patient and enthusiastic teacher, pushed me into a whole new level of confidence and understanding of how to catch trout. For any local an-

glers desiring to fish in new and fertile waters I have to recommend a trek to the Ozarks. There are many guides and accommodations on both the White and the North Fork rivers, serving everyone from kids to corporate groups. The fishing is year-round, the countryside is lovely, the waters are clean, and the people are friendly.

While there, you will enjoy a visit to Spectacular Trout Power to view an amazing set of photos by Gary R. Cooley, which show how trout manage successful leaps up the Dry Run Creek Waterfall near the base at North Fork Dam. The amazing thing about these leaps is how precise they must be to be successful. It sometimes can take as many as eighteen attempts before the trout can get it right, and some never do.

Next week: Back in Massachusetts.



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JUDAH from page B1

a commune member at Chestnut Hill in Montague, our most frequent contacts were with those who called Chestnut Hill home.

As was also customary in those days, unexpected visitations from “back-to-the-landers” from far-flung places came to be expected. The arrival of Volkswagen “beetles” and mini buses – the then generally-favored mode of transportation aside from hitchhiker’s thumb – bearing out-of-state license plates, and long-haired and bearded and braless and beaded occupants, as well as an obligatory mongrel dog or two, became quite ordinary occurrences, very routine and habitual instances.

Thanks to “word of mouth” roadmaps circulating nationwide in the counterculture underground – which proved as trustworthy as a Rand McNally Atlas has long been for a traditional family vacationing in parts unknown – “freaks” had no problem coast-to-coast locating the whereabouts of “freaks” of a fellow feather.

As, too, was customary amongst the comunards, those you met often went by first name only, or a nickname, or no name at all. For many then, it seemed, a new identity was required – or desired – to fit the new circumstances of their lives.

And so it came to pass during a visit to Chestnut Hill in the summer of 1969, I wit-

nessed the arrival of a man from California middle aged enough to be salt-and-peppered in the bush of his rather-lengthy and somewhat bedraggled beard. Although no appellation was forthcoming, I soon came to think of him as “Judah the Prophet,” a wanderer in exile seeking a “radical Christian” agrarian-based home. I can not say I talked with him, for his style was – in non-stop staccato – to spout traditional scripture intertwined with what he termed “retranslations of ancient texts” to remove “murk” which had come to cloud “the true spiritual teachings of Christianity.” But I did make sincere efforts to listen to what he had to say.

In essence, Judah the Prophet was a Tolstoyite (about which I knew nothing) and railed against authorities – church and state – as perverters of the meaning for humankind of the message for salvation and survival of “Jesus Christ, our Lord.” Apparently, Judah the Prophet was a “quick study” artist and sensed Franklin County and the Montague Farm commune not to be fertile ground for the seed he sought to plant and tend and harvest in due time its full-grown fruits, for later that same day, he vanished from Chestnut Hill in much the same manner as he had come... alone and in quest elsewhere of his Tolstoyan Holy Grail.

Since that time, I’d all but forgotten Judah the Prophet. And, in the intervening years, I

can’t recollect ever thinking of Tolstoy, except for a passing thought now and again about whether I would ever read the Russian author’s literary masterpieces, *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*. But, thirty-four days ago, those ghosts from the past were resurrected.

As a gift from Steven Myers of Colrain Road in Greenfield’s “Meadows,” for helping him prepare to move from the homestead which in July will become a charter school, I was given the opportunity to pick and choose from the family library. One of the books I discovered was a compendium of selected religious writings of Tolstoy entitled *A Confession, The Gospel in Brief, and What I Believe*. Having now completed reading all 539 pages of that book, at long last I have some sense of what it was that Judah the Prophet sought and taught, and what it meant to be a Tolstoyite.

Tolstoy was born in 1828 and died in 1910. He grew up as a member of the aristocracy and inherited his family estate in the heart of the Russian countryside. In addition to rural life, he also lived much in Moscow, as well as in France, Germany, and Switzerland. At the age of 49 and at the height of his creative fame, Tolstoy suffered a spiritual crisis and found himself in deep despair and on the verge of suicide.

From 1877 to 1885, in a literal life-or-death moment-to-moment struggle, Tolstoy devoted

himself exclusively to seeking the ultimate meaning and purpose of human existence, as well as a way to live his life in accordance with what he was discovering.

A Confession traces Tolstoy’s early years of being raised in the Orthodox tradition, followed by 35 years of what he described as “nihilism,” a faith in nothing, and what he had come to see as his wayward wanderings in the world of his time. *The Gospel in Brief* represents Tolstoy’s retranslation of the Bible books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and a “harmonizing” of them, dealing point-by-point with the teachings of Jesus through drawing together relevant passages from each of those books.

What I Believe is a summation of conclusions Tolstoy reached, namely, according to the introduction by his English-language translator, that life “is a blessing for him who identifies himself with the son of man in the task of establishing the kingdom of God on earth, here and now,” and that life “is a misfortune for him who seeks his personal welfare, which is an effort death inevitably baffles.”

As the basis for the Christian anarchist sect bearing his name, Tolstoy postulated that “To carry out the will of the Father which gives life and welfare to all men, five commandments must be obeyed”:

- To do no ill to anyone so as not to arouse

see **JUDAH** next page

MONTV / MUSIK / MOUNTAIN



36. The Cherry Blossoms

Interview by J. BURKETT

TURNERS FALLS – The Cherry Blossoms are a cool and unique band/collective from Nashville, based around Peggy Snow, John Allingham, and Allen Lowrey, with fellow travelers like Chris Davis and Laura Matter. They are hard to describe: think of a real mixture of acoustic and electric, avant and old American, songs and improv, and... party music? They started in 1991, and continue to be super fun and blow minds live and on record.

This interview was conducted through emails and phone calls. Peggy, the singer, is also a painter, and her art is on the covers of some of their releases. Some of their songs are about her paintings, too! John recently had to deal with a fire at his storage space, where he had some important stuff... thankfully it was mostly OK.

(Thanks to George Myers for getting us into this great band!)

MMM: So, what are the roots of the band?

PS: It was me and John in 1991. We did protest songs about the Iraq war. The first show was in 1993 with others. A lot of anti-war songs. I think the name is from my

childhood.

JA: Peggy and I were playing as a duo at Springwater, this club I’ve been playing at since ‘79, and we got invited to play at this indie rock club called Lucy’s and Peggy said we needed a name, so she came up with the Cherry Blossoms. That was in ‘93, I think.

I was listening to a South African mix tape with Township Swing, Miriam Makeba, and other stuff that my brother, who is a music archivist in Jo’burg, sent me. Peggy was listening to Joseph Spence (a Bahamian guitarist and singer), and when I was playing an African-influenced thing at the club Springwater she said it reminded her of the Joseph Spence stuff and we should play together, and we did.

I played with my friend Tom House too, a really great songwriter, in a wild free-folk thing with two other friends who played drums. One of my biggest fears about the fire to my storage unit is that I would lose tapes that I have of us playing in the late ‘70s. I was also in a polka band called the Polka Nuts around ‘85, and a surf band called The Gremies that was around 1990.

AL: In the early 1990s I met

John and Peggy at Springwater Super Club. At the time, I was playing drums in Lambchop and we would play the monthly open mic Working Stiffs Jamboree, which was curated by John. I met a lot of people there with whom I later played. This is when I began playing drums with the Blossoms.

MMM: What happened with this storage space fire?

JA: Miraculously most of my stuff is OK. I have a lot of tapes of the Cherry Blossoms, myself and other stuff, and most of them are OK. And some of Peggy’s paintings, which are all in good condition.

PS: It turns out a lot of his stuff can be saved! His LPs, etc.

A man lost his life. They wouldn’t let anyone in the storage space for a while. It was a meth lab explosion in a space near him.

MMM: What about your paintings? When did you start?

PS: I’ve been doing the same kind of paintings since I was 19. I’m 62 now. Still use the same easel! My paintings are mostly of buildings about to be demolished. I make a little day camp/art camp.

MMM: Have been doing both art and music for a long time? Do you like doing them both equally?

PS: Since childhood, yes, singing and painting. I sang in choral groups – Christmas carols when I was 7 years old. We would go caroling. Then I started playing other things in my 20s, like the spoons. John encouraged me to play guitar.

They are really different! Music is more joy and fun. Art is more solitary, more work. I have songs about painting and places where I paint.

MMM: So your first album was a joint release by different labels?

PS: It was mostly recorded in a room near here with good equipment. Some is live from a yard party.

JA: The “yellow house” Cherry Blossoms record was recorded by Matt Swanson, who plays bass with Lambchop. It was recorded on tape in his small living room with eight of us playing, giving it kind of a folk “wall of sound” feel.

AL: The first one was recorded by Hank Tilbury. in a studio off Music Row. There was copious amounts of George Dickel whiskey involved. We set up in one room, and recorded live altogether.

MMM: How many releases do you have now, four or five LPs?

CD: We have four LPs: the self-titled one, *Live in Amsterdam*, *The Hank Tapes*, and *Mystery Meet* (with Josephine Foster). We have a few cassette releases, too: a RRRe-cycled cassette, and one we made ourselves with a potato stamp. Those probably didn’t really get distributed past local shows. And a few CD-R releases.

We’re working on getting another LP release with Feeding Tube. This is a CD-R that was packaged as a fake BLT. I think we released it as *CBBLT* and also as *Brown Baggin’ It*. Emily O’Brien, our washtub bassist, made these awesome toast prints with aluminum foil stencils on bread, and she also made felt bacon, lettuce, and tomato for the “sandwiches.”

MMM: Any good stories about live shows or tours?

CD: On our first tour ever when we went up to Emily’s wedding, we played in Hadley at a pioneer-era schoolhouse with George Myers and Neale Gay. It was such a wonderful and heartwarming time.

When we were in Boston on that same tour, Peggy’s spontaneous street busking got the attention of the owner of Cantab Lounge, an older man who wore a necklace with a gold peanut which we would learn was a reference to his local hit record “Peanuts,” which had peaked on Billboard at #22 in 1957. Little Joe Cook had the house band clear off, and let us do a few songs.

It was an unforgettable experience touring in Europe with the Cherry Blossoms. I sure do look forward to the next time we can play with our friends in public.

PS: In Amsterdam we played a really big place, really responsive. People joined in onstage. We played forever! It was a squat.

JA: I like playing in small places for and with our friends. Playing outside of Nashville in bigger plac-

es is more exciting, but the music part is not as much fun for me.

MMM: How many times have you gone overseas?

PS: As Cherry Blossoms, just once. If I go over again... I’m not coming back! That tour was 2008. Glasgow, Paris, Amsterdam, London, Belgium.

MMM: Where have you been playing lately?

PS: Chris found a new place that makes sake wine! It’s a sizable facility, and we have played there many times.

JA: My favorite shows have been ones that Chris has set up playing in small places like Proper Sake, and before that this old bar called Betty’s.

MMM: Have you seen Nashville change a lot?

PS: Yes I’ve seen Nashville change so much. I hope we can transform things into a beautiful new world with bike paths.

MMM: So how are you doing during the pandemic times? Any new albums planned, or other recent developments?

CD: We get together far less. We would usually play once a month. And John and Peggy are both active in songwriters’ nights with their songwriting peers. Peggy plays hymns and folksongs at the retirement home where her folks lived before they passed. She wanted to continue giving comfort to people through music.

AL: We haven’t had any gigs since early 2020. We performed for the online Million Tongues Festival in September 2020. We set up in John’s backyard and played wearing masks.

CD: I [also] did a performance with Josephine Foster and Matthew Schneider that was online. **PS:** I’m still doing my painting. The shows that Chris was setting up were my whole social life, though. Music has been the losing/suffering thing.

MMM: Anything else?

PS: I would like to see things turn into more like the movie *The Seventh Seal*! Covered wagons and clear streams.

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JUDAH from previous page

anger, “for evil begets evil.”

- To be faithful once joined to a mate, for desertion and change of partners causes all the world’s dissoluteness.
- To take no oath of any kind, for a human being can promise nothing as he or she is altogether “in the Father’s power.” Oaths are taken for “bad purposes” and lead away from, rather than toward, God.
- To not physically resist evil, to not condemn, to not participate in the legal process as judge, jury, plaintiff, or prosecutor, but to endure every wrong and to serve all others well, even those who serve you ill, for every human being is full of faults and incapable of guiding others and by taking revenge, “we only teach others to do the same.”
- To not discriminate between fellow-countrymen and foreigners, for “all are children of one Father.”

Tolstoyism was founded on nonviolence, love for each and every human being, and perfection of the self through direct union with God. In this human world of nation states, private property, and orga-

nized religion, Tolstoy considered them all to be impediments to development of true spiritual life, obstacles which must be overcome. The final quarter century of his life was devoted to attempting to live his own teachings, which were to him, the real teachings imparted to the world by Jesus Christ.

In modern times, Tolstoy’s teachings regarding nonviolence and universal love profoundly influenced the “passive resistance” political philosophies of such human freedom icons as Mahatma Gandhi in India and Martin Luther King, Jr., in the United States.

Although Tolstoy’s followers formed numerous communities in many European countries where they celebrated rural life and living from the land, opposed class, race, and gender inequality, and promoted the siblinghood of humankind, there are not many professed Tolstoyites around anymore anywhere.

And that has caused me to wonder now, lo these many years gone by... is Judah the Prophet amongst that remnant still?



By **LESLIE BROWN**

MONTAGUE CITY – Years ago we decided we would look for a bigger home out in the country, say in Leyden or Conway. In my last year of social work those hill town villages were my bailiwick. I met amazing women who qualified for homemakers or health aides for some of the more physically demanding tasks, but who were also resolute in their choice of privacy and independence.

These women were role models who expected to remain where they were as long as they were able and, ideally, to die in their sleep, never having had to leave their homes.

In the long run, we chose to add on to our own home rather than move again. We put on a glass sunroom, a four-seasons space which allowed us to remain near medical services as needed. It’s been like living in a greenhouse, not just for plants, but for people. The room has electric heat for the winter, if needed, and the lowest rank of glass has small windows which can be opened with a crank to be cooler on warm days.

In my early days as a gardener the sunroom always provided

THE GARDENER’S COMPANION

Gardening These Days

us with a place to start plants like peppers and tomatoes in the early days of March, as soon as we returned from our winter break in Florida during the months of January and early February. Like many gardeners we started many more plants than we could ever use for ourselves. (We spoke this weekend with a woman in North Leverett at Rattlesnake Gutter who planned a tag sale to sell or give away her extra plants. This is how it goes!)

We left plants at the community garden, and downtown on benches, for the taking. At last we figured out we gardeners always grew too many plants, or more than we could use. It really wasn’t that easy to find takers for unfathomable reasons. So we backed off and now buy only what we want to grow if it’s a new variety or something we find hard to get.

We are enjoying some new growing adventures. We have an apple tree, some grape vines, a Manchurian apricot, a strawberry bed, and an asparagus bed.

Shrubs and bushes dominate our gardening time: laurel, rhododendron, blueberry bushes. We often buy the veggie starts we want to grow. We are in our seventies now, and have only so much time to work before the day calls for what the Brits call a “kip.” Then this brief break gets us going again.

The shrubs are not unlike having nieces and nephews and grandkids. We love their company, but then

they go home with their parents. The shrubs require some attention but you can tend them as you wish and at some point they can take off on their own. Or sometimes not, in which case you can try something else.

We so enjoy having plants from places we no longer occupy. There is a tree from the old lot where Ken was raised; we have a wild rose bush I was given by the gentleman at Owl’s Head in Maine, where I vacationed so many years; there is a pair of spruces from the Spaulding Brook lot my late husband sold many years ago.

When my family first came from Chicago to New England, we rented a home in Jamaica, Vermont for a couple of years. From that spot the man at the general store gave us a small balsam that is now a good sized tree in my yard.

It is like a memory bank, our yard, and I hope we can remain here for many more years. We are both fortunate in having good health and work hard to stay in shape. Ken has developed his own personal program and I go to classes at the Y. We both walk regularly, often at the beginning or at the end of the day.

When we have earned our toddy, we sit and relax, sharing the daily adventures. Ken’s son is nearby and my family is in Vermont so we are very fortunate. Plenty of family time and couple time as well.

A good balance, and a wonderful life.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE WENDELL POLICE LOG

Hit & Run; Mask Creep; Suspected Crotches Not Crotches

Saturday, 4/3
7:23 a.m. Officer on Lockes Village Road spoke to a dog owner and advised them their dog was in the road and almost struck by a vehicle.
12:45 p.m. Caller reporting a gray Subaru parked near DCR headquarters building for the last few days. He was unable to get a plate number, but called back with the number. Owner stated that her son borrowed her car and is camping in the state forest.
Tuesday, 4/6
5:45 p.m. Individual from Morse Village Road activated Lifeline, reporting abdominal pain.
Wednesday, 4/7
6:46 p.m. Caller from Lockes Village Road reported that a white station wagon goes by every morning around 7:45 a.m. and every night at 6:45 p.m., passing in dangerous areas and appearing to be doing double the speed limit. Checked area; negative results. Will add to log for extra patrols.
Thursday, 4/8
11:45 a.m. Officer responded to harassment issue on Mountain Laurel Road.
Friday, 4/9
12:11 p.m. Caller from Wendell Depot Road reported a brush fire spreading quickly toward some buildings. 12:37 p.m.: Fire under control; mopping up. 6:31 p.m. Caller states there is a group of young adults rid-

ing dirt bikes up and down Kentfield Road. None of the bikes have plates, and they are loud.
Sunday, 4/11
8:39 a.m. Observed mailbox on Lockes Village Road knocked to the ground and its post damaged; possibly related to recent destruction in Shutesbury and Leverett. No other mailboxes on the Lockes Village Road destroyed.
8:47 a.m. Report of a gray cat with no collar running down Wendell Depot Road.
Tuesday, 4/13
4:15 p.m. Caller from John Quist Road reported a female in a small tan vehicle side-swiped her 17-year-old daughter in her car on New Salem Road. Her daughter said the operator of the other vehicle appeared to be attempting to light a cigarette, looked up, side-swiped her, and kept going. Her daughter is not injured; the vehicle has some visible damage.
Wednesday, 4/14
10:55 a.m. Caller from Lockes Village Road reports a man came into the store yesterday without a mask, stating he “didn’t have one.” Caller saw a mask on the visor of his truck and commented on it. He stated “It’s just for looks. I don’t have to wear it.” Caller allowed him to purchase items, but asked that he not return. An hour and a half later

he was parked outside the store, behind her vehicle, staring. She was uncomfortable and notified the PD with his license plate.
4:51 p.m. Caller from Montague Road reported a black Labrador puppy with no collar at his house. ACO advised.
5:46 p.m.: Received a call from the dog’s owner.
11:45 p.m. Caller from Morse Village Road states the neighbors upstairs are dragging furniture around.
Thursday, 4/15
1 p.m. Caller from Lockes Village Road reporting a male party walking up and down the road, talking in tongues and not making sense. Children living in the house are scared to go outside.
Friday, 4/16
10:26 a.m. Lines down and power out on West Street. National Grid advised, and arrived at 11:16 a.m.
4 p.m. Officer reported that a passerby saw an ATV stuck on the side of the road in the New Salem Road area. Checked area; negative results.
Saturday, 4/17
1:44 p.m. Officer requested on Wendell Depot Road.
3:50 p.m. 911 call from Mormon Hollow Road; no voice contact. On callback it went to voicemail.
11:09 p.m. Caller from Kentfield Road reported he was leaving to get gas when he saw three suspicious parties walking toward his house. When

they spotted him they jumped onto the railroad tracks and walked away laughing. Caller returned from getting gas and saw the same three people walking back toward his house. He asked if they were OK, and they seemed intoxicated. Caller concerned due to past B&E at his residence. He described one male wearing a baggy sweatshirt and sweatpants, a heavier female wearing ripped jeans, and another female, no description.
Wednesday, 4/21
11:25 a.m. Officer responded to report of harassment on Lockes Village Road.
Monday, 4/26
4 p.m. Caller from Wendell Depot Road stated that people are always burning out in their cars, ATV, and dirt bikes and operating ATVs on the road. Informed caller that PD would do more patrols on Wendell Depot Road.
4:47 p.m. Conducted a welfare check on Cooleyville Road.
Tuesday, 4/27
2:36 p.m. Caller reported the tenants upstairs are blaring their music. She banged on the ceil-

ing and asked them to turn it down, and they have not.
4:45 p.m. Caller reported that in the past several weeks a silver VW Jetta wagon has been following him on Lockes Village Road at about 7:45 a.m. The operator drives erratically, speeding and tailgating him and other vehicles. Caller will try to get a plate number, and asked for more morning patrols.
5 p.m. Citizen from Perry Farm Road walked in reporting suspicious activity. She came across what appears to be the crotches of women’s underwear on the ground. Officer located a maroon piece of fabric and rolled it over with a stick; it appeared to be the shoulder portion of a shirt. Another piece of fabric, to the best of the officer’s knowledge, also did not appear to be underwear. Cleared without further incident, but will conduct future patrols at night as Perry Farm Road seems a popular spot for people to pull off the road and drink, based on the number of empty beer cans on the trail.

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PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Turners Falls Athletic Club Announces Scholarship Winners

TURNERS FALLS -- The Turners Falls Athletic Club Scholarship Committee is pleased to announce the following three students, who have been selected to receive our scholarships for their academics and contribution to sports.

The awards are in the amount of \$1,000 each, payable to the individual student for their second semester at the college of their choice.

The recipients are: Olivia Whittier of Gill; Makenzie Martel of Erving; and Haleigh Greene of Montague.

We would like to congratulate the scholarship winners and thank all the student athletes who applied; we wish you all the best of luck in the future.

We especially want to thank all of the active TFAC members whose donations make these scholarships possible. With this group we have awarded over \$113,000 since 1954.

The Turners Falls Athletic Club: Supporting Sports & Academics for the Youth of Turners Falls Since 1934.

For Our Youth,

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NatureCulture: The Science Page

WARREN ONDRAS PHOTO

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

Not All Black Holes are Massive

By LISA McLOUGHLIN

NORTHFIELD – NASA announced that the prolific Hubble space telescope, working in concert with data from the European Space Agency's observatory Gaia, has made another great discovery

this year. Hubble was exploring the globular cluster NGC 6397, an area of space packed densely with stars which was formed about the same time as the entire universe itself – extremely old. This particular one is 7,800 light years away, making it one of the closer ones to Earth. It is

labelled “core collapsed” because it is very dense in its center.

Looking for what researchers hoped would be a medium-sized black hole – an object theorized, but not yet found, but theorized – they instead found a cluster of small black holes. Drs. Vitral and Mamon from the Institut d'Astrophysique de Paris measured the position and velocity of the stars within the cluster, and were surprised they were not moving in an orbital-type pattern around one point of mass. Their movements were closer to a random pattern, indicating something more complex was at the core.

The small black holes are the remains of stars that collapsed into themselves once their fuel was exhausted. They then “sank” into the center of the cluster and formed this concentration of black holes, the first one found in a core-collapsed globular cluster.

The astronomers theorize that when two of these black holes merge, they create gravitational waves which can be detected by the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory experiment.



NASA PHOTO

The amount of mass a black hole can pack away varies widely from less than twice the mass of our Sun to over a billion times our Sun's mass. Midway between are intermediate-mass black holes weighing roughly hundreds to tens of thousands of solar masses. So, black holes come small, medium, and large.

Tinnitus: A Possible Side Effect of Coronavirus

By LISA McLOUGHLIN

NORTHFIELD – The Guardian reports that more people in the UK are reporting tinnitus, which is a ringing or humming sound in one's ears. They are concerned that it may be a long-term effect from COVID-19, although it could be merely an artifact of being at home and hearing different sounds, or the result of increased intake of caffeine and alcohol.

While sudden hearing loss is not

at all common it's a symptom to be on the lookout for, along with fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath, headache, fatigue, muscle or body aches, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. If you have these symptoms, contact your doctor.

According to the Center for Disease Control you should seek emergency care immediately if you exhibit the following symptoms: trouble breathing, persistent pain or pres-

sure in the chest, confusion, inability to wake or stay awake, pale gray or blue-colored skin, lips, or nail beds.

Ways to protect yourself from COVID: wear a mask; stay six feet apart from others; get a vaccine; wash your hands often with soap and water, and use hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available.

The pandemic is not over, even though Franklin County is the best vaccinated county in the state. Stay safe, and continue to follow all safety precautions.

Songbirds and Compressor Stations: Noisy Competition

By LISA McLOUGHLIN

NORTHFIELD – A study by Pennsylvania State's Agricultural Research Center shows that the

noise from gas compressor stations interferes with songbirds' breeding success. In a study that controlled for other environmental factors, researchers found that bluebirds

and tree swallows spent less time incubating their eggs and hatched fewer young in nesting boxes near the compressor stations, which emit very loud low-frequency noises.

Often located in forested areas, these sounds travel hundreds of yards into the “undisturbed” forest. The study, recently published in *Ornithological Applications*, showed that the birds didn't prefer to choose quiet nesting areas over nesting near the compressor station. Rather, it showed that the outcome of their choice to nest near the stations was an unexpected drop in the number of offspring that developed.

Apparently this is worse for the birds' long-term success – if they just chose to nest elsewhere, alternative habitat might be developed, but instead the birds don't have the foresight to know their choice was bad for their future generations.

CC PHOTO BY KEVIN COLE



A western bluebird leaving its nesting box.

Drones in the Midwest



CC PHOTO BY MOLLY ROSEBERRY

A drone.

By LISA McLOUGHLIN

NORTHFIELD – Anyone can buy a drone, and small ones (0.55 pounds or less) don't have to be registered, only big ones do. Apparently, some people in the Midwest have been flying some really big drones, ones which are more commonly called unmanned aircraft, or UA. A series of reports from Colorado, Kansas, and Nebraska detail multiple drone sightings, many by law enforcement personnel, from December 2019 to January 2020.

These large drones, with wing spans from six to ten feet, were witnessed by many but claimed by none. And the spate of sightings ended just as mysteriously as it had begun, with no one, not even the local US Air Force base, claiming responsibility.

Midwest residents chased the drones in their cars, and started loading their guns, but the swarms and formations of drones disappeared, apparently before they were able to be investigated further. Witnesses claim the drones interfered with mobile phone connections and cameras, and CBS News claimed an antenna-adorned command vehicle was seen in the area.

The Federal Aviation Administration, US Air Force, local law enforcement, and the FBI formed a 70-person task force to investigate the spate of drone sightings, to no avail. Drones can be flown with a radio controller, in which case it is possible at the time to trace who is controlling it, but they can also have flight plans loaded into their memories, in which case they do not have radio waves linking them to a person while they are flying, and are harder to figure out.

Theories as to what the drones are range from hysteria, including mass hysteria, to actual drones. According to the FAA, drone sightings have risen “dramatically” over the past two years. They currently receive over 100 reports every month of drones of concern to people.

Flying drones near airports and aircraft is illegal. Of the 366 records of UA sightings from October to December 2020 (the most up-to-date table available on the FAA website), nine were in Massachusetts. In one incident the police found the operator and told them to cut it out, but in the other eight, no operator was found. Only one report was from Western Mass, at the Barnes Air National Guard base in Westfield.

June 2021 Moon Calendar

Last Quarter

Wednesday, June 2

New Moon and Annular Solar Eclipse

Thursday, June 10

First Quarter

Thursday, June 17

Summer Solstice

Sunday, June 20

Full Moon

Thursday, June 24

NASA / HUBBLE PHOTO

An artist's rendering of a one-of-a-kind star observed by Hubble that has been nicknamed “Nasty” in part because of its weird behavior.

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EVENTS

THURSDAY, JUNE 3

Peskeomskut Park, Turners Falls: *Musica Franklin Student & Faculty Showcase*. Free. 5:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, JUNE 4

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Zara Bode's Little Big Band, Thus Love*. Part of a Downtown Gallery Walk. 5 to 8 p.m.

YOU+ME Gallery, Greenfield: Reception for *Urgent Unity, Unprecedented Hearing*. 46 visual artists. 4:30 to 8 p.m.

Epsilon Spires, Greenfield: Film screening, *TOVE* (Finland, 2021). Biopic of Tove Jansson, creator of the Moomins. Introduction by Jo Dery. \$. 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, JUNE 5

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *Saturday Salon*. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Hitchcock Brewing Co., Whately: *CA Jones Band*. Free. 5:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, JUNE 6

John Doe Jr. Records, Greenfield: *Stella Kola, Drowning In Syrup*. Window show. Free. 2:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, JUNE 11

Florence Congregational Church, Florence: *Yemen Blues*. \$. 6 p.m.

SATURDAY, JUNE 12

Nice Snack Parlor, Turners Falls: *DJ Just Joan*. 4 to 8 p.m.

Northlands, Swanzey, NH: *Indigo Girls, Lucy Wainwright Roche*. \$. 6:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, JUNE 13

Montague Center Ball Field: *Elm Chamber Ensemble, Adaskin String Trio*. Brahms and Dvorak string sextets. Bring your own chair or blanket. Free. 12 p.m.

Peskeomskut Park, Turners Falls: *The Mole, Do It Now*. Music and spoken word; bring a chair. Free. 2 p.m.

Valley View Farm, Haydenville:

Roman Diaz Rumba Ensemble. \$. 6 p.m.

Black Birch Vineyard, North Hatfield: *Livingston Taylor*. \$. 6:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, JUNE 19

Turners Falls Rod & Gun Club, Turners Falls: *Tracy & the Valley Revival*. \$. 6 p.m.

SUNDAY, JUNE 20

Black Birch Vineyard, North Hatfield: *Amy Helm*. \$. 6:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, JUNE 25

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

SUNDAY, JUNE 27

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

THURSDAY, JULY 1

Energy Park, Greenfield: *R&D, Joe Graveline and Nina Gross*.

Franklin County Musicians Co-operative summer concert series. Free. Bring a chair. 6 p.m.

SATURDAY, JULY 3

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *NRBQ*. Still at it! \$. 7 p.m.


SUNDAY, JULY 11

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

Amherst Common, Amherst: Freestone or Ooze feat. *Sunburned Hand of the Man, A.P.I.E., Allysen Callery, Willie Lane, Mazozma, Toppus Bottomus, 10 Gallon Hat*, and many more. Free. 12 p.m.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 21

Center Street, Montague Center: Barbès in the Woods feat. *Liraz, Son Rompe Pera, Kaleta & Super Yamba, Los Cupleanos, Bigyuki, Arooj Aftab*, more. \$. See barbesinthewoods.com for more information.




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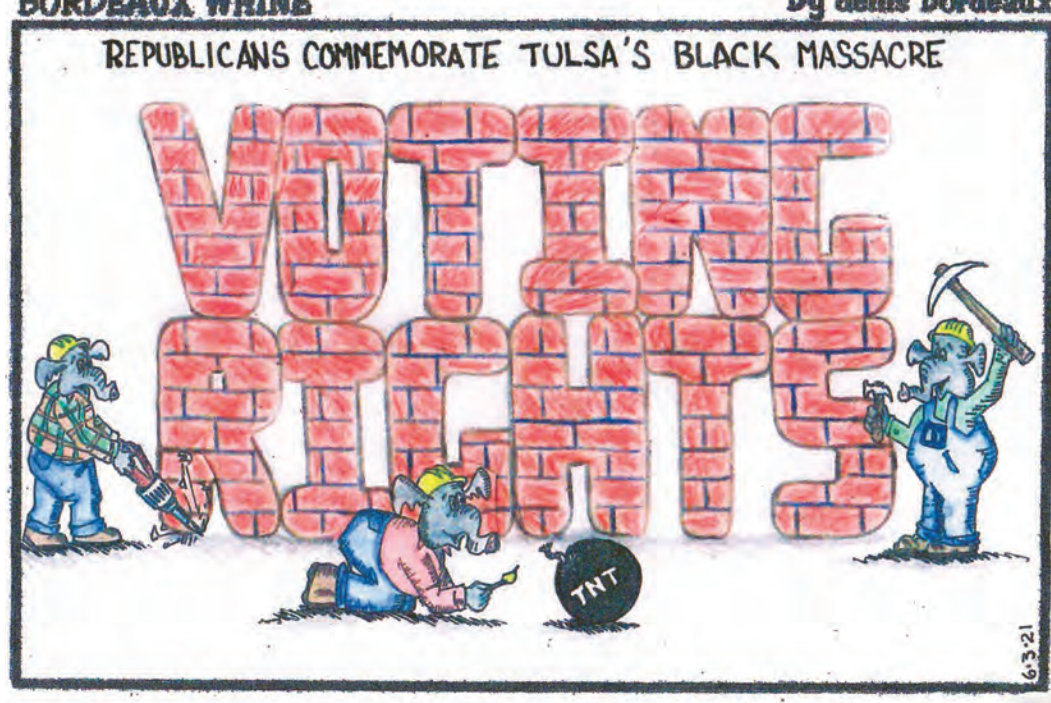
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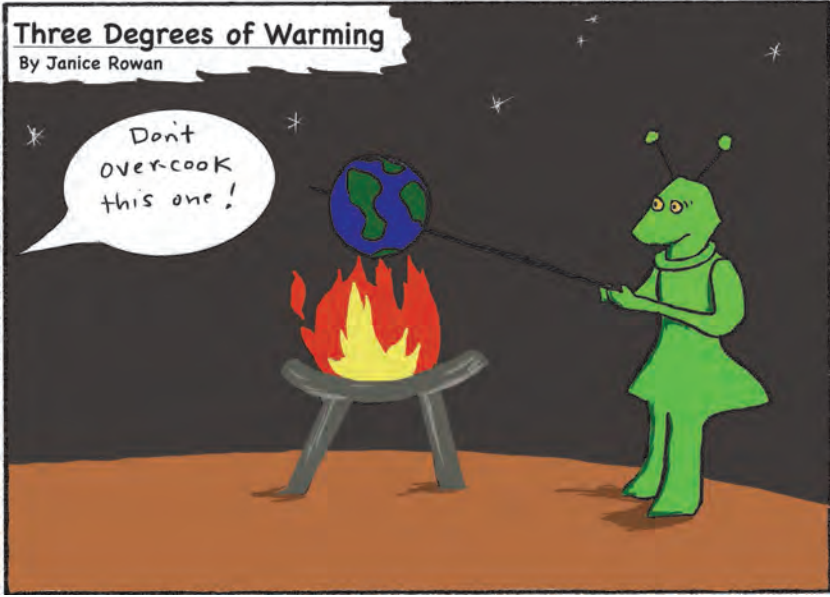
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ARTBEAT from page B1

Teaching and Learning

From the very beginning, Abrams had an interest in teaching as well as pursuing her own work. She taught her first workshop in 1975 at Leverett Crafts and Arts while she was living in Montague (she lives now in Brattleboro). She's since taught basketry techniques all over the US, as well as in Canada, New Zealand, Australia, the UK, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Uganda, and Ghana.

In February 2020, just before COVID hit the US, Abrams was in the poverty-stricken neighborhood of La Carpio, in San José, Costa Rica, teaching coiling techniques for basket-making as well as crocheting. She brings small tools she can leave behind, such as crochet hooks, she said, but works only with local materials, as she wants the women she works with to be able to source materials after she leaves.

She only works with women, she said be-



Souda, one of Abrams' Women Forms vessels, is made using cotton paper, acrylic paint and mediums, wire, beads, waxed linen and sand. It is 19" tall.

cause, "Women will take care of their kids, feed their kids, use the money to send them to school. The men might use the money to go to a bar."

The women in La Carpio have really run with the techniques she showed them, Abrams said, and are making baskets and bags using recycled fabrics, plastic bags, and local abaca fiber, often assembling the materials in inventive ways. One woman created a bag with a coiled bottom, like a basket, but with fabric sides. In instances like this, Abrams learns as much from the women she works with as they learn from her.

"As much as they get from me, I get just as much," she said. "Getting to know these women has been amazing to me. Women and their resilience and the way they stand together – I've been really strongly influenced by them."

The Women Forms

One of Abrams' series of vessels, *Women Forms*, grew out of her experience of working with women all over the world.

Abrams and I browsed through the *Women Forms* on the Mitchell-Giddings website together, each in our separate homes, on our separate screens. I admired the vessels, which exuded personality through their varied postures, and commented on how lovely I found their asymmetrical forms.

"I can make a symmetrical basket," Abrams said with what I heard as a smile. "My training was in making very symmetrical baskets."

She paused, then said, "Our bodies are not symmetrical. The way I think about it is, our bodies are shaped by our experiences. You have a little lump here and a little bump there, and that's because of what's happened in your life."

As she talked about one of the forms, "Souda," which translates from Arabic to "black feminine" in English, Abrams said matter-of-factly, "She's woven, and then her sur-



Jackie Abrams, sixth from left, with women in her basketry and crochet workshop in La Carpio, San José, Costa Rica in February, 2020.

face is covered with black mica sand."

I heard both fondness and respect in Abrams' completely unselfconscious use of that feminine pronoun.

Precarious Shelters

Another series, *Precarious Shelters*, arose from seeing neighborhoods around the world, and in the US as well, in which families were living in improvised housing, often made from discarded sheet metal and wood. Abrams made her first Precarious Shelter in 2016, and she had intended to concentrate more on working on the series than her teaching finally allowed.

"But when COVID hit, all of a sudden I had this residency in my own studio," Abrams said, and she began to work on the *Precarious Shelters* in earnest.

Because she has long wanted her work to address social justice, Abrams will be donating ten percent of the proceeds from the Precarious Shelter series to Groundworks Collaborative, an organization that provides support to families and individuals facing housing or food insecurities in the greater Brattleboro area.

Made using various combinations of wire frames, netting, crocheted fibers, lacquered sewing pattern paper, paint or thread, each of the *Precarious Shelters*, like the *Women Forms*, conveys a unique sense of character.

On her website, Abrams writes that the series "explores the vessel as a symbol of home, and honors women's roles in their homes and societies. It also exposes the precarious nature of some homes and serves as a reminder that universal emotions like hope, anxiety, joy and despair reside in those homes."

Jackie Abrams: 45 Years of Making may be seen at Mitchell-Giddings Fine Arts, 183 Main Street, Brattleboro. Temporary hours are Fridays and Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sundays 12 to 5 p.m. Check the website for expanded hours beginning in June at mitchell-giddingsfinearts.com or call (802) 251-8290. You may make an appointment to come in. Masks and physical distancing are required. See Abrams' work and read about her craft development work with women around the world at jackieabrams.com.



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