

# The Montague Reporter

YEAR 20 – NO. 30

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

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EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

JUNE 9, 2022

ENDS OF ERAS

## About-Face Computers Hang Up Their Spurs



Left to right: Brian Faldasz, Veronica Phaneuf, and Dana Faldasz call it quits.

By MIKE JACKSON

**TURNERS FALLS** – “It’s hard to close a business like this,” says Veronica Phaneuf, looking out over the merrily cluttered desks and workstations at About-Face Computer Solutions. “But it’s also hard for us to keep it going.”

At the end of this month, the local computer service business Veronica started 27 years ago will officially close up shop. Veronica has already stopped working in the field; her brother-in-law and co-owner Brian Faldasz is planning to take a retirement; and her nephew, Dana Faldasz, is moving on to “bigger and better things,” having secured another job locally.

“Our shop is a generalist kind of shop, and the marketplace is effectively phasing out the generalist,” Brian explains of the decision to pack up, rather than specialize and expand, when the shop’s three-year lease in the Greenfield Cooperative Bank building on Avenue A ends this summer.

“Literally half of my waking hours I spend doing research,” he adds. “In the past couple of years, it’s gotten harder and harder. I cannot keep up.”

Veronica started About-Face in 1995 with her sister – not the one formerly married to Brian, they clarify for the interviewer in a gale of laughter – out of her Montague Center dining room. She wanted to work from home, because “it was either that or pay for daycare,” she says, and the sister advised that “computers are the way to go.” The name was chosen in an effort to optimize placement in the Yellow Pages, a widely available book that listed local businesses by category in alphabetical order.

In its early years, the business focused on building computer systems for businesses and home users, though maintenance, repair, and recovery services would gradually come to the forefront.

Brian, meanwhile, had started running a computer business out of his own home in eastern Massachusetts – “one of those little jobs you take on as a filler thing for a decade,” he says – after the biotech company he had long worked for folded its United States operations. In the early 2000s, after Veronica’s cofounder left the business, Brian began working for About-Face as a consultant.

“None of us has formal ‘computer training,’” Veronica says. “We all just learn as we go.”

“I did take a Pascal programming course at UMass Lowell,”

Brian corrects her with a grin, “back in 1822.”

Eventually, the greener pastures lured him out West, and in 2010 the pair decided to scout around for a brick-and-mortar location. “We thought a storefront would give us credibility,” Brian explains, “and give us a place to actually be able to do the work, instead of on some damn dining room table.”

The space they found was on the corner of Avenue A and Fourth Street, part of the Audio Video House television business owned by Norm Emond, Sr. Then-business manager Kathy Peura helped them with the transition, and Brian’s son Dana joined as an employee.

“He knew that I had an aptitude for it. I was the kid in seventh and eighth grade troubleshooting to get my first generation Xbox online to play Halo 1,” Dana says. “I’d been doing lawn care before they opened the store.”

The growing family business experimented with retail – even briefly selling toy remote-control helicopters at a small markup, dropped after it led to fixing a lot of broken helicopters at a loss – but mostly focused on the bread-and-butter: residential customers, with sporadic needs.

“It’s a tough business, our particular business model, the ‘break-fix’ model,” says Brian. The team didn’t want to pursue the increasingly dominant alternative, becoming a managed service provider (MSP), a business that monitors and maintains its customers’ systems for a subscription fee. “It’s basically non-existent for residential customers,” he adds.

The three staff members speak fondly of challenging problem-solving, of helping people build custom systems, and of setting their own work pace. But it hasn’t all been rosy.

Not long after the About-Face storefront opened, Dana had a customer bring in a stolen computer. “The reason that I knew it was stolen was because I had been working on it two weeks prior,” he recounts. “I dredged up the paperwork, and I tried the password that I had for it, and it worked.”

The customer yanked the device out of Dana’s hands and bolted when confronted, but was later apprehended. “Now, whenever we do password clears or anything like that, we take a photocopy of IDs,” Dana says.

“We haven’t had much of that,” Veronica adds.

Brian recalls opening devices to see **ABOUT-FACE** page A3

## Long-Planned Solar Bylaw Passes Wendell Town Meeting

By JOSH HEINEMANN

For the third year running, Wendell had clear enough weather to hold its annual town meeting outside on the common with its citizens spread apart. In just under three hours last Saturday, voters approved the entire 32-article warrant, with the exception of one article which was passed over at the request of the selectboard.

Articles that passed included a solar development bylaw, a resolution to support the Massachusetts Fair Share Amendment, and an operating budget of \$3,440,400. The operating budget passed with one dissenting vote, and all the others passed unanimously.

Unanimous vote does not mean a lack of discussion. To introduce the solar development bylaw, four members of the planning board stood in front of the meeting to summarize the proposed text, developed through a year of meetings, hearings, and consultations with lawyers. The new bylaw will allow rooftop panels by right, requiring no more than a building permit, and increasing oversight as the size of a proposal is increased. It includes a prohibition on standalone battery energy storage systems.

Citizen Morgan Mead proposed an amendment he had prepared that would allow standalone battery systems. He said the eight battery fires the board cited as a reason for prohibiting them means nothing unless compared to the total number of such systems, which is large.

This argument was countered twice. First, it was pointed out that lithium fires are particularly dangerous and difficult to extinguish, and that Wendell has a small volunteer fire department.

It was countered a second time by biologist Bill Stubblefield, who said that storing energy and moving energy uses energy, so locating a standalone battery system in Wendell,

see **WENDELL** page A4

## \$56M State Bridge Promise Postpones Pedestrian Project

By JEFF SINGLETON

About halfway through the Monday’s meeting of the Montague selectboard, chair Rich Kuklewicz, began a discussion of “some developments down in the canal district with bridges.” These developments involved the recent decision by the state Department of Transportation (MassDOT) to replace three bridges “on an expedited basis”: the vehicle bridge across the canal just north-east of Fifth Street; the so-called “White Bridge” across the river, on the same road to Greenfield; and the

Bailey bridge that crosses the canal a block downstream.

The total cost of this “expedited” project, according to a MassDOT document, is estimated at over \$56 million, and it is scheduled to be designed in 2026 for construction beginning a year later. It could be a “three-year build project,” Kuklewicz said.

Later in the meeting, town administrator Steve Ellis said MassDOT officials had revised their timeline to advertising the project in 2027 or 2028.

see **BRIDGES** page A7



Work is already substantially underway at the intersection.

## Children Charged in Setting Huge Factory Fire in Orange

By SARAH ROBERTSON

**ORANGE** – An abandoned factory building at the center of complex legal struggles among its feuding owners and the town of Orange was destroyed on Saturday by a fire allegedly started in the middle of the day by three children.

“The town was taking actions against the owner in court to attempt an emergency demolition of that property before the fire,” Orange fire chief James Young told the Reporter. “It is tied up in the court system right now between the town and the owner due to its

deteriorating condition.”

Over 23 area departments responded to the five-alarm fire, which Young said was the largest he has seen in his 24-year career. Young said the cleanup could cost as much as \$4 million, and that he is unsure where the money will come from.

The building is owned by Karmacan LLC, a holding company established in 2019 by Michael Koeller, an aspiring cannabis entrepreneur. Attempts to reach Koeller were unsuccessful as of press time. A co-founder, Joni Shehu, resigned from the company last month.

see **FIRE** page A6

## Both Softball Teams in Quarterfinals Friday

By MATT ROBINSON

**TURNERS FALLS** – The softball teams from Franklin Tech and Turners Falls went 5 and 0 this week in postseason play. Tech came from behind against Bristol County to win the state title in the Small Vocational tournament, and in the MIAA Division 5, both teams won back-to-back games, advancing into the Round of 8.

*FCTS 10 – Bristol 9*

Last Saturday, the Franklin Tech Softball Eagles beat the Bristol County Maroon Chieftains in extra innings, 10-9, to capture the Massachusetts Small Vocational state title.

“A wise man once told me,” coach Joe Gamache said after the game, “that it is better to win ugly than it is to lose pretty.”

see **SPORTS** page A8

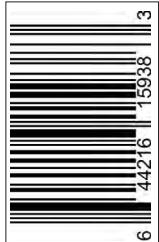


Turners Falls’ Madi Liimatainen delivers a pitch as the Thunder blanked Upper Cape Tech 21-0 in the D-5 Round of 32 tournament game at home.

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About Face Computing

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Arthur Evans   Harry Brandt   David Detmold  
August 2002

**GUEST EDITORIAL**

## Brian's Advice

As we were interviewing Brian Faldasz of About-Face Computer Solutions (see article, page A1), he offered this "closing message" to the general public, which we felt was worth printing here in full on the editorial page. – Eds.

The computer companies are running ahead of us, and they're not paying attention to what we want. Anybody that has talked to me over the past few years here in the shop knows that I'm really resentful about how the computer companies are dealing with things.

And my closing message for people, as I close my store, is basically: back up your [stuff], because you can't count on these companies to do it for you.

Buy a \$100 backup drive, and back up your stuff. Because that's the only thing that's going to save the pictures of your infant kid from ten years ago, or the emails that you got last week that you're going to be looking for six months from now after your computer crashes, and nobody can recover [anything] from it.

Back up your stuff, and save yourself. Because the computers have become such an integral part of our lives, and we don't realize it until we lose stuff, and that's a lousy way to learn the lesson. So learn the lesson now.

Back up your stuff in one fashion or another, whether you use a backup drive, whether you use

some product – it's not an endorsement, but here's one example: Carbonite. Cheap play. 70 bucks a year for one machine, they'll give you unlimited online storage. Use it, it's a cheap play.

And when your computer [soils] the bed, or you get hit with ransomware or something like that and all your stuff is gone and you're ready to cry, to have that backup is going to be just a dramatic difference. It'll save your history of your life. And the computers we're using to track our histories now.

Don't get an external solid state drive, get an external hard drive – the solid state drives can fade after two years, and you're not gonna be able to get your data off of them.

I've had people in my shop in tears, literally in tears, because their hard drive has completely failed and I can't recover anything off of it. And they've got pictures of their infant daughter or their infant son, or their wedding – these things that are parts of our history, that in the old days we would have had a piece of paper that had an image on it.

And we don't have that anymore, because we rely on these devices. If you don't back it up, it goes away. It's gone forever. So that's the only piece of advice I would give to people is, back up your [stuff] onto some other things besides your computer, so you can get it back again later.

And I say that with emotion.

## Lunches Lost?

In the January 7, 2021 edition of the *Reporter* we explored the ways public school meals programs had expanded to ensure food security for families with children through the COVID-19 crisis.

Childhood hunger interferes with learning and causes countless other woes, and it was a silver lining of the pandemic that the US government decided to take decisive action to prevent it.

But, with the same blurry and exhausted thinking that has us normalizing waves of viral relapse without guaranteed sick time supports, we have allowed one key element of the school food programs to expire: so-called "child nutrition waivers" from the USDA, which have allowed school districts to feed all children for free without

subjecting them to means-testing or other obstacles.

This program has bolstered the schools' summer meals programs for the last two years, and it will expire at the end of this month, which means that come July we will all be participating in an experiment to see just how much hunger they were preventing. (America's schools delivered 30 times as much food these last two summers as they did pre-pandemic.)

This may intersect with expected rising global food prices stemming from climate events and major crop loss due to the war in Europe.

The mutual aid groups some were setting up two years ago may now be needed in earnest, to fill in where our government has unfortunately fallen asleep.

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NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION



*"Mary from Millers" is the friendly face behind Rita's Lunch Counter at Freight House Antiques in Erving, open seven days a week for breakfast and lunch. The homemade baked goods here are a real draw both for travelers on Route 2 and the locals – especially the pies!*

## Letter to the Editors

### To Speak Loud and Clear

The silence. The deafening silence. The silence where there once was laughter, smiles, hugs and kisses. The empty spaces where there was once a living, breathing human being so full of potential and life. The silence now speaks for them. The silence speaks and howls in pain and grief.

There is no more there. Only grief, tears, and shrieks of pain and anguish. The silence will never end; it will be there forever and ever. The silence will speak to the ages and ask, "What did you do?" "Why didn't you stop this?"

The silence will speak for the lost children. Thoughts and prayers will never end the silence, for it is forever. The voices of the murdered will be forever lost to silence, never to return and bring smiles and laughter to the loved ones.

Grief and silence will be forever. Our silence and failure to act will only make their loss more painful. We could have, we should have, if only we did we could have prevented the empty, silent spaces from happening. Our silence helped pull the trigger that caused the silence.

When will America speak up for the powerless and weak and cease our silence?

Have we lost our chance? Have we lost the moment to speak loud and clear that this must stop? And it must stop on our watch. Before the silence engulfs us all.

**Kip Fonsh Leverett**

## FACES & PLACES



*Recognize anyone here? John Carey shared this photo he saved from the former Knights of Columbus hall in Turners Falls... a tiny plaque on the frame read "Franklin County Champs 1957." Some of these players could still be around!*

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Compiled by NINA ROSSI

The **Turners Falls Fishway** on First Street closes this Sunday, June 12, for the season. It has been open Wednesdays through Sundays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. if you want to come check it out. Admission and parking are free.

This Saturday, June 11 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., the **Rattlesnake Gutter artisans’ market** will be held at the Leverett Village Co-Op. I’ll be there, selling subscriptions and mugs, bags, and t-shirts at a *Montague Reporter* table. Stop by and say hi!

Also in Leverett this Saturday, at 1 p.m., the Leverett Education Foundation and Historical Commission are holding a special gathering at the Leverett Library called **“Celebrate Education in Leverett.”** This event celebrates the publication of *10-to-1: Interviews with Leverett Scholars Who Attended On Room Schoolhouses.*

The individuals in the book were interviewed by sixth graders in 2017 and ‘18. The event announcement promises refreshments, presentations, conversations, interactive exhibits, and books for sale. Rain will move the event to the Leverett Town Hall.

Great Falls Books Through

**Bars** is having a volunteer day this Saturday from 1 to 4 p.m. at 113 Avenue A in Turners Falls. Help sort and pack books for incarcerated persons with the group. No need to sign up; doors will be open, masks will be worn, sanitizer provided, and all are welcome.

The second annual **Unity Park Festival** is scheduled from 2 to 10 p.m. at Unity Park in Turners Falls this Saturday, June 11 as well. Vendors selling handmade, upcycled, vintage, and one-of-a-kind items will set up in front of Nova Motorcycles at 147 Second Street starting at 2 p.m.

Music begins with DJ Overtime, followed by Molly ES at 5 p.m. and Jimmy Just Quit at 7 p.m. Food and drink will be available from Santo Taco, Nice Snack Parlor, Ginger Love Café, and Pioneer Valley Brewing. The rain date is Sunday June 12.

The Active Bystanders group at Turners Falls High School is raising funds to help support refugees from the war in Ukraine. They will host a **Community Bowling Tournament Fundraiser** at the French King Bowling Center this Sunday, June 12 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Owner Erik Semb has donated the bowling center for this event, and all proceeds from team registrations and raffles will be donated to World Cen-

tral Kitchen to help feed the millions of refugees from the war. You may have four players on each team, for a \$40 fee per team. Contact superintendent Brian Beck at [brian.beck@gmrtd.org](mailto:brian.beck@gmrtd.org) if you are interested in registering or wish to donate raffle items.

The work bees continue at the **Art Garden** in Shelburne Falls. If you’d like to help them get ready for the free arts and crafts tent they will be running at the Green River Festival, they are looking for help on June 13 through 16, mostly in the afternoons. Call (413) 625-2782.

Would you like to give input for the 2022 Massachusetts Climate Change Assessment? Join the conversation about **how climate change impacts you and your community** during online sessions on June 13, 15, and 18.

The discussions run at 90 minutes each. Contact Carolyn Meklenburg at [carolyn.meklenburg@mass.gov](mailto:carolyn.meklenburg@mass.gov) for more information.

Learn about **amphibian migration** on Wednesday, June 15, at 6:30 p.m. Mass Audubon will present a virtual program, in partnership with the Montague Public Libraries, at which you can learn about the frogs and salamanders that migrate between their seasonal habitats, and how they do it. They will also outline efforts to protect these species, and how you can help. To register, email [librarydirector@montague-ma.gov](mailto:librarydirector@montague-ma.gov) or call (413) 863-3214.

For the first time, **Historic Deerfield will present a Juneteenth Celebration** on Sunday, June 19 at 7 p.m. The evening program of music and history, “Songs of Abolition,”

and includes early gospel tunes, music from the new documentary film *Songs of Slavery and Emancipation*, songs of the Hutchinson family (19th-century abolitionists who performed locally), and Pioneer Valley shapenote music. Performer and musicologist Tim Eriksen will be the emcee for the evening. Performers include La’Shelle Allen, Dr. Eric Brown, Dr. Kathy Bullock. Mat Callahan and Yvonne Moore, Tim Eriksen and the Pioneer Valley Shapenote Singers, and Christella Philipe. For tickets and information, call Historic Deerfield at (413) 775-7127.

The Mass Mentoring Partnership (MMP) announces the **15th and final annual Kelly Award** for 9th to 11th grade youth who have overcome tremendous adversity with the help of their mentor and are on track to pursue an undergraduate degree. The \$30,000 award will go in part to support the young person through high school, with the balance going towards their college diploma. Submissions are due by July 8; visit [massmentors.org](http://massmentors.org) for information on applying.

On Saturday, July 2, a **drumming workshop with Jo Sallins** will be offered as part of the Antenna Cloud Farm Music Walk in Turners Falls. Held outdoors at Unity Park across from Nova Motorcycles, the workshop will be open to all skill levels. Percussion instruments will be provided, and the workshop is sliding scale from \$10 to \$40. Participants must be 17 or older. There are only 15 slots, so book your ticket now at [tinyurl.com/JSdrumworkshop](http://tinyurl.com/JSdrumworkshop).

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

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ABOUT-FACE from page A1

find cobwebs and mouse skeletons – and one particularly impressive laptop full of insects and eggs. “We came back a couple hours later and there’s ants all over the counter,” he says. “There was an ant farm growing in there.”

“Some people are honest,” says Veronica, “and they call right up and say, ‘I spilled my margarita on my laptop.’” Others, though, deny culpability for their technical issues.

In January 2013, About-Face became the official technical administration of the *Montague Reporter* – volunteering their time ever since to deal with occasional crises, and helping keep this newspaper on deadline.

Not long after A.V. House was replaced by Norm Emond, Jr.’s business The Gun Rack, About-Face saw the writing on the wall. “The traffic was incredible, and they were running out of room,” says Veronica. “They were excellent landlords. They gave us plenty of notice, and we said ‘yep, we knew you were coming!’”

The year the business moved down Avenue A it had to downsize, laying off employee Fernando Ortiz with regrets – “we’re still friends,” Brian emphasizes. It opened its doors in the bank building in August 2019, and seven short months later, the world shut down.

“We expected we were going to start lighting up around here when people started doing the work-from-home stuff,” says Brian. “In fact, business dropped, because all of a sudden the work-from-home people were able to lean on corpo-



rate IT to get some *help* at home.” As the pandemic dragged on, the choice became starker: to thrive in the new era, About-Face would likely need to invest in growth, and find ways to lock in regular fees from its customers.

“It never stopped changing,” Veronica reflects of a nearly three-decade arc of the industry. “The customers pay you for your time to work on their computer, but they didn’t pay you for the time

you had to study to figure out how to fix their computer.”

For Brian, whose first computer was a Digital Equipment PDP-8, back in 1970 – “you had to program in with toggle switches” – the emerging threat was becoming ransomware, which allows criminals to hijack and encrypt a user’s data and demand money for a decryption key.

“A couple of my clients have been slammed with this stuff,” he says, including one ransom

About-Face was able to negotiate down from the equivalent of about \$50,000 in Bitcoin to about \$4,000. “Any business owners that are reading this article, I strongly recommend that you start looking at the MSP model,” he adds. “It looks expensive, but it’s going to be well worth your while, because things are evolving very fast.”

“Between COVID and that change in the technology,” admits Veronica, “we just don’t feel comfortable trying to keep this floating.” After considering putting the business on the market, the group decided it was better to simply hang up their spurs.

“It’s gonna be bittersweet to be moving on elsewhere,” says Dana. “I moved out here to work at the store, and didn’t really know anybody out here. I became really integrated into the community.... Being part of the support of the community is a big deal.”

“We are happy that we’ve been able to be here and provide the service and the resources that we’ve been able to provide,” says Brian. “And we’re sad – I’m sad that I’m now going away.”

Computers are piled up next to the front door, due to be returned to customers. Locals who relied on About-Face for their faxing needs, too, will have to find an alternative solution. Friday, July 1 at 1 p.m. is the official end of business.

“We have people that have been coming since 1995,” Veronica adds. “It’s nice to be a small-town business. But you just can’t be a small-town computer business anymore.”



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WENDELL from page A1

where the density of electricity use is thin, is wasteful and absurd. Battery systems should be located close to where electricity is generated, he argued, or close to where it will be used.

“We have a responsibility to maintain the forest,” said Sally Alley Muffin Stiffin.

Sam Birch said the proposed by-law is too conservative.

Citizen Kathy Becker said Wendell has an accepted policy not to amend a proposed bylaw at town meeting. It can be rejected if flawed, modified by those who proposed it, and offered again at a subsequent town meeting, she said, or it can be passed as is and modified as needed at another town meeting, but the time to amend a proposed bylaw is during the process of its creation. Mead withdrew his amendment, and the article passed unanimously.

During the operating budget dis-

cussion, which includes paying for police from Leverett, a citizen protested the long response time she has experienced.

Before Leverett was serving Wendell, the police department was part time and virtually volunteer. When a call came there might be no one of Wendell's police department in town and able to respond. Some places in Wendell are hard to reach, and GPS is not always accurate. Leverett has an officer on duty all the time, but that officer might be involved already, or at the far end of Leverett.

The operating budget passed with one dissenting vote.

The resolution supporting the Fair Share Amendment to the state constitution passed unanimously. If passed by the Commonwealth, it would add a 4% tax to annual incomes over \$1 million to fund public education including affordable colleges, and road and bridge maintenance.

**NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD**

## Development Planned Off Wendell Depot Road

By JOSH HEINEMANN

Wendell residents Michael and Karen Idoine met with the Wendell selectboard at its June 1 meeting, along with Mass Audubon land protection specialist Nick Rossi and Jeff Lacy of Rural Planning Associates, to make an amendment to the conservation restriction (CR) at the Idoines' property off Wendell Depot Road, Swallow Rise Farm.

This would be the first actual use of Wendell's conservation development bylaw. As amended, the CR would keep 110 acres free from development and leave two sections totaling 16 acres open for up to 13 homes. The protected land will leave a wildlife corridor between Mass Audubon's Whetstone Wood and state forest.

A prospective homeowner will be able to buy a share, and with it the opportunity to build a home, in either of the areas. Shares are sold on a sliding scale, from \$2,000 to \$10,000, and the proceeds go toward affordable housing in Wendell. The CR allows homeowners to use the protected land for agriculture or forestry, but not for buildings.

Selectboard member Gillian Budine recused herself as a family member, but with two votes, the board voted to approve the amendment and sign the necessary document before the weekend.

**Bridge Out**

Highway commission chair Phil Delorey reported that the state has closed the Kentfield Road bridge.

One family that uses a camp beyond the bridge found access to their property from the south, via Bullard Road, which the town closed and stopped maintaining. It took them some work. Delorey said he and road boss would look at small improvements the highway department can make to that access. Finance committee chair Doug Tanner said they should keep track of time and materials in case a source of money comes along.

The contract for rebuilding the

bridge has not yet been signed. The lowest bid was \$480,000, which was \$1,500 less than the next-lowest. After a contract is signed there will be a 10- to 12-week wait for materials. Delorey said that two contracts, the Kentfield Road bridge and the Mormon Hollow culvert, will cost \$200,000 more than the most recent estimates.

Open space committee chair Dan Leahy said there are failed culverts on Kentfield Road beyond the bridge which should be addressed at least with hay bales to prevent introducing tire dirt into the waterways. The board voted to sign the contract when the selectboard gets it as approved by the highway commission.

**Other Business**

Since the May election the board of assessors has had only one member, Martha Senn. Alone she does not make a quorum of the three-member board, and so no decisions can be made. The tax rate cannot be set.

The selectboard has been trying to recruit citizens to fill this and other vacant town positions with scant success, even raising the assessors' stipend. Until someone volunteers, selectboard member Dan Keller said he would fill in as needed. He will need to take a one-day online course and attend meetings.

Town coordinator Glenn Johnson-Mussad proposed a self-service station inside the town office entryway, but outside the locked office building itself, where citizens can get forms they need at any time, not only when he is in the office. Board members voted to give it a try and, if no problems arise, continue having a self-service area in the entryway.

The board voted to approve a contract by Demers Landscaping to replace the gravel at the veterans' memorial with a brick apron. The cost will be around \$6,000 and Deb Lewis, daughter of longtime selectboard member Ted Lewis, agreed to cover costs over what the town authorized. The improvement is a goal that he had hoped for before he passed away.

**NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD**

## No Takers at IP Paper; Greenfield Officer Hired; Trash Negotiation Underway

By KATIE NOLAN

At the selectboard meeting Monday night, town administrator Bryan Smith reported that the town received no proposals in its latest request for proposals (RFP) for redevelopment of the former International Paper Mill. One respondent wrote to the town saying they were interested in developing housing, and found that the site is not favorable for that.

Selectboard member Scott Bas-tarache said there were three options for the town: do nothing; auction the property off; or publish another RFP.

Selectboard chair Jacob Smith reminded those present that once the current insurance contract expires, the town will not be able to re-insure the property, leaving the town open to potential liability.

The board decided to schedule a site walk with all relevant boards and committees, and then hold a joint meeting to brainstorm the future of the vacant mill site. They also asked for reports from the police and fire chiefs about calls related to the property.

**Officer Hired**

The selectboard appointed Laura Gordon as an Erving police officer starting July 1, contingent on the outcome of the town's pre-employment screening and starting salary negotiations. Gordon has been a full-time Greenfield police officer since 1998.

Erving chief Robert Holst said Gordon is fully trained as an officer, would be “a huge asset” to the department, and would be able to pick up shifts quickly, reducing the amount of overtime for the town's current officers.

The board also approved a contract until June 30 with Community Support Options for providing mental health clinician services for the Police Regional Co-Responder Jail Diversion program, which is funded by a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH). Under this program, a clinician co-responds with police officers to calls that have a mental health component. According to Holst, the program has already been successful in “diverting people from hospital or jail.”

At its June 20 meeting the board plans to approve a contract for the DMH-funded program for FY'23, starting July 1. The clinician is based at the Erving police station, but is available to police departments in Bernardston, Gill, Leverett, Northfield, Warwick, and Wendell.

**Roads and Bridges**

The board approved using \$204,300 from state storm damage funds for Weston & Sampson engineering services for replacing the Swamp Road Bridge and repairing the North Street retaining wall.

The board authorized the same firm to proceed with engineering for replacing the Church Street Bridge. At the May 11 annual town meeting, voters approved borrowing \$1.6 million toward planning,

permitting, and constructing a replacement bridge.

The board approved spending \$88,500 for engineering the reconstruction of a wall on Bridge Street which protects the pumping station and has been eroding. The reconstruction project will be funded from state Chapter 90 highway funding, state Department of Transportation Winter Recovery Assistance Program (WRAP) funding, and town appropriations.

**Trash Disposal**

Bryan Smith told the board that there has been a reduction in total trash tonnage, and an increase in recycling, since the institution of the “free-mium” trash bag sticker program last year. Each household in town is allowed 156 free stickers per year, with extra stickers available on request. Bryan Smith said stickers will be available next week for FY'23, which starts July 1.

Currently, Casella Waste Systems picks up and hauls Erving's solid waste to USA Recycling in Agawam. The Franklin County Solid Waste Management District (FCSWMD) has been negotiating with Republic Services's McNamara Transfer Station to accept the town's solid waste in FY'23.

According to Bryan Smith, Republic has “the best rates of all the options,” but wants to be added as an additional insured party on each town's insurance policy, an unusual request. Adding Republic to Erving's insurance would cost \$2,500. He said the FCSWMD and the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Agency (MIAA), the town's insurer, are meeting with Republic and local towns about rescinding that request.

The board asked Bryan Smith to report by the June 20 selectboard meeting on the result of those negotiations, and also to find out whether Casella would charge extra if the disposal site is changed from Agawam to Springfield.

**Other Business**

Megan Rhodes, senior transportation and land use planner at Franklin Regional Council of Governments, presented the results of the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) compliance evaluation of town facilities and programs. The evaluation includes a “transition plan” with recommendations for actions the town can take to better comply with ADA regulations.

The report will be sent to the state, and the town will be eligible to apply for grants to pay for upgrades.

Rhodes said Erving employees appeared to be “pretty knowledgeable” about ADA requirements, and that while newer town buildings were generally compliant with ADA, older buildings would need work. She mentioned the bathrooms at town hall and Veterans Memorial Park as needing changes.

The board signed a memorandum of agreement with Northfield Emergency Medical Services to provide ambulance service in Erving for FY'23.

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NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

# Several Appeals to Expertise

By **GEORGE BRACE**

Road safety concerns in the Two Mile Road neighborhood and the fate of the historic Field building brought a larger than usual number of participants to Leverett’s select-board meeting on Tuesday, with the board ending up favoring a step-by-step approach in both matters.

Following a decision at a previous meeting to install two speed bumps on Two Mile Road, a group of area residents protested the move, and suggested alternatives be more fully explored. Marinos Vouvakis, a resident of Lead Mine Road, which is accessed by Two Mile Road, said the majority of households in the neighborhood had been unaware that the subject of installing speed bumps had been under consideration before it was approved.

Vouvakis presented the results of a neighborhood survey expressing support for safety improvements, and the belief there were better alternatives than bumps. He made a “formal request” that Leverett table the bumps and petition the state to reduce the speed limit from 40 mph to 25 mph.

No one at the meeting questioned the need for action to improve safety, but several residents presented research questioning the positive effects of speed bumps, and suggested that the town consult an expert on how to best address the problem of speeding in the area.

Amy Gaubinger of Drummer Hill Road, who had presented the original request to address the speeding problem, responded that it was a child-safety issue which disproportionately affected a minority of households living near the most dangerous section of the roads in question. She said the majority of survey respondents opposing the bumps lived further up the road, where the issue of speeding was not as critical.

Selectboard chair Tom Hankinson said the board had deliberated on the question at two public meetings, and had consulted with expert town employees including the highway superintendent, police chief, and other officials in coming up with the speed bump idea. He also noted there would be a cost involved in bringing in outside experts, which he said would need to be considered before making that decision.

Board member Melissa Colbert said she was concerned about “the most vulnerable population,” the children in the area. “What is the risk if we delay?,” she asked, but joined Hankinson in supporting a compromise solution involving a step-by-step approach.

The board indicated that they were in favor of further consultation, possibly installing temporary speed bumps, and taking other potential short-term measures while pursuing long-term solutions.

### Field Building

Resident Ann Ferguson presented a proposal that the board “appoint one or more impartial facilitators to set up a multi-stage, short-term process for listening to and gathering points of view and ideas for the future of the old Field library building.”

The proposal suggested this step should be followed by a series of

further steps in which the board would receive a report from the facilitators, decide which uses for the building “are potentially feasible, are beneficial to the town, and enjoy significant support,” and present their findings to a consultant for a building condition assessment.

Following the receipt of the assessment, the proposal suggested, a final decision on the fate of the building should be made by voters at town meeting.

Ferguson’s proposal came in response to the tabling of a town meeting article in April which would have authorized the board to sell the building for \$1 to a private non-profit group. Concerns were raised over a private group controlling the use of the building, and a lack of community involvement in the decision to make the sale.

The proposal prompted a lengthy discussion. Residents expressed their desires for the decision-making process to be transparent, democratic, and informed by those with expertise and no financial stake in the outcome, as well as by interested local people.

The need to move forward in a timely manner was also discussed. “We’re losing history as we speak,” said one resident, commenting on the building’s deterioration and saying it posed a danger to “irreplaceable artifacts” housed within.

The board decided to put out a call through the town newsletter and other means for volunteers to form an *ad hoc* committee as a next step in moving the matter forward. Anyone interested in taking part would be welcome to join.

### Mill Yard Bridge

A brief discussion on what to do about a deteriorating bridge on Mill Yard Road involved some of the same elements as the discussions on the Field building and Two Mile Road, with the board beginning to deliberate on how to weigh the re-

sults of a survey of residents who lived within one mile of the bridge, along with the need to move forward in a timely manner.

Colbert suggested a community forum be held in September.

### Mosquitoes

The board held a preliminary discussion with University of Massachusetts professor of microbiology Stephen Rich on the possibility of Leverett engaging in a mosquito surveillance program.

Resident Richard Nathhorst had reached out to Rich as a possible aid in helping the town opt out of the state’s aerial spraying program. Rich had previously created a successful, crowd-sourced, tick-testing program at the University which has since become a private enterprise.

Colbert commented that the state’s opt-out application is simpler this year, as the town is considered to be in a low-risk area, but that it would be “ideal” to get a program in place for the future.

Rich commented that he thought the tick-testing model he developed would work well on mosquitoes, and that a variety of benefits were to be gained for residents of Leverett and beyond.

### Other Business

The board approved a request from the Sunderland-based company Adventure East to have access to Leverett Pond and trails in town for paddling classes and other uses, as outlined in a memorandum of understanding, pending the opinion of town counsel that town insurance is sufficient.

Parking issues were discussed, and an Adventure East representative assured the board the company would follow the practices of other groups using the pond to reduce congestion.

The board appointed Shannon Gamble as the second of three Leverett representatives to the over-

NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

# Fire Truck Debt Override Vote Looms

By **JERRI HIGGINS**

The Gill selectboard met briefly Monday evening and approved several highway department projects, bids, and contracts, and authorized a modification to the police chief’s employment contract, among other business.

\$6,000 in state Chapter 90 road funding was unanimously approved for the highway department to purchase 600 tons of gravel at \$10 per ton. Purchasing the gravel now would save the department \$3,450 from a projected \$15.75 per ton cost during FY’23.

Town administrator Ray Purington was unanimously authorized to sign annual contracts with several highway department product and services vendors. An estimated \$114,656 Winter Roads Assistance Program (WRAP) grant was also unanimously approved and must be spent by the end of FY’23.

Purington told the board that most uses of the WRAP grant are “essentially like Chapter 90 projects.” The town pays for work done, and would be reimbursed through the awarded grant funds. While Chapter 90 projects need pre-approval by the Mass Department of Transportation, WRAP projects do not.

“The downside,” he said of WRAP, “is that even though this money was announced several months ago, the contracts do not become effective until July 1, so we pay those prices.”

Police chief Christopher Red-

mond was unanimously approved to receive compensation for hours worked when the funding sources are through grants, contracted police details, or other non-town funded sources.

A townwide debt exclusion vote will be held Tuesday, June 21 at the town hall, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. The ballot will ask residents to decide whether to allow a Proposition 2½ override for \$141,407 in potential borrowing toward a Pierce “Responder” fire truck. The truck’s purchase was approved at the annual town meeting. Selectboard member Randy Crochier noted that the \$141,407 would be “about a third of the cost” of the truck.

Purington told the selectboard that the planning board, board of assessors, and conservation commission have all declined exercising the town’s Chapter 61 right of first refusal to purchase 1.94 acres of land on Main Road owned by Richard French and Emily Samuels, who wish to gift it to their son.

Chapter 61 is a state land management program that offers landowners a tax break in exchange for keeping land designated as forest, agricultural, or natural habitat for at least 10 years.

Brian Peila was unanimously awarded leases for the town-owned Mariamante field for \$300 and the Boyle lot for \$250, for use as hay fields.

About 20 Earth Machine compost bins are available to Gill residents at the town hall for \$25 each, a savings of \$30 over the regular price.

sight committee charged with overseeing the joint-policing agreement with Wendell.

Gamble will serve as the citizen representative, joining Patricia

Duffy as the selectboard representative. A finance committee member remains to be appointed. Wendell will appoint three like representatives to the six-member committee.

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**FIRE** from page A1

Koeller secured a host community agreement in 2018 with Orange, acting as KT Capital Group LLC, to grow cannabis in a different mill building. He entered into business with Shehu the next year, naming him as a manager in two new entities, Karmacan and Orange Capital Holdings, LLC.

By 2020, that business relationship had apparently soured, according to court documents; in the fall, Koeller attempted to declare Orange Capital Holdings bankrupt. Last summer Shehu took legal action, and each party accused the other of fraud and breach of contract as the proceedings unfolded.

Amid this dispute, the old factory building at 16-36 West River Street was condemned – and a portion of the street closed for safety – after structural engineers warned of its imminent collapse in late March.

At an emergency meeting on April 1, the selectboard ordered the building be removed; four days later, Young inspected the building and deemed it a “significant and imminent hazard.”

“Debris including brick, wood from roof/fascia, and wood/glass from window sashes continues to litter the street and sidewalk,” he wrote in a letter to the town building commissioner. “The building has multiple large unsecured openings with evidence of unknown persons entering the structure.”

On May 11, Orange town counsel attempted to intervene in the case between Shehu and Koeller in order to secure a court order to have the building demolished, but were told the request “lacks the requisite connection to the pending case.”

**Return to Sender**

The town filed a fresh case on May 23, but a hearing scheduled for May 27 was canceled because not all parties were properly notified. The Superior Court had mailed the owners’ Notice to Appear directly to the long-vacant West River Street building itself, and it was returned to sender, according to a document filed on the court docket last Friday.

The next day, the building was on fire. Smoke and flames visible in the windows of the former sewing machine factory were first reported at 11:45 a.m. on a sunny Saturday. Firefighters began by using Orange’s municipal water supply, but eventually shifted to pumping directly from the Millers River because the volume of water needed was straining the local supply.

“Immediately from our arrival, we knew with the way the fire had progressed there would be no entry into that building,” Young said. “It was what we refer to as surround-and-drown.”

Well over 100 firefighters responded to the scene, Young said. Fire trucks from Amherst, Northfield, Gardner, and several other municipalities were visible on scene, while other departments helped by providing mutual aid to towns left without any coverage. The fire was so severe it triggered utilization of the state’s Fire Mobilization Plan.

By 2 p.m. the building had collapsed into the road in a cloud of flame, ash, and smoke.

“It’s dangerous, and he didn’t have it boarded up or anything,” said Raymond Bourgeois, owner of Bourgeois Wrecking & Excavation, the company helping with the site cleanup before the fire. “We told them eventually the wall is going to fall down, and the other is going to fall across the road, and that’s exactly what it did when it was burned.”

Bourgeois said the projected cost of the cleanup has “quadrupled” after the fire. Rather than salvaging wood beams and bricks, materials must now be sent to a hazardous waste site in Ohio and treated as potentially asbestos-containing material, he said. He doesn’t know yet how his company will be paid for the work, but says the town could look for emergency grants to fund it.

“It made the cost go absolutely out of control,” Bourgeois said. “The building had already gone out to an emergency bid. We were planning on tearing this down.”

“Once you start fencing in an area like that, or closing down the road, that attracts kids,” he added. “It just does.”

**CIRCUMSTANCE**

# At Turners Graduation, Reflections on Perseverance

By **IZZY VACHULA-CURTIS**

**TURNERS FALLS** – Last Friday, June 3, the Turners Falls High School (TFHS) Class of 2022 experienced their graduation celebration. The occasion was in the TFHS gym, which was decorated with gorgeous floral arrangements. The event was so inspiring – made especially so by speeches from several Class of 2022 seniors.

In the beginning of the celebration, all 35 seniors walked into the gym, and to their seats, to the tune of “Pomp and Circumstance.” Seniors Hannah Warnock and Kiley Palmquist then performed the National Anthem, which was absolutely amazing, and was accompanied by many cheers from the audience in attendance.

Following our principal, Mr. Christopher Barnes, who gave thank-yous and welcomes to everyone in attendance, the first senior that presented a speech was class president Emily Young, who is attending Greenfield Community College in the fall.

Emily talked about how her class continued to get smaller over the years, especially once the pandemic started. “The people who sit here today aren’t the same as the ones who sat at 8th grade graduation,” she said. “They’re here because they were the strongest ones. You were the ones to stay despite all the losses and obstacles given to you.”

Dylan Burnett, the vice president of the class, then gave her speech, which I found especially inspiring. Dylan is planning on studying psychology at UMass Amherst. She, too, expressed how strong everyone in her class is.

“You and probably most of the people in the audience tonight have likely dealt with a lot in your lives, especially these past few

years,” she said. “Maybe it is a concern about how you will afford college, or maybe it was stress from issues with your family; maybe it’s wondering what in the world you’re going to do with your life. Or maybe, like me, it could be the pain of losing someone you loved.... This year has probably been the toughest year of my life, but living through that adversity has turned me into a braver person who is able to persevere through anything.”

Finally class salutatorian Paige Sulda delivered her speech, which I also found amazing. Paige is attending Emmanuel College in the fall to study nursing. She expressed the importance of never forgetting all the incredible people who help you with your process.

“Every accomplishment we make opens up more doors and room for us to continually grow,” she said. “I challenge all of you to follow your dreams, and I know that sounds cliché, but seriously, do what you love...”

“My Dad once said, ‘You may not be able to control the end result, but you can control how committed you are to the process, and the determination and persistence it takes to stay focused on the individual tasks that lead to success.’ I encourage you to follow this advice wherever you go, and, please do not forget about the people who have supported you and shaped you all today.”

Our superintendent, Mr. Brian Beck, then presented a speech praising the Class of 2022’s “exceptional leadership.”

Following all the incredible and inspiring speeches the class advisor, Jessica Vachula-Curtis (full disclosure: she is my mother) then gifted each graduate their diploma, and a single red rose to give to someone in attendance who they appreciate.

Once all the diplomas were displayed, all the seniors presented their roses to someone



*Odalis Ramirez-Martin decorated her graduation cap in honor of her parents – and OF herself.*

in the audience, while Maddie LeBorgne, a junior, performed the song “The Alma Mater.” Mr. Barnes then announced the whole class had graduated, and everyone tossed their caps into the air!

One of my favorite parts of the graduation *soirée*, besides the heartwarming and inspiring speeches, was seeing everyone’s intricately decorated graduation caps. One of the prettiest I saw was designed by Odalis Ramirez-Martin.

Odalis explained her cap’s design: “On one side is the Mexican flag, which represents my father since he’s from Mexico. The other is the Guatemalan flag, which represents my mom because she’s from there... If it wasn’t from them coming to this country with nothing, and giving me everything, I wouldn’t have graduated, so the words ‘Gracias a Mis Padres’ means ‘thanks to my parents.’”

“As for the butterflies,” she continued, “I added them to represent me, because you know, butterflies go through different processes to become one. They’re like me: scared, but ready to see what the outside world and life will take me.”

I thought Odalis’s graduation cap was absolutely gorgeous, and the story she expressed makes it especially so. Every single one of the seniors has been through so much difficulty in their lives, whether it was losing someone they loved, experiencing the pandemic, coming to a new and sometimes scary country, and so much more.

Saturday’s graduation ceremony highlighted to everyone in attendance that the Class of 2022 is incredibly strong, and destined to accomplish amazing things.

*Izzy Vachula-Curtis is currently finishing her sophomore year at Turners Falls High School.*



*Class vice president Dylan Burnett (center) delivered a speech on living through adversity.*

**Arson-Related Delinquency**

While no one was sent to the hospital with any injuries related to the fire, two nearby residents reportedly suffered burns while trying to douse their home with water to protect it from the flames.

Two other buildings at 50 and 58 South Main Street, also uninhabited and recently used as a location for the Stephen King-inspired television show *Castle Rock*, were severely damaged. Both have ties to Koeller’s companies and were involved in his legal dispute with Shehu.

“We are not prepared to say they are completely unsalvageable at this point,” Young said.

Another abandoned building a block away on East River Street, a former blacksmith shop, was destroyed after falling ashes caught fire on the roof. A fifth building was saved when firefighters were able to quell a brush fire sparked by the falling ash.

The West River Street building was one of several that manufactured sewing machines

for the New Home Sewing Machine Company, established in 1867. By the 1890s the business was the largest employer in Franklin County. From the late 1990s to early 2000s the building was home to a cereal factory, Innovative Cereal Products Inc., owned by Walton Kilbourn. Karmacan purchased it for \$165,000 in December 2019, and it has been vacant ever since, though one of Shehu’s court filings complains of “squatters.”

“Thank god those little kids got out of there,” said Bourgeois. “It could have been worse.”

The three children between the ages of 12 and 14 are facing “arson-related delinquency charges” in Greenfield juvenile court in relation to the fire. Information about the arraignments and specific charges is closed to the public.

“Juvenile court is considered a court of rehabilitation,” Laurie Loisel, a spokesperson for the Northwestern District Attorney’s office, told the *Reporter*. “These are children and they deserve a second chance. So the idea

is not to saddle them with a criminal record.”

A reward of up to \$5,000 had been offered to anyone who could provide information about how the fire was started. Video evidence helped investigators from the town of Orange’s police and fire departments, the state police Explosion and Investigation Unit, the state fire marshal’s office, and the Northwestern District Attorney’s office find the alleged perpetrators.

“The investigation into the Orange fire received many tips from a variety of sources early on that helped move the case forward,” Loisel said Wednesday afternoon. “No reward money has been paid.”

The Massachusetts Property Insurance Underwriters Association, which runs the Arson Watch Reward Program Hotline, will decide on and disperse the reward money, Loisel said, and not state or local investigators.

While West River Street is now reopened, but the public is being encouraged to stay away from the building rubble due to possible health and safety hazards.

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BRIDGES from page A1

This would seem like good news for Montague, were it not for the addendum that all three bridges will be designed to carry foot traffic. This makes a new pedestrian bridge planned for Fifth Street – already under construction, after seemingly endless design changes, cost overruns, and committee discussions – superfluous.

The original pedestrian bridge, built in 1912 to provide access to the paper mills across the power canal, appeared to be attached to the vehicle bridge at Fifth Street, but it was in fact a separate town-owned structure. It was closed in September 2017 by a state inspector who noticed, in the words of Montague highway superintendent Tom Bergeron, that there was “virtually nothing holding it up.”

Two years later, the state agency MassWorks awarded the town a \$2,163,000 grant to build a new footbridge at the same location. But as the design work was beginning, MassDOT announced it would require the bridge be built at least 30 feet away from the vehicle bridge, which required a move to its south side.

The need to relocate the footbridge meant that some of the project would fall on land controlled by the power company FirstLight, which owns the canal and is currently in the process of negotiating a new federal license with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). This required an altered design, negotiations with FirstLight over easements, and coordination with the federal process, all of which increased the project’s cost.

Then, in the spring of 2021, sinkholes developed on the north side of the canal, which required more expensive footings for both the bridge and its ADA ramp.

The escalating costs of the project caused town officials to seek an additional \$200,000 from a special town meeting last October, but in January, MassWorks increased its commitment to the project by \$770,000. With “intersection work” on the corner of Canal Street beginning on May 9 and the bridge itself soon to be delivered, there appeared to be light at the end of the tunnel.

But last Thursday, MassDOT revealed to a small group of town officials that a more ambitious bridge project was needed which makes the whole ordeal superfluous.

“The challenge is that we are building a pedestrian bridge that, in my mind, should last 50 years, to be conservative,” said Kuklewicz. “And the state is putting in new bridges making it likely that bridge would be removed. We might get four years of service out of it if we’re lucky.”

He suggested halting the new bridge project and redirecting the MassWorks funds to related projects.

Selectboard member Matt Lord initially said that he thought the town would get more than four years out of the pedestrian bridge, but after reviewing the timeline he agreed with Kuklewicz

Ellis said the owner of the former Southworth mill building, which is slated to be remodeled into a cannabis grow facility, has devised “alternative plans” to shuttle employees to his business.

Town planner Walter Ramsey said it would be a “lot of work” for town officials, whether they con-

tinue with the pedestrian bridge or “disentangle ourselves from it.” He noted that much of the money already spent and committed, which he estimated at approximately \$500,000, has been for “intersection improvements” which would benefit the area even if the pedestrian bridge project was abandoned.

But, Ramsey said, the town is “at the point of no return,” because the bridge itself is about to be manufactured for delivery.

In the end the board voted to order contractors to “discontinue” all elements of the pedestrian project except those currently underway to improve the intersection, including sewer upgrades in progress.

Center Shafted

The pedestrian bridge discussion did not feature significant “public input,” but the same could not be said for an earlier agenda item on the “Closure of the Center Street Bridge” in Montague Center. That part of the meeting was attended by nearly a dozen Montague Center residents, who were not shy about expressing their opinions about the abrupt bridge closure on May 26.

The main complaint was that the closure had not been accompanied by adequate signage, so vehicles were driving toward the bridge and then making dangerous turnabouts. There were also questions about why the nearby South Street bridge was on the state’s “bridge list” for construction within a few years, but not the one on Center Street.

Lou Ekus, who lives just west of the bridge, suggested that the town place “slightly more clear signage” on both sides of Center Street near the Congregational Church. “[Drivers] see ‘bridge closed,’ and they still think they can pass,” he said. “This is not a complaint – I completely understand the situation. Signs had to be put up quickly.”

“I very much enjoy living on a dead-end street now,” said resident Deb Radway, “but I don’t think that’s best for the town of Montague, or the Montague Center community.”

Radway argued that Center Street was a “wider road, a better road” than South Street, and was used “much, much more by the community.” She requested that the town “get a better understanding” of why only the South Street bridge is on the state list.

Ariel Elan suggested that the town request the state “speed up” the South Street project in light of the closure of the Center Street bridge,. She also suggested that the state be asked to put up “tourist-oriented signage” to direct travelers to the Bookmill complex.

Selectboard member Chris Boutwell suggested putting electric signs at both ends of Center Street. Bergeron agreed, but said he would need approval from the state to put one on Route 63, a state road. Bergeron also said he believed the state was making detour signs to be placed near the intersection of Routes 63 and 47.

“Twice this past week I have seen 18-wheelers do turnarounds in front of my house, like they were planning on using the bridge,” said Leigh Rae, who lives on Center Street across from the village common. “I can’t understand how that would be, but it’s really unsafe.”

“Definitely that bridge needs to be repaired,” said Kuklewicz. “I would agree.”



FURTHER NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Learning Experiences; Badgering Haulers; Still Marketing Town-Owned Buildings

By JEFF SINGLETON

At its meeting on Monday night, the Montague selectboard reviewed the latest COVID-19 numbers, which are being presented in a radically different format than previously under a new grant-funded “shared services” program in collaboration with Greenfield, Deerfield, and Sunderland.

The data was presented by Jack Sullivan, an epidemiologist hired under the grant. It showed 110 in May for Montague, and 16 cases over “past week.” The chart showed similar numbers for the three other towns, though these were not controlled for population.

Selectboard member Matt Lord noted that the time period used to indicate influenza data, which appeared at the bottom of the chart, did not seem to match that of the COVID data. He also said it was not clear whether the number of “hospitalizations” at the bottom of page referred to visits or admissions.

Chair Rich Kuklewicz said he would like to see the numbers “trended on a trend chart,” because it is “hard to remember the numbers week over week unless we continue to keep all these sheets.”

Sullivan and board of health chair Melanie Zamojski were asked if there would be any public discussion of how the data, which mainly showed official COVID counts for the most recent month, could be more useful for setting policy. Sullivan replied that how the numbers are used is “above [his] pay grade,” and that he would not express an “opinion” about them.

“We’ve never been through a pandemic before in modern times,” Zamojski said, “and everything is a learning experience.”

Trash Contractors

Public works superintendent Tom Bergeron reviewed the plan of the town’s trash pickup and recycling service, Republic Services, to move from a four- to a five-day week. The new schedule requires some streets in Montague Center previously served on Tuesdays and others, primarily on the top of the hill in Turners Falls, previously served on Wednesdays to be moved to Mondays.

The list of streets is linked to the front page of the town website.

Kuklewicz said he had received calls about trash pickup from residents on Davis Street, one of whom said the trash had not been collected for a month. Ellis, noting that Davis Street is “right next to my street” called this “stunning and unacceptable.” “We are holding Republic accountable... and we are badgering them every single day,” he said.

State-Backed Development

At the request of town planner Walter Ramsey the board amended a grant agreement with the state funding the town’s comprehensive plan.

The board also approved a request to fund an appraisal of the old “Cumby’s building” at 38 Avenue A, which will soon be going on the market once again. The company New England Wound Care recently abandoned its plans to renovate the building, which remains under control of the Montague Economic Development and Industrial Corporation.

Ellis informed the board that state senator Joanne Comerford and representative Natalie Blais had asked whether the town wants them to continue to advocate for the painting and restoration of the upper portion of the General Pierce Bridge. Ellis and the selectboard seemed to feel that the issue was essentially a

lost cause and that the request, if implemented at this point, might delay the bridge’s reopening.

Ellis also reported that Blais included a \$50,000 earmark in the House version of the state budget for municipal roofs in Montague, and that Comerford had successfully submitted a \$100,000 earmark for a new generator at the water pollution control facility (WPCF).

At Ellis’s request, the board agreed to submit a \$5.5 million grant application to the state for stabilization and selective demolition of the Strathmore mill complex.

Ellis was asked whether the state agency MassDevelopment was doing a feasibility study of the mill, as previously reported. Ellis said the agency was undertaking a “canal district master planning process,” which “is inclusive of that building’s marketability and also some structural assessment.”

He added that the “consultant’s remarks” indicated the complex was in “extremely tough shape,” except for the freestanding Building 11.

Phasing Out

Ariel Elan of the town energy committee presented a revised version of a letter to the state Department of Public Utilities challenging proposals by local gas companies and the DPU’s process in docket 2080, “The Future of Gas.” A previous version of the letter had been criticized by the board for not being specific about the changes the energy committee wanted to see in the process.

The board unanimously approved the new draft, which asks the DPU to require that the gas companies develop plans to “phase out the vast majority of their natural gas and other carbon-based fuel distribution and sales by 2050.”

Other Business

At Bergeron’s request the board approved bids for fuel purchases, primarily for public works vehicles but also for those of the WPCF, the Turners Falls fire department, and the airport.

The board approved a number of requests for payments for the latest phase of the Avenue A streetscape project. The board also authorized professional services contracts to the Franklin Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority and Berkshire Design for overseeing the construction work in FY’23.

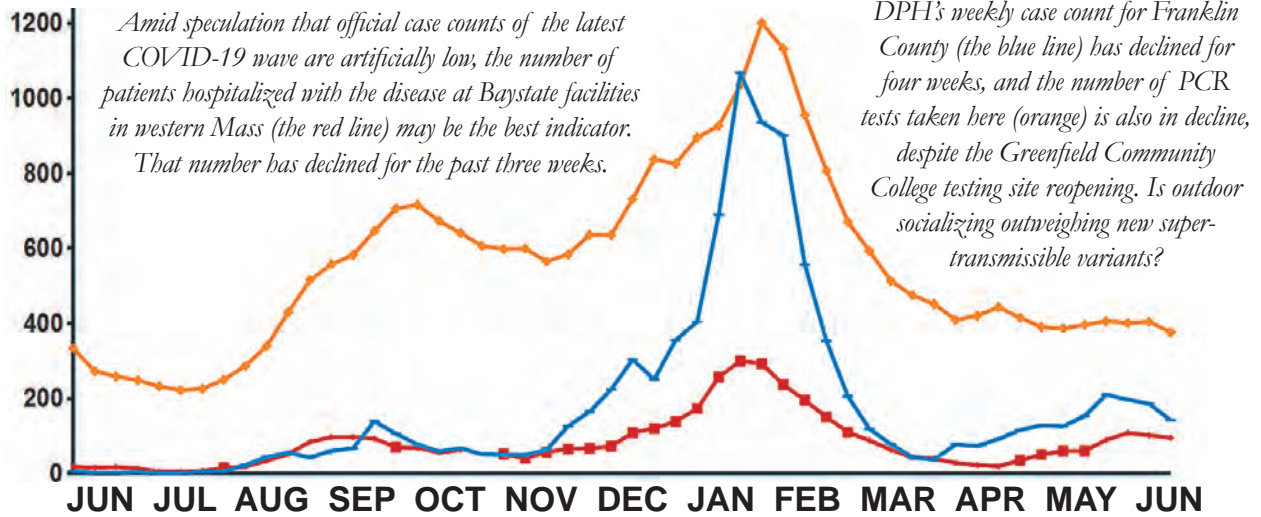
Ellis told the board that the town retirement board, which now occupies space on the first floor of town hall, has requested moving to part of the town hall annex recently vacated by the highway department. He said the town was evaluating necessary upgrades to the space, which would be paid for by federal American Rescue Plan Act funds.

At the request of administrative assistant Wendy Bogusz, the board agreed to extend the liquor license of Hubie’s Bar and Grill on Avenue A, pending a letter affirming that owner Shawn Hubert is continuing to market the property.

Bogusz also informed the board that the state liquor commission will hold a hearing on the seasonal license request of Santo Taco on Second Street because the business wants to be able to move its food trailer to multiple locations. Bogusz clarified that liquor service and storage would remain only at the Second Street location.

The board approved a deed transferring property on Federal Street to Robert A. La Shier of Dandridge, Tennessee. La Shier was recently awarded the property, which borders the Sawmill River, at a town auction for a bid of \$113,000. Ellis said the property had been La Shier’s “childhood campground.”

MEANWHILE, A PANDEMIC



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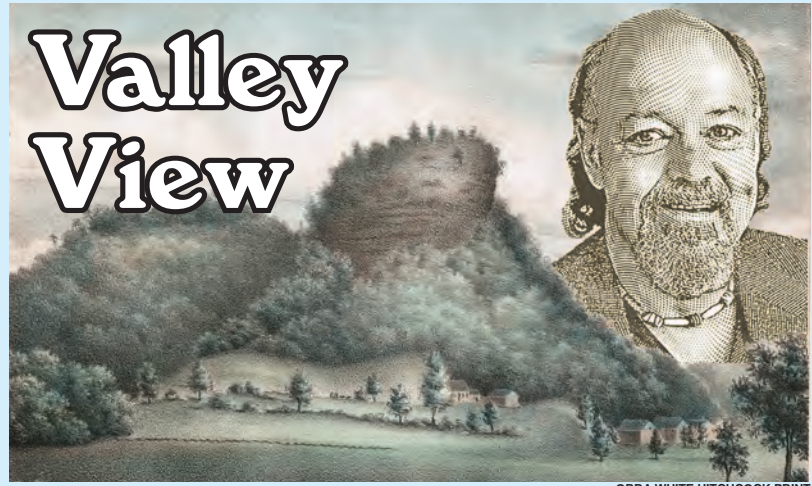
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By GARY SANDERSON

**GREENFIELD** – As seasons change, so, as we age, do our seasonal patterns and observations.

With hayfields chest high, pink weigela in full bloom, white mock-orange buds popping, strawberry scent sweetening humid air and the shad run trickling down, that reality smacked me upside the head on Memorial Day Weekend, when an unexpected daybreak encounter with a nesting doe unfolded in a finger of woods following Hinsdale Brook through my upper Greenfield Meadows neighborhood.

Headed south in gray light across the Plain Road bridge north of the old Polish Picnic grounds, I heard rustling movement to my left. I glanced up and immediately spotted a telltale white flash, followed by a ghost-like four-legged profile fleeing. A good-sized doe, she stopped and, angling away from me broadside, froze on a knoll less than 50 yards away, her head turned to face me.

“Whfoo!”

Her loud danger signal broke the morning silence. Soon she uttered another, then many more as I walked away. By the time I turned right onto Meadow Lane and walked out of earshot, she had sounded several emphatic warnings, uncharacteristic compared to many other recent deer encounters. Obviously, in my mind, she had fresh fawns nearby, perhaps birthed overnight, and was communicating with them.

Feeding or maybe returning from drinking brook water, she was communicating with her nest, not me. What I likely didn’t hear were low, guttural, burp-like sounds aimed at her nest. She was cautioning her nestlings to sit still. Potential danger at hand.

Had I searched for that nest, I think I could have found it. But why disturb a nest? Frankly, did I not know that the fawn or fawns welcomed to the world there would be up and running by the time this column hit the street, I wouldn’t have described their location. Birthing sites are to be protected, not publicized.

Simple deductive reasoning told me that doe was talking to her nest, not me. For months now, I have been bumping into daybreak

deer who had not once previously been vocal. I had regularly encountered groups of three and five, and twice just one larger solitary deer I suspect was a buck. In all cases, they’d notice me approaching, freeze on high alert, and allow me to advance within 30 yards or so before retreating without a peep. Sometimes they’d just dip back into the woods, let me pass and, confident I was no threat, circle across the open hayfield some 50 to 100 yards behind me.

This most recent nesting doe had without doubt broken off from one of those groups I had been seeing. Her behavior was clearly that of a doe protecting her nest. Honestly, deer sightings had been conspicuously absent for a week or two and I knew they were establishing fawning nests. That time of year.

By August, does will reunite and I’ll start seeing pairs of them accompanied by their fawns. Most often there seems for some reason to be two adults and three fawns, sometimes just two fawns, rarely four in my experience. Fawn mortality may be a factor. Nature’s way. Some never make it out of their nest, others are eaten by predators or hit in the road or chopped to bits by first-cut hay mowers. It happens. An ugly scene that didn’t play out when fields were cut the old-fashioned way, with scythes.

A few days after our first encounter, at the same early hour, that nesting doe and I met again from afar. Not 50 yards from where I had last seen her, there she was, head down, snuggled close to the wood line munching clover and rye. She raised her head, perked up her ears, and stared. Classic nesting doe behavior. Always alert. Never far from the nest unless, intentionally trying to distract danger away from it. Does perform that protective ritual, similar to broken-wing displays feigned by ground-nesting birds, to lure predators or human intruders away from their nests in playful, catch-me-if-you-can acts of deception.

Since moving from my hometown of South Deerfield to Greenfield 25 years ago, I have many times witnessed such acts performed to lead danger away from a nest. I can’t, however, claim to have always recognized the routine for what it was. Roaming the see **VALLEY VIEW** page B3

# GREAT FALLS APPLE COLUMN

By ANNABEL LEVINE

**TURNERS FALLS** – The growing season is in full swing, so I thought I would use this month’s column space to take you along on a little stroll around the Great Falls Apple Corps gardens.

When starting a garden, the saying goes that the garden first “sleeps, creeps, then leaps” during the first three years of existence. Well, we’ve been at this for more than three years now, and all I can say is that our gardens have taken that leap and just keep hoppin’!

The first stop on our tour is the Unity Park Community Garden. If you notice that the garden is looking particularly beautiful these days, it’s because after a few years, we’ve amassed a solid crew of gardeners and volunteers who spend their time and sweat watering, weeding, and weed whacking. Apple Corps partner Rachel Labrie is back in town this summer after being away last season, and we are so grateful to have her heart and hands back in the flow.

We are also grateful for our group of engaged gardeners who’ve cleaned our water tank, organized our shed, and kept up with our U-Pick beds in addition to their own. There’s a lot of great energy in our little corner of the park this season!

Before we visit the plants already in the ground, our first stop at the Unity Park Community Garden tour is the stockpile of free plant starts – tomato, red kale, sweet Annie, etc. – that we’d like to give away. The trays of plants are next to our three-bin compost system and should get in the ground as soon as possible. If they are still there by publication date, please grab some and save us from having to water them, and from their eventual fate in our compost.

After checking out the free pile, take a look at the eleven U-Pick beds we tend towards the front of the



Chive blossoms ready to harvest in a U-Pick bed at the Unity Park Community Garden.

garden. While it’s early yet, there are still bounties ready to harvest. Chamomile plants have taken over the standing bed closest to the road, and will keep producing blooms as the plants get harvested.

The other morning I harvested all of the open flowers, worrying that I hadn’t left any for anyone else, and when I came back to the garden a few hours later there were even more buds ready than the ones I had picked. A case against austerity if I’ve ever heard one!

The chamomile is just the start of our herbal bounty.

see **APPLE CORPS** page B8

# Response: Ziggy’s Turn

*Editors’ Note: A previous piece by Ziggy’s person, Lee Wicks, titled “Adopt Ziggy! (Just Kidding),” appeared in our February 24 edition.*

By ZIGGY WICKS ROSENBLATT

**MONTAGUE CENTER** – Although many who read this paper got a good laugh at that story about me, I feel maligned. My person told partial truths in service to her sense of humor, and that obviously resonated with many readers since I now have a reputation, and when we walk around town, some people say, “look there’s the big bad white dog we read about.” Then they smile, but they’re afraid to get too close because she wrote that I like to jump on people and knock them down.

That should not have been a compound sentence. Though I love to jump, I never ever intend to knock anyone over. I want to put my paws on your shoulder and kiss you, that’s all.

And speaking of kisses, my person referred to a bad habit that I have since abandoned. I am no longer interested in my own fecal matter, or any other creature’s. If

this was a problem at one time, it probably reflected some nutritional insufficiency. If I’d been fed steak instead of puppy kibble, it would never have been a problem at all.

The writer who exaggerates failed to mention that I was just a puppy when I dug that hole in the floor and chewed on the windowsills. My teeth hurt. It felt good. As soon as my people did what the

trainer advised and bought me big bones and thick rubber toys, I became less destructive.

I love my trainer. Her name is Elise. I get so excited when she comes over that I forget everything I’ve learned, and I jump up on the gate and make a commotion, but she ignores me and then I compose myself. She has taught me a lot, but

see **ZIGGY** page B5



Ziggy calmly enjoys a treat – one that is neither a windowsill, nor fecal matter.



# Pet of the Week



DAKIN HUMANE SOCIETY PHOTO

## “MAX”

Max is an incredibly cute senior gentleman with a sweet disposition. Initially he seems shy but once he warms up to you, he’ll be purring, kneading, giving you head butts and looking for pets.

He is accustomed to living indoors and while there was a small child in the home, he didn’t interact with her. Unfortunately, she was allergic to him and that’s why he’s available for adoption. He got along

fine with his feline brother.

Max’s previous owner said he’s a quiet boy, content to just laze around and keep to himself.

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

## Senior Center Activities JUNE 13 THROUGH 17

<b>WENDELL</b> Foot care clinic the first Wednesday of each month. Call Katie Nolan at (978) 544-2306 for information or appointments. Senior Health Rides are now available. Contact Jonathan von Ranson at (978) 544-3758 to set up a ride.	10:15 a.m. Aerobics 11 a.m. Chair Exercise 12 p.m. BYO Lunch to Bingo 1:30 p.m. Parking Lot Pantry 4 p.m. Mat Yoga <b>Thursday 6/16</b> 9 a.m. Walk With Ease 1 p.m. Cards & Games 3 p.m. Meditation for Seniors (pre-register)
<b>LEVERETT</b> Chair Yoga classes are held on Zoom on Wednesdays. Foot Care Clinic is held monthly. For more information, contact the Leverett COA at (413) 548-1022 x 2, or <a href="mailto:coa@leverett.ma.us">coa@leverett.ma.us</a> .	<b>Friday 6/17</b> 10:15 a.m. Aerobics 11 a.m. Chair Exercise
<b>GILL and MONTAGUE</b> The Gill Montague Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information please call 863-9357.	<b>ERVING</b> Erving Senior Center is open 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Mondays through Fridays. Open for cards, coffee, and snacks daily. For more information, please call (413) 423-3649.
<b>Monday 6/13</b> 10:15 a.m. Aerobics 10:30 a.m. Chair Yoga in the park (pre-register) 11 a.m. Chair Exercise 12 p.m. Pot Luck Lunch 1 p.m. Knitting & Needlecrafts Circle <b>Tuesday 6/14</b> 9 a.m. Walk With Ease 10 a.m. Tuesday Morning Knitters 1 p.m. Chair Yoga 3 p.m. Tai Chi <b>Wednesday 6/15</b> 9 a.m. Veterans’ Agent Hours	<b>Monday 6/13</b> 8:30 a.m. Toe Nail Clipping 9 a.m. Interval 10:15 a.m. Seated Workout <b>Tuesday 6/14</b> 9 a.m. Good for U 10 a.m. Line Dancing <b>Wednesday 6/15</b> 9 a.m. Cardio Low Impact 10:15 a.m. Chair Aerobics 11:30 a.m. Bingo <b>Thursday 6/16</b> 9 a.m. Core & Balance 10 a.m. Barre Fusion <b>Friday 6/17</b> 9 a.m. Quilting & Open Sew Fitness Room Open



## Sex Matters

a sex-positive health column

by STEPHANIE BAIRD

**GRANBY** – Usually for July and August I write more of a summer potpourri column reflecting on news tidbits or random sex-related items. However, I have a special August column planned featuring a new book from a local sex educator and therapist, so stay tuned for August, while I dish out the summer smorgasbord a little early.

I am excited to report that Tapestry Healthcare’s annual auction did not disappoint. Last year I won a pamphlet on masturbation and an erotic art print by the mother of masturbation, Betty Dodson. This year I won a braided rope flogger and look forward to testing out some sensation play.

The flogger was handmade in Florence, Mass. by Agreeable Agony, a local company (who knew!) They describe themselves as “a collection of crafters/artisans and kinksters from the east coast US who build beautiful handmade floggers, dragon tails, slappers, pitcher candles, claws, pretty colored bondage rope, and other unique kinky toys, and have a passion for sex education!” They also “hope to forge a more tolerant and understanding future for kink communities.” Go to [agreeableagony.com](http://agreeableagony.com) to check out their wares. They have many pride-themed color schemes for June, national Pride Month.

I attended an American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors and Therapists (AASECT) virtual conference recently and learned many new things. One of the keynote presentations was titled “LGBTQ+ Bullying: Everyone’s Problem” by Mike Parent, PhD, a University of Texas professor.

Out of data from about 15,000 high school kids, homophobic bullying was reported by 7.1% of heterosexual identified kids, and was found linked to higher rates of depression and suicide risk. For reference, around 22.9% of LGBTQ+ identified kids generally report homophobic bullying in research samples.

Parent noted that the recent spate of “no promotion of homosexuality” laws, or “don’t say gay” laws (except in regards to disease), that still exist in many states and are resurfacing in other states will likely increase many youths’ risks of depression, suicide, and/or nicotine and vape usage – including heterosexually-identified kids. The more that adults, the media, the laws, and others can support all kids and their mental health, the easier it will be for them to journey from adolescence to adulthood feeling strong and empowered.

Another keynote speaker, Lucy Fielding, urged mental health providers working with transgender folks to understand that “resolving gender dysphoria is not the point – gender pleasure is!” Her keynote was an incredible foray into the world of literature, as she shared quotes and analysis about the inherent nuances of gender and the possible pleasure within all bodies.

Another speaker shared their “gender freedom model,” a lovely Venn diagram with three circles of “play,” “pleasure,” and “possibility,” with “freedom” in the middle overlap of the circles, highlighting a sense of positivity and possibility within gender journeys.

Part of AASECT Spirit Week was a workshop called “Confidence Under the Sheets” by the women who host “Clit Talk,” the “pleasure-positive podcast.” While I didn’t much care for the homogeneity of the three pretty cisfemale white thirty-something hosts – hello? diversity in age, looks, and background, anyone? – I enjoyed the chance to learn more about my own limiting beliefs regarding my sex life, as well as to receive a visualization to help me imagine some of my own erotic fantasies.

They ended their workshop by teaching about “pleasure anchor phrases” (PAP). These follow the formula of “Pleasure is possible when I am being \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.” An example of a PAP is, “pleasure is possible when I am receptive, engaged, and vocal.” An example of the opposite of a PAP is, “I’ll have hot sex once I lose weight.” They were emphatic that pleasure and good sex do *not* depend on changing one’s body, but rather accepting one’s body

where it is at, and changing a limiting mindset.

Give it a try and come up with a PAP for yourself, and place it on your phone, bedside table, car dashboard – you name it. Before you know it, your dream sex with Western Massachusetts forest-dwelling hermits and their fairies and gnomes may indeed come true.

Speaking of good sex, I had the good fortune to facilitate a webinar for my publisher, Springer, on my *EMDR Therapy and Sexual Health* book. My college professor and chapter contributor Dr. Wendy Stock, with whom I studied back in the ‘90s in Texas, shared information about qualities for good sex, as well as continued gender inequity in partnered sex.

According to feminist sex therapy and research, for “good sex” to occur (particularly between heterosexual ciswomen and cismen), partners need to first identify oppressive sex role expectations and performance myths, and then work on improving sexual communication. Then they can address relationship issues such as sexual initiation and timing, plus power issues such as the sharing of the domestic workload, and make their sexual interactions more about connection than performance.

Dr. Stock reminded us that despite the fact that she and many other vocal sex educators and therapists have been working in the field for the last 40 years, a “gendered orgasm gap in partnered sex” continues to exist. Namely, “75% of cismen versus 29% of ciswomen orgasm regularly during partner sex,” with a large percentage of ciswomen (still) faking orgasm, despite most everyone knowing clitorises exist.

Many ciswomen continue to engage in unwanted, non-arousing sexual activities, despite the recent vocal *#metoo* movement, and many feel unempowered or unentitled to set boundaries or ask for what they want. So speak up, folks with clitorises! Learn about your bodies and communicate what feels good. Use PAPs to claim your ideal sexual contexts and the orgasms waiting within!

And for cismen, ask your partners what they want. Pay close attention to verbals and nonverbals (lubrication, as I’ve written before, does not correlate with automatic interest and readiness – it’s the mind that determines interest). Look for enthusiastic yeses. If your cisfemale partner isn’t yet speaking up about sexual desires, give them time and non-pressured encouragement.

As for same or similar gender couples, we find the orgasm gap goes way down. For ciswomen having sex with ciswomen, 86% of them report orgasming regularly. About 90% of cismen having sex with cismen orgasm regularly.

In the realm of good news and continued language evolvment, I recently learned of the term “sexual debut” as a more accurate descriptor than “losing one’s virginity.” Filmmaker Paromita Vohra states “sexual debut expands the definition of sex, which (also) includes kissing, touching, cuddling, flirting, and overture. There are many ways in which people (of different gender combinations) enjoy sex.” I love this term and look forward to encouraging my clients to utilize this inclusive phrase.

A bright moment in fighting puritanical erotophobia occurred during “Mission: Joy,” a global film event in early June. The interviewer asked the Dalai Lama about how he experiences pleasure in his life as a monk. His Holiness promptly exclaimed, “Sex? Sex!!,” laughing and relaxing with Archbishop Desmond Tutu. I definitely hope their next global event will be “Mission: Sex Positive!”

*Stephanie Baird, LMHC is an OWL Facilitator, EMDR Consultant and Psychotherapist, certified in Advancing Clinical Excellence in Sexuality (ACES,) and encourages her clients towards thriving sexual health. She welcomes feedback and suggestions at [sexmatters@montaguereporter.org](mailto:sexmatters@montaguereporter.org).*

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**VALLEY VIEW** from page B1

fields in the company of springer spaniel gun dogs, I just figured the deer were fleeing the dogs, and never gave it much additional thought.

The same held true for previous encounters dating back to childhood, with and without dogs. The deer would run and I'd watch them gracefully bound away without trying to analyze what was unfolding before my eyes. Now, walking alone without the distraction of rambunctious pets running wide quarters through fields and bordering woods, I typically get closer to wildlife, and can better understand dynamics.

Learning never ends for careful wildlife observers, whose perspective evolves over time. Whether you're a wildlife biologist, a hunter, a photographer, or just a plain pedestrian naturalist, what begins as simple childhood curiosity and fascination can become insightful analysis aimed at predicting movement patterns. It is a strategy that dates back to the earliest hunter/gatherers. The goal is to be at the right place at the right time. It's how earliest man fed and clothed himself, and today how bowhunters

and wildlife photographers today fill their freezers and portfolios.

I'm sure I have not seen the last of this nesting doe who crossed my path. I had seen her before and will see her again, likely many times. I will not be able to distinguish her from others, though. I wonder if she dropped one fawn or two? Male or female? Mixed-gender twins, perhaps? Because I didn't catch them out as a unit before they vacated their birthplace along the southern bank of Hinsdale Brook and northern perimeter of the old Polish Picnic grounds, I will never know the answer.

Nonetheless, I will see those deer many times before shotgun blasts echo from the ridges and snow covers the forest floor. I'll bump into them on my walks, and pass them feeding along the road. I may even happen upon one of their nesting places next year. Such possibilities keep daybreak walks interesting and entice insightful observers to continue placing one foot in front of the other on their daily-exercise rounds.

Never boring. It's beneficial, too.



## EXHIBITS

**Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls:** *Pollinators and Predators of Massachusetts and Costa Rica.* Bart Bouricius's photographs feature insects and arachnids. June 8 through July 5. Reception and slide show Saturday, June 25, 1 to 3 p.m.

**Looky Here, Greenfield:** *Smoky Puddle*, works by Cathy Wusocki and Wayne Hopkins. June 4 through August 27. Reception Friday, June 24.

**LAVA Center, Greenfield:** *Word on Words*, community art show combining word and images. Reception this Saturday, June 4, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. *But Not Without Purpose*, photography by Blake Soule. Reception Thursday, June 9, 5 to 7 p.m. Through June.

**Hawks & Reed Ballroom, Greenfield:** *Submerged, an oceanic art odyssey*, work by mother and son artists Nina Rossi and Jon Bander. Mixed media, soft sculpture, paintings, welded metal sculpture, and ceramic works. Through June 15.

**Leverett Crafts & Arts, Leverett:** *Roving Minds & Fertile Eyes*, work by mother

and daughter artists Beverly Phelps and Sandra Haynes. Through June.

**Fiddleheads Gallery, Northfield:** *Photography*, by New England photographers. Through June 12.

**Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne Falls:** *2022 Quilt Group Show*, quilts by Timna Tarr, Lee Sproull, Carson Converse, Wen Redmond, Sarah Stroud, Ann Brauer, Carol Anne Grotian, and Audrey Hyvonen. Through June 27.

**Shelburne Arts Coop Gallery, Shelburne Falls:** *June: Busting Out All Over*, group show by coop members. Through June.

**Local Art Gallery, Mill District, Amherst:** *Valley Artist Portraits.* Isabella Dellolio photographed 20 local artists for a project putting their portraits on Valley Bike kiosks. Through August 31.

**Gallery A3, Amherst:** *Syncope: Homage to Jazz.* Donald Boudreaux, Andres Chaparro, Bobby Davis, Terry Jenoure, and Rodney Madison present paintings, drawings, photographs, prints, and sculptures inspired by Jazz. Organized by guest curator Terry Jenoure.

Through July 2. Reception this Thursday, June 2, 5 to 8 p.m.

**Anchor House of Artists, Northampton:** *In Other Wor(l)ds.* B.Z. Reily, Micha Archer, juxtapose image and text in 3D and graphic art, with Max Strong's tight, congested assemblages tracing world travels. *Bitter Sweet Feast*, photographs, installation, poetry, and a short film, based on performance by the Exploded View collective (Trish Crapo, Edite Cunha, Sam Wood) during the pandemic. Opening reception for all shows next Friday, June 10, 6 to 8 p.m.

**A.P.E. Gallery, Northampton:** *Sunny Allis, Kinetic Book Structures.* While in residence June 6 to June 12, Allis will make an interactive, kinetic book using mixed media materials. Workshop Sunday, June 12, 2 to 5 p.m.. First in a series of summer residencies at A.P.E. Contact the gallery to reserve a workshop spot.

**Brattleboro Museum & Art Center:** Work by M. Carmen Lane, Roberto Visani, Yvette Molina, Mildred Beltré Martinez, Sachiko Akiyama, Louisa Chase, and Anne Spalter. Through June 12. Info at [www.brattleboromuseum.org](http://www.brattleboromuseum.org).

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

## Calling 911 To Report A Hand-To-Hand Transaction; Breaking Into The Wrong House; ‘Having Relations’

#### Monday, 5/30

9:15 a.m. 911 caller from Avenue A reporting that someone was turning the door handle to her apartment to see if it was locked, and now they are checking other doors. Building checked; no one located.

3:21 p.m. Caller from G Street states there is a boat that was dropped off and the past couple years it has just been left all summer long. Caller is wondering if it is legal to leave a boat like that. Nothing in area upon officer's arrival.

7:22 p.m. Message left in general mailbox stating they have a possum that looks dead, but had some babies. Called back and referred to wildlife rehabilitator and animal control officer.

9:47 p.m. 911 caller from FL Roberts states a female with short blonde hair and a blue shirt is causing a disturbance. Unable to locate.

#### Tuesday, 5/31

6:58 a.m. Caller reporting he is currently in Erving near a farm, and a cow is loose. Shelburne Control reports location is in Montague; advises farmer was contacted and is headed out to get cow.

8:48 a.m. Employee from Silvio O. Conte Anadromous Fish Research Center reporting that someone damaged the main gate to the property again.

4:21 p.m. Chief is reporting loose horses running on Federal Street. Officer spoke with one of the farms who stated they had some horses get loose but they are secured.

11:35 p.m. A 32-year-old Turners Falls woman was arrested on a default warrant.

#### Wednesday, 6/1

12:51 p.m. 911 caller from H Street states that she saw a hand-to-hand transaction that she believed to be a "drug deal" happen a few houses down from hers. Involved vehicle left the area.

5:46 p.m. Caller reporting an abundance of buzzards over by the bridge in Gill. Shelburne Control advised.

9:40 p.m. 911 caller from East Main Street reporting a female party is trying to attack her. Officer advises it was a verbal altercation; the involved female is a little intoxicated; she is now inside with a friend who agreed to let her stay there and to keep quiet for the rest of the night.

#### Thursday, 6/2

2 a.m. Anonymous caller advises people are inside the Third Street Laundry and should not be there. Unfounded.

7:11 a.m. Walk-in requests to speak with an officer regarding a male "doing donuts" on the FirstLight Power property on Gatehouse Drive. Officer spoke to involved male; he will repair the damage done to the property.

10:13 a.m. Caller observed a male with a shaved head, tank top, and shorts get into a shiny burgundy-colored Mini Cooper type vehicle with a handgun in a black holster in his hand near Avenue A and Fourth Street. Incident occurred ten minutes ago. Officers unable to locate male or vehicle.

2:35 p.m. Caller from Park Street reports a blue trash truck took a wide corner and almost struck her vehicle five minutes ago.

2:58 p.m. Caller reports a tractor-trailer truck went up onto the island and into the garden at the intersection of Montague City Road and Greenfield Road. Officer out with vehicle. No damage to island.

5:38 p.m. Caller from Seventh Street reporting a male party with a hat and

sunglasses was peeing in the park approximately ten minutes ago, and a male in a wheelchair was panhandling. Officer advises that he is parked out in front of the library and he does not see anyone in the park.

8:48 p.m. Anonymous caller reporting a red car parked at the basketball courts with two people inside who appeared to be having relations. Officer advises that the parties were the daughter of the vehicle owner and her boyfriend, both fully clothed.

#### Friday, 6/3

7:50 a.m. Caller from Montague Street reports seeing a bear in the neighbor's backyard.

9:22 a.m. Male called the NY State University police department to make an animal complaint regarding a cat on Montague Avenue. Info was previously forwarded to animal control.

4:25 p.m. Caller reporting that 12 to 15 teenagers appear to be about to get into a fight near Avenue A and Fourth Street. Responding officer advises nothing showing in area, and no one around.

8:16 p.m. 911 caller stated that he dialed accidentally; the phone was in the camping chair and the button was being pressed down. No emergency services needed.

9:52 p.m. Caller reports hearing kids over at Hillcrest Elementary School. Area search negative.

11:50 p.m. 911 caller reporting car off road on Old Northfield Road; states both parties may be intoxicated and became belligerent when the caller offered help. Shelburne Control contacted to dispatch fire and EMS. Rau's requested for tow. Courtesy transport provided for passenger. Greenfield PD advises they made contact with the mom and she was advised of the situation.

11:57 p.m. Caller from Marshall Street states she was on her screen porch and heard a male on the phone comment, "Are you sure I am breaking into the right house?" When caller asked what he was doing, the male said he was waiting for someone, then took off on foot. Area search negative.

#### Saturday, 6/4

5:39 a.m. Caller from K Street states it looks like someone shot out two of his house windows last night. Officer advises it was a rock that went through a porch window and the inner house window. Investigated.

11:57 a.m. Caller from Davis Street states that her car was "gone through" overnight and some small items were taken.

2:15 p.m. Passerby believes

that she may have witnessed a drug deal between two vehicles on the side of Lake Pleasant Road. She may also have heard gunshots. Unfounded.

2:59 p.m. Caller from South Prospect Street states that the dogs from a neighboring house jumped their fence and came after his dog while his wife was out walking their dog. Their dog has some minor injuries. Copy of call left for ACO.

3:57 p.m. 911 caller states she was sitting outside and put her phone in the cup holder of the chair; it must have hit her sunglasses and dialed on accident. No emergency.

5:50 p.m. Caller from King Avenue states that someone murdered her bushes. Officer advised. Arrest made; details redacted.

7:43 p.m. Caller from North Leverett Road states there is a wedding going on and she can hear the announcements; states she spoke to the chief, who told her to call and have a decibel reader brought up to see just how loud it is. Referred to an officer.

9:08 p.m. Caller from Prospect Street states he was just robbed and threatened to be beat up. Officer spoke to suspect in front of his parents. Suspect was Mirandized by card, and started speaking, then decided to stop talking without a lawyer.

#### Sunday, 6/5

8:34 a.m. 911 caller states that a male in a bathrobe is running in and out of traffic on Avenue A and is not making sense when he talks. Officers advised. Returned to home or family.

12:01 p.m. Three reports of a disturbance in the Eleventh Street alley. Situation mediated at this time.

6:21 p.m. Caller from Green Pond Road states that some youths are going door to door asking for beer and cigarettes. Caller states they have also been entering people's garages. Unable to locate.

7:34 p.m. Caller from Griswold Street reporting a large amount of smoke in the area. Received a call from a homeowner who advises they are trying to have a cookout and they put lighter fluid on the grill but there is no emergency.

8:24 p.m. Caller from Greenfield Road states someone tried to break into his house and was caught on camera; they took off into the woods. Starting a track.

**Monday, 6/6**

1:26 a.m. Multiple callers advising of dumpster fire on Fourth Street. Officer advises fire contained to dumpster. Second officer advises FD has extinguished fire.

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Interview by J. BURKETT  
And TROY CURRY

**TURNERS FALLS** – To celebrate the great, recent collaborations between Russ Waterhouse and Mary Staubitz (a.k.a. Donna Parker), we decided to interview them both!

Both Mary and Russ have been involved in music for a million years, and we don't have the space to cover every project by both of them. Mary is a super unique artist; we first heard her on the *Donna Parker* Twisted Village LP in the early '00s and from her shows out here in western Mass. Some of her other projects include Foam/Staubitz/Rawlings, White People, Golden Shores, Neptune, Secret Diary, Life Parker, Grease Release, and Dollar Bin. She plays out here at places like the Cold Spring house in Belchertown, Mystery Train in Amherst, and Ten Forward in Greenfield, so keep them on your radar – we bet there will be another live show out here soon.

This column is about Mary, and the next will be about Russ. They also just started a cool interview series on YouTube, so check it out!

**MMM:** *The new interview series is so great. How did you decide how to do it? Do you have plans for more interviews soon?*

**MS:** Non-Event asked us to do something for their year-end fundraiser. We're bored with livestream music performances, and wanted to do something a little different. I had been on Mike Watt's podcast a few weeks before and had so much fun talking to him that I pitched Non-Event the idea of doing a live talk show with a roster of Non-Event performers. I had already had the idea of setting up a phone line for anonymous messages, and now I had something to apply the phone line idea to as well.

We were lucky that so many left messages, and Russ made a really cool background collage of sounds and voices that ran against the phone interviews, which were really just chats with friends. We're definitely going to do it again. Like everything Russ and I do together, it was a learning curve, and we pulled it off.

We have a list! I can't wait to do it again, I'm waiting for the reason, you know? I'm hoping we could announce the guests beforehand and people might leave messages on the line of their burning questions for those guests. I like audience participation. I would do this with a live audience if I could!

**MMM:** *Thanks for playing some of the MT / Mystra events in the past few years. Any thoughts about those, or about being artists during the pandemic?*

**MS:** I love playing at Mystery Train. I love that it's a little hidden house, like a hobbit den in the midst of a city. I think my favorite MT show was when Arkm Foam invited me to play a tapes-and-turntable duo with him there. Tarp and Id M Theft Able were also on the bill.

So it's the middle of winter, I'm running late because the drive was bad, and I'm wearing this big long puffy coat. I hadn't been to that location before and didn't know how small it was, so I burst through the door, and everyone whips around to stare at me because Tarp is mid-set and it's really, really quiet. Whoops. OK.

I'm slinking around the CD bins, trying to be as unobtrusive as possible, flipping through stuff. I see something interesting and reach for it, and my big long puffy coat knocks a big stack of CDs to the floor with a very loud crash. Oh god, oh god. I immediately duck down so no one can see that it's me – although I'm

sure they knew – and then to erase any doubt Id M *points at me*, and now I'm trying so hard not to laugh, still crouched down behind the bins, poor Tarp is trying to play and I am ruining it and if I laugh I'm going to make it ten times worse and I will never be invited here again.

Fortunately you forgave me! That was the first time I played with Arkm, too, and it was so fun – he's deceptively precise, and wryly funny – that we've played together a lot since then.

It was also that same evening that Id M did one of my favorite sets ever. He picked four volunteers and asked us to recant our earliest childhood memory, one word at a time, through a touch signal and created a crazy Dada vocal round. He is so clever, and the comfortable intimacy of Mystery Train allowed for it.

The camaraderie and the unexpected moments are what I miss most about live shows, seeing someone do something new and feeling inspired by it. I traveled so much around New England to play that all of my friends are flung far and wide, and I feel like I don't see anyone anymore, I feel disconnected. Old vibrations, indeed. I want to hum.

**MMM:** *You played at Mystery Train with Angela Sawyer a long time ago... Was that project called "White People?" Any memorable memories about that project, or fun stories about Angela?*

**MS:** Oh, I remember! That was a super long time ago, 2005? Angela and I did a White People tour with Matt Wascovich, and it was pretty fun. I remember playing a distro warehouse in Brattleboro, Jeff the Pigeon in Allentown, and the Burnt Hills house in Albany.

Angela had just gotten her driver's license – mine was still suspended at that time – and seeing her get more confident behind the wheel was really cool, and sometimes knuckle-biting. Angela is a fascinating person, and a veritable encyclopedia of music. We listened to a lot of easy listening on that tour, and I remember wishing aloud that I could sing like Kay Starr or Theresa Brewer, and Angela said "Of course you can. Anyone can sing. You just need to practice."

I'm not surprised she moved on to comedy, the most difficult form of performance there is – Angela is very smart and loves a challenge. It was either that, or comedy was the thing that finally allowed her heavy use of duck calls.

**MMM:** *Are there any connec-*

*tions, memories, or total high points you want to talk about?*

**MS:** Everything I did in the past got me here. It's like a big soup that I kept tossing little odds and ends into and it simmered away. I like having so many influences, and no influences; I like fooling around with different subgenres; I feel fortunate to collaborate with so many people that I respect and that are way better than me and honestly I have no idea why they play with me, maybe my jokes are just funny.

I really like where I am right now, and I like drawing from my past, and I like moving forward!

**MMM:** *Do you guys have any fave goth, jazz, or hip hop LPs from back then? What about '80s movies?*

**MS:** I love the '80s, but not cool underground '80s. Pop stuff. I sing to Laura Branigan in my car. I love this Cyndi Lauper song "'Yeah Yeah'" – actually I like that whole record, her big one, *She's So Unusual*. Cocaine psychosis Steve Nicks. Billy Idol. My friend Al Deaderick has been making me old school hip hop mixes for years and that is the hip hop I like, the mid 80s stuff that's still minimal but more skilled. I love Traed-onya, Kool G Rap, BDP, Eric B and Rakim, MC Lyte – it's all so tough, so rhythmic, so exciting to listen to.

**MMM:** *Do you have any good ghost stories?*

**MS:** I swear this apartment I had in Jamaica Plain was haunted. You were never alone in it, even the rare times you weren't alone – it was a three-bedroom, and there was usually someone crashing on the couch too. You just had that creepy feeling at all times. Looking back, it might have been slow carbon monoxide poisoning, but who knows really.

I would love to see or hear a real ghost! I keep thinking that if I just believe hard enough, I will see one one day.

**MMM:** *Is there something you would like to share about the western Massachusetts music scene?*

**MS:** I feel like the environment is a huge factor in Western Mass music. The physical surroundings are so beautiful, and I hear a lot of natural sounds carry over into people's work. It feels like a bubble when I'm there, under a dome almost, and I think that sense of both tight-knit community and detachment enables people to do pretty much anything they want creatively. I know it sounds corny, but I feel so free when I'm there.

When we played Josh's Mystra Halloween show in Turners Falls, I

saw all these leaves over the black-top, so for our set I *raked leaves* while Russ played minimal synth, and I felt good about it because it sounded great, and I could never pull that off in Boston or Providence – I wouldn't even have the environment available to host the idea.

Neil Young hosted five-minute performances on the frozen river of Turners Falls and... people wore bird masks, and pretended to be penguins, and like, no one gives a hoot. Just do whatever you want! That space and acceptance makes everyone succeed.

I saw Donkey No No play next to a river, and a flock of geese flew onto the water, and the music already had enough space in it to accommodate the unexpected environmental sound.

I made a trio recording with Arkm Foam and Vic Rawlings in the middle of winter in Vic's backyard in Florence with pines towering over us, and for the release we stuffed the CD cases with pitch pine needles that Arkm and I collected from the Montague pine flats. That's a creative process that couldn't happen anywhere else.

Cold Spring Hollow in Belchertown is one of my favorite places on earth. Talk about freedom! My friend and ex-resident Tim Johnson brought me there to play a show as Donna Parker. I was pretty washed up, and was excited to play a show. We pull up to this falling apart-house that would look abandoned if there weren't so much life beaming from it. Tim tells me I can play wherever I want in the house, and I set up in this recently vacated room that's still strewn with paperback books, old socks, and stray small furniture.

It's my turn, and after I finish my first piece, I look up and the room is *packed* with kids, like – where did they even come from, they're interested in this? This old woman playing noise? That show made me think hard about what I'd done and where I was. Since then I have played so much at Cold Spring in so many combinations that Erik Brown offered me an honorary resident plaque. (Where is it, Erik?) I have played in every playable space in the house.

I have done some of my best live work, and some of my worst, in that house. I wave to the horses and the big grindstone on the drive up. I pass through the abandoned railroad bridge and feel like I'm entering the happiest Twilight Zone on earth. I used to listen to "Don't Fear The Reaper" a lot on that drive, because I felt like my life was changing.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Later This Month: Lester Grinspoon Celebration at UMass

**AMHERST** – "Lester Grinspoon Reconsidered: Celebrating a Pioneer of Drug Policy and a Legacy of Social Change," a symposium honoring the Harvard psychiatrist who became a celebrated advocate for reforming marijuana prohibition laws and for recognizing marijuana's potential medicinal and recreational benefits, will take place at the University of Massachusetts Amherst on Friday, June 24.

The day-long event will be held in the Campus Center on what would have been Grinspoon's (June 24, 1928 – June 25, 2020) 94<sup>th</sup> birthday. Renowned psychologist, neuroscientist, and author Carl Hart will give the keynote address.

In the mid-1960s, struck by the rising popularity of marijuana and its reputed dangers, Grinspoon began to examine the medical and scientific literature about its usage. To his surprise, he found no evidence to support claims of marijuana's harmful effects, and his resulting 1969 *Scientific American* article drew wide attention.

His research ultimately convinced him of marijuana's benefits, including enhanced creativity and medicinal uses; his interest took a deeply personal turn when his young son, undergoing treatment for the leukemia that eventually took his life, found that marijuana eased his severe nausea.

Planned with the Grinspoon family and longtime friend and activist Allen St. Pierre, the symposium brings together some of the country's most prominent experts and activists, many of whom knew Grinspoon, worked with him, or were inspired by his work, and includes those whose work takes a visionary approach to the role that marijuana and psy-

chedelics can play in society.

Three panels will explore where drug policy has been, including the journey to (more or less) cultural acceptance; where it is now and impacts on scientific research and business and industry; and what lies ahead for cannabis and psychedelics in medicine, policy, and the culture at large.

Two of Grinspoon's sons, astrobiologist David Grinspoon and physician Peter Grinspoon, will welcome attendees in the morning, with a talk about their father; the afternoon will feature a multifaceted tribute to Grinspoon. Other confirmed participants include NORML founder Keith Stroup, Drug Policy Alliance founder Ethan Nadelmann, current DPA executive director Cassandra Frederique, physician Genester Wilson-King, Grinspoon's collaborator James Bakalar, researcher and nurse Mela-

nie Dreher, expert on youth and drugs Marsha Rosenbaum, activist and lawyer Richard M. Evans, and cannabis industry consultant Kris Krane.

The symposium will culminate in a keynote address from Professor Hart, author of *Drug Use for Grown-Ups: Chasing Liberty in the Land of Fear*, followed by a reception.

The Grinspoon symposium is being held to celebrate Lester Grinspoon's life and legacy, to raise awareness of the drug policy archives held in SCUA, and to foster the use of and scholarship in those collections, including Grinspoon's own papers. The Lester Grinspoon Fund was established to support processing and digitizing his papers.

For more information on the June 24 symposium and to register, visit the website at [umass.irisregistration.com/Site/Grinspoon](http://umass.irisregistration.com/Site/Grinspoon).

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# LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here's the way it was on June 7, 2012: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

## A Way to the Other Side

The Wildlife Management area in Montague, nicknamed the “conversation area” because it’s a place where friends and neighbors meet and chat, has been divided for seven years since the bridge that linked the property on each side of the river collapsed. Together the fields at the end of North Street and the area across the river offer winding meanders along the water, woodland paths, swimming holes, abundant bird watching and a paradise for dogs. Walkers on both sides look longingly over the water and wonder if there’s a way to get to the other side.

Over the years various efforts to construct something new have failed. A suspension bridge was torn down by the state because it was deemed unsafe. An arched bridge plan was rejected because it did not provide handicapped access. In good weather many people wade across, but in cold weather hikers, skiers and snowshoers cannot use the entire area.

That may all change this summer. With an approved design plan, Montague Center resident Josh Goldman went before town meeting this spring and got the go-ahead to raise funds for a footbridge that will take just two weeks to build from start to completion.

Goldman helped with the clean-up years ago after the old railroad tie bridge failed. He said, “I knew then that it had to be rebuilt.” His

bridge design was inspired by utility pole bridge construction that has been used by the Forest Service for years.

## Mahar School Committee Responds to Wendell Budget Cut

One day after the Wendell town meeting voted to level fund Mahar in fiscal year 2013, the Mahar regional school committee decided to remove \$277,999 for state-mandated dam work from the budget. Instead the regional school will borrow money for the dam removal, cut the emergency power upgrade line item, and fund all other line items as originally planned.

At the June 5 meeting, superintendent, Michael Baldassarre, told the committee they should accept the budget reduction voted in Wendell, but also respect the votes at the New Salem and Petersham town meetings that fully funded the proposed FY’13 budget. The budget voted at the June 18 Orange town meeting will be irrelevant, because a budget has already been approved by three of the four member towns.

Wendell representative Johanna Bartlett said that Wendell’s vote was not simply a vote for a reduction in the budget. “Wendell was sending a message to the school committee,” she said. “What we really wanted was the school committee to go back and look at the budget. I see that message getting lost.” Bartlett said that Wendell wanted to give Orange the option to choose a different budget number, “rather than being forced by the other three towns.”

## ZIGGY from page B1

best of all she is training my people to pay attention to me all the time so they can figure out what I need.

Here’s an example: if I jump on the counter when someone is cooking, or stare at the container that holds my food, could I be any more clear? You would be amazed at how long it takes them to get it and give me more food. I’m 93 pounds now and still growing. I need a lot of food!

I’ve actually been doing a bit of training myself. Now, if I want someone to open the freezer and offer me one of those stuffed bones, I put my teeth on the windowsill and pretend to chew, just a little – and out comes the treat. Works like magic.

I’ve also taught them to clean up after me. I don’t like to soil my yard, so I wait until our morning walk. They have learned to bring two poop bags and to lead me to my favorite spot, even if it’s raining.

The lying writer has a nice husband – I’m here because of him. He wanted me first. For many months, the writer tried to resist my charms, but she couldn’t hold out. These days, when she isn’t writing bad things about me, she gives me hugs and kisses and laughs when I get tired on our walks and have to stretch out in the middle of the street.

Any day now, she will say thank you to that good man, because I have made their lives better. They were getting old and lazy before I came along. Now they are busy filling in the holes I dig and sweeping up the dirt I track in, making my food and stuffing my toys, and brushing, training, and walking me. I’m keeping them healthy.

I have become a great walker. I hardly pull at all. I ignore rude dogs that bark at me, and I have learned that I can’t greet strangers unless I ask for permission and sit nicely. Okay, sometimes I lose it, especially with people who really want to hug. I can always tell. It’s something in their voices and the way they approach.

Also – children! I love children, but it’s hard to remember how strong I am, so I mostly love them from a distance. There are quite a few on our street, and I watch them carefully and bark if they start yelling or fighting, or if they get too close to the road or any other danger.

People don’t know why I’m barking and why I won’t stop. They can’t hear the bear shuffling in the nearby woods or the smell of coyotes and their pups. Right under a huge rhododendron, I saw a porcupine, and there was a man mowing his lawn, and he was much too close.

Then there are the skunks, though they are not usually out during the day unless there’s something wrong with them. A friendly looking skunk wandering around without any fear of people? Probably has rabies. More barking needed.

I don’t trust those hawks, either. People keep backyard chickens in my neighborhood, and one of my favorite people has a tiny new puppy named Kiki. One of those hawks could swoop down and fly off with a small chicken or Kiki.

One day I saw a fisher cat in the field across the street. They are frightening savage creatures, so I peed several times; my way of saying *keep away!* I hope it works. Fierce as I am, I never want to tan-

gle with one of those.

By the end of the day, I get tired, and after I eat my dinner and hang around in the yard for a bit, it’s time for bed. There’s something else the writer failed to mention: I sleep for eleven hours straight, without needing to pee or poop, and I have not had an accident in the house since I was eleven weeks old. I think it happened on my first day with them. They were kind and took me out, and after that I understood. I was even able to control myself when I had giardia and had to go all the time.

I turned one on April 30, and I think I’m doing great. I’m learning new things all the time and losing interest in some of my baby games. Yesterday I stole a baseball cap and then dropped it – I thought I heard the command in my head.

I have a huge head. It holds my big brain. I like it when the writer holds it and looks into my eyes and says sweet things to me. I wish she’d said more good things about me in that story she wrote, but I have changed, and she has changed, and it’s not good to hold onto grudges.

When you see me in town, please understand how hard I’m trying. Don’t rush up to me until one of my people says it’s okay. Don’t pat my head. Like most dogs, I don’t like it. I need to sniff your hand to make sure you’re okay, and not a serial killer. After that, I like a gentle hand on my side or stroking my ear.

I might even roll over so you can rub my belly. I have freckles on my belly. They are beautiful, and I am a handsome good boy, so forget about that other article.

I’m going to set the record straight from now on.



# Scene Report: Cornhole for Fireworks

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

**GREENFIELD** – Every year, they have fireworks in Greenfield, Massachusetts near the Poet’s Seat Tower that you can see from a baseball field near my house. But sometimes, they need to raise money for them. This includes putting money in a jar toward that, and apparently, this year, having a cornhole tournament where the money from it goes towards them.

This event had prizes for people who win first, second, and third place. It was in downtown Greenfield at 5:30 p.m. last Thursday, June 2. They had a DJ and food.

I saw several cornhole boards that were nicely decorated for the teams in the tournament to use. Some of them featured logos from the event’s sponsors – Greenfield Saving Bank, and also the beer companies that were serving refreshments at the event, which were named Pioneer Valley Brewery and Hitchcock Brewing Company. The rest of the boards were just painted with certain designs and a rainbow. Two of them were like that.

A nice crowd of people showed up, and a fair number of them were actual players in the tournament. I saw them at the start of the event. The DJ they had to play music was good. He seemed to have picked good songs to be heard by the people there. I was happy to hear Bob Seger’s “Old Time Rock & Roll” being played. I thought it was a good choice to play at this gathering.

They also had a raffle where people could win various gift cards. Some of the prizes were from specific places around Greenfield, a few of being Mesa Verde, the Golden Nozzle, and Foster’s grocery store.

I learned from an announcer who was part of the Greenfield recreation department that it was a double-elimination tournament. I also learned from her that some of the teams had interesting and somewhat cool names. These were Holey Kings, the Fighting Irish, and Empress 1908.

I spent the tournament watching people hang out at this event and playing while the DJ played music to all of it. It was a decent event to be at. I believe they will have earned funds they wanted to go toward the fireworks. People seem to enjoy the event.

## Montague Community Television News

# Drag, Memorial Day, Noise Fest

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

**TURNERS FALLS** – The final performance of The Drag Sisters at the Shea Theater was documented by MCTV and is available on our Vimeo page, where you will also find coverage of both the Montague Center and downtown Turners Falls Memorial Day ceremonies, as well as the Unity Park Dedication to George F. Bush, and the footage from this past winter’s Peskeomskut Noisecapades.

MCTV has coverage of the Montague finance committee meeting, and will be updating with all the

other town committee meetings as soon as they take place!

All community members are welcome to submit their videos to be aired on TV and featured on Vimeo, which is linked to *montaguenvt.org* under the tab “Videos.”

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. And remember, MCTV is still looking for board members!

Something going on you think others would like to see? If you get in touch, we can show you



MCTV's Eggstravaganza 2022!

how easy it is to use a camera and capture the moment. Contact us at (413) 863-9200 or *infomontaguenvt@gmail.com*.

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# The Children's Page

YONERDOD ILLUSTRATION



Viola Lovelight opened her eyes to the warm, sunny morning. Figaro was sleeping above her head, and they both heard the birds calling them outside.



Most days Kicked into gear before the first cup of tea had even brewed. Viola would begin tidying the kitchen, or allow the birds to beckon her to the garden, where she would find herself digging and weeding, only to rush inside, hands muddy, to tend to the ringing tea kettle.



But today, Viola didn't even light the stove. She walked straight from her bed to the yard and sat in the grass, watching a caterpillar walk across her knee.



Viola began writing out her to-do list, a morning ritual that usually filled her with excitement and purpose. But today the list made her sad. Why was there always so much to do?



The mountain looked down into Viola's yard and sighed. "Come here my child! We haven't seen you since the ferns unfurled. A mountain walk would soothe your troubled mind."



Viola gently removed the caterpillar from her dress and stood up to get to work, but her feet walked her right past the door and up to the mountain trail.



Viola's worrying hurt her heart, but it quickly disappeared as the cool forest closed in around her. She didn't think about the patch in Priddy Please's Party dress, or of the ten-step pie she had planned, but of where to place her own sandaled foot along the rocks and fallen trees.



She didn't know where her feet were taking her as she pedaled them left, right, left. Her eyes floated from Birch tree to butterfly and eventually to the fern field, bathed in mid-morning sun.



The mountain knew Viola well, and watched her buzz around from dawn till dusk, day after day, planning parties, mending knee holes, delivering pastries and hosting house guests.

WORDS AND PICTURES BY HANNAH BROOKMAN

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# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



**HEY! DO YOU READ THIS?**

The *Montague Reporter* is looking for volunteers to help us curate this ongoing listing. Interested parties may contact [editor@montaguereporter.org](mailto:editor@montaguereporter.org).

**THURSDAY, JUNE 9**

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Marlon Asher, Rebel Alliance*. \$. 8 p.m.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *Circuit Des Yeux, Dutch Experts, Humanbeast*. \$. 8 p.m.

Colonial Theater, Keene: *Jonathan Richman*. \$. 8 p.m.

**FRIDAY, JUNE 10**

Race Street Live, Holyoke: *Superchunk, Torres*. \$. 8 p.m.

MASS MoCA, North Adams: *Kraftwerk*. \$. 8 p.m.

The Drake, Amherst: *Andy McKee*. \$. 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Vimana*. Free. 9:30 p.m.

**SATURDAY, JUNE 11**

Unity Park, Turners Falls: *Unity Park Festival & Maker's Market*, with DJ Overtime, Molly ES, and Jimmy Just Quit. \$. 2 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Simon White*. Free. 5 p.m.

1794 Meetinghouse, New Salem: *The Green Sisters*. \$. 8 p.m.

Between the Uprights, Turners Falls: *Corey Knapp*. 9 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Sugar Biscuit*, queer dance party. \$. 9:30 p.m.

Progression Brewing Company, Northampton: *Appalachian Still*. 7 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Stice, Space Camp, Death Spiral*. \$. 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Scott Meyers*. Free. 9:30 p.m.

**SUNDAY, JUNE 12**

Belltower Recs, North Adams: *Major Stars, Headroom, Emily Robb, Blues Ambush*. \$. 5 p.m.

**TUESDAY, JUNE 14**

Race Street Live, Holyoke: *The Zappa Band*. \$. 8 p.m.

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 15**

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Wes Brown with Matan Rubinstein*. Free. 9:30 p.m.

**THURSDAY, JUNE 16**

The Drake, Amherst: *The Slip*. \$. 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Zach Nugent Band*, Grateful Dead tribute. \$. 8 p.m.

**FRIDAY, JUNE 17**

Colonial Theater, Keene: *Bill Frisell & Thomas Morgan duo*. \$. 6 and 8 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Donny from the Poster, Bobb Hatt / Luicver Duo, Father Hotep, PussyVision*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Kristen Ford, Sarah Donner, Carrissa Johnson*. 9 p.m.

**SATURDAY, JUNE 18**

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Silica*

*gel, Post Moves, Willie Lane, AM Radio*. \$. 3 to 7 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Misfit Prom*. Benefit for North Quabbin Citizen Advocacy. Parade starts at 6 p.m.

Nova Arts, Keene: *Kristin Hersh, Fred Abong*. \$. 7 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Brattleboro Youth Rock Festival* feat. *Pencil Bitters, Golden Marilyn, Big Destiny, Granite Danes, Man Made Tragedies, Moxie*. \$. 7 p.m.

Belltower Records, North Adams: *Baldwin/Silbert Duo, Matt Weston, Lucia Stavros, Daniel O'Connor*. \$. 7 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Phantom Erratic #20*, acts TBA. \$. 7 to 10 p.m.

Mount Toby Meetinghouse, Leverett: *Mara Levine, Gathering Time*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *James Montgomery Blues Band, Muddy Ruckus*. \$. 8 p.m.

1794 Meetinghouse, New Salem: *Beth Logan Raffeld Quintet*. \$. 8 p.m.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: Movie with live soundtrack, *Fantastic Planet* feat. *The Emyreans*. \$. 8:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Just Fine Thank You*. Free. 9:30 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Temperature*, with DJ 45 hz, *DJ Snack Attack*, and *DJ Trends*. Dancehall, Afrobeat, reggaeton, soca, etc. \$. 10 p.m.

**SUNDAY, JUNE 19**

Palladium, Worcester: *George Clinton, Parliament-Funkadelic, Dopapod*, more. \$. 4:30 p.m.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Editrix, Spirits Having Fun, Floatie*. \$. 8 p.m.

**TUESDAY, JUNE 21**

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *Fuji/ta, id m theft able*. \$. 8 p.m.

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22**

Academy of Music, Northampton: *John Hiatt & the Goners* feat. *Sonny Landreth, The Suitcase Junket*. \$. 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Half Shaved Jazz*. Free. 8:30 p.m.

**THURSDAY, JUNE 23**

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Sister Nancy*. \$. 8:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Masala Jazz*. Free. 9 p.m.

**FRIDAY, JUNE 24**

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Pyrexia, Malignancy*. \$. 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Masala Jazz*. Free. 9 p.m.

**FRI-SUN, JUNE 24-26**

Franklin County Fairgrounds, Greenfield: *Green River Festival* feat. *Lake Street Dive, Father John Misty, Galactic, Guster, Waxahatchee, Hiss Golden Messenger, Allison Russell* and many more. \$. See [greenriverfestival.com](http://greenriverfestival.com) for lineup and info.

Northlands, Swanzey NH: *Northlands Music & Arts Festival* feat. *Joe Russo's Almost Dead, Lotus, Twiddle, Lettuce, Melvin Seals, Yonder Mountain String Band* and many more. \$. See [northlandslive.com](http://northlandslive.com) for lineup and information.

*tival* feat. *Joe Russo's Almost Dead, Lotus, Twiddle, Lettuce, Melvin Seals, Yonder Mountain String Band* and many more. \$. See [northlandslive.com](http://northlandslive.com) for lineup and information.

**SATURDAY, JUNE 25**

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Shokazoba*. Laura's B-Day Bash. 7 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Faul Fables, Miners, Kieran Lally*. \$. 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Power Trousers, Scare City, Slob Drop*. Free. 9:30 p.m.

**MONDAY, JUNE 27**

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Quiz Nite*. 7 p.m.

**FRIDAY, JULY 1**

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Apollo Suns, Lush Honey, Lemon Street*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

**SATURDAY, JULY 2**

Downtown Turners Falls: *Music Walk* featuring taiko drummer *Kaoru Watanabe, Jo Sallins & The Rhythm Queens*. 1 p.m.

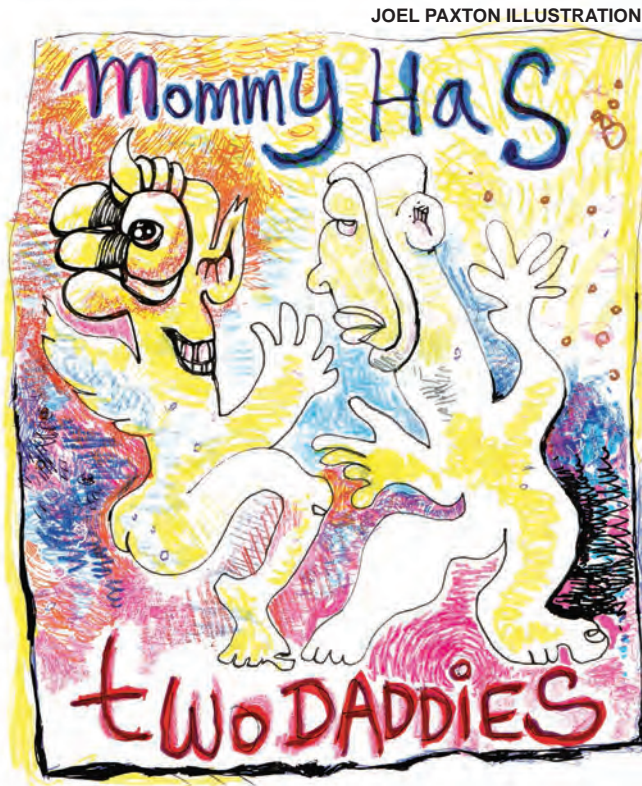
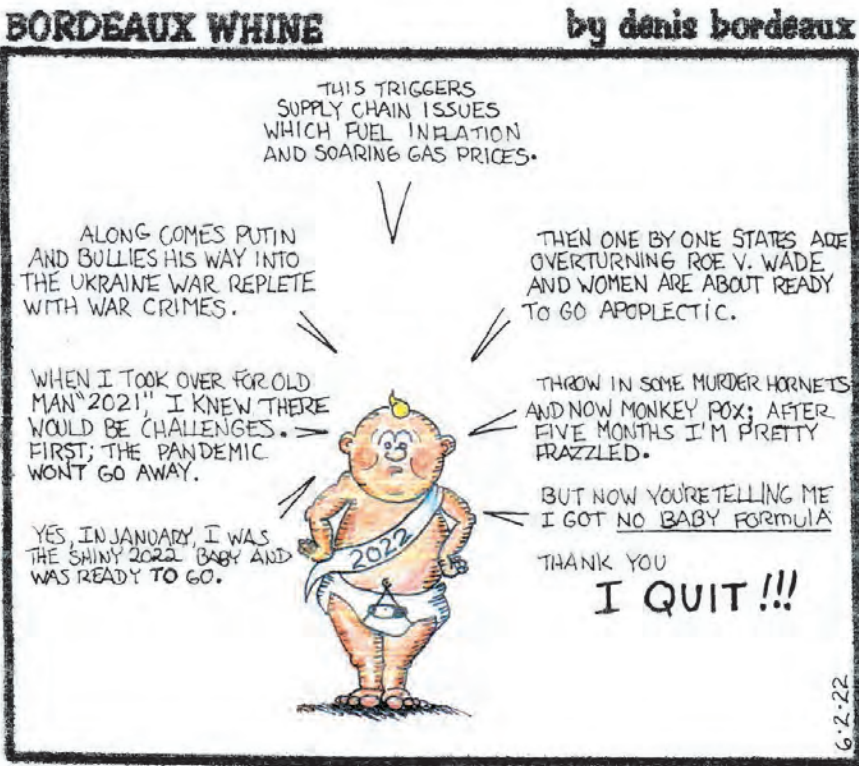
The Drake, Amherst: *Carinae, Boyfriend Machine, DJ Quills*. \$. 7 p.m.

**SUNDAY, JULY 3**

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *A.P.E., Film & Gender*, more TBA. \$. 7 p.m.

**MONDAY, AUGUST 15**

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Bonnie Prince Billy, Footings*. \$. 8 p.m.



**Three Degrees of Warming**  
By Janice Rowan



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**APPLE CORPS** from page B1  
Almost every one of our U-Pick beds has a chive plant bursting with edible pinkish purple flower heads. Our U-Pick herb/tea garden is packed with oregano, thyme, parsley, tarragon, lemon balm, and bee balm. If you’ve never used bee balm as an herb before, I cannot recommend it highly enough. The leaves have a spicy oregano taste, and the flowers make a delicious and beautiful tea.

Before you even made it to the herbs, you may perhaps have been distracted by a glint of ruby amongst the greenery in two of our U-Pick beds. Our strawberries, the gift that keeps on giving, are ripening even as I type. There’s nothing better than going to the garden to help do some work and having warm, sweet strawberries to snack on.



A harvest of chamomile from the Unity garden.

Strawberries are not the only fruit we’re growing in the park this year. The edible hedge we planted between the garden and the skate park is growing tall and coming into its town. While a few of the plants in there need a few more years to produce fruit, the gooseberries have a bounty of beach ball-size baubles hanging from their branches, and the currants, recovering from some plant dieback, still managed to push out some fruit that we may have to race the birds for.

In coming years, that hedge will also be teeming with mulberries, raspberries, honeyberries, and quince. There’s nothing like waiting for a tree to produce fruit to teach one patience.

Most of the vegetables in the U-Pick beds are not ready to harvest, though there are some self-seeded

lettuces ready to pick, as well as a few radishes here and there. We’re mostly just waiting for our carrots to grow, tomatoes to set fruit, and our garlic to scape. You’ll just have to keep coming back to visit to see what else is ready to pick for your dinner table.

**Seventh Street Plot**

After you’ve tired from the hustle and bustle of the park, take a walk up L street to Seventh, where you’ll find that our sidewalk food forest at the old St. Andrews Church is coming along nicely. After years of slow growth, the garden is looking robust and tall. When you drive by, it finally looks more like a growing forest than a garden!

Just like at the park, you’ll find plenty of glittering strawberry gems in this food forest. The strawberry patch along the Prospect Street side is ripe and ready, and the one on Seventh Street, which sits at the top of the garden with occasional shade, will be along shortly.

If you find these strawberries similar in looks and taste to the ones at the park, you’d be right. These patches were started from strawberry plant babies that had taken root in the paths at the Unity garden. If you’re looking for some immediate payoff when building up your own food forest garden, I cannot recommend strawberries enough! They fruit early and provide enough babies to start as many patches as you want.

Another perennial that is thriving in the food forest is the bunching onion. There are a few scattered through the garden beds, but the most prominent patch is on the Prospect Street side by the corner.

These onions will flower, which will then result in a head of tiny onions too heavy for its onion stem neck, causing the head to fall onto the ground and root there. They grow in such a way that they form curlicues, and as the season progresses the plant starts to look less like a garden plant and more like a sculpture. They are as delicious as they are aesthetic,



Strawberries in the Seventh Street food forest.

and their green leaves are ready for picking now for use as a garnish or wherever you’d use a scallion.

The herbs of the food forest are also thriving, with big clumps of oregano, bee balm, lemon balm, and yarrow. It seems like we’ve got a solid hold on our understory layer while we wait for the rest of our trees and bushes to grow.

**Share the Bounty**

Now that you’ve got the inside scoop as to where to find the goods downtown, I issue this challenge: Pay it forward! If you’re at the park or at the food forest, offer passers-by some of the bounty you’ve been clued into. At worst they say “no” and walk away, but sometimes you find yourself having great conversations with neighbors, and it’s fun to be in a position to share something wonderful. It’s important to make sure that folks who may not read this column or follow our social media know about this resource, and the best way to do that is to

make the offer in person.

If you take plants and they create a bounty, please find a way to pass some of that bounty along. The Franklin Area Survival Center takes produce donations of any size, or you can bring your basket to the Great Falls Farmers Market on Wednesdays where I can give it away for free at the manager’s booth.

Another way to pay it forward is to get involved. We are always looking for folks with some time or resources to help. We could use additional helping hands in the gardens, and welcome help on the organizational end. If you don’t have time to give, we can always use donations of plants, tools, and other useful items.

If you’re interested in getting more involved, and don’t happen to run into us at the garden while we are offering you some of our bounty, please reach out to us on our social media or email us at [greatfallsapple-corps@gmail.com](mailto:greatfallsapple-corps@gmail.com).



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