

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 19 – NO. 42

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

\$1

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

SEPTEMBER 30, 2021

Turners Falls Activist Charged After Governor Boat Blockade

By SARAH ROBERTSON

SWAMPSCOTT – Locked to a boat trailer blocking Governor Charlie Baker’s driveway on Tuesday morning, a Turners Falls resident was arrested along with seven other climate activists demanding the governor take more urgent action to address climate change.

“The goal was to raise visibility of the issues and hold our elected Governor accountable for the promises he made to address the climate crisis,” Nora Maynard, the local arrestee, told the *Reporter*. “It’s so difficult at every stage to challenge the status quo.”

Around 7 a.m. on Tuesday, the activists parked a bright pink sailboat painted with the words “Climate Emergency” and “Just Transition” in front of Governor Baker’s home in Swampscott. They flew flags bearing the symbol of the Extinction Rebellion network. Maynard, a musician and vocalist who recently moved to Turners Falls, said the group’s goal was to place Baker under a form of “citizen’s arrest” and publicly confront him about his decisions

see **BLOCKADE** page A6

LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Forum Planned On Joint-Police Arrangement

By GEORGE BRACE

At their meeting Tuesday night, the Leverett selectboard announced there would be an open informational meeting for residents to learn more about the town’s joint-policing arrangement with Wendell next Tuesday, October 5, from 7 to 8 p.m. at the town hall.

The board also considered renaming the transfer station and a nearby road in memorial to Richard Drury, options for slowing down traffic on Two Mile Road, and ways to ensure that residents wishing to continue to receive the town’s newsletter by mail can do so after the last bulk-mailed issue is sent out on October 1.

Residents with questions about the joint-policing arrangement with Wendell were encouraged to attend next Tuesday’s meeting, where an overview of the project and a summary of the draft intermunicipal agreement that would finalize the arrangement will be presented, along with the opportunity to ask questions.

The board noted that a synopsis is currently available on the town website for reference, and encouraged people to send questions to town administrator Marjorie McGinnis in advance if possible, saying it would make the meeting more efficient.

The board also reported that bids had been received on five components needed for the renovation of the Wendell police station in order

see **LEVERETT** page A5

GILL SELECTBOARD

New Pot Shop Proposed At Main Road Intersection



MIKE JACKSON PHOTO

If approved, the dispensary would be Gill’s first legal cannabis business.

By JERRI HIGGINS

The town of Gill was approached at Monday night’s selectboard meeting with a pitch to open a retail cannabis store on the corner of Main Road and Route 2. Among other business, the board heard an update about the perceived conflict between negotiations with FirstLight Power and the state open meeting law.

Attorney James McMahon, representing PGM Property Management, LLC, met with the board to discuss the use of the former Green River Powersports building at 1 Main Road building by Leaf Joy, a new company seeking a state license to sell cannabis for adult use.

“Leaf Joy is a family business,” said McMahon, who has represented a number of cannabis businesses since 2014. “PGM is a father who is going to be purchasing the property and leasing it to his son, who will be operating the license.”

McMahon told the selectboard that the father and son, who could not join the meeting due to a family event, hope to renovate the main building as a dispensary, and use the warehouse at the back of the property for non-cannabis-related storage, once they meet lo-

cal and state Cannabis Control Commission requirements.

PGM Property Management is based in Belmont, Mass., and its sole manager is Petr Faiziev, according to state records. It was registered in 2018 and then dissolved this summer after failing to file annual reports. Reached for comment by the *Reporter*, McMahon referred to this as a “clerical error,” and said he expected the LLC to be reinstated “shortly.” Annual reports for 2019, 2020, and 2021 appeared on the state website Tuesday evening.

The retail license, McMahon wrote, would be held by Greg Faiziev, a New York resident “who will be moving to Gill if everything works out.”

Selectboard member Randy Crochier asked how many jobs Leaf Joy might generate, and what hours the store would operate.

McMahon said that the business would likely have 30 full-time employees, with approximately four in a planned “five point of sale system,” several security positions, a check-in position, and administrative personnel. He also said the company wants to hire Gill residents for those positions. Operating hours are typically 10

see **GILL** page A7

Downtown ‘Recovery Plan’ Includes Diverse Proposals

By JEFF SINGLETON

TURNERS FALLS – The Montague planning department held a public presentation and hearing Tuesday night on a “Rapid Recovery Plan” targeted to downtown Turners Falls. The plan is the product of a statewide program by the Baker administration, currently funded at \$774 million, to stimulate recovery from the recession caused by the pandemic. The program targets urban areas in cities and towns, and Montague has chosen downtown Turners Falls in its proposal.

A grant from the state Department of Housing and Community Development enables towns like Montague to hire a planner to assist in program development. Montague is working with Dan Hodge of Hodge Economic Consulting who, along with Walter Ramsey and Suzanne LoManto of the planning

department, presented the recovery plan to a group of about a dozen residents – some in the upstairs meeting room at town hall, and others attending virtually over Zoom.

The plan, thus far, is a list of 12 potential projects grouped under the categories of “public infrastructure” and “business support.” While the rationales for the projects tended to overlap, town planner Ramsey made clear these were also “stand-alone” concepts with varying costs and funding sources to create a mix of proposals.

The first project, labeled “multi-modal wayfinding and branding,” was a plan to improve downtown signage. A second project would reconstruct the town hall annex on First Street, until recently used by the public works department, as a “multi-purpose space for the media and arts.” Ramsey noted

see **RECOVERY** page A8

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Montague Mandates Masks, Moves Town Meeting Outdoors

By JEFF SINGLETON

In response to public concerns about the recent rise in positive COVID-19 cases in Montague and Franklin County, the Montague selectboard has reimposed a mask mandate in public buildings, including town offices and libraries, privately owned bars, restaurants, and stores.

The board also moved the location of the fall special town meeting from the Turners Falls High School auditorium to an outdoor location next to the Franklin County Tech School. The town meeting date was also changed from Thursday, October 14 to Saturday, October 16 at 10 a.m.

The decisions, made at the board’s Monday, September 27 meeting, followed several weeks of debate generated not only by the increase in COVID cases but by the decisions of other cities and towns in the region to implement mandates. These included not only Amherst, Northampton, and Greenfield but also a coalition of small towns which receive public health services through the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG).

At the beginning of the joint meeting of the selectboard and board of health, public health director Daniel Wasiuk reviewed the town’s latest COVID metrics. The number of positive tests reported

see **MONTAGUE** page A7

State Reps Call On Towns To Help Meet Climate Goals

By ELLEN BLANCHETTE

GREENFIELD – On March 26, a bill passed by the Massachusetts legislature providing a framework for efforts to reduce greenhouse gases in the state, with a goal of 50% reduction by 2030 and net zero gas emissions by 2050, was signed into law. Noticing that little

attention had been paid to its passage, Paul Mark, Greenfield’s state representative in the 2nd Berkshire district, and his fellow representative Joan Meschino of Hull were invited to speak at an event in Energy Park to discuss the law and explain how it is meant to work. Both were co-sponsors of the bill.

see **GOALS** page A2



BLANCHETTE PHOTO

Joan Meschino (D-Hull) encouraged local pressure for decarbonization goals.

High School Sports Week

By MATT ROBINSON

TURNERS FALLS – This week, the Turners Falls field hockey team won its first game, the Franklin Tech Football Eagles lost a home match, and the Turners volleyball team and Tech Golfing Eagles kept their perfect records alive – both at the expense of their cross-road rivals.

Golf

FCTS 21 – TFHS 3

Last Thursday, September 23, the Franklin Tech Golfing Eagles defeated the Turners Falls Thunder 21-3. For Tech, it was their sixth straight win. For Turners, the loss dropped their record to 3 and 2.

By the way, you’ll recognize

athletes from both squads. Tech’s lead golfer, Brady Booska, defeated Joey Mosca 2.5 to 1.5 while Tech’s second golfer Gabe Mota blanked Jackson Day 4-0.

In the second foursome, Tech’s Anthony Zager beat Reese Ewell 4-0 while his teammate Aiden Bailey, defeated Grady Deery 2.5 to 1.5. Alex Sulda and Rob Wood completed the sweep, beating Braeden Talbot and Jack Jette respectively 4-0.

Volleyball

TFHS 3 – FCTS 0

TFHS 3 – Mahar 0

TFHS 3 – Greenfield 0

While the boys were clubbing it out at Thomas Memorial Golf Club,

see **SPORTS** page A6



DAVID HOIT PHOTO

Turners Falls’ Paige Sulda rapidly advances the ball towards the circle, closely followed by Mahar Senators defender Laura McGinnis. The Thunder rolled to a 4-0 win over the Senators at home last Thursday, their first of the season.



(If Local News Were More Like Cannabis, Would More People Invest In It?)

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The Montague Reporter

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Technical Administration

About Face Computing

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Different Ways

Well, the *New York Times* made a splash this week by confirming the story many *New York Times* readers have probably been darkly fantasizing about since the summer: sickness and death in the pandemic's latest wave have inflicted Republican-voting states and counties disproportionately.

The article shows this using a series of little graphs, tiny bluish and reddish circles recoiling from each other along each sickness-axis and each death-axis.

This was the predicted effect of the growing vaccination gap, itself the outcome of a two-party, winner-take-all political system where the parties have been allowed to fight using money, and money has been allowed to fight using information.

The apps wrap around all the edges of our daily lives, filling up our thought and attention and delivering a steady stream of whatever evidence best flatters our suspicions. We had been withdrawing into these burrows for several years already, but 2020's one-two punch of a social lockdown and the latest most-important-ever national election seems to have knocked us all the rest of the way in.

This is not the first time America has offered completely different realities to its residents, but to have knowledge completely torn in two

at a time when we would so clearly benefit from the basic capacity to coordinate our actions feels particularly acute, and frightening.

The university, the city newspaper, the research institute, the scientific journal: the special caste authorized to work with knowledge on behalf of everyone else has become unnecessary for profit and is, like any other, being let go. Hundreds of intelligence agencies skitter around instead, like blobs of mercury on a concrete slab, their motives often shrouded. The usual demagogues practice their baffled looks at the camera, marshalling their audiences, nervously monitoring their view counts.

Something other than this will end up happening; we're not just going to wander deeper into the fog forever. And it's not a popular thing to say, but it could end up being a turn for the better. The US government, for example, *might* wriggle out of its knots and mobilize a massive infusion of resources. Alternately, it might fail, and then tens of millions who have been sitting and watching and waiting *might* realize we will have to mobilize ourselves without it.


In this waiting room, though, the fever builds, and the sickness hangs in the air, and the patients sharpen their knives.

TROUBLE MANDESON ILLUSTRATION



Montague artist Belinda Lyons Zucker, with a collection of the wrapped ancestral figures she creates from cloth and clay, on display through October 31 at the Sawmill River Arts Gallery in Montague Center.

Letter to the Editors



The Case for Ranked-Choice Voting

Montague's recent special election is an excellent example of why many people believe ranked choice voting would be a better system. The results show two things: the difference between first and second place was razor thin – one vote, out of 671 – and both the two frontrunners received fewer than 30% of the votes. That means that more than 40% of the voters didn't choose either one of them.

In a ranked choice system, voters could have indicated their second, and even third and fourth choices. When no candidate received a ma-

majority, the lowest vote-getter would have been eliminated, and their voters' second-choice votes would have been distributed accordingly.

If there were still no candidate receiving a majority (as would have happened in this case), the process would have repeated, until there was either a tie or a majority winner.

Would the outcome have been different? Who knows – but at least it would have been clear that the winner had more support from more people than the others. That did not happen in this case.

I think those who argue that ranked choice voting is "too complicated" are insulting the intelligence of the general public. People routinely deal with more complexity than this system requires. What's so complicated about saying, "I like A, but if I can't have A, I'd prefer C over B"?

I hope that people continue to advocate for it, and that one day a majority agrees that it's a better way to go.

Mike Naughton
Millers Falls

CORRECTIONS

We made at least two mistakes in our September 23 edition!

First, the book review on Page B2 incorrectly named the book in question as *Fish Discover Water Last: Richard D. Grossman on Corporations, Democracy and Us*. The correct title was *Fish Discover Water Last: Richard L. Grossman on Corporations, Democracy and Us*.

Second, on the same page, we misidentified this soapbox spiller-

er-outer (below) as Cameron Freeland. It was Alex Hannum! Turns out multiple cars had the same number. We're told Alex's own car had a last-minute problem and he was riding a loaner from Nova Motorcycles. He was one of the winners of the "Dare Devil" award.

We apologize for these errors, and thank our readers for helping us set the record straight. Truth is always a collective endeavor.

GOALS from page A1

Standing on the stage addressing the group of residents who gathered on a sunny day on the Energy Park lawn, Meschino said this effort was part of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' "2050 Roadmap." She explained that this is a planning document, a map for working groups to focus on several areas where change in policies can affect climate change, such as housing, transportation, energy production, and nature conservancy.

Meschino spoke of green budget management, ecological line items, and looking at everything the state does through an eye on how it impacts the climate.

Meschino highlighted electrification of vehicles. "What investments do we need to make?" she asked. "Consider transportation: think public vehicles, school buses. How do we bring everyone to the table, what do they need?"

Representative Mark spoke about land use, suggesting bills banning cutting trees on public land, increasing regulations on land use, and investing in sustainable agriculture. He discussed creating a "green bank" where savings can be invest-

ed in ways that support the climate, and ways to electrify the transportation system to create reliable public transit that gets people where they want to go without impacting the environment.

On the Massachusetts website is a photograph of Governor Charlie Baker, signing the bill that the event was meant to highlight. The press release says the law "establishes new interim goals for emissions reductions, significantly increases protections for Environmental Justice communities across Massachusetts, authorizes the Administration to implement a new, voluntary energy efficient building code for municipalities, and allows the Commonwealth to procure an additional 2,400 Megawatts (MW) of clean, reliable off-shore wind energy by 2027."

During a question-and-answer period, Mark and Meschino answered many questions about the areas the legislature will be considering in the months to come, including wind, solar, and hydropower, and about how local residents could contribute to the effort.

While the Energy Park event was packed full of information on many aspects of this issue, many questions were left unanswered, so this reporter reached out to Pam Kelly, the event's organizer. Kelly is a local activist who has worked on climate issues for many years. (She is a member of the All Souls UU Church of Greenfield and the Social Justice Committee there, of which I am co-chair; the church had agreed to sponsor the event at her request, along with the Interfaith Council of Franklin County.)

Kelly said that Massachusetts currently generates 800 MW of power from off-shore wind, with a goal of 15,000 MW by 2050. The current wind energy now being built (another 800 MW) is more than that produced by the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant, which generated a bit over 600 MW when it was operating.

Wind is one of several sources of energy the state expects to use to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Solar is another growing source, but Kelly and others have been arguing that we should not be cutting down forests to create solar farms. While solar panels offset production of carbon dioxide by replacing the use of fossil fuels, the only things that actually create oxygen and eliminate

continued on **next page**



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Compiled by TROUBLE MANDESON

Tomorrow, October 1, Silverthorne Theater Company's *The Mystery of Irma Vep: A Penny Dreadful* is premiering at Hawks & Reed. **A spoof on Gothic melodramas** with two actors playing all the roles, the performance runs through October 16. Tickets can be purchased at silverthornetheater.org.

It should be noted that Hawks & Reed has a policy that requires a vaccination card or a photo of it, along with an ID, for all attendees. The cast, crew, and volunteers are fully vaccinated.

Communities That Care Coalition is seeking **nominations for the Mike Fritz Community Builder Award**, created to honor Mike Fritz, a local visionary business owner whose generosity helped to found CTCC. The award goes to a community member demonstrating vision and/or leadership in integrating programs, policies, practices, or goals of the CTCC into their own agency or institution, for the betterment of the community.

Send nominations by tomorrow, October 1, to Rachel Stoler at FR-COG, rstoler@frcog.org with the names of nominee and nominated, the date, and one to three examples of the nominees' activities.

The Athol Bird & Nature Club offers **early bird birding** with Jeff Johnstone on Friday, October 1. Come observe local fall migrating birds and gorgeous foliage beginning at 7:30 a.m. until done. Meet at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, Athol. To reserve a spot call (978) 249-9052. Check out atholbirdclub.org for details on this, and other recurring events.

Learn about **"Wild grapes as a**

healing and resilient food," on Friday, October 1 from 5 to 6:30 p.m. at Foxtrot Farm, 1237 Baptist Corner Road, Shelburne Falls. Learn about the culinary and medicinal traditions of grape leaves at this workshop sponsored by the Western MA Regenerative Food System. Visit wm-rfss.wpengine.com/ to learn more about the organization.

Saturday, October 2 is the last day to view the small weaving exhibit **celebrating the life of master weaver Dvora Cohen**, who died earlier this year. Located at the Wendell Free Library, 7 Depot Road, the exhibit has been open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 2 to 6 p.m. and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Masks are required indoors. Email asmithpen@gmail.com to learn more.

The Y of Greenfield invites **book enthusiasts** to its Local Author Showcase, where nine authors will share and sell copies of their books. The event is free this Saturday, October 2 from 10 a.m. to 12 noon in the YMCA Social Room.

The authors showcased are Wendy Sibbison, Karma Kitaj, Philip Johnson, Rebecca Daniels, G. Greene, Jovanna Van Pelt, Wendy Black Farley, Terry McConnell, and Daniel Cantor Yalowitz.

Franklin County's Largest Tag Sale is finally here. This Saturday, October 2 at the Franklin County Fairgrounds and sponsored by Bear Country 95.3 and The Outlaw, admission to the sale is \$5 per vehicle.

For sellers, booths start at just \$15 for a ten-by-ten space. Reserve now at bear953.com/2021/08/10/franklin-countys-largest-tag-sale/. If you are a food vendor or retail business, call the station at (413) 774-4301. The event will be held rain or shine.

The public is welcomed to the re-

dedication of Spinner Park and the unveiling of "The Spinner" sculpture this Saturday, October 2 at 10 a.m. Spinner Park is located at the corner of Avenue A and Fourth Street in downtown Turners Falls.

Kringle Candle and Hitchcock Brewery in Bernardston are partnering up to host a **Fall Festival** on Saturday, October 2, and Sunday, October 3 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., featuring family-friendly activities, outdoor crafters, a pumpkin patch, music, and in-store promotions. Pair up a craft beer with Hattapon Thai Kitchen's food, available for purchase from 3 to 8 p.m.

The Community Action Youth & Workforce Development Program, supporting youths and young adults who are working to make change and organize in their communities, has launched its **official Youth Council Meeting**. The event is on Tuesday, October 5 from 4 to 5:30 p.m.

The Council is open to youths ages 14 to 24 from Franklin and Hampshire counties and the North Quabbin. Participants will receive a stipend. Go to www.communityaction.us/youth-programs if you or someone you know is interested in signing up.

MassMentoring Partnership (MMP) is a statewide organization partnering with corporate, public, and philanthropic entities to provide access to quality mentoring relationships for all youth in Massachusetts. MMP is holding a virtual event, **Cheers for Champions**, on Tuesday, October 5 from 5 to 6 p.m. to celebrate 2021 KELLY Scholarship winner, Ismara Diaz. KELLY is an educational grant, and stands for "Keep Encouraging Lifelong Learning for Youth." Go to e.givesmart.com/events/mu6/# to register, sponsor or donate to the event.

Valley Arts Mentors (VAM) presents "The Show Must Go On... Line: LatinX Arts Mentorship in the Valley," an online webinar at artsmentors.org, next Tuesday, October 5 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. A **panel of leaders in the Latinx arts community** will discuss their process, work,

and experiences with mentorship.

In addition, VAM accepts mentors and mentees on a rolling basis. If you have questions, call (508) 439-2069 or email admin@artsmentors.org. VAM is a collaboration between Shelburne Falls' Piti Theatre Company, Holyoke Media, and Greenfield's Big Brothers and Big Sisters.

Why cook when you can pick up home-cooked meals-to-go? On Wednesday, October 6, the Green River House at 37 Franklin Street in Greenfield is hosting its **6th Annual Spaghetti Dinner** in honor of mental health awareness week.

Call (413) 772-2181 to pre-order meals, at \$10 for adults and \$5 for kids, and then swing by to pick up spaghetti, salad, garlic bread, and dessert for the whole family. All funds raised will support CSO's Clubhouse program for adults with mental health issues.

LAVA announces a **Literary Open Bar** event series featuring writers and lovers of writing. This will be a loosely formatted reading/discussion group moderated by local author of *Exploring the Landscape of Language*, Michael Travisano.

Starting next Saturday, October 9 from 2 to 4 p.m., the series runs on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month and meets at 324 Main Street, Greenfield. For information, contact info@localaccess.org or (413) 376-8118.

Faith & Blue, a partnership between law enforcement and houses of worship, hosts **Leverett's Town-wide Tag Sale** on Saturday, October 9 from 8 a.m. to 12 noon at the Leverett Elementary School, 85 Montague Road. Visit faithandblue.org for information.

Did you know COVID-19 testing is widely available in Massachusetts? Visit www.mass.gov/covid-19-testing to find a **COVID testing site** near you. The Look4Help website can also help you to find local COVID resources at www.look4help.org.

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GOALS from previous page

carbon from the atmosphere are trees. The other source mentioned at the event was the use of hydroelectric plants.

These are the renewable energy sources that Massachusetts can use to replace the use of fossil fuels: generating electricity from sunshine, from flowing water, and from wind. So how do we pay for all this?

Kelly points out the state has access to billions of dollars in federal COVID-19 rescue money, and says the best proposals for the use of these funds include those that lower greenhouse gases, and get towns working together on common goals.

Meschino told the attendees at the September 18 event that it is not enough to talk, but that the public "needs to put pressure on the administration to do things."

The next step in Boston, she said, is for members of the legislature to continue to connect in working groups on different areas - transportation, housing, agriculture - where energy can be converted to renewables. Input from the towns, she said, will be useful.

"It's a good opportunity," she added. "Next year, the governor is up for re-election. Push this governor [on climate issues], or if not, find a good candidate to replace him."



Last Saturday marked the 25th annual Source to Sea Cleanup, a volunteer day throughout the watershed organized by the Connecticut River Conservancy. In Northfield, Erving, Montague, and Gill, volunteers are coordinated by FirstLight Power at about 20 sites. Above: students, staff, and friends of Wendell's Deer Paths, which runs environmental education classes for children, handled the riverbank below the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls. Their prodigious haul this year reportedly included a message in a bottle.

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OP ED

Promoting Literacy, and Keeping Connected

By MARY KING

TURNERS FALLS – March, 2020, the phone rang night and day. Like many agencies, Montague Catholic Social Ministries (MCSM) was forced to close its doors when the COVID-19 virus hit. Yet the calls kept coming: people searching for safe housing, food, and diapers. Many necessities only became locatable online. It was clear the pandemic was impacting struggling local families the hardest.

MCSM offers a range of services and supports to the community. The MCSM Family Center hosts the Coordinated Community Family Engagement Program (CFCE) for the Gill-Montague Regional School District. This program is a good match for MCSM because the mission is to provide services, referrals, and literacy programs throughout the district. However, the pandemic caused major educational disruptions.

The Family Center began a program, “Keeping Connected,” delivering to families a series of packages containing crafts, masks, sanitizer, and gift cards to Food City. Importantly, each package contained special books – one for school-aged children, another for babies and toddlers. Over the past year, books were gifted to families on a regular basis. In this way, the Family Center was able to continue the CFCE mission of promoting literacy while creating fun, educational activities for families stuck at home.

Staff were worried about the social and emotional effects of COVID-19 on young children. The packages were designed to provide habitual stimulation and developmental opportunities. Keeping

Connected distributions also offered hats, gloves, warm blankets and information about how to stay safe and healthy. The program was funded through a generous grant from the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts.

Initially, the packages were distributed in front of the MCSM offices on Avenue A. As the pandemic worsened, the Family Center began working with local organizations, such as the Brick House, Gill-Montague schools, the Carnegie Library, and the Great Falls Discovery Center to distribute necessities to the community. Collaborative Story-Walks popped up all around town.

As older students returned to virtual school, the littlest children were often left out. Since the start of the pandemic, the CFCE had been offering pre-recorded stories on Facebook. Twice-weekly Zoom playgroups were added to the roster. The Keeping Connected packages enhanced the virtual learning sessions.

Quality stories were chosen in English and Spanish, like *Brown Bear* by Bill Martin and Eric Carle, or *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats. For safety, staff began distributing packages door to door with special hygiene instructions for using the materials.

What made a difference in Turners Falls was the strong existing partnerships between local organizations, and a shared concern for the emotional and social wellbeing of the community. The CFCE educational packets were integrated along themes concerning natural history and culture. The grant from the Community Foundation allowed staff to keep reaching out, even during the worst of the pan-



DAMIA CAVALLARI PHOTO

Participants at a Keeping Connected event last month.

dem, enhancing the collaborative literacy efforts with a celebration of the town’s ecological and cultural diversity.

Stories are disappearing from homes.

Local families do not always own books. During the Zoom encounters, staff were granted a window into the townspeople’s worlds. A great need for physical connection was witnessed. The absence of reading was obvious. Each time the Zoom screen opened, children ran to grab their books, holding the stories close to their hearts.

Since the pandemic, screens have become the preeminent feature of our collective existence. While useful for work, they offer a logic of diminishing returns. Everything online eventually dissolves.

Yet the benefits of reading together are enduring. Holding a child while reading a story reinforces the evolutionary biological processes that are essential for growth. Reading stimulates neuronal develop-

ment and leads to emotional competence. Reading together produces hormones necessary for communicating feelings of safety, comfort, and intimacy. This is true for both parents and children. Bonds are cemented through eye contact, touch, and the vibration of the human voice, all of which are requirements for developing the capacity to understand words, form thoughts and learn to create.

Wednesday, September 29 marks the day commemorating the 25th give-away of books. This amounts to hundreds of children’s stories circulating in the community, enough for families to create their own home library. These books represent the start of a lifetime of reading.

Mary King, Ph.D. is the director of the Family Center at MCSM, and coordinates the CFCE program at Gill-Montague schools. The CFCE program is sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care.

OP ED

Help to Depolarize America!

By BILL RICHARDSON and JOHN BOS

GREENFIELD – We are seeking eight area conservative-leaning (Red) and eight liberal-leaning (Blue) area residents committed to de-polarizing today’s political process to participate in two half-day Red/Blue dialogue workshops on Saturday, October 23 and 30 from 9 a.m. to noon. The Zoom workshops will be conducted by the Greenfield and Pioneer Valley Braver Angels Alliances.

We are Bill Richardson, the Red co-chair of Greenfield Braver Angels Alliance and John Bos, a Blue founder of the Greenfield group. We want to describe why we are working with Braver Angels in an effort to reach others across today’s political divide.

Bill Richardson: In March 2019 I read an op-ed in the *Recorder* about an upcoming Better Angels workshop. It stated that more than 10,000 votes were cast in Franklin County for President Trump in 2016. However, Reds were less willing to discuss the issues feeling not welcome in the majority Blue state we live in.

I fully supported the Better Angels goals of depolarization and discussing the issues with others with opposing views. I participated in the 2019 workshop, and have become deeply involved in the now Braver Angels (BA) Greenfield Alliance. We have discussed immigration, state voting laws, Afghanistan, abortion, gun control, Critical Race Theory, and infrastructure.

In addition to our local Braver Angels Alliance discussions, I participate in the National Braver Angels Zoom debates on the same issues with hundreds of other participants. Since it was founded in 2016, Braver Angels has grown to have Alliances in every state, and now has over 22,000 members. A BA representative recently spoke to

a Congressional Subcommittee about how our political parties can learn to work together.

We’re all in this together. I very much want other Reds to sign up for the October 23 and 30 workshop that can lead us all to find common ground.

John Bos: I discovered Better Angels in 2017. A group of liberal Leverett residents hosted a group of conservative residents from Letcher County, Kentucky for a weekend of structured dialogue in the jam-packed Leverett Elementary School auditorium. Stunned by the results of the 2016 election, the Leverett residents wanted to understand why Letcher County residents voted almost unanimously for Donald Trump.

I witnessed how the beliefs on both “sides” were expressed honestly and deeply, creating trust and care for each other. Facilitated by Paula Green, the Hands Across the Hills dialogue process melted away stereotypes so that Leverett and Letcher County residents could see the “other” as human beings. The bonds between the two groups have become stronger than their political differences even though those differences remain. Imagine that! In this time of extreme political polarization.

A number of us from Greenfield wanted to bring this coming together process to our own community, but did not feel fully capable of replicating Green’s dialogue process. We instead chose to align ourselves with Better Angels, the national organization formed in 2016 following America’s most divisive election in our history.

More important than the name change to Braver Angels (a copyright issue), BA has developed a highly successful dialogue process and has trained highly skilled facilitators to work with local BA groups. In Greenfield we have had two day-long Red/Blue workshops be-

fore the pandemic stopped our in-person workshops. The process works!

How the October 23 and 30 half-day BA Zoom workshops will work: Red/Blue participants work through four exercises:

1. **Stereotypes Exercise.** Separate red and blue groups generate, discuss, and report back on the most common false stereotypes or misconceptions of their side, why these stereotypes are wrong, and what may be true.

2. **Fishbowl Exercise.** One of the groups discusses what is good about their side’s policies, and what their concerns may be about those policies. The other side listens and learns. Then the two groups switch positions. There is no interaction between the groups during the fishbowl exercise. Afterwards, people are invited to share what they learned about how the other side sees themselves, and if they have anything in common.

3. **Questions Exercise.** Participants ask questions of those who think differently than they do, and ask questions about what they don’t understand. They then merge into mixed groups of Reds and Blues to ask questions that may gain a genuine understanding of the other side’s views and experiences.

4. **“How Can We Contribute” Exercise.** After the first three exercises, participants are eager to take some kind of action. They then collaborate with someone of the other group to share one action step.

If you have questions or would like to register for the October 23 and 30 Red/Blue Zoom workshops, please email bill.richardson2323@gmail.com or john01370@gmail.com.

Bill Richardson and John Bos live in Greenfield.

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NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Public Works Projects: Town Seeks to Review Poplar Street Layout, Fix Brook

By KATIE NOLAN

On Monday night, the Erving selectboard decided to petition Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) to transfer the Poplar Mountain Road layout to the town.

Poplar Mountain Road was laid out as a county road in 1826, with partial relocations in 1899 and 1974. When the Franklin County government was dissolved in 1997, FRCOG took control of the layouts of county roads, while towns became responsible for roadway maintenance.

In July, after heavy rains, a portion of the road was washed out and other portions of the road were damaged. Temporary repairs to the washed-out section are scheduled to be completed by winter. However, according to town administrator Bryan Smith, the town needs to establish the road’s exact boundaries in order to make permanent repairs.

Smith said the town will need to review the plans and have the layout surveyed. Once the boundaries are known, the town can petition FRCOG to either relocate the roadway or dissolve the county layout and transfer it to the town. He recommended, and the board approved, requesting that FRCOG transfer the layout to the town.

Smith reported an estimated cost of \$7,000 for the survey, with an additional \$300 per monument for replacing monuments. Weston & Sampson have provided a \$35,000 estimate for preliminary engineering for repairs to the road’s damaged portion; engineering for the entire road would be an additional cost. Smith said the engineers are working on a comprehensive proposal.

Smith said staff from the Federal and Massachusetts Emergen-

cy Management Agencies (FEMA and MEMA) toured Poplar Mountain Road and other flood-damaged roads last week. If the estimated cost of repairs meets agency thresholds, MEMA will declare an emergency, and the town may be eligible for funding from both agencies.

Church Street Bridge

In August, Weston & Sampson engineer Peter Grandy recommended replacing the deteriorated Church Street Bridge over Keyup Brook, which has been limited to one lane by the state, with a 32-foot-wide, three-sided arch design, because this would not require working in the stream bed, would not increase the width of the brook’s current channel, and would allow the existing bridge abutments to remain in place.

At Monday’s meeting, selectboard member Scott Bastarache expressed concern about the brook, which is channelized for much of its length. He said a previous engineer had said that bridges on the brook create “choke points” where it narrows, making the water flow faster. Bastarache said the town might want to improve the condition of the channel, and he didn’t want to build a narrower bridge “if it would prohibit us doing work in the future.”

Grandy said the existing bridge wasn’t choking the water flow, but “directing it.” “Any bridge structure will cause some direction of the water downstream,” he said. Grandy estimated that increasing the span of the bridge would add an additional \$122,000 to \$130,000 to the cost of the project, because it would require work in the stream channel. In addition, he said the permitting for work in the channel could take up to a year.

Grandy told the board Weston

& Sampson staff had looked at the channel in the vicinity of the bridge, but not the whole upstream. Although mitigation of the stream channel was possible, he said, the town had not asked the firm to study that. “Most areas where there are issues are not owned by the town,” he added.

“Owners won’t be able to repair the channel without the town’s assistance,” said William Bembury, a selectboard member and the owner of a portion of Keyup Brook’s bank.

Neither Bastarache nor selectboard chair Jacob Smith were supportive of financial assistance to private owners of the brook’s banks. Jacob Smith suggested the town could provide information about resources to the property owners.

Finance committee member Daniel Hammock agreed that both the entire brook and “the old deficient bridge” need to be studied, but “I’d like to see a decision on the bridge before you look at the entire brook bed.”

“I don’t see a problem with delaying a decision until we get more information,” said Linda Downs-Bembury, a member of the capital planning committee member and a property owner on the stream bank.

With the approval of fin com chair Benjamin Fellows, the board decided that the cost of the bridge repairs should be included as a placeholder in the FY’23 capital plan.

Highway superintendent Glenn McCrory said the town has signs, cones, orange barrels, and Jersey barriers for controlling traffic as Erving Center is impacted by the bridge’s new weight limitation.

At the end of August, the state Department of Transportation (MassDOT) rated the bridge at a 3-ton capacity and required the

The Town of Erving

has two **redevelopment opportunities** available: an RFP for the former grade school at 18 Pleasant Street, and an RFI for the former IP Mill complex.

More information at www.erving-ma.gov/bids

town to install barriers to reduce it to one lane. The town submitted its traffic plan last week, but Bryan Smith said MassDOT had not provided official approval yet. Board members said signs and barriers could be placed on town roads, but did not want them placed on Route 2 until MassDOT approves.

Jacob Smith asked Bryan Smith to “push the issue” with MassDOT, because the state gave the town a September 30 deadline for action.

“All interactions with MassDOT come with push and pull,” Bryan Smith commented.

Town Projects Database

The board reviewed a spreadsheet prepared by assistant planner Mariah Kurtz showing current and anticipated construction and organizational projects over the next five years, funding sources (or lack of funding sources), timelines, and departments responsible for the work.

Over 80 projects were listed, including sidewalk repair and construction on Central, Pratt, Park, and Gunn streets, the request for information (RFI) for projects at the former International Paper Mill, the forced sewer main on Papermill Road, and a sewer replacement project on Flagg Hill Road.

Board members commented on the number and complexity of projects and wondered whether Kurtz, town administrator Bryan Smith, and department heads would be able to manage the work load and take on additional projects.

Kurtz said she has slowed on ap-

plying for additional grants while awaiting responses to applications already submitted.

Capital planning committee member Debra Smith said her committee has a 25-year list of potential capital projects, and she and Kurtz agreed to meet and coordinate the two lists.

Other Business

The board reviewed the FY’23 budget calendar. By September 30, departments will receive the FY’23 goal of level-funding and guidelines for requests. Capital requests are due by October 28, and budget requests by November 17.

The selectboard, fin com, and capital planning committee will review these requests and hold hearings through December, January, and February.

An RFI asking for conceptual development plans for the former International Paper mill property was issued September 29. A site walk will be held October 13, and responses are due November 17.

The board appointed McCrory, senior center director Paula Betters, and library director Natane Halasz to a screening committee for a new building and ground maintenance laborer.

Jacob Smith said he expects Montague Community Television to start broadcasting Erving selectboard meetings by the end of October. He also asked the other members to consider holding meetings every other week rather than weekly, but predicted that alternate-week meetings would be very long.

LEVERETT from page A1

to bring the facility up to Americans with Disabilities Act standards and make it usable by officers. The upgrades would remove the need for police to return to Leverett to conduct a variety of tasks, including processing gun permit applications and talking with people privately.

The board said bids for one of the items came in higher than anticipated, but postponed action on the matter until after next week’s informational meeting.

Transfer Station

A suggestion was made to rename Still Corner Road, the small road leading to the town’s transfer station, “Drury Lane” as a memorial to Richard Drury, who operated and contributed to the station’s success over many years, and was described as a “critical factor in getting the modern transfer station going.” Drury went missing last year, and was not found.

Renaming the station itself was also discussed, with the possibility of adding the names of other contributors to the facility. The suggestions received a positive response from board members, and it was decided the matter should go on a warrant for voters to decide at the next town meeting.

Town Personnel

Iris Evebill was appointed as a transfer station employee, and Will Stratford was appointed as facilities and grounds manager.

The conservation commission reported it had interviewed two people for the position of conservation agent, but was still exploring

its options.

McGinnis reported that ads had been taken out to fill the positions of town treasurer and tax collector, but there had been no applicants for the positions, which will become vacant as of October 21.

Contingency plans for ensuring a continuation of services were discussed, with current town employees having volunteered to fill some of the gaps, and the potential need to hire a temporary worker for the remaining responsibilities if the positions are not filled.

Global Pandemic

Selectboard member Melissa Colbert provided an update on recent statistics she’d seen placing Franklin County’s status at “high risk” for COVID-19 transmission, and noted that a mask advisory was in effect.

Colbert went on to outline statistics showing the death rate from “breakthrough transmissions” compared to those who have been vaccinated was low, but emphasized the importance of continuing to follow safety guidance and protocols.

A request to use the town hall for a contra dance was not granted in light of the town’s COVID status. Colbert said that such use was not in line with CDC guidance, but that she would be happy to hear what the board of health (BOH) had to say.

It was also noted that the BOH is currently discussing safety protocols for town workers and buildings.

Newsletter and Post Office

The board’s decision to discontinue bulk-mailing of the town newsletter after the

October 1 edition prompted residents and board members to discuss ways in which community members can be assured to receive a paper copy if desired, and a wistful comment or two on the end of an era.

Plans for ensuring that elders and others interested in receiving mailed copies were discussed, and multiple volunteers came forth to compile a mailing list and mail out newsletters individually.

The newsletter will also be posted to the town website, and paper copies will be available at the town hall and other locations. Further information will be included in the October 1 edition.

The board decided to place a wifi booster on the outside of the town hall to improve service at the post office building. Selectboard chair Julie Shively said the post office could not get its own connection due to red tape involved with it being a federal building.

Shively expressed reluctance to modify the historic building, but it was decided that the impact of several small screws needed to uphold the 12” by 3” by 8” box would be minimal, and could be easily repaired if the box was moved in the future.

Other Business

The board approved a request to create an official town committee to work on planning to celebrate the town’s 250th anniversary. Members were not yet appointed, and the board advised those interested in serving that they would need to follow state laws regarding open meetings and conducting official business, and would receive training on keeping minutes and other matters from

town clerk Lisa Stratford.

Board member Tom Hankinson pointed out that there was a lot of “institutional knowledge” among current *ad hoc* committee members, and predicted the requirements will be met.

Residents of Two Mile Road requested actions be taken to reduce speeding on the road, citing safety concerns for a child population that has doubled in recent years, and an increase in traffic attributed in part to non-local delivery drivers using the thoroughfare.

Board members noted that the town was prevented from lowering the enforceable speed limit from 40 mph due to state laws setting default speed limits according to the number of houses. The board decided to look into signage and speed bumps to address the problem.

McGinnis reported that work on the Teawaddle Hill water line project was “going gangbusters” and was on schedule to be completed in approximately one month.

Resident Steve Nagy brought an ongoing complaint before the board regarding a waiver he needed to sign in order to connect to the water line, describing the situation as one in which he was being asked to give up legal rights in order to receive water. He was referred to the town attorney for further discussion.

No objections were raised to the placing of a new pole on Richardson Road.

The board announced that the police department was sponsoring a town-wide tag sale to take place at the elementary school next Saturday, October 9, from 8 a.m. to noon.



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NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Board Reviews Federal Relief Fund Rules

By JOSH HEINEMANN

The Wendell selectboard held an extra meeting on Wednesday, September 22 to learn from Bob Dean, director of regional services at the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, about using federal ARPA and CARES Act money.

During this meeting the board also accepted Tom Chaisson’s response to the town’s RFP for 97 Wendell Depot Road, offering to pay \$20,000 to purchase and restore the house and land. They accepted a bid from Cozy Home Performance, LLC of Easthampton to insulate the town hall floor, and waived the fee for use of the town hall bathrooms on October 3 for Stephen Broll. Policy allows waiving the fees for municipal functions and memorials.

Dean offered four categories of eligible uses for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money: responses to the COVID-19 public health emergency; premium pay for eligible workers; revenue loss from the pandemic; and improving water quality and public health. ARPA is a federal program but administered by states, and so specific rules are not simple, and Dean did not answer specific questions.

Selectboard member Laurie DiDonato asked if the money could be used to reimburse a small business or household for lost revenue.

Dean said he could not say with certainty whether the money could be applied to insulating the town hall floor as an improvement in public health. He said money may be spent for a consultant

to help navigate the rules, and that Community Action Pioneer Valley or the Franklin County Community Development Corporation may help guide the town through the rules.

Selectboard member Gillian Budine suggested a chart detailing what can be done with CARES Act and ARPA funding.

The board voted unanimously to award the contract to insulate the town hall floor to Cozy Homes with a bid of \$17,550, the bid valid until October 3.

Selectboard chair Dan Keller said Chaisson withdrew his bid for that project, adding that Chaisson may have had enough time in the crawlspace when he removed tons of dirt by hand, laid down a plastic vapor barrier, and covered the plastic with sand to keep it in place.

Cozy Homes will need to coordinate the work with Good Neighbors, who use the town hall for food distribution, and the crawlspace must be treated with ozone to kill mold before the insulation happens. The crawlspace fund has \$5,822, and the remaining cost will come out of the town building maintenance fund, leaving that fund low for this early in the fiscal year.

In accepting Chaisson’s response for the 97 Wendell Depot Road RFP, Keller cited many jobs he has done for the town, and his highest cash offer. A legal consultation told Keller the town could not accept the other local proposal, which came without a payment of the required surety check, if the check came later than the RFP deadline.

BLOCKADE from page A1

regarding energy and environmental policy in the Commonwealth.

“I want to ask him, where are the jobs you are creating for renewable energy?” Maynard said. “Instead of approving projects that are increasing our fossil fuel usage, we should be looking into where more wind and solar energy can be generated, consulting local communities along the way to make sure they actually consent to the placement of these projects.”

Extinction Rebellion (XR) is an international network founded in 2018. The group’s website describes it as “a decentralised, international and politically non-partisan movement using non-violent direct action and civil disobedience to persuade governments to act justly on the Climate and Ecological Emergency,” with nearly 1,200 groups in 81 countries.

Following the arrests, Extinction Rebellion Boston issued a statement outlining its opposition to three energy infrastructure projects, and urging legislators to take into account indigenous people’s perspectives on land use.

The statement referenced an Eversource substation planned near a park in East Boston, a new natural gas compressor station that began operating last year in a low-income community in Weymouth, and a natural gas-fired power plant currently under construction in Peabody, which was approved without environmental impact or community health assessments.

Allowing projects such as these to be sited in low-income or minority communities without adequate public input, the group argued, amounts to “repeated crimes against environmental justice communities” amid “climate inaction” by the governor.

“The Baker administration has a questionable relationship with util-



PHOTO COURTESY OF NORA MAYNARD

Beached in a tree belt: The Massachusetts State Police website says the protestors “blocked a public roadway,” but Maynard maintains the boat did not impede traffic.

ity companies – particularly Eversource,” XR’s statement read. “Massachusetts residents have questioned whether regular campaign donations from Eversource executives caused Baker to allow Eversource to rebuild after the disastrous Merrimack County natural gas explosions. Eversource won the multi-billion dollar energy procurement proposal because members of Eversource comprised the selection committee.”

At first, according to Maynard, police threatened to move the boat trailer if the activists refused to detach themselves from it. “We called their bluff, essentially, and we said ‘no, we’re not moving,’” they told the Reporter. The protesters had secured themselves to the trailer in such a way that officers then had to cut through thick metal pipes to remove each person individually.

“Being extracted that way, hot sparks flying, was very intense,” Maynard said. “It definitely took some time, which is what we wanted. We wanted to either stay there all day, or at least have it take a while.”

Maynard said the police provided the demonstrators with eye protection and blankets to protect them from the sparks, and the ordeal lasted just under three hours.

“I am aware of my privilege in

a really big way, in that as a white person I usually have gentler treatment from the police than any person of color, black or indigenous person would,” they said, adding that the action was carried out “in solidarity with” Breathe Clean North Shore, Fore River Residents Against the Compressor Station, and United American Indians of New England.

This was not the first time Maynard was engaged by police at a protest, but it was the first time they had been officially arrested. They were taken into custody protesting the Weymouth compressor station several months ago, but ultimately released with no charges filed.

The eight were arraigned that afternoon on charges of trespassing and disorderly conduct at the Lynn District Court, and are scheduled to reappear in court on November 4. Maynard maintains that none of the protesters touched Baker’s private property, and that the group was not blocking traffic, contradicting police reports and news articles that reported otherwise.

If the case makes it to trial, Maynard said, the group intends to challenge both charges, claiming the disorderly conduct was “necessary” to help avert climate change-induced catastrophes.



SPORTS from page A1

the girls from Franklin Tech and Turners were waging a war of their own up in the Turners Falls gym.

The Turners Falls Volleyball Thunder is very good this year, and coming into Thursday’s game they boasted an undefeated record, dropping just one match in their first five games. On the other side of the net, the Franklin Tech Eagles came into the contest with a 3–2 record.

The Franks held their own in the first two matches, dropping the first one 25-15 and the second 25-20. But by the third, Tech was spent, and Turners walked away with a 25-8 victory.

Just a quick note: After the JV volleyball game, several families from Franklin Tech left the court to watch their daughters play for the Turners field hockey team.

On Monday, Turners took on the winless Mahar Senators. The first match was a blowout as Big Blue decimated the Senators 25-2. Coach Kelly Liimatainen freely substituted her JV players in the second, and Mahar managed to put

10 points on the board.

But even with these liberal substitutions, Mahar only scored 4 points in the final match, and Powertown swept the contest 3-0.

Then on Tuesday, Blue defeated Greenfield 3-0 to extend their unbeaten streak to 8 and 0. I don’t remember Turners ever beating Greenfield in volleyball, even as a kid. Greenfield, like Frontier, has always had an excellent volleyball program. But this year, it was Turners who came out the victors.

Powertown took control in the opening match as they shot out to a 16-5 lead en route to a 25-9 victory. Green played even for the first six points in the second match, but the Thunder pulled away as it went on, and won it handily 25-13. Blue completed the sweep with a 25-9 win in the third match.

Field Hockey

TFHS 4 – Mahar 0
Southwick 4 – TFHS 3
Frontier 4 – TFHS 0

The Turners Falls field hockey team won their first game of the

2021 season on Thursday, September 23. It was also the first varsity win for incoming coach Renee Tela. Coach Tela has inherited a relatively young team, with only two seniors and three juniors on the roster.

“Look!” one of the mothers pointed out at the beginning of the contest. “They have little girls just like we do.”

Sure enough, both squads had their share of middle-schoolers on the field. But the ladies in Blue played a little tougher than the visitors did, and early on they took control of the skirmish.

From the opening whistle, Blue kept the ball in their opponents’ end as they ran coordinated attacks on the Mahar D.

Turners kept up the pressure throughout the game, and out-shot the Senators 14 to 5. Defensively, Blue rejected eight corner tries to preserve the shutout.

The win was a team effort. The first goal was scored by Brooke Thayer, assisted by Hannah Marchefka. Then Thayer gave an assist to Avery Tela as Tela scored. Next, Paige Sul-

da assisted Tela’s second goal of the afternoon. Lastly, Tela scored again with 35 seconds left in the game.

The victory broke a four-game losing streak, but the road didn’t get any easier after the win. On Friday, the Southwick Rams came to town, and blanked the Thunder 3-zip, and on Tuesday they traveled down to Deerfield to face perennial powerhouse Frontier and were shut out 7-0.

Football

Drury 28 – FCTS 6

Last Friday, September 24, the Franklin Tech Football Eagles lost to the Drury Blue Devils 28-6. Four offensive plays and a few Tech mistakes were the difference in this game.

On their first play from scrimmage, the Devils ran the ball 42 yards to the Franks’ 30. After that initial run, the Tech D tightened up. It took Drury 12 plays to score, including a stingy Tech goal-line stand.

The second deciding play came on Drury’s next series. After an interception, the Devils set up camp on their own 35. Another long run

on their second play of the series put them on Tech’s 25. Two plays later Drury scored again, putting them up 16-0 with a minute and 9 seconds left in the first quarter.

When Drury scored the second time, the Franks’ immaturity was glaring, as an unsportsmanlike penalty was called and Tech was penalized on the kickoff. “We’ve got a young team,” Coach Joe Gamache explained after the game.

Tech battled into Drury’s territory, but their second drive was also stymied on a pick and they gave up the ball, trailing by 16.

The third deciding play came in the third quarter. Another Tech pick-off set up a first-and-10 on Drury’s own 29. One play later, the Devils scored again to make it 22-0 with 6:29 left in the third. Tech finally made it a game with 4:38 left in regulation, when Chad Adams scored Tech’s first points to make it 22-6.

The final decisive play came on Drury’s next series. A 51-yard double reverse fooled the Eagle D, and Drury put the game out of range at 28-6.



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MONTAGUE from page A1

for the week ending September 25 was 15, up from eight the previous week. Although these did not apparently meet the threshold for a mandate previously set by Montague’s emergency management officials, the health board had voted the previous Wednesday to support a mandate for town buildings only.

“I know that one of our discussion points on Wednesday was that we look beyond our town, to other people who are utilizing our town,” said health board member Melanie Zamojski. The state’s most recent COVID-19 “Dashboard” at the time of the meeting had listed 235 new cases in Franklin County over the two weeks ending September 21. Town administrator Steve Ellis showed a chart which counted 58 new cases in Greenfield during the same period.

Town resident Marge Levenson said town officials should “broaden the scope” to go beyond the data on Montague, and collaborate with neighboring towns.

Wasiuk said the health board was doing that, but that “data collection” was very labor-intensive. “What I classify to be the most important data is what is happening here in town,” he said.

The discussion then moved on to the health board’s recommendation of mask mandate for “town offices” only. Wasiuk said the board had supported a “recommendation” for masks in private businesses, but felt the “number of active cases” did not justify a mandate for all “indoor settings.”

Newly elected selectboard member Matt Lord said he wondered why this criteria justified a mandate for town offices, but not for other locations.

Zamojski said a major concern had been the large number of chil-

dren coming into the libraries, but that the board of health had “stopped short” of issuing a mandate for businesses. “I am not sure that I wouldn’t go stronger at this point, given the current numbers,” she said.

Ellis showed a list of twelve Franklin County towns, including Greenfield, Sunderland, and Gill, that were implementing mask mandates.

The board first voted to accept the health board’s recommendation for a mask requirement in town buildings. Lord then proposed a motion to extend it to all public buildings and businesses.

Lord said that he recognized that a mandate would not be easy for people working in these buildings, but that he would “like to show some solidarity” with other towns in the area, and “work with other communities” toward a common regional policy.

“Almost every business I have gone into, employees are wearing masks,” said selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz. “I think that businesses are requiring it for their employees already.” Kuklewicz said he felt “the prudent thing to do” was to issue a town-wide mandate, “not just to protect myself but to protect others.”

The board unanimously voted to approve a mandate for both town and private public buildings, effective Monday, October 4.

Meetings and Parties

The board then discussed the implications of a mandate for a variety of events taking place this fall, including the Rag Shag parade on Halloween, several gatherings in Turners Falls’ parks, a fashion show, and the the Great Falls Harvest Festival, formerly known as Pumpkinfest. The issue was handed off to the board of health for more discussion.

The discussion then turned to the special town meeting which was scheduled for October 14 at the Turners Falls High School auditorium. Kuklewicz said a number of people had contacted him with concerns about the planned indoor meeting.

Lord said he had heard similar concerns, and that he felt “this is a respect issue.” He raised the possibilities of an outdoor meeting under a tent at the Franklin County Tech School, or a virtual meeting.

Town meeting moderator Chris Collins participated in the discussion, and expressed support for an outdoor meeting similar to last spring’s annual town meeting as “the best choice.”

The board unanimously voted for an outdoor meeting at the Tech School on October 16, beginning at 10 a.m.

Later the board read and approved all 13 articles on the town meeting warrant, after amending the document to reflect the new date and time. Ellis said Montague’s regular town counsel would not be able to attend on that date, but that he would “endeavor” to find an alternate “to sit in with us.”

The board voted to approve the use of public property for a large number of events in Turners Falls during October. These included two events sponsored by Musica Franklin in Peskeonskut Park, a “community night” on October 14 and a series of “after school” music classes three days a week for the month; two in Spinner Park, a “re-dedication ceremony” on October 2 and a “Birds of Prey” event on October 9; and the Fab Fashion Show scheduled for Saturday, October 9 outside 69 Second Street.

The Great Falls Harvest Festival, which will take place on Avenue A and Peske Park on October

23, had previously been approved by the board.

Other Business

Town planner Walter Ramsey requested and received approval for a \$25,000 agreement for a state grant to purchase engineering services for the reconstruction of a culvert allowing the Sawmill River to pass under South Ferry Road.

At Ramsey’s request the board also amended a grant agreement with the firm overseeing the construction of a new Fifth Street pedestrian bridge over the power canal.

The board reviewed the planning department’s “rapid recovery plan” for downtown Turners Falls, which was scheduled to be presented to a public meeting the next evening (see article, Page A1).

Acting as the personnel board, the board appointed four new employees to work at the Turners Falls Airport, three students from the Franklin County Technical School and a man named Luke Timberlake who will be operations manager.

The board also elevated Robert Bessette to the position of driver/

laborer, and appointed Jason Kingsbury to the position of grounds maintenance, at the department of public works. Samuel Stevens was promoted to Wastewater Technician at the water pollution control facility.

At Ellis’s request, the board approved a reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Ellis reviewed the lease agreement with the Center for Responsive Schools at the town-owned Colle building. Ellis said he wanted to get “the Lord’s blessing” for discussions of a lease extension, which must be approved by next April.

Ellis also updated the board on a grant application to the Massachusetts Office of Disabilities, which will include automatic door openers and a stage lift at the Shea Theater.

Kuklewicz ended the meeting with a call for a local citizens to serve on the negotiating team for upcoming employee collective bargaining at the Franklin County Technical School.

The next selectboard meeting will be held Monday, October 4.



LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here’s the way it was on October 6, 2011: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Hybrid Regionalization Heads to Town Meetings

The Mahar regional school district moved two steps closer to hybrid regionalization this week.

On Monday, the Mahar regionalization subcommittee voted to finalize amendments to the regional agreement between Orange, Petersham, New Salem, and Wendell. On Tuesday, the full Mahar school committee voted to send the amended agreement to the member towns for town meeting votes.

If town meeting in each of the four towns approves the amended agreement this fall and the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) approves it by December 1, the Mahar district will provide K-12 education for Orange and Petersham and 7-12 education for Wendell and New Salem starting July 1, 2012. The Union #28 superintendency union will continue to govern Swift River School for elementary students from New Salem and Wendell.

Fire and Rain at The Peace Pagoda

Hundreds trekked up the hill to celebrate the dedication of the new temple at the Peace Pagoda on Sunday. The wind blew through the beech leaves, and through the maple leaves, still green, but turning. Rivulets of water ran everywhere, from the rocky soil, from each dripping leaf, from the golden mandala glittering through the fog at the top of the white pagoda, and from the curving concrete eaves of the new temple.

Multi-colored origami peace cranes descended from the ends

of branches of the trees lining the steep dirt path. Their rainbow colors were echoed in the blooming umbrellas of the many devotees and friends who gathered at the doorway of the temple, so full no more could enter. The shoes of the worshippers stood on the tiled porch, and water filled the shoes, as more came trekking up the path.

Thirty monks and nuns from the Nipponzan Myohoji order, who traveled to join their brothers and sisters in Leverett for the temple’s opening celebration, bowed their heads in silent reverence, sounded gongs, or beat drums and chanted their traditional mantra, *Na Mu Myo Ho Ren Ge Kyo* (rough translation: “To honor or devote oneself to the wonderful law of the Lotus Flower Sutra”) as the golden Buddhas of the sacred altar were revealed from behind a drawn curtain.

A Treasure Trove of Loot! New Store Opening Soon

The large bay windows at 62 Avenue A are covered in blueprint paper, keeping an anxious public in suspense, wondering what the future holds in store. Proprietors John McNamara and Erin MacLean have owned the building for four years, during which time they have completed massive renovations, while brewing plans to open a store that features a delectable array of vintage items, industrial artifacts, as well as work from local artisans and craftspeople. The store, aptly named Loot, opens on October 21.

For the past five years McNamara and MacLean have been collecting vintage items and industrial artifacts and selling them out of their warehouse, at the Brimfield flea market, and at other flea markets in New York. But their idea to open the store came from being inspired by Turners Falls.



GILL from page A1

a.m. to 8 p.m. for the majority of facilities that McMahon said he has worked with, with the largest share of business expected on Fridays and Saturdays.

“The best way to think of it is equivalent to a liquor store that happens to sell cannabis instead of liquor,” he added. No cultivation, manufacturing, delivery, or consumption would occur on site under the proposed plans.

McMahon discussed Leaf Joy’s detailed design plans with the selectboard, and said he had already met with town administrator Ray Purington and police chief Christopher Redmond prior to the meeting to discuss them. He said the business wants to work closely with the town to “come up with something that is going to be a phenomenal reuse of that space – and do it in as safe and sustainable a fashion as possible.”

“In the beginning, my concern would be, ‘Where does the overflow traffic go?’,” asked selectboard chair Greg Snedeker. “You have a parking lot across the street at The Mill, which I do not think would be happy if people start parking over there and walking across the street. It is a corner that does not really have any place to go for overflow.”

McMahon replied that he does not expect traffic problems because Leaf Joy would have a 21-space front parking area, including two handicapped spaces, and additional space available in the employee parking behind the main building, should the need arise. McMahon said that he has seen “the novelty” of retail cannabis wear off since recreational sales first began in 2018, with the large crowds and traffic that followed, but that Leaf Joy would be willing to hire police details or move to “an appointment-based model” if necessary to manage traffic issues.

McMahon argued that the cannabis retail business would be “a great revenue generator for the town.” The parcel’s property taxes would increase with the “high-spec” renovations and additions, he said, and Gill would benefit from the 3% marijuana sales tax the town has previously adopted, as well as a 3% community impact fee, which he described as “money for a direct offset of any impacts of the cannabis facility.”

The company plans a community outreach meeting via Zoom within the next few weeks where residents can ask questions and voice concerns.

FirstLight Settlement Talks

“It feels almost soap opera-like,” began Purington, on what he said was “changing course from two weeks ago when we were not going to participate” in FirstLight Power’s relicensing settlement talks about recreation because of concerns over the power company’s confidentiality agreement.

That agreement had appeared to town officials to be in conflict with state open meeting law, but Purington got the opinion of counsel from another stakeholder town as to how the settlement talks can be construed as “negotiations that would qualify for executive session,” according to Purington. That interpretation would allow him to report back to the board in an executive session during the talks, and get their feedback, without violating the open meeting law or the company’s privacy stipulation.

“We are back in,” he said, “and I am glad it is working out that way.”

Other Business

Fire chief Gene Beaubien told the selectboard that his department is getting \$2,700 for FY’21’s annual Emergency Management Performance Grant, which he said will be split between the CodeRED community alert service fee of \$680, and three pagers at “about \$400 apiece.” “That leaves \$812 to go towards something else,” Beaubien said.

The fire department was unanimously approved to declare a 2009 Husky Pro air compressor as surplus. Beaubien said it still runs, but no longer compresses air.

A Complete Streets policy for the town was unanimously approved for submission to the state Department of Transportation. Becoming a Complete Streets community requires a town’s commitment to inclusive transportation planning that integrates motor vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic.

Spending amounts of up to \$9,000 towards carpet removal, disposal, and installation, as well as new flooring in the police department; up to \$5,000 from previously-awarded Community Compact funds toward a comprehensive assessment of Gill’s IT systems; and \$375 from the Recycling Dividend Program toward Gill’s participation in an October paper-shredding event were all unanimously approved.



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G-M SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Not Much

By MIKE JACKSON

GILL-MONTAGUE – The regional school committee meeting held Tuesday was short and uneventful, with a third of its 64 minutes taken up by a look at the scores from last spring’s MCAS tests. Participation rates and scores were low in comparison with state averages; superintendent Brian Beck summarized that the district has “a low baseline that we need to climb off of.”

The district is still collecting permission from families for students to participate in COVID-19 pool testing; 80% of students and staff are participating across the elementary schools, but only 36% at the middle and high school. Lumber has arrived for the new playground, but “due to supply line issues,” Beck said, only 70% of the bolts were delivered, and facilities staff are searching for replacements at local hardware stores. A tractor, a dump truck, two vans, various attachments, and eleven tables were declared surplus.

The school committee voted to empower the senior class to select two colors for a “unified” graduation cap-and-gown look. “Combining the colors is a great way to take gender out of the colors,” said Gill member Bill Tomb. The committee will hold a special meeting October 5 to workshop its official goals, and return for its next regular meeting October 12.

RECOVERY from page A1 that the local access station, Montague Community Television, has expressed interest in the building. “Accelerating Streetscape improvements” along Avenue A, previously funded using community development block grants, was a third priority listed in the report.

The fourth focused on improving “master planning” for the proposed “canal district,” the former mill district on the west side of the power canal. Ramsey stressed the upcoming construction of a new pedestrian bridge on Fifth Street, a proposed transportation bridge on Sixth Street, and the former Railroad Salvage property, which may soon be acquired by the town for back taxes.

The fifth project would be to solicit “tasteful and artistic” proposals for an evening light show projected on the tower of the old Indeck coal silo, and the sixth would “boost the administrative capacity” of the town’s RiverCulture program, potentially carving it off from the planning department by creating a 501(c)3 corporation eligible for a broader range of grants.

The next project would evaluate downtown parking to “optimize [its] use and availability.”

Eighth on the list was a proposal to establish better access to the Connecticut River below the Turners Falls dam, a proposal which, Ramsey pointed out, is also before the federal commission relicensing the FirstLight Power company which owns and operates the dam.

Improvements to the bandshell at Peskeomskut Park, and enhancing the town’s capacity to evaluate opportunities for redeveloping municipally-owned property, followed. Ramsey mentioned a proposal for a 76-unit building on the former Railroad Salvage property under the latter category.

Proposals to consider “form-based zoning” for Turners Falls and to hire a “business development coordinator” for the downtown area rounded out this diverse list of ideas.

None of the proposals appeared to generate a great deal of controversy, although several in the audience asked pointed questions.

James Mussoni of the town’s Economic Development and Industrial Corporation asked if new signage would direct people to the popular Shea Theater on Avenue A. Ramsey answered in the affirmative, although he expressed the view that the Shea is not one of the more obscure destinations downtown.

Suzette Snow-Cobb noted that there had been periodic projects to install and improve downtown signage in recent years, and asked whether the new signs envisioned under the plan would replace these. Ramsey said that the proposed project would “consolidate and replace” existing signage, and that the new signs would be “artistic, but not cluttered.”

Snow-Cobb also observed that some of the proposals, such as the reorganization of RiverCulture, would impact more than just down-



town Turners Falls, the target of the plan. Ramsey called the comment “a good question,” and said the proposals would respond to the need for an “additional focus on the downtown area.”

Ariel Elan endorsed the variety of projects in the proposal, but reacted negatively to an image of a large fence that might be installed on the west side of Peskeomskut Park next to the bandshell. “Oh no,” she said, noting that a fence might impede “cross-pollination” with Aubuchon Hardware and Food City on the other side of

Seventh Street. The meeting ended on a positive note with Rick Martin, superintendent of the Franklin County Technical School, expressing support for the proposals and saying that Tech School students could potentially assist in some of the development projects.

Ramsey said the final draft of the plan will be completed by October 8 and submitted to the state, with more planning, project design, and identification of funding sources for individual proposals still to come.



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Above: A red-shouldered hawk strikes a pose in a peach tree in the Montague Wildlife Management Area.

A MAP OF THE FABULOUS

Art by Julia Shirar and David E. Kearns, at Looky Here, 28 Chapman Street, Greenfield, until October 24. Open Sundays noon to 3 p.m., and by appointment.

By SAMANTHA WOOD

GREENFIELD – In the months before the pandemic, the artists Julia Shirar and David E. Kearns moved from Queens, New York, to Shelburne Falls. Their son, Martin, was kindergarten age.

New York City is not an easy place for artists to leave.

One wonders about isolation, loss of community, and fewer opportunities to show once you settle outside the city. And at the same time, the cost of living is so extremely high, “people are killing themselves to be artists there,” Shirar said, sitting at their Looky Here show on a recent Sunday afternoon.

From Queens, Kearns and Shirar took a look at their options for child care, commute times even within the city, and the number of hours they would have to labor to pay for it all, and realized they might never know their own child. Shirar was not sure about moving to western Mass., but Kearns felt they needed to go fast.

His urgency to move in late 2019, she said, compelled her “to



David E. Kearns, “Summer Television”

just go with it.”

It is painful how fortuitous their timing was, knowing now the confinement of the city where friends and family members experienced the lockdown, and the trauma of the virus burning through, just months after they left.

“It might be relevant,” Shirar re-

plied to an emailed question about her work in this show, “that it was all made between September 2019 and now.”

Her understatement swings around, a blazing lighthouse beacon, again and again, from within this show.

see **FABULOUS** page B5



Newport, Rhode Island, has a touch of elegance and panache, and it’s only a few hours away.

SOUTH DEERFIELD – We recently savored the delights of two new hotels in the seaport city of Newport, and spent time in the busy downtown. Though battered by the pandemic when they lost out on 65 cruise ship visits, things are vastly improved for 2022 and Newport remains a first class vacation destination or just a fun weekend away.

I set out eastward with my granddaughter Sofie, who is 11. We began our Newport adventure outside



Our correspondent and his granddaughter set out eastward to visit the famed city on the ocean.

of town, in the railroad nexus of Portsmouth, Rhode Island, where **Rail Explorers** rules the tracks with their fleet of red pedal-powered vehicles.

It’s like the old cartoon, when the guy was pumping up and down on the handle making the handcart move along the railroad tracks – this reminded me of that. Sofie pedaled harder than I did. The cart goes along in the woods for several miles until it emerges at the oceanfront, where comfortable Adirondack chairs, an ocean view, and firepits await you. A food truck is at the ready. A fun little excursion!

While we were in Portsmouth, we also visited the huge **Newport Car Museum** and ogled the 77 fabulous automobiles that live there. Gunther and Maggie Buerman, originally from Germany and Sweden, own all of the cars.

We asked Maggie which car is her favorite, and she answered sheepishly – “I like my Honda minivan that has TV screens for my grandchildren!” Gunther, however, did say that he recently took a spin in one of the supercars in their collection.

Along with this large museum, located in a spacious former factory building, there is a second automobile museum in the city. The **Audrain Automobile Museum** is located on Bellevue Avenue, the same street as the famous mansions, and offers a curated

see **TRAVELS** page B4



By DAVID BRULE

THE FLAT, ERVINGSIDE – This old house on The Flat has been a sanctuary over the years, not only for me, but for many others, both human and non-human. Life’s high tide seems to bring strayaways and wanderers here. Life set me down in this place where I never thought I would spend most of my life. Or maybe I always knew I would?

Coming here as a child visiting grandparents, I could have guessed that somehow I would be called back here. Very late in life, I understood why I had been placed here, that I was here to tell the stories this house holds, the stories tucked away in the attic, in forgotten drawers, and in hidden places down in the old pasture, waiting for me to find them.

Sometimes, there was a seemingly lost Strayaway child, a child who came here to live awhile and then went away, unlike me because I stayed and took on this house and land. They say there’s always at least one per generation who chooses to remember those kinds of stories, and to pass on the acquired experiences of the old family.

In our tenure of the house, some of those children weren’t children at all but wild creatures seeking safety and security, a brief haven to restore body and spirit, to stay and heal before moving on.

You may think it strange, but it was a wee creature that put these thoughts into my head, just the other day.

Thrilled I was to see a lovely towhee these last days of September. This is a modest bird of the dry woodlands, dressed in old fashioned colors, simple black and white with a chestnut stripe on each side, and a bright red eye. These birds pass through the yard a few times a year, but mostly inhabit the high and dry Montague Plains, just a few minutes flight from these lowlands along the river.

I was flattered that this bird, a female towhee, dropped in down here to visit the homestead on the west-flowing river. It didn’t take long for me to notice, though, that something wasn’t quite right. Her left leg was bent and broken, twisted and mostly useless, but she was doing her best to scratch and peck at the random seeds I always toss out in the early morning or just at dusk.

Now, towhees have a particular style of finding food. They scratch with a jumping motion with both feet, as would chickens, rummaging through the leaf litter. I wasn’t too sure she would last long with only one functioning leg.

WEST ALONG THE RIVER THE STRAYAWAY CHILD

Yet over a few days time, she quickly introduced herself to me and trained me to toss a handful of grains in her direction, where she would pop out from the sheltering rhododendron and get her meal before the greedy English sparrows noticed. So that way I’ve managed to keep her going for awhile, even in her disabled condition.

Our summer-long companion, Miss mam’zelle hummingbird, having spent many the morning or early evening with us at the sugar-water station just four feet from our deck chairs, has left us. She stayed unusually late there at dusk just last Wednesday, drinking her fill deeply, on and off for an hour while we savored our glasses of cool white wine along with her. Then she did what hummers do in late September. We haven’t seen her for days, but at least she could fly away.

Not all the strayaways found that so easy.

This is an old house, in the family for one hundred and fifty years. There have been other times over the generations, when the strayaways winding up here seeking solace and family warmth were true wayward souls, some were my kin.

In old families there are stories told in whispers and oblique references, secrets told out of the reach of little pitchers with big ears. But I heard it all anyway.

Those kinds of memories come back on a day like this, as the summer has left us and the air has a growing sharp chill. If these walls could talk, they would speak of generations past facing life with its ups and downs, a few moments of joy and relief, in a long line of days of struggle. Let’s say also there

see **WEST ALONG** page B3



Eastern towhee, Pipilo erythrophthalmus.



DAKIN HUMANE SOCIETY PHOTO

“ROWDY”

Rowdy was a stray who had been visiting the woman who brought him to Dakin. While with us at Dakin, Rowdy has spent his time helping out in one of our staff offices. His office buddy has only good things to say about him! She says he is social, chatty, loves to be pet and to play. His favorite toys are string on a stick and the peacock feather, and he loves sitting on laps! Rowdy has bonded with

his office-mate and will likely bond strongly to his new family as well. Interested in adopting Rowdy? 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 OCTOBER 4 THROUGH 8

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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 10/4

10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
1 p.m. Knitting Circle

Tuesday 10/5

3 p.m. Tai Chi

Wednesday 10/6

9 a.m. Veterans' Agent Hours
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
1 p.m. Bingo

Thursday 10/7

10:30 a.m. Brown Bag
1 p.m. Cards & Games & Pitch

Friday 10/8

10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise

ERVING

Erving Senior Center is open 8 a.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 hand-washing 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

MONTAGUE LIBRARIES OCTOBER 2021

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

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. Once the

weather gets too cold, Story Time will be virtual. 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. Once the weather gets too cold, Music & Movement will be virtual. 10 a.m.

2nd and 4th Fridays: Hands-On STEAM. Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, & Math activities designed for grades K to 4. Take these creative and educational bags home! The kits are free and will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. Bags will be sent to Montague Center and Millers Falls Libraries, too, on the days they're open.

Wednesday, October 6: Turners Falls Fire Dept. visits the

Library! Carnegie Library, outside. Get up close to a firetruck and meet some Turners Falls Firefighters during Fire Prevention Week. Rain or shine. We have books that you can borrow about firetrucks and firefighters. Questions? Call (413) 863-3214. 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Monday, October 11: The Montague Public Libraries will be closed for the holiday.

Saturday, October 16: Halloween Party. Outside at the Carnegie. Children of all ages and their caregivers are invited to have free Halloween fun on the lawn of the Carnegie Library. Costumes are encouraged but not required. Please physically distance yourself from those not in your group. 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Wednesday, October 20: 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.

Learning to Fly Fish: Part XVI

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. 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

MICHIGAN – We got up and made coffee around eight the first morning. Huge swelling fair-weather cumulus clouds greeted us and promised another dry and clear day. We headed to Rusty Gates’ Orvis store by the AuSable to get some information on what the fish were taking and suggestions of where to go.

While I usually shop only when I actually need something, I have found that I am compulsive about fishing tackle and gear. My heart races and I am pulled in by a force much stronger than practical concerns for my wallet. On the lawn outside was displayed the Orvis High Ride Pontoon Boat. I covet that boat. It is portable, with oars and anchor, manageable for one person, and can expand fishing into the deeper and less accessible parts of a river when wading isn’t possible. Randy dragged me away from it, and we went in.

Being midweek late in the season, the shop wasn’t filled with wild-eyed fly fishers. One man was carefully going through the bins selecting particular flies and buying them in an assortment of sizes. We began chatting and he said he’d been hammering rainbows all morning on these, showing us what he was getting.

Immediately Randy and I began pouncing on their fly selection, which was huge. I confess that often I am not very “scientific” when I am buying flies. In other words, if a fly is particularly pretty or strange, I sometimes can’t resist. Such choices are not matching the hatch, but



RANDALL BERRY PHOTO

Our clueless fly-fishing heroine.

pure whimsy. Fun, but not especially productive in catching fish.

After getting some directions, we left Gates’ shop having spent only \$25 or so apiece for flies. The fellow ahead of us spent about \$150. Randy rushed me past the beautiful pontoon boat, and we set off.

There was only one car in the large parking area near the access point to the river. At the Swift River in Ware sometimes the spaces are filled, even midweek, so I felt graced with yet more luck beyond the good weather and easy river access.

We waded into fairly shallow, beautifully clear water, with a fast current. Randy headed upstream and I headed downstream. Even though the water was not high, I am unaccustomed to such rapid flow, and it took awhile for me to wade confidently.

It can be dizzying if you look too closely at it. I try to let myself just feel it until it is comfortable and look out rather than down, somewhat the way you would standing on a high summit with nothing to hold onto.

This was a very different river environment than I have been used to at the Swift River. The AuSable was rocky and quick and I could see no fish anywhere. In the lazy Swift, even if you don’t see the actual

trout, which you generally do, you can see where the probable lies are and work those places.

My lack of experience in a variety of rivers became immediately clear. I hadn’t a clue how to fish this river. Since the water was fast I selected a large, high-floating fly and cast downstream at a three-quarter angle. I would work a section for a time, keep wading, and work another. No hits. Nada. Zip. Zero. No trout spotted. No inviting pools where they might be resting out of the quick current to be seen.

Oh, no. Here I finally was, in the Holy Water of the AuSable, with a huge section of it all to myself on a beautiful morning. And I was clueless.

I began to wonder about the man in Gates’ shop who claimed to be “hammering them.” Did he work for Rusty? Why was this incredible place really so empty of flyfishers?

I worked downstream a ways, then turned and worked the other side back upstream, and met up with Randy. We just looked at each other and waded out, got in the truck, and decided to try another section.

Next: We keep trying, and turn to the Manistee River.

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WEST ALONG from page B1

were more than a few black sheep to have spent time within these walls, although they are now only living in my memory, as echoes of the whispered conversations I wasn’t supposed to hear.

And who was that child who arrived here when I was ten years old, her parents gone their separate ways? She was taken in by our Irish grandmother and raised as her own child. You may know, that’s what an old family homestead does. The old house has been an anchor for the occasional Strayaway Child, a refuge, a place where if life hands you a raw deal through no fault of your own, you’re sent to a stable homestead, and family is family, they are meant to take you in.

Most of those family stories turned out better than they would have otherwise, if it weren’t for the grandmothers. Grandmothers do take over, and provide the love that the parents, dealing with their own demons, could not, or would not.

Now wasn’t our own grandmother a Strayaway Child, left in this village by a wayward father, having lost his wife after the ocean crossing from Ireland? He set off to the Far West to start his immigrant’s life over, leav-

ing our grandmother with aunt and uncle until she married and moved into this house down here on The Flat. She in turn took in a grandchild or two, left behind in broken marriages and other tragedies.

We are lucky nowadays. All that we have to shelter are creatures damaged in some way, like that young towhee, who is still here, and coping with her disability with our steady support. Maybe she too will move on before winter. We also have other moments sharing time and learning life’s lessons with the hummingbird, generations of cats and dogs, even monarch butterflies.

As a matter of fact, just the other morning, the last of the chrysalises we had been sheltering from parasites opened, and the promised monarch emerged. We lifted him up into the noonday sun, and he was off and up into the bright blue sky. Like the other Strayaway Children sheltered here in days gone by: when it was time, they left on their own wings to do what they could with the destiny life had given them.

Read more of David’s writing at riverstories.davidbrule.com.



ENCOUNTERS

A Q&A About *The Wonderful*

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

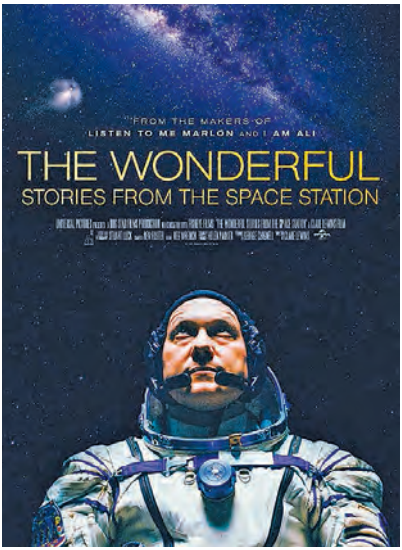
GREENFIELD – The Garden Cinemas in Greenfield hosted another round of “Questions and Answers” as an event for a movie they were showing: *The Wonderful: Stories from the Space Station* (2021), which is a documentary film collecting stories from astronauts who have been on the International Space Station. One of the astronauts from the film, Catherine “Cady” Coleman, was there at the September 18 showing to answer people’s questions.

A nice big crowd came out for the movie, and to talk with Cady Coleman after. It was the same outcome for the event they did with The Mauritanian. It turns out that besides featuring a brief appearance of Cady’s son talking, the film also features an interview with her husband Josh Simpson. Both Coleman and Simpson gave an introduction before the movie, and said they looked forward to answering our questions.

The movie allowed me to learn that the Space Station started in 1998 and involves 16 nations. The audience heard from one of the early space crew that was up there, the commander of the station, named Bill Shepherd, and from one of the two Russian astronauts involved. We also heard from an individual who helped train that crew. Another segment featured a Russian astronaut, who is the son of an astronaut, going up in space three times.

An astronaut from the UK talked in the film, as did one from Tokyo. A female astronaut from Italy spoke about things, too. The astronauts who went to the Space Station had some interesting moments to relate about doing that!

Due to an unfortunate incident, one crew member had to return home in a Russian rocket instead of an American one. The American one was described as being on an air-



plane, while the Russian one was described like being on a carnival ride!

I saw on the screen one astronaut calling his kid from space, which was very cool. Coleman was able to do the same thing with her son and husband.

I asked her a couple of questions, which were what it feels like going into space on a rocket, and what it was like looking down at Earth from the Space station.

To the first, she said “It’s a very amazing feeling.”

To the second, she said, “It’s so beautiful – especially at night.”

Coleman and her husband were very gracious with answering people’s questions. They both ended up telling somewhat detailed stories with some of their answers. One had her husband seeing the rocket going very slowly into space when it was actually going very fast.

As for the movie, I really like things to do with history and space. This film satisfies those interests very nicely. At the ending of the film, I found it to be very fitting for four astronauts again to speak about the station and space exploration. To me, it was just the right way to end the film. It nicely recapped what had been largely talked about in the picture.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Rash Of Theft: Entire Truck, Bikes, Pot Plants Stolen; Boxing Practice; Car Blaze; Rock Dam Stranding

Sunday, 9/19

6:15 a.m. Canal Street resident walked in to station to report his truck had been stolen sometime after 5 p.m. Saturday night. Truck has tommy gate and masonry equipment in it. Police officer advised the truck had been involved in a Greenfield incident. Information entered into NCIC and BOLO given to Shelburne Control and Greenfield PD.

7:30 a.m. Two walk-ins from Sunset Drive reporting vehicle incidents. One license plate was stolen off a truck and may be attached to a blue 2006 GMC Sierra. The other reported his vehicle was entered and several items were stolen – change holder, registration, clothes, backpack, and trash bags. He found some of his clothes further down the road, and some tire tracks.

1:13 p.m. K Street caller reported her unlocked vehicle was entered overnight and theft of small items – a gift card, earrings, a vape pen, and possibly a pay stub. She will call back if she notices any other missing items.

2:31 p.m. Suspicious persons reported at Randall Road address. Homeowners are not on site, and caller does not recognize the two people trying to jump-start vehicles in the driveway. Investigating officer found the male lives there and the female party used to live there.

4:55 p.m. Cumberland Farms employee reported a cash register scanner was stolen last night.

5:03 p.m. Caller reported a Honda Accord has been left parked and running for at least four hours at Avenue A and Third Street. Owner was contacted, and was unaware it had been left running.

6:56 p.m. Theft of tools and change reported stolen from a vehicle on Eleventh Street sometime in the night.

10:23 p.m. West Main Street caller reported fire and/or carbon monoxide alarms going on in her home. Referred to Shelburne Control.

Monday 9/20

9:48 a.m. Food City employee requested an officer on hand as there is a male party shopping that they believe is about to shoplift.

10:34 a.m. Caller from Avenue C reported receiving threats from male party in Athol. He hung up when advised that no crime had been committed.

10:43 a.m. Report of debris in the road near Riff’s on Avenue A as a result of a minor motor vehicle accident. DPW contacted.

10:59 a.m. Taylor Hill resident spoke to officer about a former housemate who keeps returning to the house. She was advised of options.

11 a.m. Concerned caller reported two women walking in the drained power canal. Not found by officer.

11:53 a.m. Central Street caller believes children are home alone and they are very loud. Investigating officer found the mother home with the children, and advised her of the noise complaint.

4:13 p.m. Female caller on Avenue A reported a man was threatening her because her dog barked at him. Investigating officer advised the situation was not as reported, and parties were given options.

4:17 p.m. Walk in reported her debit card is missing and someone has been using it. Advised of options by officer on duty.

5:06 p.m. Caller from Dell Street reported fire alarms going off. Referred to another agency.

7:06 p.m. Walk-in reported two-car accident at the Routes 47/63 crossover that happened earlier in the day. No injuries and minor damage to vehicles.

7:23 p.m. Report of erratic driving by a blue Audi on Fourth Street: driver is varying speeds, all over the road, and appears to be looking at phone, then double parked and is facing the wrong way. Vehicle gone when officer arrived.

9:41 p.m. Caller came into the station to fill out missing person paperwork. She reported her daughter was picked up by a recruiter and flew to Fort Jackson for Army basic training on August 3. She has not heard from her daughter since August 19, and her boyfriend always answers the phone. Oklahoma Police to do a well-being check at the address on file. Daughter called Montague PD to confirm she is fine, and just doesn’t want anything to do with her mom at this time.

Tuesday, 9/21

8:29 a.m. Officer checking on disabled motor vehicle found it to be out of gas.

2:04 p.m. Employee at Greenfield Cooperative Bank reported harassment of van driver at the teller window. Officer found it to be a verbal argument, and dispersed the parties.

2:30 p.m. Call from the Parent/Child Development Center on G Street requesting an officer to assist with removing an agitated older male from the property. Party is not allowed on the property and left before the officer arrived.

4:29 p.m. Seventh Street resident came into the station to report his sister had stolen \$1,500 from him. Officer explained no crime had been committed, since the sister is on the bank account.

5 p.m. Speeding dirt bikes and helmetless riders reported on East Mineral Road.

6:43 p.m. Fourth Street caller reported harassment from neighbors when she cut through their courtyard; she has it on video. Situation mediated by officer.

8:56 p.m. Caller reported he was threatened by a male wearing a blue thermal shirt, tan pants, and a baseball hat in front of Booska’s on Avenue A. Requested an officer speak to the party who is now walking along Avenue A toward the bridge.

9:16 p.m. Report of suspicious vehicle parked on the side of the road by the Tech School. Caller said this is the third time she has called about this vehicle. Officers advised caller.

Wednesday, 9/22

2:36 a.m. Third Street caller asked for police assistance with ex-girlfriend banging on the door and continuing to call him. Officer advised the woman to stay away for the night and not call him. She has stuff she wants to get out of the apartment, and was advised to come back during the day time.

11:04 a.m. Report of catalytic converter stolen off Prius on Crocker Avenue.

11:40 a.m. Walk-in caller reported ongoing vandalism at a gravesite in Ste. Anne’s Cemetery on Turners Falls Road.

2:48 p.m. Federal Street caller complaining of loud noise from revving engine.

4:10 p.m. Dunton Street caller filed a report about his house being egged.

4:11 p.m. Complaint of possible drug-related activity on Fourth Street between an older gold Jeep and a fancy white car. Caller also complained of a heavyset bald man who buys liquor on Avenue A, drinks it on Seventh Street, and then pees in the street.

6:23 p.m. Greenfield PD requested someone meet them at the shelter to house a dog found on Deerfield Street.

10:10 p.m. Sounds of fighting and racing cars reported in front of the Millers Pub. All quiet on officer arrival.

10:13 p.m. Officer assisted home health aide to enter client’s home at Park Villa Apartments.

10:55 p.m. Fight reported on Fourth Street. Turned out to be boxing practice, with participants wearing boxing mitts and gear.

Thursday, 9/23

10:37 a.m. Caller requested an officer to assist with a fraud situation on Avenue A. An \$800 item was supposed to be returned to him and instead he received a half-dollar coin. Caller advised of options.

10:45 a.m. Multiple calls regarding a car on fire behind the senior center on K Street. Fire was put out, and arrangements made to have the car removed.

12:25 p.m. Report of locks cut and stolen bikes on Third Street. One is a black-and-orange BMX bike and the other is a black bike with bright blue accents.

1:12 p.m. Report of very aggressive pit bull on Meadow Road charging people when they walk by the house. Caller has reported this dog before, and says it is on a lead in front of the house, which is close to the road. ACO has visited in the past and says the dog was not near the road. ACO visited again and found “Beware of Dog” signs posted on property in question, though the dog was inside at the time. ACO advised dog owner that it is okay for the dog to be on a lead as long as it doesn’t hurt someone.

2:12 p.m. Call from SRO at the Tech School regarding an altercation and threats as students were leaving school. Parties were pulled over by Montague PD on Millers Falls Road and Henry Avenue.

2:52 p.m. Caller from Keith Apartments requested assistance with lockout of a white Chevy Cruz. Party was not there when police arrived.

3:15 p.m. Report of a woman driving on Bridge Street, yelling at one of the neighbors and throwing a bottle. Second call received from target, saying that she is the mother of his child and has a restraining order against him but she keeps calling and texting him from different numbers. He would like police assistance, and will come into the station to file a voluntary statement.

4:57 p.m. Caller stranded on Rawson Island by the Rock Dam called for assistance. He was trying to cross the river and the water started rising. First-Light Power contacted to slow down the water.

5:27 p.m. Avenue A caller advised to go to the courthouse to file for a restraining order.

5:38 p.m. Montague City Road caller advised on options following receipt of threatening text messages.

6:20 p.m. Single-car accident reported on South Prospect Street. No apparent injuries, but airbags were deployed and fluids leaking, so FD was contacted and the car was towed to Rau’s.

7:04 p.m. Officer confirmed a 911 misdial at

see MPD page B4

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MPD from page B3

253 Farmacy on Millers Falls Road.
10:15 p.m. Randall Road caller reported two unwelcome people on her property and they might have jumped out the window. She has a restraining order against the female party. Officer on scene found no intruders, and caller could not find the restraining order.
10:46 p.m. Above caller reported she had been attacked, and has a butcher knife, and is scared. Woman was taken into custody after throwing a lit cigarette at officers. FD notified to ensure to fire issue.
Friday, 9/24
12:01 a.m. Report of dark-colored Mazda on

Federal Street near Route 47 driving dangerously – crossing the midline and into the breakdown lane. Driver was reportedly out of control and travelling almost 80 mph at one point. Caller was unable to see the plate information, and not sure which way the car went after reaching the Route 63 crossover.
6:29 a.m. Driver reported nearly hitting a man wearing a blue sweatshirt tied around his waist walking down the middle of Montague City Road. Walker told the police he was just crossing the road.
7:39 a.m. Caller reported that she witnessed a male dressed in black riding a white scooter run

right into a parked car on Worcester Avenue. The car is parked in front of a house and she is not sure where the scooter went. Officer found a small scuff mark on the car.
8:56 a.m. DPW notified of flooding at Montague Street and Crocker Avenue.
3:17 p.m. Runaway reported on Central Street after being denied a sleepover at a friend's house. Rock Dam area was searched without success. Parents will contact friends and a social worker for assistance.
4:12 p.m. Potential controlled substance violation at Unity Park turned out to be Juul pods.
4:49 p.m. Repeat 911 calls were confirmed to

be pocket dials by a man building a fence on G Street.
5:06 p.m. Repeat 911 calls on Sherman Street, confirmed to be from someone having phone difficulties.
Saturday, 9/25
1:55 a.m. Small tan terrier reported on-the-loose behind the church on Franklin Street. Officer saw the dog and it appears to have gone home.
6:48 a.m. Several rambling nuisance calls to the dispatch center.
8:01 a.m. Montague Street caller reported the theft of 10 pot plants, about 4 or 5 feet tall. Security camera shows they were taken between 9:11 and 9:28 p.m. by someone who crawled under the

fence to get the plants. Caller wants this on file, and they will call back if anyone is seen in the area. They will also notify the neighbors.
11:25 a.m. Caller from Second Street Alleyway facing the water reported he was woken up at 1:06 a.m. by two males in the alley behind his house trying to start up the engine of either a go-cart or a riding lawnmower. He found a gas can in the morning and decided to report it in case someone else reported a theft.
1:12 p.m. Report of unsafe driver on Millers Falls Road near the airport – motor vehicle passed them at about 70 mph and almost hit their mirrors, then flipped

them off and kept going. They were headed over the bridge into Erving on Papermill Road when last seen.
2:39 p.m. Second Street caller reported her children's three bikes were stolen overnight – one dark blue mountain bike, one blue BMX bike, and one purple mountain bike. The bikes were leaning up against the house in the back alleyway.
2:53 p.m. 911 misdial received from the Millers Falls Rod and Gun Club. When called, officer was told there is a large meeting going on and they will advise everyone to check their phones.
4:43 p.m. Walk-in to police station was requesting assistance to force

his juvenile son to get into the car for a custodial visit. Parent was advised of civil options.
5:00 p.m. Officer conducting a routine traffic stop on Turnpike Road near the high school found revoked registration, so the car was towed by Rau's.
8:43 p.m. Caller from Wentworth Avenue requested police assistance to remove unwanted female who refuses to leave his property. Officer moved her along.
9:13 p.m. Caller reports that someone has come up to her grandmother's house on Dunton Street and started jiggling the front door handle. No one was found by the investigating officer.



TRAVELS from page B1

collection of up to 15 cars from a collection of 112.
In the same building as the car museum is Newport Indoor Golf. Here, you can sample hundreds of different virtual courses, and play rounds in courses far and wide, hitting the balls against the magic screen.
GM Max Buerman showed us around and demonstrated how players hit the balls at a screen and it shows the trajectory with perfect accuracy – you can display the exact look of some 200 different courses from around the world. Golfers come here to visit the eight stations all year long to prepare for future golf outings and tweak their swings.

On our first night we walked a few blocks to Bowen's Wharf and joined the enthusiastic crowd enjoying lobsters, fried clams, and other seafood treats at the **Lobster Bar**. I like a place with atmosphere, and boy, do they give this to you here! At the Lobster Bar the dining area had the floor of a real wharf, and the boats coming in reinforced the charming nautical feel. The fried whole belly clams were delicious, as was the key lime pie.

Where to Stay in Newport

Hammett's Hotel, located on Hammett's Wharf, was once home to a cargo depot, lumberyard, bank, coal yard, temperance-oriented tea house, laundry, concert venue, ice rink, yacht basin, and most recently, a parking lot. The hotel was built in 2020 and reflects the city's maritime and naval heritage. A bell out in front of the hotel is a reminder of this city's long seafaring past and former America's Cup glory. They call Newport the City by the Sea, and the boats in the harbor create a nautical energy to the busy city.

With 84 rooms and most of them facing the water, the Hammett is a medium-sized property with a great big deck that overlooks the busy Newport Harbor. The rooms, however, are not spacious, there is just enough room for the beds and bathrooms. It's moderately priced and designed for the traveler who wants chic but isn't going to spend a lot of time in the room.

The restaurant, which is large and spacious, wasn't open during our visit but there are plenty of great

choices for dinner on nearby Bowen's Wharf, which teems with activity at nighttime. The Hammett's restaurant Giusto features an outdoor bar and expansive patio overlooking the Newport Marina, a private dining room, and semi-open kitchen.

On our first night we walked a few blocks to Bowen's Wharf and joined the enthusiastic crowd enjoying lobsters, fried clams, and other seafood treats at the **Lobster Bar**. I like a place with atmosphere, and boy, do they give this to you here! At the Lobster Bar the dining area had the floor of a real wharf, and the boats coming in reinforced the charming nautical feel. The fried whole belly clams were delicious, as was the key lime pie.

Despite the fact that Newport is a city with a legacy as the home of famous millionaires, we found a few places to dine when we needed to count our pennies on day three. Here, on the main drag, Thames Street, we found **Il Forno Italiano**, where slices go for less than \$4 and truly satisfy.

Another stand-out for outdoor dining is the **Smokehouse Cafe**, at 31 Scotts Wharf. They have a sidewalk-facing outdoor bar, perfect for people watching. And what a colorful and interesting parade it is!

My particularly picky granddaughter Sofie loved her chicken fingers, and my lobster salad was generous and delicious. Like many of the restaurants we visited, the Smokehouse points you to a symbol, a QR code, that puts their menu on your phone, making it easy to order.

Parking is perhaps the biggest challenge in Newport. since the city was designed back in the Colonial era when horse carriages prevailed. Try to avoid using the car around the city. We found a parking space on Thames Street for \$1.25 per hour instead of the \$8/hour rate at most private parking lots.

Newport from the Air

Although a trip out into the harbor on one of the many harbor excursion tours in Newport brings you close to the impressive yachts and sailboats of the rich and famous, nothing gives you a better view than from the cockpit of a helicopter.

And yes, you can hire one for a 15-minute or longer buzz atop the mansions and view the entire city from above. Jeff Codman has been a pilot here for decades, and he provides these short tours daily, departing from the airport in Middletown, Rhode Island, about 15 minutes from the center of Newport.

Newport is known for its sailboats... and for the fabulously rich men who built their summer cottages along Bellevue Avenue in the city. The biggest and most famous mansion, the Breakers, was built by Cornelius Vanderbilt II, and even modern-day tycoon Larry Ellison of Oracle Corp. has one now.

Talk show maven and car nut Jay Leno also owns a mansion on Ocean Drive. We learned this on an interesting tour called the **Newport Native Tour**, in an airy trolley bus with open windows, another pandemic caveat.

The 1957 wedding of JFK and Jackie Bouvier was an event that put Newport on the map. The tour includes passing by the famous **Hammersmith Farm** where the fabulous reception was held, and the church where the couple tied the knot on Thames Street.

Ocean Drive is a must-see if you're interested in seeing houses you might never be able to afford which all overlook the waves of Narragansett Bay. We saw it from the road as we scooted around in a three-wheeled, low-power, two-person scooter. You can rent these at **Scouter World** in Newport. Scenic rides for sure and fun.

Another must is the famous Cliff Walk, which takes you on a 3.5-mile hike right on the ocean and right in front of many of the mansions on Bellevue Ave., including The Breakers. You're right there, on the oceanside, looking up and in at the vast mansions along the route. We wanted to know more so we booked a "servant's tour" of one of the mansions, the Elms.

The servant's tour provides a lot of information about the lives of the mostly immigrant population who played such an important role in the city. The mansions are stunning, even from the back hallway or the vast servant's quarters. It's fun seeing the home from the basement and other off-limits areas.

The newest boutique hotel in Newport is the **Brenton**, also along the Newport harbor front. This hotel has a yacht-like feel, with white beadboard walls and a number of elements that feel like you're on a friend's boat. In fact, another perk that the hotel manager told us about is the beautiful Hinckley yacht that the hotel makes available for the guests to charter. Talk about riding in style!

The dining situation also reflects a new era. Instead of retiring to the restaurant, you can dine in what is called the Living Room, a comfortable airy space where small plates



HARTSHORNE PHOTOS



Top: Rail Explorer's fleet of pedal-powered vehicles. Middle: If you go to the Lobster Bar, our correspondent recommends the fried whole belly clams – and the key lime pie. Bottom: The City by the Sea, from the air.

come out of the invisible kitchen while you enjoy casual time with friends. We sampled the dining and it was as impressive as it was pricey. The menu includes small bites like oysters, scallops, and lobster tortellini.

The seared steak came with microscopic potato straws but had an

excellent flavor. The Brenton impresses with its creative and comfortable decor, their own yacht, and a staff who strives to take care of its guests.

You'll feel like you are in the company of your famous rich uncle, except the bill is still on you this time.



WEBSITES

Rail Explorers
Railexplorers.net

Newport Car Museum
newportcarmuseum.org

Hammett's Hotel
www.hammettshotel.com

Newport Helicopter Tours
Newporthelicoptertours.com

For more information on lodging, dining, attractions and transportation visit www.discovernewport.org.

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Abandoned Fowl Leads Riverside Chase

Welcoming Back The Spinner

By JERI MORAN

SUNDERLAND – While looking at a river canoe access last week, three women discovered a small rooster hiding along the steep embankment, looking for food. Without much discussion, it was decided to try and catch it, as there were no houses anywhere nearby but plenty of birds of prey and a road with speeding traffic.

Catching it was, oh, not so easy – as this attached map, from a GPS the youngest and most agile of the good Samaritans had on her, shows. It led an exhausting chase.

A fourth good Samaritan stopped to help; she lived up the road and had heard that this chicken had been down along the bank for over a week. They all reckoned that it had been dropped off by the river, perhaps when its owner discovered that roosters crow, and that neighbors aren’t happy with the noise.

One of the samaritans remembered that she had a jar of birdseed in her car. (Another story.) The rooster really wanted it, but was still very wary of these people who had chased it. With a lot of patience on everyone’s part, the rooster came to hang around the open doors of two cars, and in a final flurry they got it to hop into one of them.

Barbara, the fourth good Samaritan, went back home and got a large cage and volunteered to keep the rooster, now named River, temporarily, while they all tried to find its owner or a good home for it. Please understand these are not just four sappy good Samaritans for animals – all contribute to agencies that feed the hungry, like the Franklin County Community Meals Program, and protect our landscape, like the Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust – just ordinary people who didn’t know each other for the most part, but wanted to try and help one of the more vulnerable creatures amongst us.

A lot of places or individuals they tried said “no, don’t want a crow-er,” “no, already have one rooster,” “no, he’s not a registered fowl,” or “no, don’t want to sell fertilized eggs from my hens”...

But this story has a happy ending. As of press time, Cloa’s Ark Animal Sanctuary in Hadley has agreed to take River the Rooster. Yay! Anyone wanting to donate to good local people taking care of unwanted animals can do so at their website, cloasark.org.



Above: The difficulty of River’s capture was recorded for posterity via GPS. Below: Mount Grace stewardship manager Tessa Dowling, with the finally-caged River.

TURNERS FALLS – The public is cordially invited to the rededication of Spinner Park this Saturday, October 2 at 10 a.m. The newly rebuilt “pocket park” is located on Avenue A at Fourth Street.

The park was first dedicated in May 1985 by local officials, members of the Montague selectboard, and state representative John W. Olver. At that event, “The Spinner” sculpture was dedicated in honor of our industrial heritage and the women who worked in our cotton and paper mills. Nine women who worked at the Kendall, Esleek, Strathmore mills were in attendance.

The rededication event will feature remarks and a plaque honoring former town administrator Frank Abbondanzio, the positioning of a time capsule created by Nina Rossi, and the unveiling of The Spinner, completely refurbished by local sculptor Jack Nelson.

The original “Spinner” was created in 1873 by French sculptor Leon Cugnot. The Turners copy was cast in an Alabama foundry in the 1980s.

The park reconstruction project was funded by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. The work was completed by Sciaba Construction Corp., of Walpole, MA.

Montague Community Television News

Relive The Summer!

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – What is on your “Best of Summer 2021” list? For us, it includes the youth violin ensemble of Musica Franklin, The Lovelights’ “Fairy House Day on Avenue A,” Skeleton Crew Theater, the Pocumtuck Homelands Festival, Barbès in the Woods, Trash Rich Fashion show, and much more.

If you missed any of this summer’s incredible lineup, browse the MCTV Vimeo (which can be found linked to the MCTV website, montaguenvetv.org, under the tab “Videos”) to catch a glimpse of a Submarine Soap Box Car, the second-oldest community band in the US, or a light-up boat parade.

Don’t forget to check in on the very important meetings also available through MCTV. This week we have updates from the Gill-Montague re-

gional school committee, the Gill and Montague selectboards, and the Montague finance committee.

As always, all community members are welcome to submit their videos to be aired on Channel 17, as well as featured on the MCTV Vimeo page.

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

The station is also looking to hire a producer to make Spanish-language content. Please email infomontaguenvetv@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 infomontaguenvetv@gmail.com.

FABULOUS from page B1

In explaining what the move to western Mass. has meant to them, both artists speak about access to the natural world, and the relief of being able to move around out in the woods with a child without running into other people during the pandemic. Having time outside, to really look at and get acquainted with the landscape, has been so important for them, they seem almost ashamed to say it.

Martin – now 7, busy painting during gallery time at Looky Here – looks up long enough to tell me what I need to know: that his mother draws and paints mostly what is there, and his father starts with what is recognizable and then paints what you can’t see.

And then Martin returns to his own task at hand.

“I work on pieces on and off,” Kearns wrote in an email, “so there’s always a lot happening. And I draw; that is the root of the work, combined with a lot of very close looking at the world, the natural world in particular. The pandemic made my hermit-like approach to making art the only option.

“I have family who were very close to the frontline, so-to-speak, in Queens, NY, and so there was a level of awareness that was a challenge to square with our feeling of relative freedom and ease here in western Mass.”

Of sharing a show with Shirar, Kearns wrote, “I think there is a clear stylistic difference in paint use and subject matter, but also a lot of resonance in colors and other elements of our shared world that can be seen moving from one side

of our current shared studio to the other. I appreciate Julia covering ground that I don’t.”

“His work is the backdrop of puzzlings about my own endeavors and a source of inspiration,” says Shirar. “In the case of my work, it is all from ‘life’ and memory as distinct from a photograph. I don’t paint from reproductions except for my own drawings. The paintings and drawings are about the observation of what is real, in real time... a meditation on ‘now.’

“The pandemic atmosphere was affirming for my work in that I think it is very relevant to be painting the status quo. I’m of the mind that ‘the personal is political’ and I felt no change in that.”

In a watercolor by Shirar, “Lake Bomoseen,” there is a semicircular red wash that feels like an energy field over the lake, a blast radius, perhaps a magnifying lens, transporting the viewer across the water’s surface to the trees on the other side. This small painting works like a magnet, pulling me around to look, and look again.

Shirar’s color palette is a product of her time in several distinctly different regions, absorbing light and landscape in Texas, living for many years on the West Coast, and coming to the East Coast, where, she says, the beauty is no less, but is perhaps less conspicuous. In one of her paintings, there is a brown so rich it reminds me of the Marin Headlands, across the bay from San Francisco.

In the front window at Looky Here, Shirar’s large piece, “Outpatient,” hangs nearly floor to ceiling. Two figures sit in an embrace that reveals great vulnerability and care. Layers of cloth have been stitched

into the painting, as though the artist was compelled to build, and then to dress them. It takes on a tactile quality that would be emotionally evocative at any time, but in this span when we have sometimes been deprived of hugging those we love when they needed it most, the scene becomes even more urgent.

Shirar reveals through portrait so much unsaid that I hear my own heart beating while I look into these paintings. One needs the portrait to have the opportunity to look this closely, because it is impolite to stare – and I realize one of the privileges of the portraitist is the liberty to stare.

This proximity – the viewer to the painting, the people in the paintings to each other – are complex equations of intimacy,

each with its own variables, where sometimes we are so close it is impossible to see it all clearly.

In a piece titled “Fishing,” figures on a boat hold their lines, waiting for a bite. Here Shirar uses ink in a sepia sort of grayscale ranging from very pale to strong black. The people are visible as gestures, almost shimmering, like water. It is the wharf that comes through most vividly and defined. This is a clear portrait of stone. I know the sound of this place, where the water meets rock.

Kearns’s artwork in this show was all made this summer, and is atypically uniform. He mixes his own paints, using water-soluble pigment in acrylic medium. The variety of greens alone in these paintings is striking, alongside what Kearns calls

“the artificial candy color and brown muckiness of it.”

Standing looking at the paintings, Kearns says some of his style is a nod to the mechanical printing process of color separation and “a color sense shaped by reading comic books.”

In a painting titled “The Source,” tree after tree keeps watch over easels, and from a fissure at the center of the world, a stream of acrylic medium runs out to greet the canvases. With the painting “How to Look at Pictures,” I found myself staring into a top-down map of a neighborhood, recognizing boxes for community gardens. But when I turned my head and looked back, the garden plots were clearly giant books. It made me laugh.

There is a playful energy in Kearns’s painting, while he takes a very serious approach to longing, a method of willing the world into being. In a sculpture in the front window, “Scene from New Age Literature,” this imaginative landscape becomes three-dimensional, teases a threat to spill out into a larger geographical consciousness. It is a bit like peering into the lysergic dreams of a utopian regional planner. They illustrate commitment to a waking life where the imagination is manifest, and a vibrant refusal to live in merely three dimensions.

A map of the fabulous is a useful thing. It might be revealed in the face of someone you love, or the gesture of the body. It would have to include what you know to be there, but cannot yet see.

To be in the company of this work, even for a little while, is like finding yourself on the map, in it. It is a good place to be.



Julia Shirar, “Outpatient”

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WARREN ONDRAS PHOTO

NatureCulture: The Science Page



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

One Ocean: Five Names

By LISA McLOUGHLIN

NORTHFIELD — The US Board on Geographic Names has decided to name the waters from the Antarctic coast to 60 degrees South the “Southern Ocean.” The decision has not yet been ratified by the International Hydrographic Organization, who first read the proposal in the year 2000. If ratified, the Southern Ocean would join the Atlantic, Pacific, Indian, and Arctic oceans as named regions of the 71% of our globe covered by ocean.

I wondered why they were naming the ocean, and in the process realized there’s a lot going on in Antarctica lately.

Antarctica is a contentious place, even if there’s never been a war there. It is governed by the 1961 Antarctic Treaty, which was signed by the 12 countries then doing science there, and 46 countries have acceded to it. Any country that conducts scientific Antarctic research can vote on decisions made there; that’s currently 28 nations.

They’ve created three additional international agreements: the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Seals (1972); the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (1980); and the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty (1991). Taken together, these are the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS).



Paradise Harbor, in Antarctica.

There is great worry that the Protocol on Environmental Protection may be reviewed in 2048, which is 50 years from the date it was put into force. Article 25 of the protocol allows for this review. The original Treaty was up for a possible review at the 30-year mark, but no country asked for a special conference to review it. The treaty’s main concerns are mining and energy extraction, water sources (70% of the world’s freshwater is held in Antarctic ice), and of course, military.

On a visit to Antarctica in 2008 and 2009, Franklin County resident Cate Woolner learned more of the history of Antarctica, including that during World War II, Great Britain had a base there where they hunted whales for their oil, which was in great demand. They later abandoned the base, but retain a presence on the continent.

Cate saw calving icebergs, penguins unafraid of people, and various scientific research outposts: some staffed, some simply shacks overrun by penguins and seals. Establishing a scientific outpost on Antarctica is not a well-defined process, and several countries are banking on a homesteader approach to lay claims to their “rights” once the treaty expires.

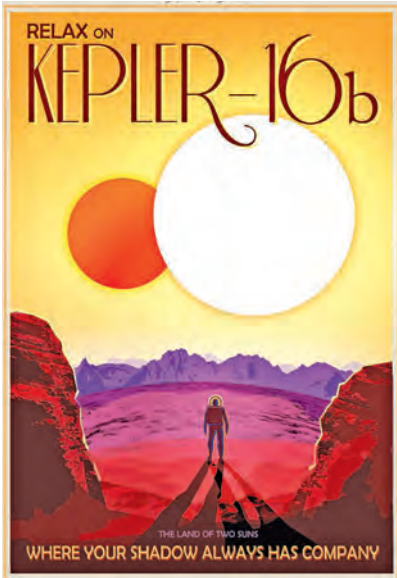
29 Possible Planetary Neighbors

By LISA McLOUGHLIN

NORTHFIELD — We find planets outside our solar system, “exoplanets,” by watching them transit across their star, blocking out light. In an interesting example of looking at the other side of things, researchers from Cornell University in New York have used the European Space Agency’s Gaia catalog of stars and star motions to calculate which planets would be able to detect Earth using the same methodology.

In the past (or future) 5,000 years, 1,715 nearby star systems — defined as within 326 light years, or 100 parsecs — could have seen Earth transit based on their location and angle. 46 of these could hear our radio and TV transmissions clearly and so know Earth is (or was) inhabited, and 29 of the systems have possibly-habitable planets.

Exoplanets seem to be a specialty of Cornell. In 2020 post-doctoral researcher, Jake D. Turner and team



NASA has created a series of “travel posters” for exoplanets.

were the first to detect an exoplanet from its radio bursts — from the planet itself, not any inhabitants. Planets emit radio signals on their own through a process called cyclotron maser instability (CMI), in which electrons are accelerated in the currents of the magnetosphere, the magnetic field that protects a planet from solar wind (plasma and particles from its sun) and cosmic rays (high-energy atom fragments from outside its solar system).

Turner and other researchers are working on how to interpret these bursts of energy to tell them more about the planet. The energy bursts do carry information. The planet Dr. Turner et al found was like Jupiter, and not by accident. He found

it by working backwards: studying Jupiter’s radio signature, then using that pattern as a template to look for other Jupiter-like planets.

The one he found was in the Tau Boötes binary star system. If the research is confirmed, it will be yet another way for astronomers to detect at least some types of exoplanets. In their research, some exoplanets did not have significant radio emissions.

NASA has gone a little crazy over exoplanets, making travel posters like the one included in this article, and it maintains a counter on exoplanets.nasa.gov which as of this summer says there are 4,422 confirmed, 7,445 candidates, and 3,280 planetary systems of exoplanets.

The nearest known exoplanet orbits Proxima Centauri, the next star over from our sun, slightly over four light years (24 trillion miles) away. This planet is considered unlikely to be inhabited because its star flares up quite a bit, and it is in very close orbit.

The nearest known exoplanets that have a good chance of being habitable, if not inhabited, are 40 light years away in the TRAPPIST-1 system, where four of the seven planets orbit in a habitable zone (i.e. one where water might be on the surface as liquid or ice).

Finally, the farthest exoplanet we know of in our galaxy is Kepler-443b, 3,000 light years from Earth.

Back to the Land

By LISA McLOUGHLIN

NORTHFIELD — Many thanks to Mike Jackson and Nina Rossi at the *Montague Reporter* for letting me write, with few exceptions, basically whatever I wanted for the science page for so long. I appreciate their forbearance, and I have enjoyed working with them, learning a lot along the way.

In the coming years I will be growing NatureCulture (nature-culture.net), which coordinates the Authors and Artists Festival (February 26 and 27, 2022 online — this year with a concurrent poets’ retreat), and a new project Writing the Land (writingtheland.org) which pairs poets with land trust-protected lands and publishes, in concert with Human Error Publishing, an anthology sold by land trusts to support their mission.

Now in our second year, Writing the Land has grown from 11 to 45 trusts; from 40 to over 100 poets; and from New England to nationwide. Land trusts keep farmland working farms, and forests forests — under land trust protection, lands can be working lands, wilderness, and/or habitat — but they won’t become housing developments or strip malls.

Look into land protection for your lands today. Free help is available from knowledgeable boots-on-the-ground people at the UMass Extension Service: masswoods.org.

Thanks so much for reading; I have enjoyed having an excuse to research more science in order to write the Science Page. And many, many thanks to the Solar Store in Greenfield for their stalwart support of all things scientific....

Lazy Bee Clones

By LISA McLOUGHLIN

NORTHFIELD — The South African Cape honeybee (*Apis mellifera capensis*) has been found to clone itself. Normally, reshuffling of DNA is required for asexual, thelytokous parthenogenesis, a rare form of reproduction found in only about 1,500 species. In this process female bees lay eggs that become other female bees.

The eggs contain chromosomes from her mother bee and a male drone, but because no additional male chromosomes are added, there is genetic loss each time, and eventually the bee can’t reproduce this way anymore.

There are two ways around this problem. Normally, bee colonies have a queen bee who reproduces sexually: she receives DNA from the male drones, and so can continue to lay genetically diverse eggs.

The South African Cape honeybees who are reproducing asexually have found another way. They are instead making perfect copies (clones) of themselves, which they can continue to do indefinitely. One line of clones is estimated to stem



Cape honeybees.

from one bee who could do this in the 1990s, now with hundreds of millions of copies.

Bees cloning themselves might not be a problem, except that some of them have started sneaking into the hives of a different bee, the African Lowland honeybee (*Apis mellifera scutella*). Once there, the South African Cape honeybees do not do any work, so the invaded hives collapse. This is a problem not just for the African Lowland honeybees, but also for humans, as they are pollinators.

It may also not be good for the South African Cape honeybees, whose population in the long run will have no genetic diversity, and therefore be more vulnerable to disease.

October 2021 Moon Calendar

New Moon
Wednesday, October 6

First Quarter
Tuesday, October 12

Full Moon
Wednesday,
October 20

Orionid Shower
Thursday, October 21

Last Quarter
Thursday, October 23

High Altitude Mottling on Jupiter: The familiar banded appearance of Jupiter at low and middle latitudes gradually gives way to a more mottled appearance at high latitudes in this striking true color image taken December 13, 2000, by NASA Cassini spacecraft.

NASA/JPL/UNIVERSITY OF AZ PHOTO

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 30
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Ma-sala Jazz*. Free. 6 p.m.
Look Park, Northampton: *Big Thief, Alex G*. \$. 6 p.m.
Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Janet Evra: An Evening in Paris*. Free. 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 1
Stone Church, Brattleboro: *The Gaslight Tinkers*. Free. 5 p.m.
Mystery Train Records, Amherst: *Joseph Alred, Russ Waterhouse & Mary S., George Hakkila*. Free outdoor show. 6 p.m.
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Session Americana, Ali McGuirk*. \$. 7 p.m.
Shutesbury Athletic Club: *Stillwater Band*. \$. 7 p.m.
10 Forward, Greenfield: *Clock Serum, Lucie Rosenfeld, Jake Meginsky, iblameclara*. Electronic. Vax proof required. \$. 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 2
Belltower Records, North Adams: *Mountain Movers, MV+EE, Honey Radar*. \$. 5 p.m.
Shea Theater, Turners Falls:

Greenfield Police Association Comedy Night. \$. 7 p.m.
Academy of Music, Northampton: *Art Blakey Centennial Celebration* feat. five former members of Blakey's Jazz Messengers. \$. 7:30 p.m.
Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: Film screening, *Phantom of the Paradise* (1974 Brian DePalma cult classic). \$. 8 p.m.
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *A Night of Simon & Garfunkel* with Jim Henry and Tracy Grammer. \$. 8 p.m.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 5
10 Forward, Greenfield: *Anonym, Donkey No No, Proprietary Blend*. \$. 8 p.m.
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *King Yellowman* feat. K'reema & the Sagittarius Band. \$. 8 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 6
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Half Shaved Jazz*. Free. 6 p.m.
Bezanson Recital Hall, Umass Amherst: *Celebrating Bird: The Music of Charlie Parker* with Fumi Tomita, Jeff Holmes, Tom Giampietro, and David Detweiler.

Free. 7:30 p.m.
Palladium, Worcester: *New Found Glory, Less Than Jake, Hot Mulligan, LOLO*. \$. 7:30 p.m.
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Alasdair Fraser, Natalie Haas*. Scottish & global music. \$. 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7
10 Forward, Greenfield: *Spirit Sprinkler*. New age & ambient night. Vax proof required. \$. 7 p.m.
Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: *Okkervil River, Damien Jurado*. \$. 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 8
Calvin Theater, Northampton: *Tom Rush, Leo Kottke*. \$. 7 p.m.
Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *Sue & Marvin of Falltown String Band*. Free. 7 p.m.
Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Sam Amidon, Zara Bode's Little Big Band*. \$. 7 p.m.
Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Erin McKeown, Spouse*. \$. 7:30 p.m.
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Kimaya Diggs, Wallace Field, and High Tea*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Brewbakers, Keene: *Diane Cluck, Davey F. Mandesea*. \$. 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 9
Shutesbury Athletic Club: *Shokazoba*. \$. 5 p.m.
Pushkin Gallery, Greenfield: *Sam Amidon, Max Wareham*. \$. 7 p.m.
Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Film premiere, *The Secret of Sinchancee*. Shot at local locations. \$. 7:30 p.m.
10 Forward, Greenfield: *Charmaine's Names, Father Hotep, Olana Flynn, DJ Krefting*. Vax proof required. \$. 8 p.m.
Bishop's Lounge, Northampton: *Smokin' Leather*. Grateful Dead tribute. \$. 9 p.m.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 10
Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Jackie Venson*. \$. 7 p.m.
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Rachel Baiman*. \$. 7 p.m.
Academy of Music, Northampton: *Judy Collins*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Samirah Evans & Her Handsome Devils*. \$. 7 p.m.

Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: *Lucero, Morgan Wade*. \$. 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 15
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Mark Erelli, Mary-Elaine Jenkins*. \$. 7 p.m.

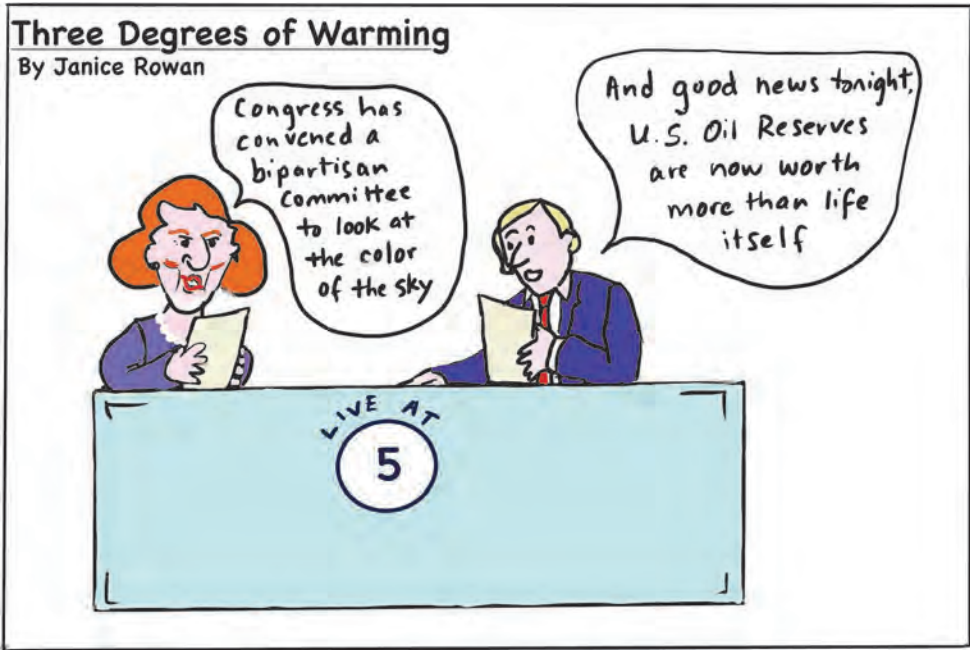
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 16
Calvin Theater, Northampton: *Ben Folds*. \$. 8 p.m.
Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Dead Man's Waltz*. Grateful Dead, Allman Brothers, The Band tribute. \$. 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 17
Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: *Bill Frisell Trio*. \$. 8 p.m.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 19
Academy of Music, Northampton: *Patty Griffin, Gregory Alan Isakov*. \$. 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21
Iron Horse Music Hall, Northampton: *Robyn Hitchcock*. \$. 7 p.m.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23
10 Forward, Greenfield: *Kal-bells, Ruth Garbus*. Vax proof required. Tickets on sale now. \$. 8 p.m.



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TV REVIEW

The Lotus Eaters: *The White Lotus*, HBO’s New Comedy of Manner

By W. KAIZEN

AMHERST – Ah vacation. It’s supposed to be time spent getting away from it all and leaving your worries behind, especially if you’re staying at the kind of high-end, all-inclusive Hawaiian resort that the protagonists of HBO’s new comedy *The White Lotus* are visiting. Unfortunately, personal shortcomings and the politics of privilege are not so easy to escape.

Mike White produced, wrote and directed *The White Lotus* in a flurry of activity during late 2020. White, who wrote and starred in *Chuck and Buck* and *The School of Rock*, had his last HBO series, *Enlightened*, canceled after two seasons. He licked his wounds by, of all things, becoming a contestant on the reality TV show *Survivor* and came in second place. Given another shot at directing his own TV series, he’s made the hit of the late summer season: an amped-up, satirical upstairs/downstairs story that skewers the arrogance of rich white people who can afford special treatment wherever they go.

The White Lotus follows a group of VIPs on a week’s holiday. The six-episode series begins with a flash forward where we learn that someone has died at the titular hotel where they are staying. A useful if overused MacGuffin, trying to guess who will meet their end, becomes secondary to the show’s wicked skewering of contemporary manners. White was clearly inspired by the cutthroat in-fighting of *Survivor* as well as the well-to-do life he leads living in Hawaii, where he owns a home.

As our guests arrive on a privately chartered boat, Armond, the hotel manager, waits with apparent eagerness to meet his clients’ every need. He gives some advice to a new staffer. “Here self-disclosure is discouraged,” he says. “The goal is to create for the guests an overall impression of vagueness. That can be very satisfying where they get everything they want but they don’t even know what they want, or what day it is, or where they are, or who we are, or what the fuck is going on.”

Along with White’s incisive writing, much of the show’s humor (and pathos) comes from the hilariously exaggerated performances of the cast. As played by Australian actor Murray

Bartlett, Armond’s shrimp-pink suit and forever open arms are topped by a Tom Selleck moustache that can’t contain his shit-eating smile, a smile that wears thin over the course of the week as he and several of his staffers become all too specific to some of their charges.

Primary among these is baby-faced bro Shane Patton, the spoiled scion of a real-estate empire, played by Greenfield native Jake Lacy. On his honeymoon with trophy wife Rachel (Alexandra Daddario), Shane is miffed that they haven’t gotten the room his mother booked for them. Shane spends the week ignoring his new wife and relentlessly badgering Armond, who has an increasingly difficult time remaining vague.

Another of the VIPs, Tanya McQuoid, is played with Emmy-worthy aplomb by Jennifer Coolidge, best known for her appearances in the movies *American Pie*, *Legally Blonde* and the TV show *2 Broke Girls*. Tanya has come alone to the *White Lotus* to scatter her mother’s ashes. She lumbers around in chiffon muumuus, a bottle blonde with social anxiety whose eyes are perpetually asquint, her speech perpetually slurred from too much Botox and too many Cosmos.

When Tanya can’t get the massage appointment she so desperately needs, spa manager Belinda (Natasha Rothwell) steps in to help. Instead of continuing to kvetch, Tanya wallows in Belinda’s attention, groaning with pleasure and singing off-key during her holistic ministrations. It’s one of many small examples where the show pivots from nasty to nice, offering redeeming glimpses of its antiheroes.

Tables quickly turn, and Belinda doesn’t have the upper hand for long. The relationship between Tanya and Belinda, who is black, are a microcosm of both the show’s humor and its pathos. While Tanya genuinely seems to like Belinda, she can only express her gratitude through money. When she suggests that she might give Belinda the funds to open a spa of her own, Belinda begins working on a business plan while bending over backwards to accommodate Tanya’s whims with increasing desperation.

The final group of VIPs, the Mossbacher family, suffers from internecine fighting. Ma-



Armond (Murray Bartlett) and staff await the arrival of guests on HBO’s new comedy *The White Lotus*.

triarch Nicole (Connie Britton), a high-powered CEO in the mold of Sheryl Sandberg, spends much of her vacation on one screen or another leaning in to work. Her husband Mark (Steve Zahn) lives in her shadow. Mark browbeats their teenage son Quinn (Fred Hechinger) into spending time with him – and away from Quinn’s own panoply of portable screens – in a misguided attempt to be a good dad. Jealousy erupts between daughter Olivia (Sydney Sweeney) and her accompanying friend Paula (Brittany O’Grady) over love interest Kai (Kekoa Kekumano), a native Hawaiian who works at the hotel.

Colonialism’s specter lurks around the show’s edges. Hawaiians perform pseudo-ritual dances for the guests. Kai recounts how the land on which the hotel is built was stolen from his people. Paula, who is the only character of color among the VIPs, reads Frantz Fanon while sunning herself by the pool.

The Hawaiians are marginal characters at best. They’re props for the projection of the character’s fantasies – as entertainment, as love interests. In moments of semi-introspection several characters acknowledge the legacy of colonialism, although in such blinkered ways that it only makes things worse. A late season plot twist, which I won’t spoil, involves a harebrained scheme that ends with life-changing consequences for one of the

show’s least privileged characters.

Ultimately, *The White Lotus* is as much a tragedy as a comedy. Its humor comes from watching alphas crush betas, giving it an often-uncomfortable edge of cruelty.

This isn’t lost on Armond. Late in the series, he sits with Belinda after their workday is done, sharing a bottle of wine and surveying the last of the guests finishing their dinners. Embittered by what he sees, Armond quotes a line from Alfred, Lord Tennyson’s poem *The Lotus-Eaters*: “Hateful is the dark-blue sky/Vaulted o’er the dark-blue sea/Death is the end of life; ah, why/Should life all labor be?”

Like Odysseus’ men as recounted in Tennyson’s poem, Armond longs to become one of the lotus eaters, spending the rest of his life leaving his own and his guests’ troubles behind so he can enjoy at least some of the luxuries that they do. As White says in an interview appended after one of the episodes regarding vacation as a failed attempt to escape from one’s troubles, “There really is no escape.” What makes the show’s critique of whiteness and class successful is White’s recognition that this is even truer for the haves-nots who serve the haves trying to get away from it all. Sadly, that the straight, white VIPs win out in the end is no surprise.

HBO has picked *The White Lotus* up for another season.

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