

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 19 – NO. 38

also serving Erving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

\$1

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

SEPTEMBER 2, 2021

GILL-MONTAGUE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Virus Enters Third School Year

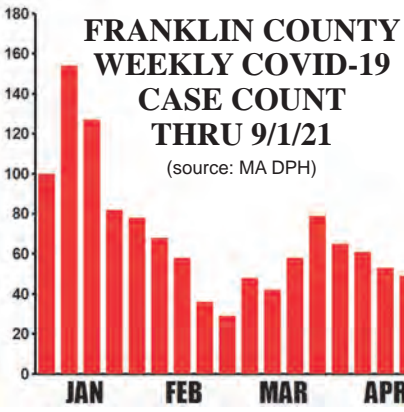
By MIKE JACKSON

GILL-MONTAGUE – Last Thursday marked the first day of school at Gill-Montague schools, which are convening in person with no remote learning option, in accordance with state orders. In Franklin County, 88% of 16- to 19-year-olds and 64% of 12- to 15-year-olds had received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine as of August 24, according to state data, but for those under 12, it was 0%.

With the spread of more transmissible strains of the virus outpacing vaccination and the incomplete nature of the vaccines' protection, meanwhile, cases are on the rise. "Every two weeks in the state of Massachusetts, the case trend seems to double," superintendent of schools Brian Beck reported to the school committee last week.

Beck said the district's main strategies this year will be masking indoors and on buses, hand-washing and sanitization, three-foot distancing requirements, and ventilation. Students will check and report on their symptoms daily, and their movement around the building will be recorded to aid contact tracing should an outbreak occur.

One change since last year is a see **GMRSD** page A5



LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Public Meeting Planned Over Police Region

By GEORGE BRACE

Leverett's selectboard announced on Tuesday that an informational meeting on the town's joint-policing initiative with Wendell would take place in the Leverett town hall on Tuesday, October 5 at 7 p.m. Wendell residents are invited to attend the session. The meeting will explain a recently completed draft contract formalizing the arrangement between the two towns, and present an overview of the undertaking's history. The board also discussed difficulties in replacing the town's conservation commission agent, among other business.

The completion of a draft agreement between Leverett and Wendell moved the towns closer to formalizing an arrangement that began see **LEVERETT** page A7

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Town Hall Moves Toward Acquiring Cotton Mill Site



The former Railroad Salvage building was razed this year by the EPA.

By JEFF SINGLETON

The town of Montague has finally initiated action to take control of the property at 11 Power Street, known locally as "Railroad Salvage." The motion to move the property into land court for back taxes was taken at the selectboard's meeting on Monday.

The building on the property, originally a cotton mill constructed in the late 19th century, and later a discount department store, steadily degraded over the past two decades; a 2016 fire left it a hazardous pile of rubble. During the past year the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) funded and executed a hazardous materials cleanup, removing a substantial portion of that rubble and demolishing several partial walls that remained standing after the fire.

Town administrator Steve Ellis reminded the board that Montague had delayed initiating this action until the hazardous material cleanup was complete, because the town was concerned that there might still be "unknown liabilities associated with the site." He said the EPA cleanup was not the "last step in the process, but it is the last one we can take without taking ownership of the property."

Ellis told the board that the EPA finished its project under budget because "they did not run into any nasty surprises." He estimated the cost of the federally-funded project as "in the vicinity of \$997,000."

The motion approved by the selectboard named a group called Solutions Consulting Group, LLC as the current owner of the property. Jeanne Golrick, a former Millers see **MONTAGUE** page A6

Revered Tree Given a Second Life



SUBMITTED PHOTO / KIM LINDNER

Gill woodworker Sam French lent his skills to a Maya Lin-led library design.

By ANNE HARDING

GILL – Chances are, if you've been out and about around the county, you've seen the hand-crafted furniture of Sam French. The owner of Gill Country Clear Woodworks has rocketed to wider fame as a result of his recent work with award-winning designer Maya Lin and architect Bill Bialosky at the new Neilson Library on the Smith College campus.

During the library renovation, which began in 2017, a 125-year-old elm tree had to be taken down to make way for new utilities, and because it was deemed at risk of falling. Though the tree was removed, it was revered enough to be sent for milling and drying locally in order to salvage the wood. This is where, two years

later, French came in – building beautiful new library furniture from this memorable tree.

French is quick to share the limelight for what he considers a great honor, amazing experience, and community effort. When I asked how he got involved in the Smith project, French said he was recommended by Sue Fiske of Greenfield's Forest Products Associates (FPA). FPA is a mecca for local woodworkers, with an incredible inventory of wood species and a variety of products not always available at your average lumber yard.

"We don't just sell lumber, we build community," Fiske says, "and Sam is a perfect example of one of our community members." French echoed Fiske's comments about the importance of community throughout see **TREE** page A7

Derby Organizer Back on the Soapbox

By JEFF SINGLETON

TURNERS FALLS – Yes, the Soapbox Derby will be returning to Turners Falls on September 19, after an eight-year hiatus. Former Montague Center resident Mik Muller has assembled a new team to organize the event, and then had to "scramble" to put it on the late-summer calendar after the state modified its mask mandate last spring. Muller told the Reporter that 28 participants have signed up as of this writing. The competition will begin at noon.

According to the event's website, montaguesoapboxraces.com, the races will be divided into three "divisions" by age – 8 to 12, 13 to 19, and 20 and up. The race course begins at the top of the First Street hill near its intersection with Unity Street and, after a steep drop, finishes near the entrance to Unity Park. Vehicles will descend the hill in pairs in two qualifying runs.

The competition will move from the youngest to the oldest division, with the latter starting from a special ramp at the top of the hill to

increase speed. The website details vehicle design specifications for different ages.

As in the past, well-known luminaries will announce the event and perform the function of "style judges" near the finish line. This year's luminaries will be state representative Natalie Blais and WRSI DJ and news reporter "Monte" Belmonte. Food and refreshments will be available from vendors at Unity Park and at the nearby taco stand on Second Street.

see **DERBY** page A5

ERVING SELECTBOARD

Erving Center Bridge Meeting Draws Focus to Traffic Issue

By KATIE NOLAN

At Erving's August 23 remote selectboard meeting, Weston & Sampson engineer Peter Grandy presented options for repairing the Church Street bridge at the North Street intersection over Keyup Brook.

"This will be an ongoing discussion, for many meetings," selectboard chair Jacob Smith said as he introduced Grandy to the joint meeting with the finance and capital planning committees.

In February, a state Department of Transportation (MassDOT) engineer told Erving officials that the bridge was in poor condition and must be closed or made one-lane only. According to the town website, the selectboard has not yet received formal notice about the bridge from MassDOT.

In March, a special town meet-

ing approved \$195,000 for Weston & Sampson to provide engineering, permitting, and consulting services for the repair or replacement of the bridge. At the town meeting, voters asked about alternatives, such as making Church Street a local-access-only street or demolishing the bridge. They asked town officials to study traffic patterns more carefully, to consider the effect of changes at Church Street on traffic on North and High streets, and to ask Church and North Street residents for their preferences.

Grandy presented three options for a replacement bridge, all of precast concrete: a three-sided frame, a three-sided arch, and a box culvert. The frame and arch would use the bridge's existing foundation, and the box culvert would increase its span. The estimated costs

see **ERVING** page A8

Glass Vandal Strikes Again

By MIKE JACKSON

TURNERS FALLS – Exactly 18 months after an anonymous tagger went on an expensive nighttime spree down Avenue A, etching an identical loopy logo into over two dozen windows from Walgreens to the Shady Glen, they came back for more. On Wednesday morning a number of freshly carved tags had appeared, this time reaching across the bridge to at least one Riverside business, and including the front door at Montague town hall.

"It's upsetting when people deface public and private property to no real purpose or end. It's disheart-

ening," town administrator Steve Ellis told the Reporter. "As was the case previously, the Montague police department is going to do everything that they possibly can to identify who the perpetrator was."

"An incident report was completed, and the vandalism was investigated without any positive outcome," Montague police chief Chris Williams responded last fall to an inquiry about the initial spree in the early hours of March 1, 2020.

Oliver Miller, the owner of 104-112 Avenue A, said he replaced five large panes of glass last year at an expense of thousands of dollars. On see **GLASS** page A6



Every Day Is Labor Day

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The Montague Reporter

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Founded by
Arthur Evans Harry Brandt David Detmold
August 2002

Drink Me

Hi! It's your community newspaper. Do you have a minute for a quick check-in?

Always a labor of love, the *Montague Reporter* has been chugging along with a somewhat reduced crew, and somewhat reduced revenue, all through this pandemic, as institutions rupture in slow motion all around us: first for a month, then three months, then an astounding year... and now for a year and a half, with the end looking further away than it did this spring.

Alice opened the door and found that it led into a small passage, not much larger than a rat-hole: she knelt down and looked along the passage into the loveliest garden you ever saw. How she longed to get out of that dark hall, and wander about among those beds of bright flowers and those cool fountains, but she could not even get her head through the doorway; "and even if my head would go through," thought poor Alice, "it would be of very little use without my shoulders. Oh, how I wish I could shut up like a telescope! I think I could, if I only knew how to begin."

Back around the New Year, we really hoped that this summer would be a nice relieved party, and this fall would see everyone coming back together, getting to business, maybe finding new ways to get involved in the life of their community. A natural renewal, which would naturally deposit a wave of interested new helpers at our doorstep.

Well, by now we've figured out just as well as you have that we're all still stuck in this stupid hall, and we shouldn't just keep waiting.

So! A number of announcements, apologies, requests, and solicitations are in order. Maybe something in this column is for you.

First off, the **price of stamps** went up this week, bringing the cost of mailing a *Reporter* to a reader from 92 to 98 cents. They currently cost us 38 cents each to print, and we publish 46 a year, which means that *just to print and mail* the paper just went from \$59.80 to \$62.56 annually.

As it so happens, we've been selling mailed subscriptions for \$60 per year. Haha. Effective immediately, that cost is going up to \$70. (Sorry!) Expect more news on delivery routes soon, but that one was an emergency.

Second, we apologize if you have been affected by the chaotic scene in our **renewal department**. We are catching up, but many of

you are overdue and have not yet been notified. If you suspect this is the case, email subscriptions@montaguereporter.org or call (413) 863-8666 to inquire. If you want to send money just for fun, we do need it!

Third, we've launched a **special fundraiser** specifically to cover a project this fall that's long overdue. The *Reporter* archive is almost entirely online, but very few people are finding it, because we have kept it hidden from search engines. There is only one reason for this: we want to go through all the back issues and remove the names of **people whose names appear in our police logs** for having been arrested.

We discontinued this practice in 2018, after pitching the idea to our readers and finding it strongly supported. Now we want to follow through, but it's a very labor-intensive job. If you have money to give, this is a *huge* community value: it will allow us to finally make two decades' worth of local resources and information easily available to the public at large, and it will ensure that hundreds and hundreds of people will not have their names unfairly tied to past mistakes, or even to crimes they did not commit.

Please contribute what you can at www.gofundme.com/f/help-the-montague-reporter-redact-names!

And finally, the very best part: **we need people**. We need writers and carriers and vacuum-ers, doodlers and door-knockers and copyeditors and occasional obsessive researchers. There's a Great Resignation going on out there – 55% of American workers say they plan to leave a job in the next year! – and while this restlessness means a number of our beloved colleagues are leaving their posts, we figure we should be able to scoop up even more in the chaos, if we only ask.

Specifically, we're looking for: an editor-curator of a **monthly science and/or technology page**; someone to compile and edit a weekly **police log** (no names, please!); a community member interested in learning journalism who can cover biweekly **school committee meetings**; a monthly compiler of our local **library listings**; one or more people who want to cover local **art and music**, regularly or occasionally; anyone who wants to be a **hard news reporter** and has a little spare time between Mondays and Wednesdays; a couple weekly **newspaper carriers**, one with a car; and possible members of our **board of directors**.

Might this be you? Get in touch!



Chef Kirsten Levitt of Stone Soup Café, operating every Saturday out of Greenfield's All Souls Church on the corner of Main and Hope, stirs the pot from which 400 hungry souls will be fed.

Letters to the Editors

Candidate Introduction: David Jensen

Over the last 41 years as a Montague resident I have had the opportunity to participate in the commerce of, service to, and governing of our town. When Mike Nelson needed to step down from the Selectboard an important gap needed to be filled. Not fully knowing who would be running, and with the encouragement of people I respect, I submitted my nomination papers. I am offering my experience, opinions and insight to fill that function.

I have actively participated as a citizen and employee in the governance of the town.

I was on the Finance Committee for three years, am currently a Town Meeting member for an uninterrupted thirty-three years, and was the town's Building Inspector (now retired) for twenty-nine plus years. In that time I have had hundreds, if not thousands, of conversations regarding the operation, running, and execution of town services, including the opinions and views of the personal that delivered those services. All these views and opinions were diverse, sometimes murky or contradictory, but the concerns shared a clear desire to see things work and a vision of where we are and where we are hoping to go. I look forward to continuing these conversations.

As an introduction, or resumé if you will, I arrived in Montague with family in 1980, my last year of obtaining a Physics degree from UMass. The economy and employment scene was poor, and having limited options, I started a business on Avenue A in a building that is now Riff's. Many storefronts at that time were empty, the sidewalks were heaved, and the shade trees were mostly dead and gone.

There I met Frank Abbondanzio. Our shared interest in the revitalization of Turners prompted me to join the Finance Committee and then Town Meeting from Precinct 5, with a mere five votes. There I got to observe the "elders" of their time – Walter Sojka, Henry Baucher, Jack Bassett and others – guide the Town. Many lessons were learned.

It was later that the Inspector of Buildings position opened up once again. I applied for it and was appointed.

It came in the middle of the new Sheffield School construction and its anticipated opening. However, health concerns in the school led to the revelation of defects in the school's ventilation systems, ultimately requiring the school's closing during its first academic year.

With such a controversial decision I anticipated a very-very short career with the town. Not so, it turned out. I lasted another twenty-nine years, giving me the opportunity to meet many of the town's citizens and absorb their insights and opinions. I have also seen the Budget process from both sides.

Over the following years, along with the day-to-day work, came more consequential issues. Some persist to this day. The Railroad Salvage building degraded and is now the remnant of an opportunity lost. The Indeck power plant was de-constructed with its remnants still in place. And the Strathmore Paper Mill remains the unresolved White Elephant in our Historic Industrial District. On the plus side, two+ years of court wrangling finally "liberated" downtown Millers Falls, giving that village the opportunity to revive.

On the smaller scale, I with many others helped fund and construct the first skateboard park, which ultimately evolved into the attractive and permanent facility that serves the youth of today. More recently as a working member of the Lake Pleasant Village Association we reconstructed the sinking Bell Tower pavilion, shortly followed by the rebuilding of the Bridge of Names, crushed during the recent severe windstorm event. I also served as Vice-Chair of the Building Committee that finally found the DPW its new home.

I believe that credentials and experience have their place but are not the ultimate qualifiers for the Selectboard seat. Knowledgeable insight, judgment, and temperament rank higher. These qualities are hard to convey by assertion on paper. That judgment is ultimately for others. So, I request the voters of Montague consider me as their next representative to serve on the Selectboard.

David Jensen
Lake Pleasant

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No paper fourth week of November,
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Compiled by NINA ROSSI

Our Family Legacy Farm on Turners Falls Road in Montague has opened a **sunflower maze** recently. Explore the maze Thursday through Sunday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. because this week, September 2 through 5, is the last chance visit for the year! Adults are \$10, children are \$5, and kids under 5 years old are free.

There is an emoji bingo game to play as you work through the maze as well. Hundreds of blooming sunflowers offer exciting photo opportunities, and you can help support a local farm family.

Did you enjoy the **Green River Festival** last weekend at the Franklin County Fairgrounds? We were there on Saturday, very grateful for the overcast day that kept the heat way down without significant rain showers. Some of the highlights that day were the parade with the Rebirth Brass Band, Cimafunk, Vapors of Morphine, and Zara Bode and her Little Big Band at the family tent.

Perhaps you are planning on going to the Fair next week, September 9 through September 12. Add to your enjoyment by watching a fascinating and superbly produced **history and celebration of the Franklin County Agricultural Society and Fair**, by Chris Clawson.

This five-month project, completed just in time for the 2021 Fair, tells the story using vintage movies, music, and archival materials from a number of private and community collections. The Society and Fair have been part of the community since 1848!

Scan the QR code on this page, or visit the Montague Historical Society website at montaguearchive.org to view this and other projects.

Pete Wackernagel is looking for **help planting a rain garden** behind

the Montague Town Hall in Turners Falls this Saturday, September 4 from noon to 5 p.m. Volunteers will help plant a biodiverse, 4,500-square-foot rain garden behind the town hall to filter stormwater, provide habitat for insects and birds, and serve as a new amenity along the riverside bike path.

Helpful things that you could bring include trowels, shovels, watering cans, and wheelbarrows. Bring water for yourself to drink and wear a hat. Look for the Facebook event "Help Plant a Rain Garden Behind Town Hall" for more information.

The LAVA Center in Greenfield announces a **new art exhibit** within their walls in September. Maria Sparrow's show, "Ancestors/Ancestress," includes paintings with titles in English and Spanish. Sparrow is a painter, teacher, and musician interested in themes of belonging and alienation. There will be an opening reception on Saturday, September 11 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The Main Street gallery at LAVA is open Saturday mornings and Thursday evenings. Details are online at www.localaccess.org.

The Great Falls Discovery Center is picking up steam with online events for families this fall. For the little ones, check out the popular **Kidleidoscope Story Hour** on Friday mornings in the Great Hall outdoor courtyard. Themes in September include hummingbirds, rabbits, and coyotes. The program includes a story, activities, and a craft, with appropriate social distancing measures taken.

The Great Hall at the Discovery Center will also be hosting a **woolen quilt exhibit** through September 30 curated by weaver Peggy Hart. "Make Do or Do Without: Depression-Era Wool Quilts" shows examples of quilts made

from old wool clothes or crafted with woolen and worsted manufacturing samples, and contemporary quilts inspired by the vintage ones. This exhibit includes examples from Western Massachusetts Fibershed using local wool.

The Center also hosts the **Art Naturally Series** for children over six years old, adults, and teens. The series features stories and art techniques of collage and mixed media to explore the natural world. Meet in the Great Hall on Saturday, September 11, from 10:30 a.m. to noon. Come early and enjoy September's Story Walk, featuring the book *Abuela* by Arthur Dorros, on the lawn.

Stop back the next day, Sunday September 12, to **celebrate Grandparents' Day** with self-guided adventures for you and your grands: bike path BINGO, and craft supplies for making a memory book. Ask at the welcome desk for these self-guided activities from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.



The Career Center is offering a new program designed specifically to enable economically disadvantaged job seekers over 55 to succeed in a remote work setting. "**Learn to be a Remote Worker**," an online skills training program for older job seekers, starts on September 13, with additional class cycles starting in winter and spring. Find out more at www.operationable.net/remote-worker-training or email mgurina@operationable.net.

Eggtooth Productions is pleased to announce their first full-scale, in-person production on September 10 and 11 at the Shea Theater in Turners Falls. **The Drag Sis-**

ters: Back Where We Belong is described as "a glittery, fun-filled, musical extravaganza where the musical magic of Etta James meets Dolly Parton meets Lou Reed meets Sia fully glammed and busting dance moves, not to mention extra dry martinis."

Get your tickets at www.sheatheater.org. You can also view the new schedule of shows at the venue, which has reopened this fall for vaccinated patrons only. Theatergoers must also wear masks when not eating or drinking.

Silverthorne Theater seeks **actors to audition** for the role of Erica in *Bright Half Life*, a two-character play by Tanya Barfield. Specifically they are seeking white, female-identifying, queer-identifying equity and non-equity performers. The play is slated for December 3, 4, 5, 10 and 11 at Hawks & Reed Performing Arts Center in Greenfield.

Auditions will be held Saturday, September 18 from 3 to 5 p.m. at the LAVA Center on Main Street.

Contact silverthornetheater@gmail.com or call (413) 768-7514 to schedule an audition. All roles are paid.

A **pop-up marketplace featuring local artists** is planned for Saturday, September 18 from 12 to 5 p.m. at 60 Chestnut Hill Road, Orange. This is the site of the North Quabbin Garlic and Arts Festival, which is still on COVID hiatus: "With safety and collective wellbeing paramount, organizers made the decision that the time was not yet right for the usual huge gathering. But local artists need support (and brighten our lives) more than ever!" Attendees are also welcome to bring a picnic and to do an open mic on the family stage, and several food vendors will be there.

Just down the road on the same day, **Seeds of Solidarity Farm** will hold its second of five consecutive Garlic Saturdays, where folks can purchase planting and culinary garlic and enjoy some growing tips and a farm tour. So head out east on Route 2 for a fun day of art, food, farms, and music.

Performers, artists, and musi-

cians: the **Wendell Cultural Council** is accepting applications for the next Mass Cultural Council annual funding cycle. Applications must be submitted online between September 1 and October 15. To submit, go to massculturalcouncil.smartsimple.com.

The latest Coalitions Connections newsletter has a bunch of tips and resources for parents about the new mandate for **students to be masked in the schools**, as the contagious Delta variant spreads and there is still no vaccine for kids under 12 years of age. Local parents and caregivers contributed tips about kids wearing masks, and there is a list of places to buy various types of masks made for children's faces.

Extensive wildfires across our continent affect air quality even when we cannot see or smell smoke, so it doesn't hurt to be extra careful, especially if you have breathing issues. Did you know that you can **check local air quality online** at www.airnow.gov? Find out if you should modify your outdoor activity, or switch to staying indoors, by logging in with your zip code.

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

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Another Letter to the Editors

Candidate Introduction: Mark Fairbrother

To the people of the Town of Montague:

I was born and raised in Montague and went through its school system, graduating from TFHS in 1975. I saw the decline in town when the mills shut down, but also the slow recovery as this town has remade itself as a community with renewed energy and outlook.

The COVID pandemic hurt us like it did so many other towns and cities, but I have been impressed by the resilience small businesses in particular have shown as we all try to come back to a new normal. Downtown Turners shows us this as restaurants reopen, the farmers' market and downtown cultural events come back, and some businesses that weathered the storm like the Great Falls Market thrive.

I have participated in town government in many ways since I joined the Montague Conservation Commission in the mid-'90s, including stints on the Airport commission, search committees for town planner and town administrator, ad-hoc committees regarding redevelopment of the Strathmore and the planning and construction of the new DPW building, restoring civilization

to Dry Hill Cemetery, and as a Selectboard member. It has been a pleasure to do these things, and I have served with many diverse, interesting and talented people. I have learned a lot about municipal government and how things do, and sometimes don't, work.

As a selectboard member, I found that much of the work can be generally routine as yearly budget and personnel cycles move along. Most of it is very positive as new ventures or programs get started that provide jobs, improvements, and opportunities in our new economy.

I also learned that part of being a selectboard member is understanding that the time will come when you have to be prepared to make difficult decisions that other people, or you yourself, may not like. Dog hearings were the worst; someone's beloved pet vs. someone else who was probably injured and certainly traumatized. Does the dog live or die, or can a different solution be worked out; high emotions on both sides. Having to sit across a table from someone who wants you to do something that you know would be a mistake and not in the interests of

the Town and voting not to do whatever it is (not hiring someone that has been presented for a position, telling supporters of one project that your priority must be a different project, or telling another town's representatives we won't be able to do what they want us to do).

The old mill town economy and model are gone, but Montague has retained the characteristics that have made it an attractive place to live, and has forged a new economy and sense of community that, like the country as a whole, is more diverse in people and vision.

Like any other small town we have both societal and economic problems that need to be addressed and worked out, but I know we have the strength, determination, and people to accomplish these things and move forward, and I would like the chance to take part in the journey as a member of the Montague Selectboard, so I ask for your support in the upcoming special election in September. Thank you.

Mark Fairbrother
Montague Center

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Guess What? More Letters to the Editors!

Schools Doing Tree Crime

Voters in Montague passed tree bylaws at the most recent May town meeting. These bylaws, which are available on the town website, include various provisions to protect public trees including prohibiting:

- covering or obstructing any open land at the base of a public tree designed to permit access of air, water and fertilizer to the root system; and
- parking a vehicle on the Critical Root Zone of a public tree. The Critical Root Zone is defined as measuring outwards from the trunk a minimum of 1.25 feet for every inch diameter of tree trunk, four feet above the ground.

The Gill-Montague Regional School District administration building has two large old oak trees at the rear of the school. These trees are growing together and are taller than the administration building. The school administration is parking a 30-yard dumpster 6.5 feet

from the base of one of the trees, and a small school truck 6.5 feet from the second tree.

I measured the trees, and determined that the Critical Root Zone should be about 39 feet for the first, larger tree, and 30 feet for the second tree. The school administration is flagrantly violating the tree bylaws designed to protect public resources as the trees are endangered by both the dumpster and the small truck.

When I spoke with tree warden Mark Stevens about this, he said that he had spoken with various people at the school asking them to move the dumpster. Although they committed to doing so, the dumpster is still there, and the small truck parks there regularly.

Why isn't the school administration responsible for complying with public policy like the rest of us?

Ella Ingraham
Turners Falls

Montague Mug Race Thank-Yous

Tough to begin naming all the wonderful folks who pulled together to make the 40th Mug Race such a huge success. Dr. Al Ross and Dave Kaynor were honored by their friends in such fitting ways. Al's friends and family ran the course (canoeists became runners); Dave's incredible fiddlers arrived armed with instruments, talent, and spirit.

After taking a year hiatus, runners came ready to tackle the hills with gusto. With the humidity rising, off they blasted and took "Tracy's Turn" flying, to the cheers of the growing crowd. The Finish Line was the place to be to watch youth and experience come together for their victories.

Thank you to our great sponsors: Rau's, Montague Mill, Village Store, Falls Farm, Scott Fallon, Greenfield Savings Bank, McCarthy Funeral Home, Renaissance

Builders, Red Fire North, Gary Turn, Mount Grace Land Trust, Moretti Landscaping, About Face Computers, and Barstow Bakery.

There are many volunteers that year after year arrive early and stay to the end to ensure the runners' needs are met. Montague Center Fire personnel manned the course route for safety. "Thank you" never seems quite enough.

The highway department took time from a very busy summer to give the course a sweep and loan equipment.

Many local events did not take place this year, and I am grateful that the Mug Race was able to get scheduled, supported, and have so many runner traverse "Al's route."

Ann Fisk, Director
Montague Mug Race
Montague Center

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Restoration Disagreement

After I read Robert J. Steinberg of Montague Center's letter about the Spinner Park sculpture (August 19), I did a little research of my own and feel reassured about the work that has been done to restore the spinner. While it's fair to raise questions and concerns, the nasty tone of the letter was uncalled for.

I am always grateful for the community spirit here in Turners Falls and for all of the people who use their time and creativity to make this a vibrant place to live. Jack Nelson has always been someone who brings positive energy to our community - a quality the world could use more of these days.

Anne P. Jemas
Turners Falls

Every Letter to the Editors Should Be This Good

Read with interest about the revival of the soapbox car race.

Montague Old Home Days had a soapbox car race back in the day. Sometime in the early '60s we built a car (shades of *The Little Rascals*) out of an old English pram and ran it in the race. I took this photo of the "pit crew." From left: Pinnie, Hugh, Jeff and John, with Joel in the precarious driver's seat.

Jerry Sears
St. Louis, MO



OP ED

Solar's Land Impact Necessitates Moratorium

By **LESLIE CERIER**

SHUTESBURY - Three years ago, 30 acres of forested land were clear cut to make way for an industrial-scale solar project in Shutesbury. Since the panels went in, nearby homes have experienced water damage, and we just found out that required monitoring and paperwork from the developer related to environmental impacts and maintenance have been late and inconsistent.

Citizens and Town officials learned from that experience and voted in bylaws in June 2020 that regulate the impact of solar development on the environment and Indigenous ceremonial sites. Moreover, our zoning laws limit the size of any solar development to 15 acres.

Currently there is a plan for five more of these industrial-scale solar projects in our Town. That means removing 190 acres of forest. Two of the solar projects are sited on land set aside for conservation by the landowner who was recently compensated by the State, private funds, and a land trust in the amount of \$3.3 million. The State itself considers this land environmentally sensitive due to its extensive forest cover and biological diversity. It should be especially protected by the Town.

The developer wants to get around the usual permitting process by pressuring the Town to

approve a "public-private partnership," which would make them qualify for the highest tier of state subsidies through the Department of Energy Resources SMART funds program. This is a gross misuse of State funding because by establishing a "public-private partnership" arrangement with the Town, they would no longer be financially penalized under state environmental restrictions that discourage siting solar projects in forests or agricultural land. Their business model is an attempt at an end-run around State regulations as well as our Town's voter approved zoning and solar bylaws.

If these new projects get installed, they will likely affect neighboring residents' drinking water and storm water management, not to mention their property values. Look at what happened in Williamsburg, a case documented by local news media. The developer clear cut 19 acres for a solar project that resulted in major storm water run-off damage, polluting several acres of wetlands and the river tributaries. The damage was so bad that the Attorney General sued the developer for over \$1 million.

What about the limit of 15 acres for development projects in my town? The landowner and developer will certainly enlist their network of political, economic, and legal connections to pressure the Town for a waiver. It doesn't help

that State laws regulating solar development are obsolete, specifically the vague clause that says that solar development should not be "unreasonably regulated." This defining feature of the law written in the 1970s offers little guidance for dealing with the current state-wide proliferation of industrial solar and its consequences.

We are all for appropriately sited solar to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but what we are witnessing here is the destruction of carbon-sequestering forests that are part of the solution to the climate and biodiversity crisis. What is happening in Shutesbury, despite our bylaws, can happen in any town in Massachusetts. That means your town, too.

Therefore, we are calling on Governor Baker for a moratorium on solar projects over 5 acres. That's enough electricity for about 150 or more homes. It would allow for 1) municipalities to consider bylaws to best address their residents' concerns about solar, and 2) give the public and experts time to work with lawmakers and regulators to fix the problems with the state's energy policy.

Please sign the moratorium petition at www.savemassforests.com solar action page. For more information, please visit savethepinebarrens.org.

Leslie Cerier lives in Shutesbury.

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DERBY from page A1

Muller told the *Reporter* that it has been a long and uncertain journey to the revival of the derby, which began in 2010 with the assistance of the local community television station (Montague Community Television). After four years, the original organizers had reached their limit, and Muller began a search for new sponsors.

The derby remained “dormant” until 2019, when town administrator Steve Ellis suggested that Muller contact some of the newer businesses in town. A committee was then formed with Peter Chilton of Nova Motorcycles, Seth Rutherford of the cannabis firm 253 Pharmacy, and parks and recreation director John Dobosz.

“Then COVID hit,” Muller said. The pandemic delayed the event for almost two years.

“I’ve never been to one,” Rutherford told the *Reporter* when asked if he had ever attended a soapbox derby. He went door to door seeking donations from different businesses in town. “It was a great opportunity,” he said. “I have been able to meet a lot of local business people.”

Chilton, who will be constructing at least one vehicle for the event, said he had attended an early



John Zellman of Turners Falls won a design prize in the 2013 Derby for his fire engine-themed entry.

version of the derby and now has been “deemed the race director” by the organizing committee.

Brian Lamore, a physics teacher who is charge of the “maker lab” at Turners Falls High School, is constructing at least one vehicle with his students. Talking to the *Reporter*, Lamore embraced the uncertainties of the project. “We’re jumping off a cliff and flying on the way down,” he said. “But things will turn out in a good way.”

Soap box racing began in the early 1930s in Ohio, according to The *Smithsonian* magazine. In 1933 a photographer noticed “three boys, each sitting in a cratelike frame fixed to baby-buggy wheels, rolling down a bumpy hill in Dayton.” The photographer invited the boys back for a race the next week, and a “considerable crowd gathered.” Over the next few years the race started drawing large crowds and the event moved to Akron, where a large stadium was constructed by the New Deal’s Works Progress Administration.

Today Akron is also the home of a soap box derby museum, and the headquarters of All-American Soap Box Derby, Akron, Inc. The organization has regional chapters, but Muller said the Montague event is not part of this. One reason, he says, is that the national organization promotes its own soap box kits, whereas the Turners Falls event prohibits their use. According to the event’s website, “Your vehicle must be hand-made (this is the part to be as creative as possible!). Any kits or prefabricated vehicles will be disqualified.”

The instructions continue: “We encourage you to be as creative, fun & tasteful as possible when building your cart. Many Racers will come up with a theme for their cart and pit crew, while others just might want a cart built for speed. This is a fun community event so come light-hearted and ready to have a great afternoon! If you have a support team who wants to cheer you on, you should get them to gather in one spot and hold up a sign so other fans can gather.”

GMRSD from page A1

relaxation of quarantine guidelines – students potentially exposed to the virus but showing no symptoms will be tested each day, and may remain in school as long as they remain negative.

District nurse leader Melissa Bednarski urged parents to contact the schools if they know their families have been in contact with infected patients.

Adjustments

At the August 24 meeting, the school committee approved a raft of changes to student handbooks including new policies on due process, vaping, and cell phones at the elementary school level, and reflecting a shift in discipline toward restorative practices and a “multi-tiered system of support” model at the middle and high school.

“I absolutely really believe in teaching kids,” said newly hired high school principal Christopher Barnes, “so we’re going to do the best that we can to take these opportunities with students, to teach them and have them be involved in change, rather than just responding with consequences.”

Beck said one idea under consideration was offering community service as an alternative to suspension.

Newly hired director of teaching and learning Jeanne Powers joined the meeting to discuss supports the schools are providing teachers and students to address learning loss from last year, as well as plans to address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The school committee discussed reviving the defunct equity committee, and ex-

pressed hope that student council would provide leadership on the issues. Chair Jane Oakes also added that she hoped the committee could regularly meet with student representatives, as it has in the past. “The students are so good at perceiving what’s happening, and communicating it so clearly to us,” she said.

“And they hardly use any acronyms,” Michael Langknecht joked.

Other Business

Montague member Carleigh Dlugosz, who is moving out of town, has resigned from the school committee. The committee will make an appointment to fill her seat at its next meeting on Tuesday, September 14.

Oakes urged the *Reporter* to share with our readers that any Montague resident interested in filling the vacancy may send a letter of interest to the superintendent’s office at 35 Crocker Avenue in Turners Falls by Monday the 13th.

Cassie Damkoehler apologized for her comments on intra-district school choice at the previous meeting. “I received a couple emails,” she said. “I recognize that families will always make the decision that is best for them and their children. My distaste or frustration was not meant to target families that make that choice – it was more so about the program, and how it exists.”

The committee once again discussed the idea of meeting in person rather than via Zoom, but did not decide to be doing so yet.

Students have an extra-long weekend this Friday through Monday.

NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

Gill Grows Slightly; Hose Left Running; Liabilities Add Up

By **JERRI HIGGINS**

The Gill selectboard met Monday night and approved the town staying with a single voting precinct, paying for a study of advance funding for retiree benefits, and abating a number of sewer bills, among other business.

“We are up about 50 people,” noted selectboard chair Greg Snedeker, of the 2020 Census data the town has recently received. That data showed a 3.4% increase in Gill’s population since the 2010 Census, up from 1,500 to 1,551.

“What you are voting to accept is the precinct map, which will look remarkably like the map of Gill,” town administrator Ray Purington told the board, explaining that they needed to officially decide on the number of precincts based on the 2020 data.

“Tell [town clerk Doreen Stevens] that I want three precincts,” joked selectboard member Randy Crochier.

“Doreen would probably hurt you if you tried to go with more than one precinct,” Purington replied.

Included in the meeting materials were a Census report and “the legal description of the borders of Gill,” which contained hand-written “perambulations,” from 1850 through 1885, recorded by Gill’s past selectmen.

Signatory surnames on those hand-written documents, such as Cushman, Hale, Snow, and Montague, among others, lent a window into past public servants whose names now adorn parks, buildings, and streets. Those names also provide a through-line to living descendants – several of whom continue serving local communities in various ways.

The selectboard unanimously voted to accept the precinct map, and to remain as one precinct.

Sewage Pardons

The selectboard considered a number of requests for abatement of sewer bills, and approved several for filling swimming pools.

Purington told the board that one abatement for \$15.50 was requested by a resident who wrote that a pressure relief valve on a mini-tank under her kitchen sink “went off... resulting in an uncontrollable flooding.” The resident explained that she could not shut off her water main, but called a plumber who was able to turn it off. She learned that her house water pressure should be about 70 psi, while the plumber told her that “the water pressure that was coming from the main town line on the street exceeded 100 psi.” Hydrants were being flushed that day, which likely contributed to the increased pressure.

“It sounds like it was related to the town flushing hydrants,” said Crochier, adding that while the town does not normally cover equipment malfunctions, this seemed to be an exception. The abatement was unanimously approved.

Another request involved a hose that had been left running for several days during the late July rainstorms that flooded many area homes and properties. The resident explained that his child was afraid to go behind a tree where the shutoff valve was located after washing the family dog, and did not tell anyone the hose was still running. Due to the rainy conditions, the running hose was not noticed until the clerk for the Riverside water district informed the resident about excess water usage readings.

The extenuating circumstances of heavy rain and an unthinking child led Crochier to say that while this did not meet the strict criteria for abatements, “I am not ready

to just say ‘no.’”

“An adult did not know that this was going on,” Snedeker added.

The board members all agreed that this was a “tough case,” and wanted to gather more information about past water usage at the residence. They tabled the decision until their next meeting.

Post-Employment Benefits

Town treasurer Peter Turban attended the meeting to request \$5,500 for Odyssey Advisors of Colchester, Connecticut to evaluate the town’s “Other Post-Employment Benefits” (OPEB) liability.

Turban said that the company conducts their valuations every two years. “The first year they would do a very detailed report, and the company would update those figures in the second year,” he said. The term would be for the 2021 and 2022 fiscal years, and Turban told the selectboard that “most of the tables and charts” from the OPEB valuation report could also be used in the town auditor’s report.

Massachusetts General Laws states that OPEB is “... a trust fund established by a governmental unit... for the deposit of gifts, grants, appropriations and other funds for the: (1) benefit of retired employees and their dependents, (2) payment of required contributions by the unit to the group health insurance benefits provided to employees and their dependents after retirement and (3) reduction and elimination of the unfunded liability of the unit for such benefits.”

Governmental employees become eligible for those OPEB benefits such as health, dental, life insurance, or disability, upon retiring, but Turban explained that many towns’ OPEB liability accounts are underfunded because

there is no law against it. However, in 2016, the Governmental Accounting Standards Board released new requirements that jeopardizes a town’s ability to get bonds and notes if its OPEB account is underfunded, according to Turban.

“[Odyssey Advisors] did a survey that showed that 79% of the towns and cities in Massachusetts that they deal with are not materially funded,” Turban said, “and only 53% of the towns and cities in Massachusetts are over 1% funded.”

“Nationwide it is pretty awful as well,” added Snedeker.

“19% of towns and cities are funded over 10%,” Turban continued, “and 11% of towns and cities are over 20% funded. I do not think we are all that bad – we do have quite a bit of funds in the account.”

“It should be good to have something in writing that says whether we are in terrible shape, or we are in *really* terrible shape,” Crochier quipped.

There was some discussion as to where the money for Odyssey’s fee should come from. Turban said that the town has been putting “roughly \$13,000 a year” into its OPEB liability account, but Crochier advised against drawing it down before seeing the report on the town’s liability.

Gill has not had an OPEB valuation report, or a town audit, since 2016, said Turban, but an FY’21 town audit is expected this winter or early next spring.

Instead, the board agreed the expense would come from the town’s general fund. “We have been putting \$5,000 away every year for the audit,” Turban said. “I think we have plenty of money built into that account to pay for this right now.” The board unanimously approved the expense.

Other Business

\$9,000 was unanimously approved for the highway department to purchase a used sander from J. C. Madigan, Inc., of Lancaster.

The sander, which will go onto the town’s 10-wheeler truck, may be necessary because while a new dump truck approved this year by town voters is being outfitted with an all-season body and plows, it will not be delivered to the town until January.

“I am looking for permission to basically buy us an insurance policy,” said highway superintendent John Miner.

Miner told the board that the 14-foot stainless steel sander was listed for \$10,000, but he was able to get a \$1,000-dollar trade-in for the town’s old sander body. “It’s in very good shape,” he said.

Miner said that his department would keep the sander until the new truck comes in.

“And then sell it?” asked Snedeker.

“Ideally, yes,” answered Miner. “It is in good enough shape that we could get close to, if not all, of our money back.”

“We need something before the [new] truck comes in,” agreed selectboard member Charles Garbiel.

Purington reported that the first part of the Gill Elementary School flooring project has been completed. “The tiles are gone, the flooring is down, the teachers have moved back in, the kids are back in,” he said. “The photos I have seen look really nice.”

Crochier added that he spoke with Lisa Desjarlais, the elementary school’s new principal, who said she is happy with the results, and that “the whole school looks so much brighter and cleaner.”

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NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Town Officials Swayed By Public Booze Plea

By JOSH HEINEMANN

At its August 18 meeting, two groups asked the Wendell selectboard for use of the town hall. The first request, for a private event on August 21, was simple and was accepted without discussion. The second group was the Friends of the Wendell Meetinghouse.

Two members of the Friends, Court Dorsey and Chris Queen, came to explain their wishes. The group is holding a celebration of the Meetinghouse's renovation on Saturday, September 11 from 2 to 6 p.m., and wants to have access to the town hall bathrooms. In addition, they wanted to close the southern section of Center Street to allow for parking on one side, and room for cars to turn around so people can leave when they want to. Parking on one side allows room for an emergency vehicle. These requests were granted after little discussion.

The Friends plan to have food tents on the north common, to have music in the gazebo, and to serve beer and wine from inside the Meetinghouse. But, given the current increasing number of COVID cases, they do not want people to linger inside the building, but only to look at the renovation, get served if they want, and then leave to make room for others.

The Meetinghouse lot is small, and not terribly inviting, and there will be shade, food and music on the town-owned north common, and the Friends want people to feel comfortable crossing Center Street with a serving of beer or wine. Town bylaws, however, do not allow alcohol on town property. Queen and Dorsey asked for a one-time exception.

They promised to limit people to two servings, and Dorsey emphasized his experience in non-violent training and gentle but firm enforcement. He said that at one time, beer was served at Old Home Day. The bylaw was passed at a town meeting in response to disorderly conduct at Fiske Pond.

Without adding details about beer served at Old Home Day, selectboard chair Dan Keller said, "That ended badly," and said he did not want to set a precedent or start down a slippery slope. The board was short one member, and Keller and member Laurie DiDonato wanted time to consider their decision, so it was postponed to the board's September 1 meeting.

On September 1, the board met again with Dorsey, discussed the proposal in depth, and ultimately agreed to grant a one-day permit to allow beer or wine to be carried across Center Street to the common.

The Friends will be required to hire a certified server, carry insur-

ance for the event, and designate three people to keep an eye on attendees' behavior. DiDonato said the two-drink limit made her feel comfortable with the idea.

Because the Meetinghouse will be a venue for future events, the board also discussed creating a general policy and procedure for fielding similar requests.

Police and Roads

In preparing to make the old police station ready for renovations that will allow it to become a substation for the Leverett police, highway commission chair Phil Delorey and others emptied the building. 20-year old computer equipment was discarded, and furniture was moved to the WRATS storage container for a future auction.

As project manager, Delorey said he had gotten a dozen requests for bid documents for the renovation, and hoped construction can start in mid-September. The work will be divided into four components: sprayed foam insulation, carpentry, plumbing, and a new heating system.

Representatives from Leverett and Wendell worked together and prepared a lease agreement. They are sending it to both town counsels for final wording.

Delorey also asked the board to allow a 30-day extension to the new highway employee's probation period. He said the extension would not be punitive, and would allow his pay to increase as it would if the probation were not extended. According to Delorey, the new hire has the necessary licenses and has worked well, but the extensive road work that followed heavy summer rains did allow him time to become familiar with the plow trucks and the techniques of plowing.

The selectboard agreed to the extension.

Other Business

DiDonato said that as soon as Green Communities approves the spending, the energy committee will approve installing window quilts at the library. She said that will use up the remainder of Wendell's grant. The town can apply for the next round of grants, which are competitive.

Town coordinator Alisha Brouillet said one person is waiting to meet with town engineer Jim Slavas to give a second estimate for spraying foam insulation under the town hall floor. Tom Chaisson gave one estimate, but because that estimate was over \$10,000, the town needs three.

Full Moon Coffeehouse organizer Kathy Becker sent the selectboard a message to say the committee will not even try to hold coffeehouses in the coming season.

GLASS from page A1

Wednesday two more of his windows were damaged, including one large tag facing a window seat at the Upper Bend eatery.

"What do you do?" Miller asked. "We need to find a way, for everybody's sake, to figure out who did it.... I want to know that if we replace our windows again, they're not going to get scratched."

"Scratching into my window?" said Alex McGuigan, who rents the storefront at 102 Avenue A for her vintage shop Buckingham Rabbits. "The biggest joy I get from the shop is doing windows.... And it was already replaced once, so insurance will go up again, or I just live with it, and they get what? Street cred? I don't get it."

MONTAGUE from page A1

Falls resident and former member of Solutions Consulting, wrote to the Reporter last January contending that the property had been awarded to the town by the land court in 2013, and that Solutions Consulting "ceased to exist" in 2016.

Town treasurer Eileen Seymour said she had talked to the town's tax title attorney, who said he would be asking the court of "expedite the judgment."

Airport Expansion

The board approved a \$340,700 grant from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) on Monday that will be used to fund borrowing used for the purchase of Pioneer Aviation, a company that performed fueling, storage, maintenance and flight training services for the public airport. Airport manager Bryan Camden said this would be the first of three federal grants to pay off the bonds.

Ellis asked Camden if the grant award "meets the schedule" for the bond payoff plan presented at a recent town meeting that approved the Pioneer purchase.

"It does," Camden responded, "with a few days to spare."

The board also approved a \$32,000 "Airport Rescue Grant," which is part of the federal CARES Act response to COVID-19. In response to a question from Ellis, Camden said that the FAA has determined that these funds could be used for debt service.

Bargains Galore

At the board's previous meeting on August 23, a deed to the former rectory of Ste. Anne's church on J Street in downtown Turners Falls, transferring the property to the new owner John Anctil, was approved. The deed, valued at \$25,000, is part of a land development agreement with the town that requires Anctil to undertake substantial work on the property.

Town planner Walter Ramsey said the building will be "remerged" with the church next door, which Anctil also owns.

The board also voted to formal accept the deed for the Highland Cemetery, as well as the trust fund associated with it, which contains \$34,000. The transfer of the former private cemetery to the town had previously been approved by Montague town meeting.

Block Grants

The bulk of the August 23 meeting was taken up by a public hearing on the town's annual application for federal Community Development Block Grant funds. Most of that hearing was devoted to descriptions of four social service programs.

Kwamane Harris, executive director of the Brick House, described "three core services" that would be funded by the grant. These include individual case management, fo-

cus on an "action plan" for each participant; an education program described as a "community of practice"; and a "referral network" that would direct young people to "the right services in our community so they get what they need."

Barbara Bodzin, the executive director of LifePath, which serves elders and people with disabilities, said next year's grant would provide funds for a home-sharing program whereby elderly residents would "open up their homes" to younger people who would provide care as well as assistance with housework, shopping, and laundry in lieu of rent.

Calvin Moen of the Wildflower Alliance, formerly the Recovery Learning Community, said the block grant funds would be used for "peer support groups and other wellness activities in Montague." He said the group was "rebooting" its programs in Montague which were disrupted by the COVID pandemic.

There was no representative present from the Montague Catholic Social Ministries which, as in recent years, plans to use the funds for a program for young English-language learners and their parents.

Brian McHugh of the Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, which administers the block grants for the town, then reviewed the other components of the grant. These will include funding for at least three housing rehabilitation programs and the continuation of the Avenue A streetscape project, which involves new sidewalks, planter upgrades, and several new streetlights.

The board voted to approve the application, which totals \$788,174.

Formalizing Procedure

At the same meeting, finance committee chair Jen Audley presented the selectboard with a nearly-completed draft of a weighty new "financial policies manual." The 64-page manual was developed with the assistance of the University of Massachusetts Collins Center and funded by a state "Community Compact" grant.

Audley pointed out that the selectboard has been involved with developing the financial policies with the fin com, and that retiring board member Michael Nelson was part of a subcommittee that "launched the process."

Audley said the consultant was charged with taking existing policies that were "already written down" and "build[ing] on them." He talked with staff about practices that were not written but should be in the manual, and reviewed the policies for consistency with state law. Audley said the final product "was not significantly different from what the town has been doing," but that "now those things are visible for anyone to see."

The fin com chair asked the selectboard to adopt 15 of the 18 poli-

cies within the next month, but said "there are three we would like to hold on to to work on a little bit more over the next year." These involve the annual budget process, capital planning, and the use of reserves.

Audley said her committee would plan a more detailed presentation of the policies at its September 8 meeting, and make the presentation on September 22.

"We can only appeal to people's better angels," said Ellis, "and ask that A, if they were involved, they stop that kind of behavior – and B, if they know who did it, they share a tip with the Montague police. Because this is destructive, and it does not advance the causes of a prosperous community."



Roads, Roofs, and Poles

Town planner Walter Ramsey gave the board an update on the Complete Streets program, and the board approved a change order to install "flashing beacons" on Turnpike Road. The beacons will be funded by a donation from Judd Wire, a manufacturing company located near the crossing.

Ellis told the board that LaRochelle Construction, the company working on the roof of the senior center on Fifth Street in Turners Falls, had given the town an estimate of the cost of replacing siding and painting the building. He said the roof project, which was "essentially done," had come in under cost, but the additional work would need another town meeting appropriation and a new bidding process.

On August 23, the board approved a new utility pole on Davis Road in Mormon Hollow, but held off on a request by Eversource electric company to install 18 new poles on North Leverett Road, because no one from the company was present to explain the project.

The board approved the placement of the 18 North Leverett Road poles when it met on Monday.

Other Business

The board approved the resignation of Lynn Meehan as a full-time 911 dispatcher, but then appointed her to part-time or "per diem" position. Ellis warned the board that he felt there needed to be "further conversations" about the dispatch department. "It is a very small department," he said, "and it makes it very challenging to cover 24/7 dispatch services."

The board approved a memorandum of understanding with the Franklin County Solid Waste District for the hauling of liquid sludge generated by the water pollution control facility.

Selectboard member Chris Boutwell announced Saturday, September 25 as the date of annual hazardous waste collection at Greenfield Community College and the Orange transfer station. Participants must register with the waste district by September 18.

The board went into executive sessions at the end of both meetings: on August 23, to review the minutes of previous executive sessions for potential release, and on Monday, to discuss negotiating strategy with unions over potential reorganization of the 911 emergency dispatch.



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LEVERETT from page A1

approximately two years ago when Wendell's police chief retired. Leverett has provided police services to Wendell under temporary agreements since that time. The contract was written with the aid of consultants hired by Wendell through a state grant program.

Residents and members of Leverett's social justice committee (SJC) expressed concerns over transparency in the process of creating the agreement, and the availability of information about the police regionalization initiative generally.

Aaron Buford and Shannon Gamble of the SJC both said they were not opposed to initiative, but that they and others in the community have been confused at times in the course of events, and that better communication was needed to improve community involvement.

"That's what this meeting is for," responded chair Julie Shively, pointing to the complexity of drafting the agreement, the length of time involved, and some aspects of the arrangement being in Wendell's purview as factors making ongoing communication difficult.

Buford said he appreciated the communication he has had with the selectboard and police department overall, but felt it had been spotty at times, and would like the SJC and community to be engaged more directly.

Shively said she hopes to have the draft agreement published on the town's website prior to the October 5 informational meeting. The meeting will use "somewhat of a hybrid format," allowing for remote access.

Conservation

Con com chair Isaiah Robison

appeared before the board to discuss difficulties the commission is having in filling the paid, part-time, position of conservation agent. Robison and the board discussed the challenges small towns face in filling such positions, attributing the turnover rate to relatively low pay and applicants using them as stepping stones to full-time employment elsewhere.

Robison suggested increasing the pay from \$16.68 an hour, noting that it's only slightly more than fast food workers make, or increasing the number of hours from five or six to 10 per week.

Board members suggested more advertising be done, but brought up other avenues to look into, such as contacting the Franklin Regional Council of Governments about the possibility of a shared-services arrangement. Selectboard member Tom Hankinson volunteered to look into the potential of working with the University of Massachusetts, perhaps to develop a co-op program which could provide continuity in the position.

Various Messes

The board reviewed an email complaining about the state of grounds and gardens near the entrances to several town buildings, including the stone wall in front of the town hall. Shively noted that various gardens and plantings mentioned in the email were maintained by volunteers, and the COVID state of emergency had an impact on such work.

Highway superintendent Matthew Boucher said his department does what it can with groundskeeping which it is not directly responsible for, but has been busy recently with road work. A number of suggestions were made, including

"get[ting] the elementary school kids out there" to work on the school grounds and contacting a tech school for credited help.

Hankinson said he was personally concerned with the state of the stone wall in front of the town hall, at which point Robison and Boucher said they were volunteering to take care of it.

Gamble suggested the possibility of volunteers creating pollinator islands in places, and volunteered to weed the garden in front of the safety complex, but was informed by Boucher his department had "cut the whole thing down" that afternoon.

The board also continued to seek resolution to a complaint over a large pile of dirt on Old Mountain Road. The pile, created by a resident 20 years ago, serves to keep ATVs from accessing a public hiking trail.

Town administrator Marjorie McGinnis said her research indicated the pile is on an old county road that was discontinued in the 1800s, at which time its ownership theoretically reverted to the property's prior owner.

Those taking part in the discussion agreed it was in the town's best interest to maintain hiking access, but that something needed to be done to address the reason for the complaint: vehicles turning around on the lawns of abutters after discovering they are on a dead-end road with no place to park.

Signage regarding the dead end and lack of parking was suggested, along with a "turnaround" that didn't involve people's lawns, though it was noted there were space issues with the latter solution.

Other Business

The board approved two small

TOWN OF LEVERETT
Buildings and Grounds Facilities Manager

The Town of Leverett is hiring a part-time Facilities Manager beginning in October. Duties to include, but are not limited to, cleaning, maintenance, repair, contractor coordination and supervision of custodial employees. Such oversight to include the preparation of specifications for work to be done under contract; inspection, and budget monitoring and preparation. Salaried position scheduled at 7 hours a week average. Pay is \$9,600 per year. Experience managing and completing projects for buildings and grounds maintenance preferred. A job description and application are available in the Town Hall or at www.leverett.ma.us. Questions should be directed to townadministrator@leverett.ma.us. Applications due by September 10th, 2021.

Leverett is an AA/EOE.

LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING
Leverett Conservation Commission

The Leverett Conservation Commission, in accordance with the Wetlands Protection Act (MGL c.131 §40), will hold a remote public meeting on September 13, 2021 beginning at 7:00 p.m. to review a Request for Determination of Applicability for the replacement of a utility pole near Doolittle Brook on Montague Rd. The public can participate by emailing the Conservation Commission for the link to the Go To Meeting (ConCom@leverett.ma.us). The link will also be posted at the Town Hall by September 9, 2021. The application is on file and available for public inspection in the Conservation Commission Office by appointment at (413) 548-1022 ext. 3.

changes to the town's contract with the board of assessors, changing the hours of in-person availability of a department representative, and allowing for remote contact.

The board corrected the minutes of a previous meeting, at which a misstatement had been recorded concerning the vaccination status of the person serving lunches in the senior lunch program. The person in question is fully vaccinated, and has been for some time.

In response to the publication of 2020 Census data, which showed Leverett as having 1,865 residents, the board decided to remain a single

voting precinct.

The selectboard also met on Wednesday, August 18, and hired Leverett resident Hannah Paessel as library director.

The board instituted a policy requiring the wearing of masks at selectboard meetings, but wanted to hear from the board of health and other town boards and committees as to whether or not the policy should be adopted by other town bodies and meetings.

The board also continued to discuss improving the sound quality of "hybrid," remotely-accessible meetings.



TREE from page A1

our conversations. Smith College invited him to bid on the library project, and he credits his partner Tracy Dowd for his successful response to the RFP and handling the business dealings with the college. French also says he was humbled by the many clients who wrote him incredible letters of recommendation, but according to the library website, it was French's own artistry and commitment to sustainability that convinced the architects he was the right person for the job.

French has been working on his own for about six years now, but grew up learning woodworking from French and Ball Millwork – his father, Dick French, and business partner Pete Ball. The pair shipped their 18th century reproduction millwork all over the country during their heyday. Sam told me the library project would not have been possible without the use of his father's equipment, and the larger spaces of the French & Ball shop in the adjacent building.



SUBMITTED PHOTO / NICK RUGGIANO

Slices of the elm were transformed into furniture at French's Gill shop.

Readers may also remember French from the local music circuit. He has played guitar from the time he was about 13 years old, and like many, I enjoyed his drumming with the Ghost Quartet at the Rendezvous. When he started raising his own family, his interests expanded, and it wasn't long before his rehearsal and recording space became a workshop and a full-time venture.

French tends to work with both "cookies" and "live edge slabs," often harvested from the family lot. A tree cookie is a cross section or slice of a tree, while a live or natural edge slab is a vertical slice – maintaining the tree's natural shape as an aspect of the design. The bark is removed from the slabs, but they are not squared off. Live edge artists celebrate the curves of a tree, knots, deformities, and even evidence of insect borings.

You have likely seen examples of Sam French's work around the area – many years ago he built a coffee table and a high-top, built many years ago for the Rendezvous; the outdoor bar at the Gill Tavern; much of the woodwork at the Great Falls Harvest; all the tables for the Greenfield Bar and Grill. He also did all the woodwork at Lefty's Brewery.

French uses native hardwoods like maple, ash and cherry. Some of the wood comes from the managed tree lot, though French noted that he often works with trees that might not be of interest for "ordinary" lumber. Most of the tree guys in the area know of French's interest in salvage and interesting trees, and many give him a call when downed trees need to be removed. He particularly likes to work with cherry – the color is beautiful, it is hard but not too difficult to work, it tends to be stable, and it complements other woods well. It is not uncommon for him to use more than one kind of wood in a piece of furniture.

While I was visiting Sam's workshop a customer and friend, Corwin Edson, dropped by to check on the progress of a custom bed frame order. The massive maple headboard was nearing completion and ready for inspection, but French still needed to finish the footboard and frame with drawers. The cherry for the frame and drawers was cut from Edson's property in Northfield when he was building his house many years ago, and French provided the maple.

We took a tour around the barns to look at his inventory of drying wood. French tends to work with thick slabs that take time to dry – at approximately one year per inch of thickness, most of his lumber takes at least two years to dry. Various piles of wood were stacked outside, with spacers to let the air circulate and cover boards to protect the wood from sun damage and color changes.



SUBMITTED PHOTO / KIM LINDNER

French transformed two "cookie" slices of the giant elm into decorative tables that will live on inside the library.

The library project called for three huge reading tables – 11 feet long by 5 feet wide – and four benches, using the "live edge" slabs from the tree. French worked with Bruce Golinski of Northfield Fab & Machine Inc., who designed and built the massive bases to hold the reading tables; electrician Ken Russell, who wired the tables with outlets; and Doug Smith of Doug's Auto Body in Gill, who prepped and painted the bases.

Delivery and installation were also a challenge. A crane was used to lift the pieces from the truck and into the library's fourth floor.

The project also included two "cookie" tables. Imagine receiving a nine-inch-thick slice of a huge elm tree and taking your trusty chain saw to slice it into thinner pieces. To be fair, you get to attach a special tool to guide your saw and keep the cut even, assuming you can actually lift it up!

The slices illustrate the irregular shape of the old elm with all its whorls, splits and flaws. Like many traditional woodworkers, French uses an old technique known as "butterfly keys" to stabilize fissures and gaps and keep the slices stable.

When I asked French which piece was his favorite, he could not. "[I'm] not sure I can pick just one, because they were all created in tandem," he told me. "It was almost like a dance, where the beauty was in the process of creating the furniture as a whole, allowing each individual piece to have its own unique voice."

To see more of French's work, including the pieces from the Nielsen Library commission, visit his website at www.gillccwoodworks.com.



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ERVING from page A1

were \$1.4 million for the frame, \$1.44 million for the arch, and \$1.5 million for the box culvert.

Grandy said that Weston & Sampson recommended the three-sided arch, because it would not change the Keyup Brook channel and had "better aesthetics" than the three-sided frame. The box culvert design would require working in the stream bed and increasing the width of the channel.

Selectboard member Scott Bastarache said another engineer had told the board that constricting the stream at the bridge would speed up water flow in a "firehose effect." "If we spend \$1.4 or \$1.5 million," he asked, "are we locking ourselves into creating a bottleneck, so we have a bridge we can't adjust?"

Grandy said the arch would maintain the current channel, "not making it wider, not making it smaller." He said much of the stream is already channelized, and that if the channel were widened, "you would have to modify North or Highland Street and you don't have the space."

Asked about the existing abutments, Grandy said most of the abutment would remain in place, with the pre-cast footing behind it.

During the public comment period, residents spoke primarily about traffic on Church and North Streets.

Linda Downs-Bembury, a Church Street resident and capital planning committee member, asked if Weston & Sampson had considered traffic count studies for those streets.

Grandy said the traffic count numbers were "not extravagant." Downs-Bembury replied that 1,413 vehicles had been counted northbound on Church Street in one day.

Capital planning committee member Peter Mallett said it was not local traffic using North and Church Streets, but "people using GPS." Jacob Smith said that in winter, large numbers of skiers pass through northbound on Fridays, and southbound on Sundays.

The *Montague Reporter* checked

Google Maps for directions from Erving's East Main Street to Mount Snow in Vermont. The quickest route, at 72 minutes, uses North Street in Erving and Gulf Road in Northfield before connecting to Route 91 North in Bernardston. The longest, at 76 minutes, uses Route 2 until Shelburne and then turns north on Route 112.

Town administrator Bryan Smith said the town prefers traffic stay on Route 2 to get to Route 63 or Route 91, rather than using North or Church streets as shortcuts.

One resident suggested installing speed bumps. Grandy said the town could install them on Church or North streets, but they would be a problem during plowing season.

Another resident suggested building a roundabout at the intersection of Route 2 and North Street. "Do you have enough property to place a roundabout?" asked Grandy.

Jacob Smith said that in winter, large numbers of skiers pass through northbound on Fridays, and southbound on Sundays.

Grandy described problems with eastbound and westbound turns from North Street onto Route 2. The sight distance is not far enough, he explained, and there is limited room for trailer trucks to turn. He showed a graphic with turning pathways for an average trailer truck, staying in its travel lane. The path appeared to clip the edge of either the Crooked Tap Café on the west side of the intersection or the Flis Market on the east side.

The intersection could be improved, Grandy said, if "the state were willing to move Route 2 a little bit south." He suggested stop lights at Church and North streets

to slow traffic, and recommended the town work with MassDOT to find solutions.

Another resident, calling the truck traffic "a disaster," suggested that the town "buy the store and the Crooked Tap."

Flis Market co-owner John Flis said he felt there was "a lack of involvement of MassDOT." "I know everyone is working hard to find solutions," he said. "How do we move this forward?"

Grandy said he could help town planning assistant Mariah Kurtz work on recommendations to discuss with MassDOT.

Jacob Smith replied that the local MassDOT office has tried to help the town, "but Boston is where the decisions are made." He said the town would continue to research options for the bridge and problems at future meetings, and asked residents to submit their questions to the board.

Storage Sticker Shock

Bastarache said he felt "sticker shock" at the estimated cost of constructing a new dry storage and office building for the highway, water, and wastewater departments. Kurtz presented a preliminary cost estimate of \$4.3 million for a six-bay garage and storage building with an attached two- to three-person office space. One of the garage bays would be a vehicle washing bay.

Mallett was also surprised at the cost. "It boggles my mind," he said. "I'm blown away how this thing has taken off."

Bastarache observed that when the subject was first discussed, in 2019, the working estimate was about \$500,000.

"None of us is excited to see the costs associated with the building," said Jacob Smith. "We don't have the funding or capacity [to build this] for at least the next 12 to 24 months."

"There's no pressure on time," said Bryan Smith, suggesting the board could take more time to consider the project.

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Sewers & Streetlights

The board voted to accept Tighe & Bond's proposal for \$60,600 for engineering and construction oversight for the Flagg Hill Road sewer replacement project. The preliminary estimate for construction is \$200,000, with bid opening scheduled for October and construction for November or December.

Highway superintendent Glenn McCrory said Tighe & Bond and Elm Electric had completed a report on the decorative lighting on Main Street, itemizing damaged sockets, burnt-out lights, non-functioning receptacles, and loose wires. He said the town now has a clear list of what needs to be corrected.

Bryan Smith said he can develop a scope of work based on the list, and solicit quotes from contractors. He said he had "a general sense" that restoring the lighting and removing some fixtures would cost approximately \$10,000 to \$20,000.

Other Business

The selectboard approved going

forward with a \$928,267 Community Development Block Grant application. The federal grant funds, to be administered by Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Agency, would pay for rehabbing up to eight properties in Erving, six in Northfield, and three in Warwick.

The board appointed Pamela McNamara as wastewater maintenance worker. McNamara currently works as the senior/community center and library building and grounds maintenance worker.

Bryan Smith told the board town hall would re-open to the public from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays once an air purifier is installed. The parts were still on order.

Selectboard member William Bembury asked, in light of Governor Charlie Baker's mandate for vaccines for state employees, whether the town could mandate vaccination for its employees. Bryan Smith said he would revisit the issue with town counsel.

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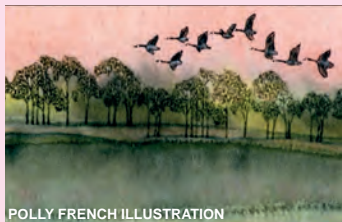
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SEPTEMBER 2, 2021

Above: A goat at Ripley Farm in Montague.



WEST ALONG THE RIVER

COME SEPTEMBER

POLLY FRENCH ILLUSTRATION

By DAVID BRULE

THE FLAT, ERVINGSIDE – What did you do with a fleeting August? Who knows where the time goes. A sort of true August lingered here ever so briefly between torrential July floods, crushing humidity, and tropical storm. Yet in between those events, August has given us a month of ringing chorus night and day of 10,000 crickets, buzzing cicadas in the daylong heat, katydids’ ratcheting call all night. The snowball tree, white hydrangea, glows now, but soon will turn an antique old rose come September.

Meanwhile, goldenrod has brightened, crowded with a hundred pollinating insects, and cardinal flowers flame even more vivid scarlet than the tanager that bears its name. Years ago, I used to feel a tinge of late summer regret when I walked along the west-flowing river shore. I knew those wild cardinal flowers finally blooming meant I’d soon be headed back to the classroom, to leave behind summer projects, summer idleness, the end of hot humid days like this. Back I’d be once again to wearing shoes, clean shirts and long pants, to resume my role as pedagogue and language teacher.

Now though, in the midst of my septuagenarian *jubilación*, I can sit back and philosophize with Nicky the Siberian asleep at my feet in the grass. Taking it one day at a time, as it comes. I can still feel whimsical and wistful about the passing season, but now with no regrets.

So far we’ve filled each hour of summer with a good sixty minutes’ run, as recommended by Kipling. Not a minute wasted, even those spent in summer siesta dozing, listening to the hum of the ancient 1950s Silex Handybreeze rotating fan I salvaged from the Old Camp up on the Connecticut, before we sold it out of the family. Just like

back then, the fan moves from left to right and back again, cooling the sleeper from toe to head, lulling the senses with a faint whirr. Maybe next year I’ll invest in a modern AC unit, you never know. Then the old fan will make the journey upstairs to the front bedroom to find itself retired from summer usefulness among the other relics of past generations.

We did have a chance to savor the dripping mist of August after a night and day of rain carried in from the Caribbean by a storm named Fred. Now New England is humid and tropical. Yet in spite of all, languid crickets still sing through the wet.

Jungle growth, spurred by a month of wet conditions, reminds us of the time of the dinosaurs that walked this valley. Ferns seem to be as high as the house, oak and maple drape the river bank, and fox grape vines hang from branches, creating a southern feel of Spanish moss, softening the landscape.

We mere humans have carved out houselots and homestead rectangles here and there, roads and streets cut ribbons through the landscape. But green wants to take over again, and the Triassic and the Jurassic lurk beneath the pavement, waiting to come back once we are gone, having done our final wrongs to this green world we were given.

Lightness hides behind the veil of the morning’s mist. Hummingbird nudges bumble bee aside to dip into the nectars of jewelweed. She has spent the entire summer with us, as impertinent as ever, buzzing us, buzzing the flowers in the yard in her sugar-fueled nectar high. Over in the garden, regularly visited by the thriving cottontail population in spite of the rabbit-proof fence, tomatoes hang stubbornly green, beginning to crack and split from too much rain. More string beans than we could see **WEST ALONG** page B5



KEVIN BRULE PHOTO

A hummingbird, spotted in the author’s yard.

scene report

Celebrating a Perfect Season

By CHIP AINSWORTH

GILL – The afterglow of winning the state softball title continued on August 22 when over 100 players, parents, and friends gathered at the Schuetzen Verein. “This is the fun stuff,” said Turners Falls High School athletic director Adam Graves, referring to the team’s undefeated (18-0) season and its tenth title. “I’d like to do this every day.”

The celebrants ignored Tropical Storm Henri and laid plates of fresh corn, pulled pork, and other treats prepared by local caterers Joe and Kathy Tomaus on the blue tablecloths. While they ate coach Gary Mullins huddled with Jason Salls, George Emery, Jen Luciano, and Fred Smith near the trophy table, where the girls came up for their championship jackets and swag bags.

Taylor Murphy’s mother Carrie remembered pitching for Mullins. “I was his first state final loss,” she remembered with a laugh, referring



AINS WORTH PHOTO

The 2021 Turners Falls softball team and their supporters gathered one more time.

to a long-ago game against Dighton-Rehoboth.

Guests included longtime alumni Stash Koscinski and George Bush, who sat near priests Stanley Aksamit and Galadima Goni of Our Lady of Peace Church on Sev-

enth Street. “People have trouble pronouncing my name, so they just call me Father Stan,” said Aksamit. “I sent Gary a letter with my observations, how his preparation gives them an opportunity to win.”

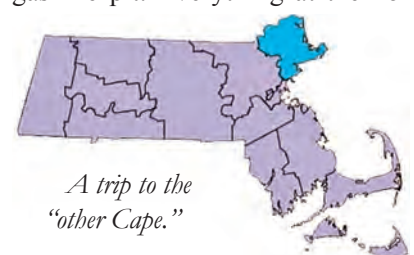
see **SEASON** page B5



SOUTH DEERFIELD – Cape Ann, Massachusetts truly delivers when it comes to ocean views, fresh seafood, harbors with character, and compelling historical sights. The small town of Rockport is famous as a center for *plein air* painting done outdoors with natural light, and you can visit dozens of art galleries and enjoy talking with artists in many of them. Cape Ann is made up of Rockport, Gloucester, Essex and Manchester-by-the-Sea – remember the movie?

Rockport is famous for the most-painted place in America: Motif #1, the red fishermen’s shack on the dock on the harbor.

Our mid-September 2020 visit began by checking in at Rockport Inn and Suites, where they have 72 rooms that offer living room/sleeping room combinations that are comfortable and affordable. The pool proved to still be a popular draw even in the languid end of summertime, as was the outdoor gas fire pit. Everything at the ho-



A trip to the “other Cape.”



HARTSHORNE PHOTO

Cape Ann in Rockport and “Motif #1,” the most-painted scene in America. Rockport is home to 37 art galleries and dozens of painters.

tel was pandemic-friendly, from the masked lobby staff to the lack of room cleaning, the new normal. But it made us feel good about our two-night stay there.

Rockport Repast

We arrived in downtown Rockport at around 7:30 p.m., and many people like us were walking around

and considering their dinner options. One place that’s well-known is Roy Moore’s Fish Shack, which is hardly a shack and is located at the beginning of Bearskin Neck, the mostly pedestrian walking area that stretches out into the harbor.

Across from Roy’s, we found the Blue Lobster Grille, and we were see **TRAVEL** page B3

Pet of the Week



“JAYDEN”

Jayden is an energetic young guy who has lived well with other cats, dogs and kids of all ages. However, because of its FeLV+ status, he should not live with other cats unless they are also positive for FeLV.

He's happy to greet visitors and loves to play! Jayden also loves his cat scratchers and “talking” to you. He is adventurous and likes to explore his surroundings, but is also

happy to lay down and get a good petting session in.

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

SEPTEMBER 6 THROUGH 10

WENDELL

Wendell Senior Center is open for a foot care clinic the first Wednesday of each month. Call Katie Nolan at (978) 544-2306 for information or appointments. Senior Health Rides are now available. Contact Susan von Ranson at (978) 544-3758 to set up a ride.

GILL and MONTAGUE

The Gill Montague Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Council on Aging Director is Roberta Potter. For more information call 863-9357. Messages can be left on our machine when the center is not open.

Monday 9/6

Closed for Labor Day

Tuesday 9/7

1 p.m. Knitting Circle

3 p.m. Tai Chi

Wednesday 9/8

Foot Clinic by appointment

No activities, no classes

Thursday 9/9

10 a.m. Chair Yoga at GFDC

10:30 a.m. Senior Farm Share

1 p.m. Cards & Games & Pitch

Friday 8/27

10:15 a.m. Aerobics

11 a.m. Chair Exercise

ERVING

Erving Senior Center is open 8a.m. to 3 p.m., Mondays through Fridays. Open for cards, coffee, and billiards. Fitness room also open. Exercise classes will be limited to 15 people per class.

No lunch will be served. We will continue with Brown Bag the first Thursday of each month. For any questions or concerns, please call Paula at (413) 423-3649. Masks are optional. Proper handwashing and social distancing are still required.

Mondays

9 a.m. Stretch & Balance

10:30 a.m. Zumba Gold Floor

Tuesdays

9 a.m. Stretch & Sculpt

10:30 a.m. Line Dancing

Wednesdays

9 a.m. Chair Class

10:30 a.m. Zumba Gold Chair

11:30 a.m. Bingo

Thursdays

9 a.m. Restore & Re-Emerge

10:30 a.m. GOOD for You

Fridays

9 a.m. Quilting Workshop

LEVERETT

Chair Yoga classes are held on Zoom on Wednesdays. For more information, contact the Leverett COA at (413) 548-1022 x 5, or coa@leverett.ma.us.

Senior Grocery Hours

Big Y: Senior hours from 7 to 8 a.m. (413) 772-0435

Foster's: Senior hours from 7 to 8 a.m. (413) 773-1100

Green Fields Market: Senior hours from 8 to 9 a.m. Monday-Saturday. Curbside pickup & delivery is available on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. (413) 773-9567

McCusker's Market: Curbside pickup available from 10 to 11 a.m. Order by 1 p.m. for pickup the following day. Delivery available Monday to Friday. Email pickup@franklincommunity.coop (413) 625-2548

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

LIBRARY LISTING

SEPTEMBER 2021

MONTAGUE

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls

Mondays 1 to 8 p.m.

Tuesdays 1 to 8 p.m.

Wednesdays 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Thursdays 1 to 5 p.m.

Fridays 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Saturdays 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

(413) 863-3214

Millers Falls Branch

Tuesdays 2 to 7 p.m.

Thursdays 2 to 7 p.m.

(413) 659-3801

Montague Center Branch

Mondays 2 to 7 p.m.

Wednesdays 2 to 7 p.m.

(413) 367-2852

Montague Public Libraries will be closed Saturday, September 4 and Monday, September 6 for Labor Day.

Wednesdays: StoryTime Outside. Join Meghan Doyle for stories, songs and a Take-and-Make craft on the Carnegie Library lawn. Unpleasant weather? Look for the Facebook Live link on the “Youth” page of montaguepubliclibraries.org. This link allows folks who do not have a Facebook account to join in on the fun. 10 a.m.

Thursdays: Music & Movement Outside, for children. This weekly bilingual, English-Spanish, series with Tom Carroll and Laurie Davidson currently meets on the Carnegie Library Lawn. Weather unpleasant? Meet them on Facebook Live: www.facebook.com/Tom-and-Laurie-1991464. 10 a.m.

Tuesday, September 28: Retirement Party. Join us for the farewell reception of the outgoing Director of the Montague Public Libraries, Linda Hickman, on the Carnegie Library lawn. Light refreshments will be served as we celebrate her 24 years of dedication. 5 to 7 p.m.

Wednesday, September 29: The Montague Public Libraries visit the *Great Falls Farmers Market!* Say hello to Angela and Meghan and get a free book and craft bag. 2 to 4 p.m.

GILL

The *Slate Memorial Library*, in the center of Gill, is open Tuesdays 2 to 6 p.m., Wednesdays 3:30 to 7:30 p.m., Thursdays 2 to 8 p.m., and Saturdays 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Call (413) 863-2591 or email at gill.slate.library@gmail.com.

Sunday, September 26: The big upcoming event is “A Celebration of 100 Years: Happy Birthday Slate Library!” a party on the library lawn in conjunction with the Gill Harvest

Festival. “Please join us for a piece of birthday cake, a puzzle swap, children’s activities, and a chance to see the collection and become a member of the sweetest library on this side of the Connecticut river.”

LEVERETT

Leverett Public Library Hours: Tuesdays 3 to 6 p.m., Thursdays 3 to 6 p.m., Saturdays 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. (413) 548-9220. Curbside pick-up is available during these hours as well. Masks are mandatory for anyone over the age of 5.

Mondays & Wednesdays: *Online Qijong*, 10:30 a.m.

WENDELL

Wendell Free Library Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 2 to 6 p.m., Saturdays 10 to 2 p.m. (978) 544-3559.

Masks required, 30-minute limit in building, limit of 10 patrons in the building at a time. Curbside service available Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 12 to 4 p.m. Some small-scale faxing or printing is available upon request.

Wendell Flag Logo products are for sale as a fundraising project of the Friends of the Library. You can also call Mez Ziemba (978) 544-3177.

ERVING

Erving Public Library Hours: Sundays and Thursdays, 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. (413) 423-3348. No appointments needed, or use curb service, or locker service after hours.

Sunday, September 26: Erving Public Library Celebration Open House. From Friends’ Facebook: “We invite you to attend the library’s celebratory open house! We had to cancel the Grand Opening in March of 2020, but we still want to mark the occasion of Erving’s beautiful new library building. Starting at 1 p.m., we will have remarks from officials and guests, followed by performances by Julie Stepanek (music for children) at 1:30 p.m., Henry Lappen the Juggler at 2:30 p.m., and traditional Irish music group Banish Misfortune at 3:30 p.m.! We’ll draw lucky door prizes at 5 p.m. Light refreshments, scavenger hunt, and crafts. Join us for an afternoon of celebration!”

Tuesday, September 28: Reading Widely Book Group meets to discuss *The Guest List* by Lucy Foley. (Check with the library to see if this is online or in person.) 6 to 7 p.m.

NORTHFIELD

Dickinson Memorial Library Hours: Tuesdays 1 to 8 p.m., Wednesdays and Thursdays 1 to 6 p.m., Fridays 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturdays 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. (413) 498-2455.

“Hello from the Dickinson Memorial Library’s new director Misha Storm! I’ve been here about two months, and feel perfectly settled in. Some of you may know me from Leverett Library. Before that, I worked at Greenfield Public Library and Hatfield Library. I can’t wait to meet those of you that I have not met already.

“The library has been open to its full hours since early this summer and we are so happy to be a little more ‘normal.’ We are asking that people wear masks in the building, but other than that, there are no restrictions. You can stop in anytime we are open. You can still pick up via curbside; just give us a call.

“Our three **book clubs** have been ongoing, and anyone can join. You can find out dates and book titles on our website. Information about the **Genealogy Group** and the **Afternoon Knitters** that meet at the library is also there.

“And, for the month of September, the library has an art exhibit in the Gallery, *Views of the Valley: Photographs by Catherine Lee*.

“If you’re looking to stay updated on what’s going on at the library, be sure to sign up for our biweekly newsletter. You can sign up by emailing dmemlib@gmail.com. We are also looking towards the future with a community survey! You can find the link to the google form on our website or pick up a physical copy of the survey at the library. We want to hear from you!”

First Saturdays: The Friends of DML host a *Puzzle Pick Up Day*. No need to swap, you can come pick up a pile of puzzles, even if you don’t have any to trade! 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Friday, September 10: Kids’ Fridays start up. Every Friday we will have activities for kids. There will be MCBA Book Club, Lego activities, movie showings, and time spent Reading with Rio, the Golden Retriever. 2 to 3 p.m.

Tuesday, September 14: StoryTime for the little ones starts back up, and should happen most Tuesdays. 10 a.m.

Thursday, September 16: Seed Saving Demonstration for adults. 6 p.m.

Friday, October 1: Jazz Concert at the Golf Club. Call the library for time.

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TRAVEL from page B1

pleased to be able to grab one of their outdoor tables as the light began to fade. Inside, at any other time, people would be dining in their spacious dining room overlooking the harbor. But not this year... Our friendly server hooked us up with delicious breaded bay scallops and wine, and we were happy as clams!

An Artist's Town

One stand-out art gallery was David Arsenault, who moved to Rockport from Albany, New York a dozen years ago, and proudly sells his work in a downtown gallery space, right on the harbor.

Arsenault's work includes many familiar scenes of Rockport and included a painting of the stage at the Shalin Liu Performance Center. This stunning Rockport arena has a giant picture window nearly floor to ceiling, providing a view of the harbor from the back wall of the stage, which is stunning if not a bit distracting. Arsenault's paintings are realistic and dramatic and he also creates prints on canvas of the original oil paintings.

Halibut Point State Park is one of several large granite quarries that gave Rockport its name. Though the granite industry withered during the Great Depression, today there are many quarries that you can swim in. It just takes knowing a local who might have a key. The park is well managed by the Mass DCR, and it's a remarkable hike – the steep drop down to the water-filled former quarry is framed by the view of the nearby ocean. Along the coast, a striking man-made formation is the hundreds of pieces of granite that were the wrong size and got dumped into this massive pile right on the beachfront. The flat stones and the big breaking waves make this a popular place to ramble.

Gloucester Castle

One of the most famous places in Gloucester is the Hammond Castle Museum, built in the 1920s by inventor John Jay Hammond, Jr. The wealthy tycoon built his dream house in three distinct parts, separated by a mini-cathedral in the middle, and including artifacts and building façades (repurposed sections of buildings) he found in Italy and France, and a gigantic organ that was once the largest privately owned organ in the western hemisphere. It was fun touring the house, which is right on the ocean, and learning the eccentric history of its residents.

Many famous people visited Hammond at the castle and stayed the night, including Walt Disney and George Gershwin. Today it's

one of Cape Ann's favorite wedding venues.

Famous Clams

We had to try the clams from the chilly waters of northern Mass, and one of the most famous clam houses is located right on the water in nearby Essex. It's called Woodman's of Essex, and the lines are as legendary as the famous whole belly clams. Fortunately, it's a huge place, so the lines were not as bad as they could have been.

We met Steve Woodman, the grandson of "Chubby" Woodman, the man said to have actually invented the fried clam in 1913 when he threw some of the bivalves into the oil while cooking french fries. It caught on, and a legend was born. Steve joined us as we dug into lobster rolls and those famous clams, and talked about the long history of Woodman's and how they have fared during the tough pandemic times of late. They worked it out!

Hiking Spot

Right down Route 127 from Hammond's Castle is another great hiking spot that provides more of those cherished ocean views. Coolidge Reservation offers 66 oceanfront acres along pathways that traverse a seaside meadow. Breathtaking vistas await with rocky outcrops, woodlands, wetlands, a sandy beach, and the open expanse of the ocean lawn.

We wanted to actually get out into the water, and for that we needed a captain. We still had a little more ocean left before we left Cape Ann to return to our inland home.

We found the perfect boat and captain in George Story, who runs Sandy Bay Tours and Charters. This was a fun way to get out into the big bay and get all kinds of information from the 40-year experienced captain of the small boat. Captain Story regaled us with stories about Rockport's giant Sandy Bay, which is the world's deepest and largest, and told us about how the huge seawall that still protects the harbor was built before WWII. The company offers three trips a day on his seaworthy fishing vessel, and it's a great way to see all of the lighthouses and the craggy coastline of Cape Ann.

Find out more about Cape Ann and these north shore towns at capeannvacations.com.

Local travel editor Max Hartsorne writes about traveling around our region, and a little beyond. Max is the editor of *GoNOMAD Travel*, a website published since 2000 in South Deerfield. Find him online at www.gonomad.com.



Fried clams and lobster from Woodman's of Essex: Worth the wait!

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Eggings; Dog Chaos; Communism and Vaccines; Bear Not Hallucinated; Unneighborly Suspicions

Monday, 8/16

6:52 a.m. Family woken up by sounds of a fight in upstairs apartment on Griswold Street. All quiet when officers arrived.

3:30 p.m. Report of suspicious armed male party with walky-talky claiming to be an investigator. Would not leave when told he was at the wrong address. State police did not have an investigator in the area. Followed by a call from a woman at work whose roommate had called about an unknown man asking about her. Man gone when police arrived.

11:30 p.m. Complaint from H Street about loud music, power tools, and hammering. Neighbor agreed to close the garage door while working on their vehicle.

Tuesday, 8/17

9:33 a.m. Reports of house egging on Grove Street and car egging on J Street.

10:12 a.m. Caller reported whining, white dog tied to a pole for 45 minutes at Walgreens. ACO on vacation, but the officer found the owner.

11:45 a.m. Burglar alarm at Greenfield Savings Bank. Turned out to be an IT person entering the rear door.

12:17 p.m. Report of a truck losing its load at the sharp turn on Unity Street – driver creating a traffic hazard during cleanup.

12:26 p.m. Erratic driving reported on Montague City Road. Police spoke to the driver, found no signs of impairment. Followed the driver for a while with no issues.

Wednesday, 8/18

6:52 a.m. Report of suspicious pickup truck lurking at Keith Apartments. Turned out to be a contractor working on the building.

7:58 a.m. Lake Pleasant Road caller advised of options after speaking to an officer about an assault and other things that occurred a day earlier.

9:05 a.m. Report of unusually long time spent by a patron in the restroom at Cumberland Farms. Patron advised by officer of concerns.

11:47 a.m. Report of a dead hawk in Turners Falls woods. Referred to environmental police.

9:00 p.m. Stumbling raccoon reported on South Ferry Road.

Thursday, 8/19

4:04 a.m. Complaint by an N Street caller about ongoing issue with their neighbors' barking dog. Quiet on arrival. Second call asking why the officer didn't even bother to get out of the cruiser as this is an ongoing issue. Information will be referred to the ACO when he returns from vacation.

Second neighbor called with a similar complaint, stating the dog woke her up over her running AC unit at 5 a.m. This caller was concerned the neighbor hadn't been seen for a month. Upon investigation, determined the dog was not registered. Officer will visit later to advise of bylaws about barking and registration.

10:30 a.m. Further calls from N Street regarding the barking dog. ACO called in from vacation to report he was aware of the dog. Female at the apartment is not allowed to have a dog, but says it belongs to her boyfriend. A son is supposed to be caring for the dog. Officer advised the son of the complaints. ACO to follow up upon return.

11:48 a.m. Hillside Road resident complained about possible medication tampering, food theft from a shared fridge, and threats from landlord. Advised of options.

3:33 p.m. Caller reported a car parked at Unity Park with doors open and purse inside. Owners were fishing.

4 p.m. Griswold Street caller reported a neighbor refuses to bring his aggressive dog inside. Officer advised, put the dog inside.

4:41 p.m. Complaint of two men knocking on doors at Powertown Apartments, scamming about electric bills. Officer found them on Fourth Street without paperwork or permits. Officer remained in the area after observing them driving around in a suspicious manner.

Friday, 8/20
10:24 a.m. Request for walkthrough at Hillside Avenue residence where a family member passed away recently; neighbor is concerned about possible squatters. No evidence of squatters found by the officer or K9 companion.

11 a.m. Numerous calls about white/grey terrier with a history of evading capture. Dog is creating a traffic hazard on Montague City Road. ACO advised.

11:42 a.m. Party recognized by officer at Scotty's chased toward airport, arrested on outstanding warrant.

5:42 p.m. Report of unattended fire on Seventh Street. Appears to be trash fire. FD notified.

5:5 p.m. Injured squirrel picked up at Turners Falls Pizza, relocated.

8:38 p.m. Turnpike Road caller reported a stolen Yamaha scooter.

9:55 p.m. Report of the theft of a \$100 bike lock from a package delivered to a Main Street address.

10:21 p.m. Prospect Street caller complaining of loud

music at Third Street Brewery. She will file a complaint with the police chief and selectboard. (Fashion show was underway at the time.)

10:26 p.m. Caller from Alvah Stone concerned about a truck parked in the lot after hours for two nights. No vehicle found.

Saturday, 8/21

12:03 a.m. Report of helmetless scooter drivers driving erratically at Cumberland Farms, heading north on Avenue A.

11:51 a.m. Request for assistance from an FL Roberts patron whose car is running at the gas pump with the keys locked inside. Car turned out to be on Third Street.

3:25 p.m. Amazon package reported stolen on Emond Avenue.

3:37 p.m. Caller from Ferry Road reported illegal dumping of a dozen tires over an embankment near a stream.

4:01 p.m. Report from West Main Street of deliberate revving of a very loud engine. Not located.

6:19 p.m. Report of intoxicated, loud, rude non-resident male causing a disturbance on Avenue A.

8:26 p.m. Fire reported on Randall Road; turned out to be in neighbors' fire pit.

Sunday, 8/22

2:40 a.m. Report of a suspicious male on the side of Lake Pleasant Road. No one found.

5:10 p.m. Caller reported an off-leash dog on H Street approached her dogs, causing her to slip and fall in the mud. Unable to locate.

10:19 p.m. Montague City Road caller reporting ongoing complaint of noisy upstairs neighbor.

Monday, 8/23

12:04 a.m. Caller in Greenfield requested an ambulance and officer – not sure what he hit, but his bumper is all messed up. Referred to Shelburne Control.

2:21 a.m. Officer found a party laying on the side of the road with a bicycle by Peskeomskut Park, moved along.

6:27 a.m. Multiple annoying calls about communism and vaccines.

7:33 a.m. Caller requesting additional surveillance on porta potties at Unity Park which are being vandalized.

5:15 p.m. Flooding reported on Montague City Road – DPW closed road between Walnut Street and Turnpike Road. Reopened when flooding dissipated.

6:05 p.m. Walk-in reporting her vehicle was hit and damaged while parked at the Turners Falls post office.

6:15 p.m. Report of power line hazard, Greenfield Cross Road. Eversource en route.

9:16 p.m. Complaint of noisy upstairs children on Montague City Road. No officer available to respond.

Tuesday, 8/24

11:19 a.m. Report of shoplifters at Food City, caught on surveillance cameras.

12:20 p.m. Horse on the loose, Turners Falls Road.

4:18 p.m. Report of aggressive, erratic young male driver on Millers Falls Road near the airport tailgating, honking, and swerving. When caller pulled off to the right, the driver flipped her off then passed other vehicles on the right.

5:03 p.m. Complaint of a panhandler at Walgreens, possible drinkers on Seventh Street. Officer did not find either party.

5:30 p.m. Northfield PD delivered an intoxicated male to Turners Falls where he was held until picked by his partner. Female partner called back and wanted to return him to the jail; then called back a second time to say he had jumped out of the car near Randall Woods.

8:31 p.m. K Street caller reporting a phone scam reputed to be the US Treasury.

10:10 p.m. Report of a group of people attempting to break into vehicles on I Street. Officer made contact with a group of juveniles and advised them to stay off people's yards.

Wednesday, 8/25

12:11 a.m. Multiple pull alarms and smoke detectors at Carnegie Library. FD requested DPW keyholder to the scene. No fire found.

9:31 a.m. Third Street caller reporting threatening scam calls about bills owed.

10:20 a.m. Female arrested after shoplifting various items from Food City, reportedly selling to a male party at Peskeomskut Park.

1:03 p.m. Caller from Bridge of Names reporting a male hallucinating that a bear is chasing him. Cousin walked him to the other side of the bridge. Officer advised the male was not hallucinating and did see a bear.

1:30 p.m. Unity Park caller reporting youth ripping down caution tape where swing maintenance is occurring. Officer found the subjects at FL Roberts and had them return to apologize.

4:16 p.m. Vladish Avenue caller reported a missing female Maine coon cat wearing a blue harness but no tags.

5:09 p.m. and 7:48 p.m. Possible drug activity reported on Fourth Street. Parties gone before callers advised police.

Thursday, 8/26

5:31 p.m. Caller reported unlicensed, helmetless
see MPD page B4

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MPD from page B3 driver on red motorcycle racing up and down Avenue C – not found by officer.

5:58 p.m. Blue-and-silver bike, bike rack, and bike pump reported stolen on Avenue C.

Friday, 8/27

12:35 a.m. Report of tree down on Federal Street in Millers Falls covering the sidewalk and into the road. Second caller advising the tree is laying on wires, hit vehicles, and is blocking the entire road. Eversource, Turners Falls FD, and MassDOT contacted to assist.

6:48 a.m. Officer advised two parties not to sleep under the overhang at the recreation building at Unity Park.

10:12 a.m. Report of barking dog on L Street not having enough water. ACO visited; owner said the dog had been let out to do its business and was back inside.

2:25 p.m. Report of female getting into a fancy white car on Fourth Street for possible drug activity.

3:58 p.m. Resident reported her 12-year-

old daughter is being threatened with violence by another juvenile. Advised of options. She requested extra patrols at school dismissal.

7:33 p.m. Man arrested for driving under the influence after reports that he drove his Jeep through locked gates on Migratory Way. Vehicle hung up on sensitive equipment. FirstLight Power notified and responded.

8:22 p.m. Female caller concerned about an ex-boyfriend who has a history of violence showing up unannounced. Finally left after several requests, but she is concerned he is wandering around neighborhood. Not located.

9:37 p.m. Hypodermic needle reported behind the Black Cow Burger.

Saturday, 8/28
1:26 p.m. Large pile of pallets found behind caller's house on Chestnut Hill Loop. Concerned about potential for fire.

2:13 p.m. Caller complaining about a barking dog near N Street. Officer located the dog

on M Street locked on porch while residents were doing yard work. Advised owners of complaint.

2:25 p.m. Alarm company reporting residential alarm; resident is home but gave the wrong passcode. Officer could not locate.

5:57 p.m. Officer conducting a traffic stop on Avenue A found a driver with outstanding warrants. Transported to the station; female party to drive the car home. Released on payment of bail.

Sunday, 8/29
12:34 p.m. Call from the Shady Glen: a truck pulling a boat crashed into the side of the restaurant and is stuck under its awning.

3:20 p.m. Two different callers reported a dog locked inside a vehicle with all windows rolled up. Officer spoke to the driver. Vehicle was running; dog was not in distress.

8:56 p.m. Walk-in reported hitting a deer on Turners Falls Road. Officer followed the driver to the scene. Deer was dead on arrival.



Learning to Fly Fish: Part XIV

Ariel Jones, who recently passed away, penned a series of 21 articles in the Montague Reporter in 2005 on her experiences learning to fly fish. (Note: Yes, we thought there were 14, but we discovered seven more in our archive this week!) 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**

TURNERS FALLS – I had a good spell of fishing during the first half of July. I had begun to catch trout on a regular basis, and they were large. I hadn't fallen into the river in weeks. I was developing a much better eye for what insects the trout were feeding on, and for where the fish were. It was delightful to see these beautiful fish so clearly now: cruising, holding, sipping, even refusing an offer (disappointing, but important to know).

The aquatic insects are often very small and hard to see. The glare off the river's surface, the current, sometimes the speed with which things happen all make for difficult visuals. To match the hatch, it is critical to select flies the trout are actually feeding on, and this changes constantly, sometimes from hour to hour, day to day, or week to week. If the trout aren't rising it becomes harder to tell. Then it is helpful to scoop rocks or weeds off the river bed and see what is down there, and try to match those ("nymphing").

Only time on the river can develop these skills, and I was enjoying my obvious progress. I was changing flies and tippets a little faster and making better choices in these important matters. Confidence was building within me and I was feeling less self-conscious fishing around guys who might cumulatively have 100 years of experience among them.

Suddenly I stopped catching fish. I was going out most evenings, fishing until 9 p.m. and not even getting refusals. Skunked. As these no-catch evenings accumulated, I began to panic and to lose whatever calm and concentration I had acquired.

It Can Get Worse

The first mistake was to cast and retrieve rapidly. If a trout wanted my fly it would have to move damn fast, because I allowed very little drift. These quick casts led to sloppy (and scary to trout) retrievals of the line, and inaccurate placements of the fly. I began to rapidly spiral out of control.

Changing flies became difficult and clumsy again; I wouldn't take the time to change leaders or tippets when they needed to be changed. I began to catch the hooks in my fin-



ARIEL JONES PHOTO

Landing a rainbow trout.

gers from rushing. I began to bleed and say bad words.

Earlier this week I dropped my forceps into the river and got soaked retrieving them from the bottom. Just as I started to put them away safely, I repeated the drop and had to go down again for them.

I had enough that day. My sleeves were so wet they hung down to my knees, I was shivering and discouraged and mad at myself.

I left and drove home glumly. In my mind's eye I saw the elegant casts and quiet retrieves of the fellows I fished around; their large rainbows landed with casual aplomb; their clothes completely dry.

I had a cup of sweet hot tea when I got home and went to bed straight away, exhausted and blue.

What Is That Sound?

Out on the river again, still not getting any strikes. While standing there in exasperation, I heard a strange squeaky sound, on and off, on and off. What on earth? Looking around, I saw nothing, but continued to hear these strange sounds occurring in a kind of conversational rhythm.

I looked down at the river and spotted several trout holding in the same area, not three feet away from me. As I watched them, I realized the sounds I heard were coming from the fish!

When Rainbows Gossip:

A Play in One Act

I bent over to peer into the water. The closer I got the more clearly I could hear the sounds. It was horrifying.

Tom: "Ha ha ha. Did you see that last fly?"

Tola: "Slurp."

Tina: "Yeah. Looked like a beetle on a bed spring."

Tola: "What was she thinking?"

Tim: "Waste of two bucks."

Tola: "Slurp."

Tom: "Slurp."

Tola: "That bright green line slapped the water so hard Great Grandma Twyla nearly had a heart attack."

Tina: "Slurp. Hey, I hear they think we can't see the line cause it's green!"

Tim: "Slurp. Ha ha ha!"

Tom: "I'm gonna jump up out of the water and give her a thrill."

Tola: "Ha ha ha. Slurp."

Tina: "Oh, me too. Let's all do it in different spots! She'll go crazy!"

Tim: "We can be the happy trout. They love that one."

Tom: "Let's give her a chorus of Summertime while we're at it."

Suddenly, to my disbelief, all four fish began leaping a foot or two out of the river, twisting gracefully. They did look happy.

Tim: "Not bad, Tola, for a rainbow who eats as much as you do."

Tola: "You should talk, chubby. You should leap more and slurp less. Regain that sleek physique."

Tim: "Slurp. I'm sleepy."

Tom: "Let's play ring around the fly fisher!"

Tola: "Slurp. Slurp."

Tina: "Tola, get with it, gal. Don't be such a little trout."

Tola: "She might get dizzy and fall down. You know how scary that is."

Tom: "Slurp."

Tim: "Save it for when she attempts to land you."

Tina: "Slurp. Slurp. Slurp."

Tola: "Hee hee. It is funny to watch the line wrapping round her legs. Slurp."

Tom: "Whee! Whee!"

Looking down I saw a 16-inch rainbow circling my legs. Then he leapt a good two feet out of the water and took off like a shot. I was shaken.

RING. RING. RING. What was that?

Lying in my bed I looked up and saw two huge rainbows very rapidly circling the ceiling above my bed. Alarmed and blinking to adjust my eyes, I realized it was just the ceiling fan. On the fourth ring my answering machine picked up and I heard a voice say, "Ariel? Are you there? Pick up. It's Tom. Want to go fishing tonight? Call me."

Oh, good. But... which Tom was it?

Montague Community Television News

County Fair Retrospective

By **HANNAH BROOKMAN**

TURNERS FALLS – The Montague Archive has compiled historic and contemporary footage of the Franklin County Fair in a 40-minute video that details the history of the fairground and its festivities. If you miss it on Channel 17, be sure to check it out on the MCTV Vimeo page.

Videos from Nolumbeka's Pocumtuck Homelands Festival are starting to roll out, as well as some of the many concerts from this summer's programming at Peskeomskut Park.

The MCTV Vimeo page can be found linked to the website, montaguetelevision.org, under the tab "Videos." Community members are

welcome to submit their videos to be aired on Channel 17, as well as featured on the Vimeo page.

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 station is also looking to hire a producer to make Spanish-language content. Please email infomontaguetelevision@gmail.com with a resume to schedule an interview!

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

37 episodes are now available!

Look for us on Apple/iTunes, Spotify, Stitcher, Anchor, Castbox, and elsewhere...



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WEST ALONG from page B1

possibly eat fill the kitchen table. Who can we give them to?

By **August 23**, we have learned that after all, we didn't have to duck the hurricane called Henri; that Category 1 storm blew itself out before ever reaching our garden. The near miss has left the air this morning bright like a September day, with a breeze moving leafy shadow patterns across my notebook page.

The inquisitive and cheeky young catbird fledgling tests the chokeberries growing all in a beaded row, not yet ripe. Clouds drift across the sky – high clouds going one way as they usually do, other lower wisps of clouds going in a seemingly different direction heading north. Counter-currents set up by Henri disorient the cloudwatcher's eye, used to seeing clouds going in one consistent direction, from southwest to northeast.

There's always something new up there.

Today high up in the middle sky, appearing as small flecks in the blue, dozens of chimney swifts swirl, riding the updrafts, sights set on the southlands. Before the would-be storm, the first nighthawks knifed down evening skies. They are always the first to leave us, getting out way ahead of the first frosts. Strictly flying insect-eaters, feeding on their way, they need to be sure of their next meal, no taking any chances.

The lovely breeze shakes the trees' leaves. They toss in the air's current like a girl shaking out her wet hair in the sun, the way Robert Frost would have it. Wind rushes through branches like the sound of yonder river, the two voices quite identical, difficult to distinguish where one begins and the other leaves off.

The most familiar sound of true summer, the sound I've been waiting for, is the piercing electric buzz of the summer cicada. It seems to start up at 8 in the morning, almost exactly when the temperature reaches 80 de-

grees. After days of rain, the sun reaches that insect somewhere in the jungle of greenery.

That familiar summer sound brings me back to my days in the house above the Narrows, back to my boyhood home. The street high above the river's edge, looking out on Barton's Cove downriver, was lined with pitch pines, as it is still. The cicadas loved to buzz out from there on a hot summer's day, out from the stiff pine needles, or so I imagined. They promise heat, and so does the weatherman.

In **late August**, days have a comforting sameness to them. We take advantage of the cool of the morning, the ringing of the snow crickets relentless and endless. By noon, the heat will rise to tropical rainforest standards. Shortly after, it will be time to slow down even more, stretch out in the breeze of the rotating fan, try to follow the tinkling piano notes of *Gymnopédie* by Eric Satie on the disc player,

until summer siesta sleep slips quietly over all.

In August, though noon-time is a chorus of insects and soothing music, the evening will be cooler, and then it will instead be ice cubes tinkling in the tall gin and tonic glasses, as we congregate in the twilight on the back deck.

We may even try to follow the Red Sox on the radio, but they are testing our loyalty. Although as in every year, the team was full of promise in the pennant race during mid-summer, they are now in their annual slide to somewhere in the middle of the sundry pack, their bull pen faltering, fading as always like the wilting Joe Pye weed on the edge of the garden walk.

With summer and the Sox on the wane, we'll soon be turning our thoughts to the season that has made New England famous. Those first maple leaves will be turning red in the marshes, skies will soon be empty of summer swallows and swifts, and then inevitably will come September.



FEST REPORT

Green River Fest 2021

By **MELISSA WLOSTOSKI**

GREENFIELD – The Green River Festival is a huge event in Greenfield – so much so that I believe it has always been sold out in tickets when it comes around each year. This year it went on starting August 27 and finishing on August 29. The various performances were on a total of three different stages. This year, instead of being at Greenfield Community College, it was at the Franklin County Fairgrounds.

I decided to go to the first day of the event. A stage called Artifact Cider was set up where they judge livestock for the Fair, and they had a band called Misty Blues performing first. It was four men and a female singer, and they lived up to being a blues band like part of their name says. The musicians on guitars, a saxophone, and a drum set were good, and I loved the singer. The audience agreed with me when it came to them as well. Their performance continued to be high quality as I watched it.

Like the last event I went to at the Fairgrounds, there were a lot of food vendors there, along with vendors selling things like art and t-shirts. The grounds have a huge open field, which was where a stage named after the Greenfield Saving Bank was. A huge crowd was there listening to Sammy Rae and the Friends. They sounded like a rock 'n' roll band. The crowd loved them. To me, they were okay. I found the singer Sammy Rae to be the highlight of their performance.

The Dean's Beans stage had a reasonably large crowd present as well. The band was Combo Lulo.

I was told by someone listening to their music that they were playing Ska music. It sounded like pop music, which people seem to enjoy. Some people were dancing to it.

Another band was Twisted Pine, which sounds like a name for a heavy metal band, but sounded like more of a bluegrass one. Twisted Pine were very unique-sounding. They had two guitarists, a bass player, a fiddler, and a flutist in the band. They were actually kind of fun to listen to because of how unique-sounding they were.

After Misty Blues, Soggy Po' Boys played, and they sounded like a Jazz band with a nice bass player in it. People seem to enjoy them – some even got up from their seats and dance to their music. They were also unique sounding due to their singer's unique voice and three different musical horns in the band.

After Combo Lulo there was a band called the Big Takeover. I liked the guitarists and the singing voice that was part of the reggae music they played. It had an upbeat tone to it, which really showed in some of their songs they did

After Twisted Pine, a band called Deer Tick played rock 'n' roll music very well for people listening. The guitarist's playing is what made it good, in my eyes – that was the highlight of their performance for me, although the band's singing was alright.

I have bands which I liked from this day that I would put in third or second place. Their names being Twisted Pine, Soggy Po' Boys, and Sammy Rae & the Friends. My favorite one of the event was Misty Blues. Their singing had the most depth and power.



Misty Blues performs on the Artifact Cider stage.

SEASON from page B1

Graves, the eighth-year AD, was soon to resume the laborious task of making sure mask guidelines are followed, and also help the school stem the flow of eighth graders to other schools. "Of 92 eighth graders from four years ago, only 46 have stayed to be seniors," he said.

"It just makes it tougher when we're getting less and less kids," added Mullins. "Our new principal Christopher Barnes wants to create a social media position and blast all the sports scores out online."

Adams is eyeing Luciano, the middle school coach whom Mullins regards as the program's "seller of softball."

When he's not worrying about the impact of losing a half-dozen seniors and the departure of a popular eighth grader to Tech, Mullins is relaxing and listening to baseball. Both he and Luciano share a rarity in these parts: they're both Yankees fans. Their favorite Pinstriper is leadoff hitter DJ LeMahieu.

In Hatfield where he grew up, Mullins wore No. 8 in Little League, Yogi Berra's number. Nowadays



Souvenirs of a memorable season, on display at the Schuetzen Verein banquet.

he listens to Big Apple sports talk-shows. "Every morning I say, 'Alexa, turn on WFAN' and she takes care of me," he chuckled.

Much has been written about Mullins's chess-like game management, but nary a scribe has revealed how he came to be named Gary. "My proper name is Charles Gehringer Mullins, because my fa-

ther was a Tigers fan and his favorite player was Charlie Gehringer," said Mullins, referring to the Hall of Fame second baseman who batted .320.

"But I had an uncle named Charles, so they called me Gary."

Or Gehri! Either way, you know the rest of the story.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Bobcat, Jumpers, Shooting, Farmstand Thefts

Thursday, 7/1

10:17 a.m. Report of a possible injured hawk behind a residence on Main Road.

11:20 a.m. Report of a white tractor trailer that struck a guardrail on the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge

5:36 p.m. Suspicious vehicle searched on the French King Bridge.

Friday, 7/2

7:22 a.m. Searched for a subject from last night's incident on East Mineral Road in Montague.

Saturday, 7/3

9:04 a.m. Caller advises he may have located a body on the Connecticut River bank.

Sunday, 7/4

9:17 to 10:34 p.m. Three callers complaining of fireworks.

Monday, 7/5

5:21 p.m. Caller from Grove and Walnut streets reported his neighbor told him there's been a bobcat in the neighborhood.

5:57 p.m. Boater passing under French King Bridge observed kids on the catwalk. Unable to locate.

Tuesday, 7/6

3:14 a.m. Greenfield dis-

patch took a call reporting a male party grabbing and pushing a female off the French King Highway.

Thursday, 7/8

9:42 a.m. Officer on patrol located subject wanted for making suicidal statement and threatening to jump off the French King Bridge. Subject taken for mental health evaluation.

Friday, 7/9

3:54 p.m. Greenfield advising they took a call from Oak Street for a baby bobcat.

Sunday, 7/11

1:39 a.m. Loose goats reported on Main Road.

10:36 a.m. Caller from West Gill Road advises a neighbor told him that mail from area mailboxes was taken and ripped up. Approximately four mailboxes found to have mail tampered with.

1:31 p.m. Checked vehicle stopped in the rest area on the French King Highway with hazard lights on. A toddler was vomiting in the vehicle. Parents all set.

Tuesday, 7/13

1:03 p.m. Caller from Main Road advises the flags at-

tached to the war memorial markers have all been snapped off.

Wednesday, 7/14

5:08 p.m. Caller reporting a tractor trailer unit got hung up on the guardrail on the Turners Falls Gill Bridge. Truck and trailer pulled out of service by Mass SP truck team. Criminal citation issued.

Thursday, 7/15

8:55 a.m. Assisted EMS on Barney Hale Road. Subject reported to be under a vehicle from a fall.

9:50 p.m. Car vs. tractor trailer accident on the French King Highway. No injuries.

Friday, 7/16

2:50 p.m. Farm sprayer disabled in the middle of the intersection at Gill lights. Koch's called to tow it to Factory Hollow Rest area. MassDOT and FDs assisted with spill control.

Saturday, 7/17

11:43 a.m. Farm stand on West Gill Road had property stolen.

4:12 p.m. Report of two separate incidents of larceny, eggs and cash, from farm stand on Main Road.

Monday, 7/19

12:06 a.m. Mass SP in pursuit of a vehicle on French King Highway.

6:49 p.m. Body recovered from Connecticut River at NMH boathouse.

Wednesday, 7/21

8:59 p.m. Caller reported a car pulled over near the overpass on Route 91 northbound before the Northfield exit. It appears someone is going to climb over the railing. Responded as mutual aid as no other units available. Subject straddling bridge railing. Pulled back and took for mental health evaluation.

Thursday, 7/22

1:53 a.m. Mass SP responding to reported shooting, Main Road. Assisted with investigation.

9:33 p.m. Assisted Montague PD with shots fired.

Monday, 7/26

4:33 p.m. Mountain lion reported in South Cross Road area. Several sightings over past few weeks.

Thursday, 7/29

7:35 a.m. Assisted Erving PD investigating unattended death at Dorsey Road and French King Bridge.

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NatureCulture: The Science Page

WARREN ONDRAIS 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

Recent News & Findings

By LISA McLOUGHLIN

Red Snow

Red snow occurs wherever glaciers are: in Antarctica and the Alps, notably. There is a new insight into this phenomenon, which has been observed for centuries but wasn't understood. Algae of the genus *Sanguina*, which exist on the scale of about one ten-thousandth of an inch, are in the glaciers. Normally green, these algae become red to protect themselves from ultraviolet light.

Red snow is increasing because the algae thrive in the heat from global warming and eat carbon dioxide, which we have more of with greenhouse gases. Because red is darker than white and absorbs more sunlight, the red algae cause the glaciers to heat up and melt more quickly, which isn't great for the already stressed-out glaciers.

Australian Prehistoric Crocodile

Re-examining a skull found in the 19th century, a team of researchers have discovered that a giant prehistoric crocodile lived in Queensland, Australia. The crocodile, now called *Gunggamarandu maunala* ("River Boss" or "Hole Head," in Indigenous languages of the region) lived between two and five million years ago. Its total length, extrapolated from the partial skull, is estimated to be about seven meters (23 feet) long.

Before the discovery, it was thought Australia had none of this subfamily of crocodiles called *tomistominae*, of which there is only one living species, the false gharial, which inhabits fresh water in Asia.

Snails in the Sun

Researchers from the University of Michigan attached tiny computers to leaves near snails to figure out how they alone survived the introduction of an alien predatory snail to their South Pacific Island. It turns out the native white-shelled *Partula hyalina* snails could survive longer in the sun, and so were able to live on the edges of forest and not be eaten by their predators.

The predator, called the rosy wolf snail, had been brought in to control



Above: red snow; *Partula hyalina* snails. Below: The Q'eswachaka bridge.

an earlier import, a giant African land snail which was introduced as a food source but became a pest.

The world's smallest computer, the Michigan Micro Mote, was used for the first time in the field for this research. The amount of light was measured indirectly by keeping track of how fast the computer's battery was recharging. The wolf snails had computers glued to their shells, but the endangered white snails' sunlight was measured even more indirectly, with magnets attaching the computers to the upper and lower sides of the leaves the snail rested on.

Peruvian Bridge Rewoven

A centuries-old Incan bridge in Peru called the Q'eswachaka that crosses 50 feet above the Apurimac river was rebuilt in June 2021, during the pandemic. The bridge

was part of the 25,000-mile road system the Incas built that lasted over 500 years. The Huinchiri community repaired the 30-meter-long rope bridge, which is the last surviving Incan bridge.

It is made of Peruvian feather grass, locally termed *qoya ichu*, which is first moistened and beaten with rocks. In the rebuilding process, women weave small ropes, approximately 120 of which are woven into each larger rope by men. Each family contributes a section of rope, so they are literally "weaving community."

The entire rebuilding of the bridge, previously done every year in a ritual that included destroying the old bridge and thanking mountain spirits and Earth Mother, typically took three days each June. It exemplified cooperation among people and with the natural world.

Sustainable Food

By LISA McLOUGHLIN

NORTHFIELD – One third of the land on our planet is used for agriculture. It matters a lot what we do with our agricultural lands, and what we grow on them. The current way we grow plants produces about 15% of global greenhouse gases, and agriculture is the largest driver of deforestation on the globe.

In western Massachusetts we are lucky to live in an area with so many farms that grow food. What else would farms grow? Solar panels and hops (in Northfield), corn and soy (in the Midwest), and parking lots and McMansions (everywhere). The US has lost 11 million acres of farmland to development over the past two decades; farmers of color are hardest hit, losing 30,000 acres of farmland a year.

By contrast, in western Massachusetts we can go to a farmer's market almost every day, Wednesday through Saturday, during the growing season. We can shop in towns half an hour or less from Montague and get local produce grown practically – and sometimes literally – in our backyards.

Other places struggle. For example, in Iowa, industrial farms thousands of acres in size grow corn (29% of acreage nationally) and soybeans (26%), three-quarters of which is for livestock feed or ethanol. The quarter of it that we do eat is consumed as soybean oil, high-fructose corn syrup, corn meal, and other sweeteners.

Many organizations, among them Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust and Network, FARMS, and the Sustainable Iowa Land Trust (SILT), are trying to help food farms flourish. FARMS helps Black farmers understand their legal rights; Northeast Farmers of Color are bringing sustainable soil practices to New England; and SILT's strategy is to "ring" Midwest cities with food farms to make food more accessible to all. What they have now is veggies that come from California, Florida, and Mexico. A long way to travel to Iowa.

Closer to home we have wonderful small farms everywhere. Seeds of Solidarity is an organic farm in Orange that uses a technique commonly called regenerative agriculture. The difference between regenerative and regular agriculture is that regenerative agriculture has a net positive effect on the environment, and often on social networks, too.

Seeds of Solidarity exemplifies this model. As farmers Deb Habib and Ricky Baruch write in their book *Making Love While Farming*, they bought the land they could afford, which was not prime farmland. This made them resourceful. They pioneered what is now known as the cardboard method to build up their soil. This method has the benefit of keeping nutrients concentrated where plants need them, using less water, and allowing for hand-harvesting and other non-mechanized methods. Besides running a farm, the

couple run a nonprofit which brings young people who have a need to be in touch with the land to a place they can work with their hands in the soil.

Conventional farming has most of these elements: lots of machinery; GMO seeds that cannot be saved year to year; additions to the soil like chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Tilling the soil causes dust clouds that rise over fields as well as substantial run-off in a strong rain. Regenerative farms use less machinery, which means less fossil fuels and also less topsoil loss.

Anyone who has tasted an heirloom tomato or has their favorite apple variety knows why we need the old varieties of seed. And I think by now it's clear that fewer pesticides are better.

Chemical fertilizers may be unfamiliar to many. They are made from mined minerals and sometimes manufactured chemicals. In regenerative agriculture, the addition of minerals from elsewhere is not necessary because plants that restore minerals to the soil share the space. The quintessential triplets are corn, beans, and squash, planted in one hillock and allowed to intertwine. Water is conserved as it can be distributed to the plant clusters directly and not spread out all over a field.

There isn't a standard definition of regenerative agriculture. In general, it uses processes like cover crops, the integration of livestock, and reducing or eliminating tillage, in order to improve soil health, sequester carbon, and increase biodiversity. Regenerative agriculture is good for the planet because it encourages carbon to stay sequestered in soil, thus increasing its productivity and at the same time reducing global warming.

If you are interested in regenerative agriculture, social justice, inner peace, or just want some fantastic and uplifting stories, tips, and recipes, check out *Making Love While Farming*. If this book leaves you wanting more, read *Farming While Black* by Leah Penniman – great practical tips, history, and recipes too! Do visit one of our many farm stands or farmers markets, some of which are listed in the sidebar below.

Farmers Markets

- Wednesdays, 2 to 6 p.m.**
Peskeomskut Park, Turners Falls
- Thursdays, 3 to 6 p.m.**
135 East Main Street, Orange
- Thursdays, 4 to 7 p.m.:**
Trinity Church, Northfield
- Fridays, 2 to 6 p.m.**
Baptist Corner lot, 53 Main Street, Shelburne Falls
- Saturdays:**
8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Court Square, Greenfield
9 a.m. to noon
Uptown Common, Athol
10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
58 Church Street, Bernardston

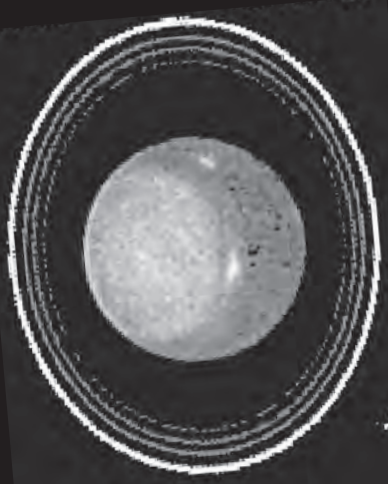
(info from www.NFMD.org)

September 2021 Moon Calendar

New Moon
Monday,
September 6

First Quarter
Monday, September 13

Full Moon
Monday, September 20



The Hubble space telescope observes Uranus, revealing rings and bright clouds.

Autumnal Equinox
Wednesday,
September 22

Last Quarter
Tuesday,
September 28

NASA PHOTO

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

The 413 Pub, Easthampton: *Dead Collective*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *Steve Ellis*, rare solo gig. No cover. 7 p.m.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Zara Bode's Big Band*. \$. 5 p.m.

Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: *Hiss Golden Messenger*. \$. 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

Millside Pond, Easthampton: *Adeline, Williamsburg Salsa Orchestra, Alex Asher Quartet*. Free. 5 p.m.

Iron Horse Music Hall, Northampton: *Dan Bern*. \$. 5:30 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *The Drag Sisters: Back Where We Belong*, extravaganza by Eggtooth Productions. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Dead Beat*. \$. 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

Millside Pond, Easthampton: *Red Baraat, Sofia Rei, Albino*

Mbie. Free. 5 p.m.

1794 Meetinghouse, New Salem: *Christine Ohlman & Rebel Montez*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *The Drag Sisters: Back Where We Belong*, extravaganza by Eggtooth Productions. \$. 7:30 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Travis Laplante/Jason Nazary duo, Jen Gelineau, Paul Flaherty/Jake Meginsky duo, Nat Baldwin*. Vax proof & mask up... because this show is sick (managing editor's choice). \$. 8 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Bella's Bartok*. \$. 8 p.m.

Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: *Mdou Moctar, Pure Adult*. \$. 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Janet Evra*, jazz singer. \$. 1 p.m.

10 Forward at Mesa Beach, Greenfield: *Anti-Imperialist Dance Party*. Speakers at 5:30 p.m., salsa lessons at 7 p.m.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

Gateway City Arts, Holyoke:

Tank and the Bangas. \$. 8 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Thus Love, Carinae*. \$. 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Home Body, Minivan, Bad Behavior DJs*. Vax proof & mask up. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Darlingside*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: *Yo La Tengo*. \$. 8 p.m.

Bishop's Lounge, Northampton: *Carinae*, spec. guests. \$. 10 p.m.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

Peskeomskut Park, Turners Falls: 3rd Annual Fun Fest feat. *The Gaslight Tinkers, Viva Quetzal, Musica Franklin students*. Free. 1 p.m.

Three County Fair, Northampton: Concert for the Homeless feat. *Marcy Playground, Lit, The Motels*, and more. \$. 1 p.m.

Mount Toby Meeting, Leverett: *Paul Kaplan*, folk. \$. 2 p.m.

Palladium, Worcester: *Coheed & Cambria, The Used*. \$. 5 p.m.

Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: *Vimana*, jazz-rock. By donation. 7 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Rebelle, Simon White, The Equalites, DJ-Iganic*. Reggae. \$. 7 p.m.

Calvin Theater, Northampton: *Julien Baker, Thao & the Get Down Stay Down*. \$. 7 p.m.

1794 Meetinghouse, New Salem: *Keith Murphy & Becky Tracy*, French Canadian and Irish traditional. \$. 7:30 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Nemesis, Minivan, Model Home, PussyVision*. Vax proof & mask up. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Belltower Records, North Adams: *Taiwan Housing Project, Sky Furrows, Strange Fate*. \$. 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Easthampton: Arcadia Folk Festival feat. *Suzanne Vega, Lori McKenna, Chris Smither, Ladama*, and more. \$.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

Academy of Music, Northamp-

ton: *Dr. Dog, Bowerbirds*. \$. 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Shamarr Allen*. \$. 8 p.m.

FRI-SUN, SEPTEMBER 24-26

MASS MoCA, North Adams: FreshGrass Festival fest. *Dispatch, Sam Bush, Tombone Shorty, Bela Fleck*, many more.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

1794 Meetinghouse, New Salem: *Mad Agnes*, contemporary folksong \$. 7:30 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Christoph Inrigger Trio*, jazz. \$. 7:30 p.m.

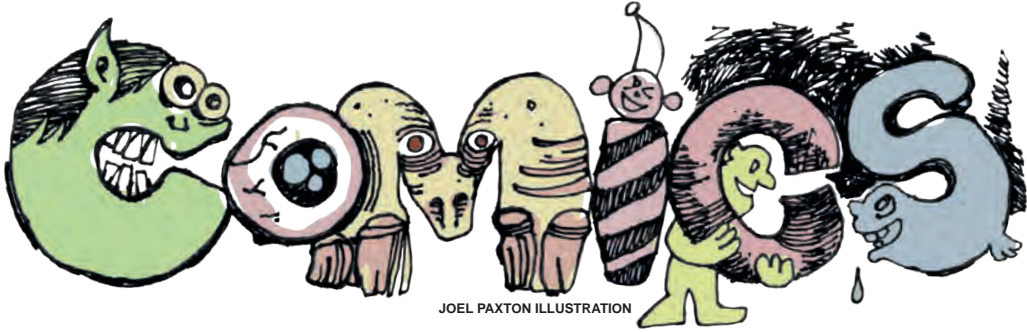
Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: *The Mountain Goats*. \$. 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

Palladium, Worcester: *NOFX, The Mighty Mighty Bosstones, Pennywise*, more. \$. 12 p.m.

Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: *Shelley Roberts & Charlie Widmer*. 7 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Big Al Anderson and the Floor Models*. \$. 8 p.m.



JOEL PAXTON ILLUSTRATION

OVER THE HILL

Carolyn Clark



GLIMPSES

ANNABEL LEVINE

Three Degrees of Warming

By Janice Rowan



Cool Cats on the Ave

Suzette



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GREAT FALLS APPLE COLUMN

By ANNABEL LEVINE

TURNERS FALLS – September has arrived, and the alternating hot and wet weeks of the summer are slowly giving way to cooler nights and the promise of fall bounty. Traditionally for the Great Falls Apple Corps the coming of fall has come to mean apple harvests, fall clean-ups at the Unity Park Community Garden, and getting another round of fruit trees and other edible perennials into the ground.

As we described in last month's column, apple harvesting is upon us! We weren't able to have picking dates ready for this week's print deadline, but keep an eye on our social media and look for an announcement in next week's *Montague Reporter*. Our biggest project will be harvesting the "fish lab orchard" down on the Patch, and we're very thankful to the folks at the Silvio Conte Anadromous Fish Laboratory for having us back once again.

Looking ahead to the abundance about to be harvested, we hope that our readers will take a moment or two to think of people or organizations that could use donations of fresh apples. Last year our apples and applesauce were only given out at our free table, but this year we'd like to branch out. This could be anyone from a food pantry in another

town, to your neighbor who likes to bake! As long as someone will eat them, we want to give them.

With all the coordination of resources going into this apple-harvesting project, I can't help but daydream about the possibilities for the future. I'm dreaming of a commercial kitchen where we can not only make our own applesauce, but also a place to make free meals and put up all kinds of seasonal bounty. Then I thought, why stop at just a kitchen? What if that kitchen was attached to a community cafeteria, where we can use local food to make free meals everyday?

But if we have the kitchen and the dining room and the hungry customers lined up at the door, we



Look out for these Kousa dogwood fruits along Avenue A. This one, from an early ripening tree, is almost ready to eat!

need to dream up where we get our ingredients. How local can we get? Fruit trees in front yards, in parks, in cemeteries? A network of neighbors sharing the excess bounty from a backyard (or front yard!) vegetable garden? Turning unused space into community gardens or pocket farms? Planting grapes at the base of all of our iron and chain-link fencing, and becoming a village of vines?

I share these dreams because soon after the fall will come winter, where we'll take time to focus on our next year of growing and feeding and eating. One of you out there may have an interest in seeing one of these ideas come to light, or perhaps you have resources to share. Or, maybe, if you're also dreaming of doing projects in the community, of any kind, we can support each other.

Before I let you go, I would be remiss without our yearly reminder that apples are not the only delicious fall fruit that grows abundantly in downtown Turners Falls. Long-time readers of this column may remember that cooler temperatures signals the time to start looking for the "alien soccer ball" fruits of the Kousa dogwood tree!

The fruit's orange flesh deals a punch of tropical flavor that serves a real contrast to its fellow fall-ripening fruit, the apple. The fruit will start to ripen in the next month, so

LEVINE PHOTOS



Most of the apples we pick are from old and unsprayed orchards so their skins can look a little different. These spots are benign and edible, and the apple underneath is sweet and delicious!

find your trees now and keep an eye on them! In downtown Turners alone you can find these trees in front of the United Arc, Greenfield Savings Bank, Peskeomskut Park, and the Great Falls Discovery Center. If you find yourself at the Great Falls Farmers Market on an upcoming Wednesday, look for me at the market manager's booth and I'd be happy to show you the park's two Kousa dogwood trees.

Lastly, get your pen and calendar ready because we've got a Save-the-Date announcement! We're throwing a Halloween Party and Fall Clean-Up at the Unity Park Community Garden on Sunday, October 31. We'll be dressed up while

we tuck in the garden for the season, listening to live music thanks to a grant from the Montague Cultural Council. More details coming soon!

The Great Falls Apple Corps advocates for edible landscaping and all sorts of community gardening. We maintain the Unity Park Community Garden, a sidewalk food forest at the former St. Andrew's Church, and a weekly free table on Saturdays at Unity Park from 12 to 3 p.m. If you are interested in volunteering, or want to stay up-to-date with all our goings on, check out our Facebook, our Instagram @greatfallsapplecorps, or email us at greatfallsapplecorps@gmail.com.

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