

The Montague Reporter

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

AUGUST 25, 2022

Towns Debate Plan to Address Pollutants at Shared School

By SARAH ROBERTSON

NEW SALEM – A camera stuck down the well at Swift River School earlier this month found a crack in the well’s casing, and some Wendell and New Salem officials believe this suggests surface contamination, rather than groundwater, could be the source of PFAS chemicals in the school’s water. At a meeting on Wednesday night, engineers presented three potential plans to address the issue.

“The question is, is PFAS entering through the fracture?” said Tighe & Bond senior project manager Eric Lehan, who presented his firm’s work. “Maybe it is. Nobody knows for sure.”

Monthly tests of the well at the elementary school since November 2020 have shown PFAS levels at more than double the state’s safe drinking water standard of 20 parts per trillion (ppt). To comply with a consent order from the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Wendell and New Salem paid Tighe & Bond \$23,000 to create a corrective action plan. The towns plan to share the costs of the work, and could face fines if a plan see **SCHOOL** page A8

WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Twelve-Acre Battery Project Proposed In Wendell Center

By JOSH HEINEMANN

Discussion of threats to forest land in Wendell took prominence at the selectboard’s August 17 meeting, with two proposed projects in competition for the most potential clear-cutting.

Town coordinator Glenn Johnson-Mussad shared a notice of a meeting planned for the next night, sponsored by state senator Jo Comerford, on a proposal by Eversource to clear-cut 50 more feet on either side of a power-line right of way stretching Ludlow to Northfield. (See article on this page.) Selectboard member Dan Keller said he planned to attend.

Agriculture commission member Laurel Facey said the idea behind Eversource’s proposal is to remove trees before a storm can toss them onto transmission lines and start fires, as has happened in California. She suggested instead selectively cutting trees likely to reach the transmission lines if they fall.

Towns weren’t notified of the plan, and Eversource is trying to get it approved quickly, with only one environmental impact report, and start cutting fall of 2023. The deadline for public comments was Monday, and Keller suggested the board submit a letter of concern. Conservation commission member Mary Thomas said the con com had already written one.

Another Project

New Leaf Energy, recently spun off and sold by Borrego Energy, has plans to create a lithium battery system at 58 Wendell Depot Road, see **WENDELL** page A8

THE DOG DAYS OF AUGUST



JACKIE LUCCHESI PHOTO

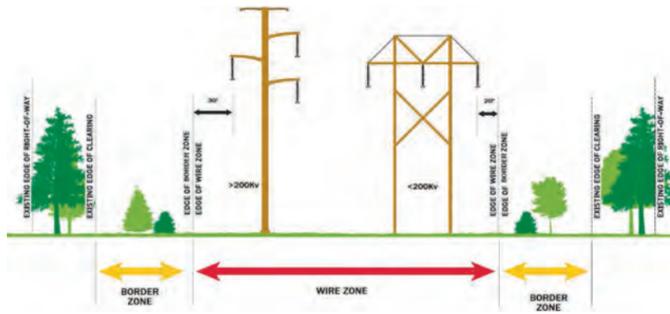
Jackie Lucchesi shared this photo of a nice spot, just off Turners Falls Road, to sit and look over Barton Cove.

Eversource Requests Permission to Clear 371 Acres of Trees Along Its Right-Of-Way

By MIKE JACKSON

FRANKLIN COUNTY – Conservationists, planners, and public officials were scrambling last week to catch up with the news that electric utility Eversource Energy plans to clear 371 acres of trees in a 29-mile-long right-of-way stretching from Northfield to Ludlow, in an effort to keep branches off powerlines. At a meeting pulled together by state senator Jo Comerford, Eversource government affairs director Mark Reed agreed to ask the state to extend a public comment period on the project’s environmental notification.

Eversource’s “WT-11” transmission line, which passes through Irving and a corner of Wendell into Montague, Leverett, and Shutesbury, is currently maintained with a 125-foot treeless zone, and the company



Eversource provided this diagram of “two-zone maintenance” in its public filings.

is requesting permission to expand that to about 200 next year. The newly cut “border zones,” according to the company’s vegetation management plan, will be allowed to grow back, but only with trees and shrubs that grow to less than 25 feet tall.

“Inkberry, blueberry, dogwoods, certain apples, et cetera – if those

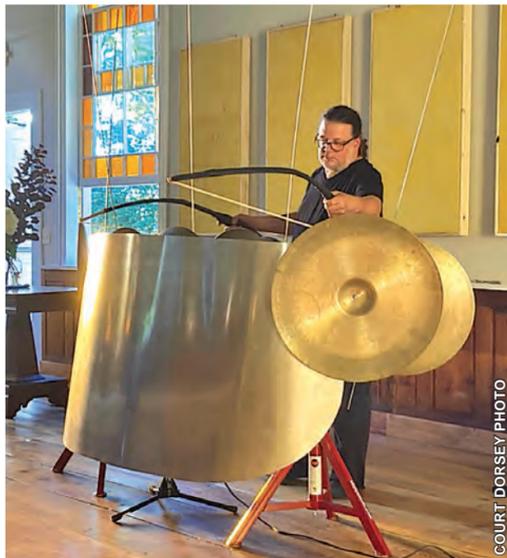
sorts of species come back, then those would be encouraged to be there, and grow to their full size and maturity,” Eversource senior arborist Bill Hayes explained during last Thursday’s Zoom meeting.

The company first filed its environmental notification for the project see **TREES** page A6

The Meetinghouse Fills With Sound

By SAM GERDES

WENDELL – Improvisational sound artist Matt



COURT DORSEY PHOTO

Matt Samolis administers a Sunday sound bath at the Wendell Meetinghouse last week.

Samolis performed on Sunday, August 14 at the first official indoor public event at the Wendell Meetinghouse after years of closure due to necessary restoration projects.

This immersive sonic experience showcased a set of cymbals assembled by the artist himself. The arrangement of cymbals and steel stroked by bow in a rowing fashion was inspired by the “bow chime” or “steel cello” sculptures first engineered by artist and composer Richard Rutman. Samolis, a trained flautist and composer, developed the current instrument following four or five trials.

Unlike other sound baths I’ve attended, this acoustic expression was at times eerie and dissonant, troubling notions of harmony. (Of course, someone in the audience was wearing a Pauline Oliveros t-shirt.) This improvisational score was drawn over a more complex soundscape than the lulling, purely consonant New Age medium with which I’m familiar.

With the interplay of ambience and droning feedback, Samolis accepts discordance without judgment. After 25 years of working with this instrument, he was delighted to share that new sounds still emerge, as they did this evening.

Much of my conversation with Samolis alluded to see **MEETINGHOUSE** page A6

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Ramsey Named Top Pick for New Assistant Administrator

By JEFF SINGLETON

Greg Garrison, who chairs the search committee for Montague’s assistant town administrator, came before the selectboard Monday to announce that town planner Walter Ramsey has been recommended for the new position. The selectboard delayed a final hiring decision until its next meeting.

Garrison described the selection process, which involved refining the job description, advertising it in publications and online, and culling the responses down to two finalists: Ramsey and Kevin Flynn, who has served in administrative positions over the past three decades in towns such as Marlborough, Gardner, Barre, Sandisfield, and Phillipston.

While his committee was providing its own assessment, Garrison said, the selectboard might want to review the interviews and other documents according to its own criteria.

Despite Flynn’s “longer history see **MONTAGUE** page A7

GILL SELECTBOARD

Rising Sewer Costs Stressful For Riverside Neighborhood

By JERRI HIGGINS

Expensive pump replacements at the pump station in Riverside, and concerns from residents of that neighborhood over high water and sewer bills, topped the Gill selectboard meeting agenda last Monday, August 15.

Highway superintendent John Miner told the selectboard about nearly \$10,000 spent in repairs and labor for two sewer pump motors at the pump station that had burned out within the last six months.

Miner said that “underwear, bras, t-shirts, rope, and plastic exercising bands,” along with diapers and other items, have been “binding up” the sewer system pumps. By the time he and his crew could get to the pump house, he said, “it was already too late” to stop the damage; one motor had been so hot that it was sparking.

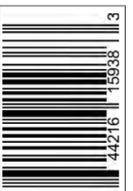
He and his crew checked possible entry points outside of the sewer system, but could not find any. “I do not know how people are getting these items down their toilet drains,” he said.

Miner was approved to use the town’s sewer account, rather than highway department monies, to pay his employees for their extra time dealing with the pump issue. He said that his crew typically gets paid for three hours a week through the sewer budget, but that they had accumulated “138 man-hours, at a total of \$3,781,” in wages since the problems began in February.

see **GILL** page A5

One Final Summer Week Off... Next Edition Comes Out September 8! Happy Labor Day, Etc.

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The Montague Reporter

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Well-Targeted Aid

This week's announcement that the US federal government plans to forgive one-sixth of the student debt burden is big news, though the bar is set low. "I propose to forgive all undergraduate tuition-related federal student debt from two- and four-year public colleges and universities for debt-holders earning up to \$125,000," candidate Joe Biden wrote in April 2020. At that time, Biden had already effectively clinched the primary, so he was making promises to the entire country, not just trying to fend away the Democrats' left flank.

It took nearly half his term, but his administration finally unveiled a student debt relief plan Wednesday. Pell grant recipients – whose parents earn under \$60,000 a year – are eligible for \$20,000 in relief; the announcement highlighted that the real value of Pell grants has held flat for four decades while tuitions have nearly tripled.

And all other borrowers whose income is under \$125,000 per year are eligible for \$10,000 in relief.

Watch very carefully how this is criticized. Political power in the United States is these days nearly entirely about resentment, and anyone public policy deliberate-

ly benefits is a target. But where criticism of government action has traditionally been staked on resentment of an undeserving poor, student debt relief opponents will fall over themselves to push a line, whether explicit or implied, that it is a transfer of wealth up from exploited producers to idle thinkers.

For every ten high school graduates in America, roughly two go to college without needing to take out loans, while another five enroll and take on debt. Some study liberal arts or computer science, and others become nurses or truck drivers – yes, trucking training programs are a major new source of debt. And a *Wall Street Journal* study named 2022 as the year that the majority of the nation's manufacturing workers will be college grads.

So, these \$10,000s will be spread, and fairly evenly, among people from the fourth to the eighth decile of wealth. 97% of income tax, meanwhile, is drawn from the sixth to the tenth deciles. So even if taxing "workers" is seen as paying off "students'" loans, those dollars are actually flowing down the class staircase to the less fortunate.

Pay very close attention to those who want you to believe otherwise.

Chris Dempsey For State Auditor

I am writing in support of Chris Dempsey who is running for State Auditor – the only statewide office that keeps tabs on the efficiency and honesty of the rest of the state government.

Chris stands above the rest. Really. He's very tall. But he also rises above the fray with his ability to stick to the facts rather than trying to bring down his opponents in the usual way of politicians.

This skill was abundantly clear when Chris led the grassroots, volunteer campaign No Boston Olympics, which was successful despite being outspent 1,500 to 1 by some of the most powerful corporate interests in the state. Chris has already saved taxpayers billions in Olympic cost overruns.

Chris has a clear vision for how the auditor's office can help on issues ranging from climate change, to reform of the State Police, to ensuring the proper use of federal stimulus dollars. Chris's record across the public, private, and non-profit sectors makes clear that

he will fight to ensure state government answers to the people, not the powerful. Chris knows how to tackle complex financial problems, build grassroots coalitions, and stand up for the public interest.

Both Senator Jo Comerford and Representative Natalie Blais have endorsed Chris, for they know he will be an advocate for people in rural Western Mass.

The Democratic Party chose him as the endorsed candidate at the state convention in June. In the words of the current State Auditor, Suzanne Bump: "I have listened carefully to the statements of the two Democratic candidates. They could not be more divergent, and I have concluded that Chris Dempsey is the best choice to be the next State Auditor."

Please join me in voting for Chris Dempsey in the primary on September 6. Contact your local Town Clerk for early voting options.

Kate Martineau
Millers Falls



Alix, the self-styled "mayor and mini-manager of Turners Falls," seen here on patrol at Unity Park.

Letters to the Editors

Longer-Term Solutions Needed

A few weeks ago, your editorial asked "What makes a young person want to be good?" I think almost everyone wants to be "good," meaning liked, respected, even loved. Perhaps a better question is what helps keep young people from doing bad things?

After watching the discussion of residents' concerns in Turners Falls at the August 8 selectboard meeting, I came away thinking that an increased police presence might be helpful – maybe even necessary – in the short term, but I also agreed very much with Rich Kuklewicz that more police is probably not the long-term answer.

It occurred to me that this might instead be an opportunity to explore non-police alternatives for addressing these issues. We know this approach has strong support among town meeting members and

others in the community – might it be helpful here?

The selectboard discussion suggested some possible approaches. Neighbors are already talking with each other about the problems; maybe something like a neighborhood watch, or community chat group, or neighborhood association might be helpful? Working together might help make the available police resources more effective, but it could also do more than that.

Do the people involved in these incidents already know and dislike each other? Or are they largely strangers? Would some sort of community-building be helpful?

Maybe these aren't the right questions to ask (there's a lot I don't know about this situation), but I hope that public discussion of these topics can continue, both so that the situation in Turners Falls

can improve and so that all of us might learn something. I suspect that these problems are not unique to one location, and lessons learned in this case may have much wider applications.

Mike Naughton
Millers Falls

CORRECTION

We mistakenly identified Chris Wise as the president of the Friends of the Montague Common Hall in our August 11 edition (Page B1, ... *Friends Group Raises Funds for Improvements.*) "That position is held by Nicole Nemeç," Chris writes. "I'm the treasurer." We did not fact-check this claim, but we assume that it is correct. Apologies to all!

Democrats: Vote in the September 6 Primary

I am writing to urge all Democrats to vote in the upcoming September 6 Primary. The candidates have been hard at work campaigning and we have the responsibility to help choose who will represent the party in the November elections. Mail-in ballots and early voting have already begun. Please check with your Town Clerk to get details.

The following candidates were endorsed at the party convention in June: candidate for Governor, Maura Healy; candidate for Lieutenant Governor, Kim Driscoll; candi-

date for Secretary of the Commonwealth, Tanisha Sullivan; candidate for Attorney General, Quentin Palfrey; candidate for Treasurer, Deborah Goldberg; and candidate for Auditor, Chris Dempsey.

For more information, please check the candidates' websites. And please encourage your friends and neighbors to vote.

David Dempsey
Montague Center
Chair, Montague Democratic
Town Committee

Thanks

Just a quick note to say how much I enjoyed your interview with Will Oldham in the issue published on the 11th.

I especially appreciated the conversation around the differences between Oldham and his Bonnie Prince Billy persona – getting the one to discuss the other was like seeing multiple facets of his life and artistry at the same time. Great stuff! Cheers,

Jedediah Berry
Easthampton

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LOCAL BRIEFS

Compiled by NINA ROSSI

Many thanks to seamstresses Mary Feeney, Jackie Lucchesi, and Anne Harding for their assistance whipping up our new promotional *Montague Reporter* aprons for premium donors! Enjoy our “news coverage” while keeping the splash-splash from whatever off your clothes. Donate \$100 or more to the *Reporter* to receive this free gift.

The **Green River Swimming and Recreation Area** is closed early for the season. Restrooms, concessions, and river use are closed, but playground and park amenities are still available for public use.

The park was closed for swimming due to suspected parasites on July 26, and the presence of *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia* was confirmed on July 29. Since then, it has not rained enough to flush the river. The state issued a Level 3 critical drought designation for the area on August 10, which remains in effect.

“Big Machines” are coming to Northfield Mountain this Friday, August 26 from 10 a.m. to noon. At the free event, kids of all ages can check out **large construction machines, fire trucks, school buses**, and learn about bus safety. There will be a sandbox with diggers for the younger set. This program is a collaboration between FirstLight and community groups. Free kiddie hard hats for the first 100 kids!

The **Turners Falls Annual Summer Bazaar** is being held in Peskeomskut Park from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. this Saturday, August 27. Check out 30 crafters with essential oils, jewelry, birdhouses, woodcut prints, upcycled glass, vintage housewares, and more. There will be a basket raffle to benefit the Franklin County Regional Dog Shelter. The rain date is September 3.

The second annual **art sale and garden tour at Milk Barn Studio** is scheduled for this Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 25 South Ferry Road, Montague. Find original fine art, prints, cards, raffles for charity, treasure hunt, refreshments, and more. Learn more at tracyvernonart.com. The rain date is Sunday.

Geologist Richard Little presents a talk and walk this Saturday, August 27 at FirstLight’s River-view Pavilion in Northfield. This free outdoor event will begin with a 45-minute talk, followed by a 45-minute walk.

“You will see evidence of colliding continents, dinosaur fossils, armored mud balls, and lava, plus the glacial history of drumlins, eskers, and Lake Hitchcock,” reads the event description. “This illustrated presentation will be accompanied by samples, maps, and a driving guide for you to explore further.” Professor Little discovered the Jurassic armored mud balls, and is leading a project to have them be officially recognized by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Choose from 10:30 to noon or 1 to 2:30 p.m., and register in advance at www.bookeo.com/northfield. Attendance is limited. For more information, visit www.ArmoredMudBalls.rocks or www.EarthView.rocks.

Need backpacks and school supplies? Community Action Family Center’s backpack and school supply distribution is coming up soon, from 10 a.m. to noon this Saturday, August 27 and from 3 to 6 p.m. on Monday, August 29. Pick up free school supplies, while they last, for Franklin County students kindergarten through 12th grade. Learn more at communityaction.us or call (413) 475-1555.

Join Stone Soup Café for the 18th Annual **Harvest Supper** Cel-

bration on the Greenfield town common this Saturday, August 27 from 4 to 7 p.m. The Harvest Supper is free and open to everyone in the community. Farmers and talented chefs donate their time and produce to create an amazing meal that is served to over 800 people every year. Come for delicious food, music, face painting, story sharing, and a “Really Really Free Store.”

Masks will still be strongly encouraged at this year’s event whenever possible, and people are encouraged to bring their own plates, cups, and utensils to cut down on waste. The rain date is Sunday.

The town of Erving will celebrate the installation of a **giant heron sculpture** at the Riverfront Park next Tuesday, August 30 at 5:30 p.m. The six-and-a-half foot tall sculpture was made of reclaimed metal by Turners Falls native Jon Bander, a.k.a Notorious Weld. It includes pieces of used equipment donated by FirstLight Power, who also funded the project.

Jon is my youngest son, and I will be there to celebrate with him! There will be refreshments and music from Bad News Jazz & Blues at 6 p.m.

There will be an **Overdose Awareness Day event** next Wednesday, August 31 at the Episcopal Church of Saints James and Andrew in Greenfield. There will be time for remembrances and educational presentations, such as one on Narcan administration by Tapestry Health. At the church from 4 to 5:30 p.m., followed by a silent walking vigil to Energy Park.

The **Franklin County Fair** needs volunteers to collect compost and recycling at the event, held September 8 through 11 at the Wisdom Way fairgrounds in Greenfield. Kids under 14 may volunteer with adult supervision. Volunteers earn free admission and other perks. Learn more and sign up for a shift at tinyurl.com/fair-helpers.

In honor of Mass Mentoring Partnership’s 30th year, ALKU will be awarding **two \$30,000 academic scholarships** to rising high school seniors. The recipients must have been impacted by and engaged in a positive mentoring relationship for at

least one year, and plan to attend a four-year college or university. Find out more by contacting Anne Comber at acomber@massmentors.org. Applications must be submitted by September 9 at 5 p.m.

Ask the experts at a free workshop on **Invasive Plant Management for Landowners**, co-hosted by the Northfield Conservation Committee and FirstLight Power. Learn the best practices for managing invasive plants, such as bittersweet vine and multiflora roses, on your property.

Joan Deely, MS will lead this roadside workshop from 9 to 10 a.m. on Saturday, September 10 at 150 Old Bernardston Road in Northfield. She will cover identification, management options, and pro tips. Sign up at www.bookeo.com/northfield. Bring bug repellent and wear comfortable footwear.

A **statewide ban on putting textiles in the trash** is expected on November 1. A textile drop box is the latest recycling option now available at the Montague Transfer Station, open 7 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Wednesdays and 7 a.m. to noon on Saturdays.

Items can be torn, stained, out-of-style, or missing a mate, but must be clean and dry. Items that cannot be reused will be sorted, baled, and sold to recyclers who make insulation, padding, and wiping cloths.

To see a list of accepted items, visit franklincountywastedistrict.org/p/68/Textiles. For more on the waste ban, see www.mass.gov/guides/massdep-textile-recovery.

Registration has begun for the **Sawmill River 10k Run**, according to the Montague parks and rec department. This year’s race is scheduled for Saturday, October 8 in Montague Center, beginning at 10 a.m. near the village common.

The race is a sanctioned USA Track and Field event, with five age divisions. The entry fee before October 7 is \$30. The event benefits the rec department’s Sponsor-A-Child scholarship program. Registration available at (413) 863-3216 or www.montagueparksrec.com.

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More Letters to the Editors

Three-Way Fight? Way Too Complicated. The Left Should Ally With Donald Trump

The recent raid at Mar-a-Lago was an unprecedented and egregious violation of democratic principles, and an act of political intimidation carried out by an illegitimate and historically criminal political police force acting as an arm of the Deep State.

No amount or degree of classified documents could ever justify a raid on the home of a former President of the United States who is the leader of the only (nominally) opposition party and that party’s likely candidate in the next presidential election. Outrageous!

Yet this came upon the heels of yet another outrageous Deep State raid upon the home and offices of the African People’s Socialist Party elder founder and leader, Omali Yeshitela, replete with armored vehicles, 40 helmeted and camouflaged agents carrying AR-15 type assault rifles, flash-bang grenades, drones and a “no-knock” warrant.

The stated cause was the imagined “collusion with Russia to divide Americans and interfere with our democracy.” But it was the Orwellian opposite – a brazen act of political intimidation of a civil rights organiza-

tion opposed to the neoliberal, imperialist hegemonic agenda in Africa.

For former Leftists to not recognize the totalitarian nature of both raids as an accelerating juggernaut of repression, censorship, and FBI/Deep State paranoid desperation is a sad postmortem on a formerly proud and stalwart resistance to FBI crimes and political repression. It is sleep walking through history writ large.

Meanwhile, right-wing Republicans are calling for the dissolution of the FBI and an end to the nuclear madness of our proxy war with Russia, while Liberals and “progressives” lionize and sanitize the “three letter” agencies of the imperial infrastructure. Madness.

Instead, we all should be joining hands across the gulf of ideological differences to smash or at least weaken this secret political police force that has plagued (if not destroyed) our democratic institutions and trampled the Bill of Rights from its inception.

Elliot Tarry
Montague

‘Proof’ Ja’Duke Shines

You will not be disappointed in the performance and script of Ja’Duke’s latest offering, *Proof*. The narrative is compelling, and the acting is as good as any I’ve witnessed on the Ja’Duke stage.

The entire cast of four perform so naturally that on occasion I caught myself forgetting this was “just a play.” Caitlyn Waynelovich is outstanding in her lead role! She performed seamlessly and was “made for the part.”

Congrats to Director Nick Danger and the talented cast of creators.

Mary Kay Mattiace
Montague City

(The show runs this Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m.)

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AT LARGE

Baystate Closes Practice; Growers Eye Hollow

By CHIPAINSWORTH

MONTAGUE CITY – The press release made it sound like a good thing. Baystate Primary Care of Turners Falls was closing in October, depriving Montague townfolk of 30-plus years of medical service.

Now, the release ballyhooed, “Patients will have access to a broader range of services provided ten minutes away in Greenfield... The consolidated practice will offer specialty care, integrated behavioral health and ancillary health services.”

Don’t reach for the dictionary, we looked it up for you. Ancillary means “Providing necessary support to the primary activities of an organization.” It’s one of those mindless words writers reach for when stuck for an elusive third adjective.

The reality is that a significant number of Montague residents have been left to fend for themselves after Connecticut River Internists’ good-faith sale to Baystate Health in 2019. These days reading bloodwork equals a physical check-up, or as it’s now called, a “wellness check.”

Former CRI patient Beldim Merims relayed his experience to me: “I recently had my annual checkup at the Turners Falls facility, which was obviously about to close. I had 15 minutes with a nice doctor who had driven down from New Hampshire, and who scanned my lab report and said I was fine.

“I’m 85. I don’t intend to stick with Baystate, where I will see a different primary every time, and where I will be lost in the bureaucracy. I am very uneasy having no personal physician such as I had in Dr. [Wayne] Gavryck. Where to turn?”

According to Gavryck, about 40% of the patients that CRI saw were from Montague. It was a community-driven practice, not dollar-driven. “The fact that they couldn’t sustain a \$3 million practice for three years shows incredible incompetence on the part of their leadership,” he said.

Staff was informed of the pending closure and subsequent consolidation to the Sanderson Street building two weeks ago. “They put the an-

nouncement out system-wide less than an hour after they told us,” said a longtime employee who’s submitted her resignation. “They think the patients will just follow us to Greenfield.”

Some of those patients have no choice. They are elderly and unaccustomed to the new health care racket that leaves even doctors helpless and beholden to the suits upstairs.

“My last two appointments and my next one are on the telephone,” said an 84-year-old Turners Falls resident. “I don’t even know what my doctor looks like.”

High Over the Hollow

Hadley resident Joe Czakowski has grown squash and shade tobacco on family land that’s been tilled for more than a century. Now he’s decided to try pot growing, but wants to do it away from the eyes of his prying neighbors.

Czakowski owns a small parcel in the Greenfield Industrial Park, has budgeted \$100,000 for the startup, and is burning through it faster than a skimpy pre-roll. “It costs \$15,000 just to start talking,” Ezra Parzybok said during an informal meeting on Monday with concerned residents who live below the industrial park in Factory Hollow.

Parzybok refers to himself as a cannabis business consultant. Ten years ago when medical marijuana was legalized, he got a permit to grow pot for one patient, which was the law. There was only one problem: “I had many more than just one patient. The Feds were sending military helicopters and they saw pot growing on my upper deck and I was raided by the DEA.

“When it hit the news the reaction was, ‘Hey! That’s the medical marijuana guy! There was a community outcry about, why are they still sending helicopters over Northampton? I wasn’t charged, and it made me pretty well known. So when they legalized recreational marijuana, people came to me saying, ‘I have the money to get in, but I don’t know how to do it.’ Today I make it my job to be the expert on laws and compliance.”

As Czakowski’s agent, Parzybok is accus-

tomized to meeting neighborhood resistance. During the evening meet under rainy skies, he was peppered with questions from Al Norman about the technical aspects of the operation, specifically what qualifies as an indoor grow as opposed to an outdoor grow. At one point he paused, pointed a finger at Norman, and said, “You’re a smart guy. What’s your involvement?”

The town’s famed sprawlbuster was brought on board by Doug Stotz, who’s worried his family’s homestead could be impacted by lights, cannabis odor, and noise.

Skeptical neighbors aren’t Parzybok’s only dilemma. Czakowski’s land is zoned industrial and that would require him to put down a concrete pad the size of a hockey rink to meet regulations. “Joe’s not sure he wants to do that,” Parzybok said. “He’s not sure it would meet his budget.”

Another factor to consider from Czakowski’s standpoint would be quality. The marijuana would grow inside two hoop houses using natural air flow. Whereas state-approved indoor grows are of such strict standards they would make Walter White blush, outdoor grows are susceptible to nature’s whims. Plants can get moldy and rot, but aren’t under the same strict oversight as indoor grows.

Parzybok said Czakowski’s plants would be compressed into oil and sold to buyers to use in edibles. “It would be like taking tomatoes to the retailer, but they aren’t good enough to put on the shelf,” he explained. “So what do you do? You sell them for tomato sauce.”

Parzybok said he will meet with Czakowski to consider the next move. “With all of the state regs, local bylaws, and community pushback,” he said, “we have to decide if this is a feasible project for the owner.”

Indeed, state-approved pot growing is not the financial panacea it’s thought to be – but that’s another story for another time.

Chip Ainsworth writes sports for the Recorder and news and opinion, including this column, for the Reporter. He lives in Northfield.

OP/ED

This November, Support Licenses for All

By ANDREA SCHMID

FRANKLIN COUNTY – For the last five years, I have been part of a statewide campaign known as Driver’s Licenses for All. This is only a small part of the 15-year fight to make Massachusetts the 17th state to allow undocumented immigrants to earn driver’s licenses. This past June, I thought my hard work had finally paid off after legislators voted the Work and Family Mobility Act into law – or so it seemed.

While working people, community and religious leaders, and unions across the state celebrated this victory, a counter-campaign led by a group called “Fair and Secure Massachusetts” formed with the intent to overturn the law. Their strategy? To put the question of whether immigrants should have access to driver’s licenses on the ballot in November’s mid-term elections. How did they set out to do it? By convincing 40,120 people across the state to sign a petition agreeing that this should be the case.

While supporters of the Work and Family Mobility Act fought hard to discourage people from signing this petition, our efforts were not enough. Last week the Fair and Secure MA campaign confirmed a victory in gathering the number of signatures necessary to achieve their goal. From now until November I will do everything in my power to prevent this ballot initiative from succeeding, and I want readers to consider joining me in this effort.

Let me be clear: this isn’t just about ensuring that immigrants have driver’s licenses because it’s morally right. I encourage people who might be on the fence to consider this as more than a pro-immigrant, do-gooder effort – although if you’d like to look at it that way, you are certainly more than welcome to. Anybody who has had the documentation they need to have a license should care about this issue and support it.

Having more insured drivers on the roads simply makes everyone safer and more accountable. This isn’t just my opinion – law enforcement leaders in Franklin County, including sheriff Chris Donelan and district attorney David Sullivan, have also agreed with this for many years. Over 60 law enforcement officials across the state publicly supported the Work and Family Mobility Act for these reasons and more. People across the political spectrum came together to pass this legislation, because its benefits to Massachusetts are clear and straightforward.

However, misinformation is powerful, and the culture war that is emerging is making it harder for people to trust each other, especially when it involves listening to people that don’t look or think exactly like they do.

I’ve heard a lot of misinformation in the last few weeks about what might happen if immigrants can earn driver’s licenses. For example, at a Fair and Secure MA petition-gathering event, one organiz-

er claimed to passers-by that having driver’s licenses will enable immigrants to vote in elections, which is entirely false. Having a standard license does not enable anyone to vote, especially now that voters will be required to show Real ID to participate in elections.

Another false claim that has been used repeatedly to withdraw support for the Work and Family Mobility Act is that if this law came into effect, immigrants would have driver’s licenses “just handed over to them,” without any of the standardized testing that all residents must go through to obtain a license. Everyone, including immigrants, will have to go through the same process at the RMV that has always been required for Massachusetts residents to acquire a driver’s license.

I tried to explain to people that these rumors weren’t true. Some paused, considered what I had shared, and declined to sign. Yet many people refused to listen to me. They succumbed to passionate yet misleading anti-immigrant rhetoric, rather than thinking carefully about the ways overturning this legislation would harm their community.

In the coming months, readers should expect to encounter a lot of fearmongering around what the Work and Family Mobility Act will do to our state. The campaign against driver’s licenses for all is being led by Maureen Maloney, a woman whose son was killed in a car accident by an undocumented person

in 2011. While the untimely death of her son is a terrible tragedy, she has since made it her objective to essentialize all immigrants as potential murderers on the road.

This couldn’t be further from the truth. When licenses are available to immigrants, we can expect more, not less, accountability on the road. Everyone driving legally will be insured and able to claim responsibility for an accident if it were to happen.

We should also not conflate the driver’s license question with much-needed federal immigration reform. The Work and Family Mobility Act simply addresses the reality that driving is a necessity for many to get by in our society, and for this reason, many people are already doing it, whether licensed or not. Opening the door for undocumented people to earn driver’s licenses is a public safety approach to ensure that everyone on the road follows the same standards and expectations.

Reliable transportation is absolutely essential for daily life. Living in an area as rural as this one, we know how important it is to have a license to get around. So – do you think every driver you share the road with should have to pass the same driver safety exam as you did, and be fully insured in case of an accident? If you do, you should not support Fair and Secure Massachusetts’ ballot initiative this November.

Andrea Schmid is a labor organizer at the Pioneer Valley Workers Center.

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GILL from page A1

Jeff Suprenant, a resident of Riverside's sewer district and chair of its water commission, said he learned about the damaged motors in the summer edition of the town newsletter, where an item attributed sewer rate increases expected later this year to the improperly disposed items.

Suprenant suggested that students at the Four Winds School, housed in the Riverside municipal building, may have flushed those items down the school's toilets. Selectboard members Randy Crochier and Greg Snedeker both responded that anyone in the sewer district could have flushed the items.

"If there is a major blockage that caused [the damage] in the main part of the line," asked Suprenant, "why should the sewer district get zapped for it? This is the town of Gill – we are all in this together."

Crochier said that residents in the sewer district should bear the bulk of the district's operating costs, but that it was fair to ask the town to help pay for extraordinary costs. "Certain things I think all of the town should help pay for," he said, "because those of us on septic systems benefit by Gill having a small section of town sewerage.... It helps all of us to have something nearby."

Crochier also said that private septic tanks like his get pumped into "the same wastewater treatment plant that your district's [sewage]

does," referring to the Montague clean water facility.

"My sewer bill was \$500 – in three months – plus my taxes," said Suprenant. "Jesus Christ, I am getting so I cannot afford to live down here."

Riverside resident Peter Conway said he pays "just over \$2,000 a year" on sewer bills. He and his son David, who also lives in the district, attended the meeting to discuss the rate increases after seeing the town newsletter item. He told the board that he understood the rate increases after subsidies from the Montague paper companies ended, but expressed concern that his conservation efforts have not seemed to mitigate ever-increasing costs.

"There is so much wrapped up in this issue," said Snedeker. "The Southworth paper mill went offline so the rates went up considerably." Snedeker also said that several other changes in how the town of Montague processes sewage and water increased those rates even more.

Crochier added that when the selectboard sets the sewer rates each year, the meeting "is always advertised, and not attended."

"This is the first time I heard about a meeting," Suprenant responded. "That is why I am here. Plus, with the sewer bills the way they are, it is just outrageous."

"It is tough for us, because we are not in your district," said Sne-

deker. "We were a little happier when John [Ward] was on the board... We always feel a little bit apprehensive voting on it. But really, it becomes a financial decision to make sure we cover the bills and do not end up short."

David Conway said that, as someone who worked in the food industry for years, he knew of several businesses that did not clean their grease traps regularly, even though it is required by law. He asked the board to consider increasing grease pit inspections of the district's food-serving businesses.

Miner recalled several feet of grease buildup at the pump station before his tenure, which he said had cost the town about \$8,000 to remove and dispose of. "Unfortunately, even with the chemicals we have been using since I took over, the well is still filling up with grease," he said.

Peter and David Conway both expressed interest in serving on a sewer district committee after Snedeker suggested forming one. "You have the most stake in this," said Snedeker.

He also said that the town of Montague should hear directly from Riverside residents, too. "I do not mean to throw it back," he continued. "I just think when rates were much lower, and your bills were much lower, nobody thinks about forming a committee, because you are happy with everything. One of the ways to deal with it is to come together and figure it out."

Regional Services

Town administrator Ray Purington told the selectboard that the town of Northfield had invited Gill to participate in a grant-funded study for regionalization of its emergency services.

"Being a neighbor of that, [it] would be nice if we could be involved with that, but only if it is helpful to Gill," said Crochier.

Purington, Crochier, and fire chief Gene Beaubien planned to meet with Northfield emergency medical services about the scope of the study, and report back to the selectboard.

Snedeker and selectboard chair Charles Garbiel approved a mem-



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Damage caused by clothing flushed to this Riverside pump station cost nearly \$10,000 to repair. Water commissioner Jeff Suprenant speculated that the bras, rope, diapers, and other items may have been flushed by students at the Four Winds School.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Eight French King Bridge Calls; Bad Driving; Four Loose Black Cows

Friday, 7/1

12:58 p.m. Signs knocked over at Main and North Cross roads.

10:28 a.m. Caller from River Road advises there is a large, loud party with a bonfire.

Saturday, 7/2

9:51 p.m. Caller from West Gill Road reports fireworks.

Sunday, 7/3

12:28 a.m. Report of three individuals standing on the side of the French King Bridge; may be teens.

3:59 a.m. Accident with injury on Main Road. Heavy damage to vehicle and pole.

Tuesday, 7/5

3:59 p.m. Observed damage to two sections of fencing on Riverview Drive.

9:24 p.m. Male in crisis at the French King Bridge. Transported to CSO.

Wednesday, 7/6

12:27 p.m. Accident with injury at the Gill lights.

5:57 p.m. Request for a welfare check for a male party

parked on the Gill side of the French King Bridge.

8:46 p.m. Assisted Bernardston PD on Church Street.

Thursday, 7/7

7:33 p.m. Received report of a suspicious vehicle on the French King Highway. Unattended J.B. Hunt trailer left in the rest area for two days.

Friday, 7/8

12:28 p.m. Fraud/scam reported on Mountain Road.

7:36 p.m. Caller from West Gill Road reported a Great Dane in the road.

Saturday, 7/9

7:19 p.m. Check on a male party sitting in a lawn chair on the sidewalk of the French King Bridge. States he comes there every now and then.

Sunday, 7/10

2:17 p.m. Caller from Barton Cove Road advises parties at a campsite have not been seen in a couple of days; tent is filled with water.

Tuesday, 7/12

9:03 p.m. Suspicious vehicle

parked near the French King Bridge. Subject was taking pictures.

9:22 p.m. Bear in a front yard on River Road.

Wednesday, 7/13

5:30 a.m. Party from Myrtle Street reports a tree limb fell; no wires affected.

Thursday, 7/14

2:17 p.m. Main Road caller reported a stolen bicycle.

Friday, 7/15

9:17 a.m. Assisted state police on Mill Street.

3:26 p.m. Tree across Mountain Road. No wires involved.

Saturday, 7/16

1:03 a.m. Caller from Main Road states there are hunters on her property.

6:30 p.m. Assisted Bernardston PD with unwanted person on West Mountain Road.

Monday, 7/18

9:07 p.m. Caller from Main Road reported a suspicious person in her kitchen.

10:31 p.m. Caller advises she is on the French King Bridge

and wants to jump. Detained; ambulance requested.

Friday, 7/22

8 a.m. Tree on the power lines, Mountain Road.

4:45 p.m. Assisted Erving PD with disturbance on the French King Highway.

9:08 p.m. Checked on an individual in a vehicle in the French King Bridge area for an extended period of time.

Saturday, 7/23

9:41 a.m. Caller from the Barton Cove camping area reported a missing dog.

3:59 p.m. Suspicious vehicle reported, French King Bridge. Family taking a hike.

Sunday, 7/24

6:55 a.m. Wood Avenue caller reported a missing dog.

Tuesday, 7/26

8:44 a.m. Caller from River Road reports a dead deer on the side of the road. Highway department advised.

10:30 p.m. Caller from West Gill Road reports four loose black cows.

orandum of understanding for shared legal services between the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) and the towns of Gill, Erving, Northfield, and Montague. FRCOG will provide \$10,000, with each town providing \$2,500 toward legal assistance during the next phase of the First-Light Power company's hydroelectric relicensing application.

Crochier recused himself from voting due to his management position at the Cooperative Public Health Service, part of FRCOG.

Other Business

On a consensus vote, the selectboard unanimously approved \$4,728 for the fire department to purchase new fire hose.

The highway department was

approved to proceed with roadway line painting on West Gill Road, Boyle Road, and Main Road from the public safety complex to the Route 2 intersection.

Anna Hendricks and Karen Larsen were unanimously appointed to the Cultural Council, and Jenna Marotte was unanimously appointed to represent the Upper Pioneer Valley Veterans Services District, all through August 2025.

A utility pole hearing for new service on Dole Road will be held at the August 29 selectboard meeting.

A donated Earth Machine compost bin was unanimously approved as a door prize for the town's third annual Harvest Festival. The festival will be held from noon to 3 p.m. on Sunday, September 25 on the town common.



Gill Early Voting Schedule State Primary Election

Saturday, August 27
9 to 11 a.m. and 3 to 5 p.m.

Sunday, August 28
No Early Voting

Monday, August 29
2 to 2 p.m.

Tuesday, August 30
12 to 2 p.m.

Wednesday, August 31
12 to 2 p.m.

Thursday, September 1
4 to 6 p.m.

Friday, September 2
No Early Voting

Voting will take place at the Town Hall in the meeting hall upstairs.

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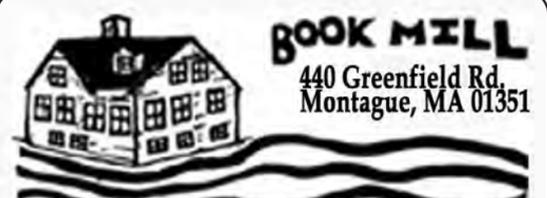
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ADAM KOHL PHOTO

Samolis has also been involved in renovations at the Meetinghouse.

MEETINGHOUSE from A1

the meditative quality of his musicmaking. Samolis lives and works at Insight Meditation Society, a silent meditation retreat center in Barre. The Vipassana practice in which he is immersed informs his improvisational scores. The basis of Vipassana practice is that of mindful observance without attachment or judgment. Appositely as a machinist, Samolis elicits acoustic emergence by solely providing the energy for the instrument to speak.

Of the two dozen townsfolk and friends in attendance, many sat intently throughout the performance with their eyes closed, while others reclined supine among the pews. In addition to providing sonic performance in the space, Samolis has volunteered some time, along with a host of volunteers and contractors, to restore the roughly 176-year-old Meetinghouse after its closure in the early 1990s.

There has been a coming together over the past two years to get the building back in working order. The Meetinghouse has been stripped to its bare bones. The walls have been insulated, reinforced, plastered, and painted. Non-structural beams have been removed to create an open floor plan. The original wide plank pine floor has been refinished.

A stone staircase has been added up to the front door, and an accessible ramp added at the back of the building. The original Holbrook bell – the work of George Holbrook, an apprentice of Paul Revere – has been maintained in the bell tower, and is rung on special occasions, as it was on Old Home Day.

In its current condition, the Wendell Meetinghouse is a three-season event space. Work is ongoing, and funds are needed to continue getting this building up to speed. According to Court Dorsey, president of the Friends of

the Wendell Meetinghouse board, the two main priorities remaining include the installation of a modern heating system and the addition of a restroom. These projects are estimated at \$250,000.

The revitalization of this Massachusetts Historical Site is pertinent to the creation of a gathering space for the people of Wendell and surrounding towns. Dorsey emphasized the projected use of the Meetinghouse vision under “The Four Domains.” The four tenets follow: “The Living Room,” as defined on the Wendell Meetinghouse website, will be an intergenerational “gathering place in a café style setting [...] in partnership with Village Neighbors Inc., children’s play space, tweens and teens clubs area, reading room with internet, puzzles, and games.” As it was last Sunday, this space is a “Performance Place” for music, poetry, dance, film, or otherwise, including a partnership with the Full Moon Coffeehouse.

The Meetinghouse can also be used as a “Maker/Learner Center” for arts and crafts, workshops, galleries, or lectures, and is open for eclectic spiritual activities, or “Spirit Circles.” It is also a place for weddings, celebrations, memorial services, and other private events.

Events are currently being booked for this fall – be on the lookout for sacred circle dances, and another forthcoming performance by Matt Samolis and collaborators.

If you would like to host an event at the Wendell Meetinghouse, email info@wendellmeetinghouse.org. To financially support the ongoing renovations, visit wendellmeetinghouse.org/donate or send a check made out to “Friends of the Wendell Meetinghouse” to P.O. Box 171, Wendell, MA.



NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Truck Money Goes to Town Meeting; IP Mill Demolition Talk Advances

By KEITH WATERS

Some may be enjoying a relatively quiet month of summer activities, but the Erving selectboard is staying busy. By the end of the month they will have had three Monday night meetings, in addition to the work they do the rest of the week.

The Monday, August 15 meeting brought discussion of a number of procurement processes currently underway: a new cemetery; new permitting and licensing software; new video camera systems for the police; a new loader for the highway department; new paving for the current cemetery; new members to fill vacancies on the planning board, recreation committee, and board of assessors; new branding for the town’s signage – a lot of new stuff!

Three town-owned properties have been identified as prospects for the new cemetery. To keep the ball rolling, town administrator Bryan Smith will prepare information to send to a number of companies who deal in making new cemeteries.

A search for new permitting and licensing software to replace the not-fully-functional software currently in use at town hall is underway. The board and town administrator agreed the town should put out a “request for proposals,” allowing them to choose what they consider the best solution, rather than an “invitation for bid,” which would lock the town into the cheapest offer. The cost is projected to be around \$17,000 per year, up from the roughly \$10,000 the town pays now.

The board approved a five-year

contract with a Texas company for police body and cruiser cameras, at a total cost of \$85,000.

A new loader, which the highway department needs to replace the current one which no longer has a functional roll guard, is not as easy. The town does not have money set aside for this, and will have to go to a special town meeting (STM) to get approval from the people.

Timing is an issue, however, as there is only one suitable loader available anywhere in the vicinity. This loader would cost \$200,000, or \$215,000 with a four-year lease. The current loader would be moved to the salt pile to load salt for the rest of its useful life.

The selectboard plans to schedule an STM for the middle of September, so Erving residents should be on the watch for that if they want to weigh in on this.

The quote the town got for a paving project at the current cemetery was unexpectedly more than \$10,000, so an additional advertisement and quote-procurement process is legally required. Bryan Smith and the board all heartily congratulated Glenn McCrory and his highway department team for a great job so far on the cemetery project.

The town has vacancies on a number of boards, and more expected. Letters of interest from advertisements placed in July were came the week of August 15, and more will be placed.

Finally, the board returned to the subject of town branding and signage with assistant town planner Mariah Kurtz. All agreed the initial set of designs had been too busy, and

that something simpler would be better. Brian Smith and Kurtz suggested they create a “scope of work” document and break the project into smaller tasks. The board agreed.

On Monday, August 22 a public meeting was held to discuss the future of the town-owned International Paper Mill property. Kurtz told the *Reporter* that between 20 and 25 people attended the roughly two-hour session, and were “very engaged.”

“It was interesting that so many people were on board for at least some demolition,” Kurtz said. “The tricky part of that would be funding... Demolition funding is very hard to come by.”

Erving has received a \$600,000 state grant to fund a proposed partial demolition of the complex, which Kurtz said “won’t cover the full cost of the selective demolition we’re proposing”; the town is applying for another \$600,000 through the state’s “one-stop” funding portal.

According to Kurtz, one idea discussed at the meeting was a “phased approach,” with the town demolishing some buildings and repeatedly seeking redevelopment proposals, which “could be more expensive in the long run, but might be more palatable to voters” faced with smaller one-time price tags.

The town’s insurance policy on the property has been extended until next fall, Kurtz said, but she warned that “each time we renew, it’s decreasing how likely we are to be able to renew in the future.”

Additional reporting was provided by Mike Jackson.

TREES from page A1

with the Massachusetts Environment Policy Act office (MEPA) in mid-June, but public attention in the affected region did not take hold until the last week of the public comment period, which was scheduled to close on Monday, August 22.

Climate and environmental groups began to circulate calls for comment, including Our Revolution Massachusetts, urging MEPA to require a full environmental impact study before issuing the company a certificate of compliance.

Comerford said her office “began to hear from many constituents who were concerned and confused,” and invited the company to meet with local officials and planners from the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) and Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC).

“We thought, given the magnitude of the proposal and the amount of local interest, and the potential impact of the proposal, that it was very important to have a quick meeting,” she explained.

Hayes said that the MEPA certificate was only the first step in getting the project approved, and that Eversource would then “go through other agencies more vigorously” to vet various details of the proposal, including the Department of Environmental Protection, town conservation commissions, MassWildlife’s Natural Heritage & Endangered Species program, and the state historical commission.

Of the 371 acres that would be cleared of trees, consultants working for Eversource reported that 34 acres are riverfront, 33 border vegetated wetlands, and 112 are priority habitat under the state Endangered Species Act.

Over the last several years, the company has carried out the same

program on a number of its other right-of-ways in eastern Massachusetts.

Wendell selectboard member Dan Keller said he would like to know how many trees have fallen on the transmission lines in question during their 50-year history. Reed said the company should be able to provide that information.

Nina Keller said that as an abutter, she felt “highly disrespected” by not having been directly notified of the project. She asked about chemical spraying in the right-of-way, and Hayes replied that the company’s periodic use of herbicide is subject to separate regulation.

Andrea Donlon of FRCOG, urged Eversource to “break out the resource impacts by town.”

Patty Gambarini, an environmental planner with PVPC, noted that “the project area extends across two public water supply watersheds,” and recommended the company “reach out directly to drinking water operators in each of the communities where those kinds of impacts or project collocations occur.”

According to the report, these include the areas of Nurse and Dean Brook in Shutesbury, Amethyst Brook in Amherst, and Higher Brook in Ludlow. The project also crosses a wellhead protection area in Northfield that recharges a public water supply.

A number of commenters asked for more information about the heights of trees and of powerlines, and how the new width of “border zone” was determined. Comerford urged the company officials to provide “sharp numbers,” as well as information on the town-by-town impact, and asked that the legislative delegation be included in all communication with town officials.



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MONTAGUE from page A1

working in a similar capacity," Garrison said the committee felt that Ramsey, who has served as town planner since 2010, has "a very strong knowledge of the community, knowledge of the position, [and] knowledge of the needs of the town of Montague." He also suggested that there would be a "very quick transition," and that Ramsey would be in the position for the "long term."

Selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz said he had not yet had time to view the interviews, which had been posted online by MCTV, and member Matt Lord said he had not been able to find the scoring sheets used to rate candidates. Similarly, Chris Boutwell said he had "not had time to look at everything."

The board appeared inclined to endorse the search committee's recommendation but requested, in Kuklewicz's words, "one more week to do our due diligence."

Parking Ban Melting?

At the same meeting, Ramsey proposed that Montague's winter parking ban, which prohibits on-street night parking between December 1 and April 1, be relaxed to allow parking except during declared snow emergencies in downtown Turners Falls. The proposal comes after a recent study concluded that while the parking supply is adequate, there is widespread dissatisfaction with the winter ban.

Ramsey's proposal, which he said was "vetted with downtown stakeholders" and developed with town administrator Steve Ellis, the police chief, and the public works superintendent, only applies downtown but could be extended elsewhere in the future. The new ban would only apply to an area from the Connecticut River up the Hill to Park Street and Hillside Avenue, including the Patch neighborhood but not the upper Hill or Montague City.

Within this area, on-street overnight parking would be prohibited only during a "declared emergency," which would be announced through the CodeRED text system, town website, and social media. The evening after the ban is lifted, residents would need to remove cars from municipal lots for plowing.

Discussion at the meeting focused on who would declare emergencies, and the criteria for imposing them. Kuklewicz said that ice could create bigger problems than snow, and Ramsey suggested the designation "winter emergency."

When Lord pointed out that the Patch does not have a town lot, Ramsey said that residents manage this problem for four months under the present ban, and that the changes would make it "slightly more convenient for them."

The board did not take a vote, but Ramsey said the policy could be implemented this winter. The planning department needs to hold a public hearing, implement a plan for signage and communication – potentially including blue "snow emergency beacons" – and clarify questions around declaring emergencies.

Trash News Still Bad

Monday's meeting featured another long, tense discussion, at least the third in recent months, with trash collection firm Republic Services about recent missed trash and recycling pickups.

Melissa Sibley of Emond Avenue

in Turners Falls said she is living in a "rural neighborhood," with wild animals such as foxes and groundhogs getting into garbage "that has been out for weeks."

Lord, who lives in Montague Center where there have also been frequent complaints of missed service, asked Republic operations manager Amias Callender if he understood "how much of the town is not getting regular trash pickup."

Callender replied that he did understand the problem, but that last week one truck broke down and another failed an inspection, an "anomaly." He said that a driver shortage was not impacting Montague's routes, because the town has a "set driver" who is now getting familiar with its neighborhoods, and that a brand-new vehicle is in service.

He admitted that Montague Center had been a recent problem, and that the company is "going to continue to tighten up," and has created a "hot list" of problem streets.

Lord said Callender's response gave him "more confidence," but that Republic, a national corporation, reported \$331 million in recent quarterly income. "They've got money for new trucks," he said. "Let management know that you need them."

Republic manager Tyler Finnegan said garbage trucks are back-ordered up to eight months.

Kuklewicz announced that he was going to act as "the hammer," noting that there had been a "big debate" earlier this year about whether to renew Republic's contract, and that a new application advertised as creating better communication with Republic was not working for some residents. "You guys really need to get on top of it," he said. "If that means you need a supervisor out here to patrol a route, then I ask you guys to do that."

This proposal was seconded by Ellis, who said constant complaints to town hall were "impacting the productivity" of staff. "We've just got to get it right," he said.

Reduce, Reuse... Pave?

Jan Ameen of the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District announced that the state has awarded Montague \$10,000 to purchase a trailer to help it comply with new regulations requiring that mattresses be recycled.

Ameen said the trailer must be designated for regional use, which means that residents of towns such as Leverett and Gill can use it. The new recycling rule applies only to cleaner mattresses, not "dirty, moldy" ones, which will still be placed in the traditional "bulky waste box" but for a higher fee.

The board voted to accept the grant. Ameen recommended a \$30 fee for the disposal of cleaner mattresses and \$35 for dirtier ones, but the decision was not finalized.

Public works superintendent Tom Bergeron came before the board to announce that Warner Brothers, a company based in Sunderland that does road work for the town, would be paving portions of Turners Falls Road in the coming weeks.

Bergeron said the asphalt paving, which he called a "test section," included 2,800 pounds of recycled plastic – the equivalent of 124,000 water bottles, 224,000 single-use grocery bags, or "if you really want to get down to it," three million drinking straws.

He said Warner Brothers was putting this plastic "in the oil

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which is in the blacktop," and that if the blacktop deteriorates within the next several years, the company would "own it." "Being a green community, I thought it would be nice to do something with our roads," he concluded.

Kuklewicz suggested the DPW put up a sign to announce the experimental paving. Bergeron chuckled and said the work could start this Wednesday, "so there might be a lot of white hardhats out there, taking a look at it."

The Developmental State

The board unanimously approved a letter to the Franklin Regional Council of Governments requesting a brownfield contamination assessment of the town parking lot on First Street, a site being considered for affordable housing.

The board approved a payment of \$37,889 for the Avenue A Streetscape project and issued a "certificate of final completion" for work in front of the Colle building and Shea Theater, part of Montague's community development block grants. It also executed a Federal Aviation Administration grant of \$570,635 to help pay for the town airport's recent purchase of Pioneer Aviation.

Ellis gave an update on town hall roof renovations. Bids are due September 1, with work to begin in late September.

The board delayed discussing a proposal from engineering firm Wright-Pierce to hire a company to fix Montague's "leaky man holes." Ellis said he wanted to have more discussions with Wright-Pierce. The board did execute another agree-

ment with the firm, which it had previously approved, to integrate older maps of the town's sewer system into an ongoing sewer study.

The board voted to amend a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Franklin Regional Transit Authority to release the authority from an obligation to construct a natural gas line along Sandy Lane, which had been part of its plan to build a new bus maintenance facility in that area.

It approved an MOU with the state Department of Transportation, which will donate a "speed feedback" sign and other safety signage to the town, primarily for use along Turners Falls Road.

On the advice of consultant Ken McCance of Yolon Energy, the board approved a two-year contract, beginning next April, to purchase natural gas. McCance said he was not prepared to propose a similar contract for electricity because of instability in that sector, which he attributed to evolving state and local policy.

At Ellis's request, the board approved an agreement for shared legal services to help negotiate First-Light Power's new federal hydroelectric licenses.

Ellis mentioned that new state policy on local community agreements with cannabis companies, and revenues from them, has been signed into law. He said that town funding from cannabis revenue for programs at local schools and the Brick House would probably continue, but that "for any expense that is not timely, the town should take a very cautious approach," and that he has urged the schools to avoid contracts involving

"long-term obligations."

In response to a question, Ellis said he believed that a cannabis delivery company had "discontinued its intent" to move into Millers Falls, and had vacated its premises in the village.

Other Business

The board approved a request by Lawrence George of Brick & Feather Brewery to allow outside seating at their Eleventh Street facility, conditional on resolving a potential tax problem. Ellis urged George to begin applying to the state for permanent seating under an amended liquor license, as the board's vote falls under a temporary COVID emergency license. "I actually do have all this put together," said George.

The board approved an entertainment license for Jesse Bay for a music event on September 24 at Peskeompskut Park. Ellis proposed that a fall special town meeting take place on Thursday, October 13. He said the town clerk recommended the warrant be kept limited, and that the date not be pushed later in October, when it could conflict with preparation for the November election.

Kuklewicz suggested that the meeting should be held in person at Turners Falls High School, "unless there is a new [COVID] variant."

The board approved applying for a state grant to fund a wage and classification study for town staff, and at the end of the meeting, retired into an executive session to discuss union contracts. The board's next meeting will be held Monday, August 29.

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SCHOOL from page A1

is not submitted by September 30.

The crack Tighe & Bond discovered is located about 23 feet down the 200-foot well. The three options the firm presented are repairing the well, drilling a new one, or installing a PFAS filtration system at the school. Unable to agree on a long-term plan Wednesday night, the two towns decided to weigh the matter at their next selectboard meetings.

Wendell selectboard chair Laurie DiDonato suggested testing only the water entering the well through the cracks to see if it has exceptionally high PFAS levels. Lehan said this could be included as an aspect of the long-term plan sent to the DEP.

Wendell finance committee chair Doug Tanner asked whether the leak could be contaminating the aquifer with PFAS, and Lehan replied that the aquifer was probably contaminated. "It's interesting to me that DEP says nothing about that," Tanner said. "If our leaks are contaminating the aquifer, and their solution is simply to put filters in... but it's okay to have that leaking well there, contaminating the water in perpetuity? That's absurd!"

Installing a treatment system in the building, the solution initially favored by the DEP, would cost about \$75,000, plus \$7,000 a year to maintain, replace, and dispose of carbon filters. If the mechanical room where the well is located is too cramped to meet building code, another option would be to put the system in a music room closet where a water tank is already stored.

Drilling a replacement well would cost about \$105,000, according to Tighe & Bond, and comes with risks, such as the new well requiring an easement through land court or the water still being contaminated. Most neighbors of the school contacted about a free well-testing program provided by the state declined to have their water tested, said Wendell selectboard member Dan Keller.

"You don't know the quantity or quality of water that you're going to get," Lehan said. "It would be nice to have a survey of surrounding wells, but... some people don't want to do that. That's a personal choice - I don't know what to say about that."

New Salem selectboard member Carl Seppala said he lives near the school, along the same branch of the Swift River, and no PFAS were detected in his well.

The third and final option is re-sealing the well and hoping it stops the PFAS contamination. Years

ago, principal Kelley Sullivan explained, high sodium levels in the school's water supply were remedied after snow plows stopped salting the roads around the school. At that time, a leak in the well casing was suspected, but it was never investigated.

Tighe & Bond said sealing the well would cost \$108,000, but it may take longer than the other options, and could end up costing more if the infiltration proves difficult to isolate.

The officials debated the options for about two hours.

Most of the Wendell officials said they favored drilling a new well, and New Salem selectboard chair Hugh Mackay tentatively sided with them. "It's a 50/50 cost here, so we all have to be in agreement," he said.

Seppala, however, said he favored installing a treatment system first. "I don't want to gamble with taxpayer money," he explained. "I want the school to be functional."

While Tanner said Wendell has a plan to contribute \$60,000 from various sources to pay its share of the chosen solution, New Salem is still debating whether to use American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

"There's nothing stopping you from making a [new] well the long-term plan," Seppala said. "The only thing I can say is, the source of funding from New Salem will become more complicated, and the fact that the New Salem selectboard is about to change drastically complicates it."

One board member, Randy Gordon, resigned in June, and Mackay has announced plans to step down as well. A special election to fill both seats is scheduled for October 25.

"At this moment, if we go for the well, I'm having a special town meeting," Seppala said. "I have no idea what the two new people will want."

"I think the best bet is to go for the best long-term solution first," Keller argued. "The school and the town would be much happier with a clean well than with a dirty well with a filtration system on it."

Since high PFAS levels were first detected, Swift River School students have been encouraged to bring water bottles from home, and filters have been installed on water bubblers.

Though DEP regulations state that a person or institution identified as a "potentially responsible party" can be required to pay for the remediation of contamination, identifying the original source of the PFAS at Swift River was not discussed at Wednesday's meeting.

WENDELL from page A1

independent of any solar installation. This appears to be contrary to the solar development bylaw passed at the June annual town meeting, which allows a battery system only if it is associated with a solar field.

Instead of contacting the town planning board, New Leaf submitted a notice of intent to the con com and indicated they will apply directly to the state Department of Public Utilities for approval. The wetlands permit application came from a division called "Wendell Energy Storage 1, LLC," and New Leaf is working with former parent company Borrego on aspects of the project.

The project would clear and pave 12 acres to install 750 large lithium batteries, 100 megawatt-hours of storage, surrounded by a 25-foot tall fence. Planning board chair Molly Doody said it is the first such proposal in western Massachusetts, and open space committee chair Dan Leahy said it would be the largest industrial development ever in Wendell.

Leahy described the site as a priority area, abutting one of the best wetlands in the state. Although the batteries proposed are less flammable than lithium-ion batteries, it is worried that the Wendell fire department would be outmatched if the facility catches fire.

Doody said she had sent several emails to town counsel, but so far had seen no response. Thomas said New Leaf representatives came to a recent con com meeting, and are scheduled to return in October.

Leahy said he felt Borrego, New Leaf, and Wendell Energy are not honest brokers. Selectboard chair Laurie DiDonato said the story should be sent to senator Comerford, and the public should get involved.

Further Incursions

Old Home Day organizer Kathy Becker said the experience of parking on the north common for Old Home Day had allowed a taste of the "forbidden fruit" of parking there, and that in spite of organizers using "as many barrels as they could find," attendees parked too close to trees.

She suggested plantings along the common's edge, or a special permitting process if another time comes when parking on the north common is requested.

Town project manager, building inspector, highway commission chair, and citizen of the year Phil Delorey said he has seen cars parked on the grass in several other places on both commons, even where there

is pavement nearby to park on.

First Refusal

The owner of a 103-acre property on Gate Lane sent the open space committee a notice of intent to sell; the town has the right of first refusal.

Leahy said there is likely no other buyer in line, and that over half the property is of high biological value, part of an undeveloped habitat corridor between the Quabbin and Connecticut River and a priority in the town's open space plan. There is an issue with the property's Chapter 61 status. While the owner believes Gate Lane is still a town road, Leahy said he had found records that the town voted to discontinue it in 1986.

Delorey described town road frontage as not just a quantitative issue, but a qualitative one. Gate Lane is a single narrow lane with wide spots at intervals allowing vehicles to pass. Selectboard member Gillian Budine added that it is not even private, but has multiple owners. Leahy said he hoped to reach an agreement with DCR about the property.

Wendell Early Voting
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All voting takes place at the Wendell Town Offices, 9 Morse Village Road.

Safety, Cordwood, Junkers

Delorey brought up the Y-intersection of Locke Hill and Locke Village roads, a source of many near-collisions and some full ones.

Drivers traveling south from Wendell Center on Locke Village must cross oncoming traffic to continue straight up Locke Hill, but vehicles traveling north on Locke Village are not visible to them until it is too late. (Unless both vehicles are traveling the speed limit.)

Delorey said he has approached FRCOG about an engineering design of that intersection, possibly using state land to make a T-intersection.

Christine Heard asked about the town wood bank, as the property where it was planned is now privately owned. She suggested the Phelps lot off Montague Road, which is dry, was logged recently, and has a cleared area and gate. Leahy said that there is a wetland on that site. Budine said the bank should be put on an upcoming agenda.

Heard said some scrap had been

removed from 131 Locke Village Road, but there are still vehicles. Keller said some had been removed, and the owner received a special dispensation to keep extra vehicles on site because he needs them.

Personnel

In response to Heard's question about the annual report being printed on loose paper, Johnson-Mussad said it was a result of having four coordinators in the space of a year. He said the town would print a limited number of 2021 books, and the 2022 report will be in book form.

The selectboard appointed Ray Stone to the board of assessors, and Cole Emory has shown some interest in the third assessor position. If he follows through, "I can retire," said Keller, who has volunteered so the assessors can meet. No one has volunteered to be Wendell's representative to the FRTA advisory board.

Fire chief Joe Cuneo is scheduled to retire in October 2023, and a committee is working to find a way to keep fire service in Wendell. Cuneo has not said he would definitely leave if it has not finished its work by his retirement birthday, but for him to stay on, the town would need to send a home rule petition to the state.

DiDonato said a home rule petition is not a big deal, and might help to give the committee extra time.

Other Business

Bus company F.M. Kuzmeskus and Swift River School are working with Wendell to apply for EPA grants to help pay for electric school buses. One complication is that some Swift River drivers keep the buses at their homes, saving fuel and time. It may be possible to install charging stations at the highway garage.

The selectboard voted to use \$350 from its account for a new flagpole at the veterans' memorial.

Because clerk Anna Wetherby cannot come to a special town meeting on October 12, the board changed the tentative date to Wednesday, October 26, at 7 p.m. at the town hall.

The board approved a list from the Council on Aging of surplus materials for auction, a \$6,000 donation by the Friends of the Wendell Library to be used at the library's discretion, and the lending of town-owned chairs to Suzanne Pugh.

The board scheduled a meeting with the New Salem selectboard on Wednesday, August 24 to discuss the PFAS situation at Swift River School (*see article, Page A1*).

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Above: Chinese lanterns, also known as bladder cherries and strawberry groundberries, grow on Central Street in Turners Falls.



WEST ALONG THE RIVER
THIS LONG,
DRY SUMMER

By DAVID BRULE

THE FLAT, ERVINGSIDE – It’s been a quiet month of August at this old house on the edge of the known world, just off River Street.

Down here, it is a world unto itself; there’s always something to see. Take this morning for example. There’s the cool dew underfoot, that won’t likely last another hour. Dewdrops on the green metal Paris café table under the old apple tree, my favorite spot for a book, coffee, and starting the day off right.

The kayak that yesterday glided over the surface of the great river now rests in the last green grass nearby, waiting for the next trip to the water. A pesky chipmunk climbs up on the arm of the Adirondack chair, expectant, interrogating me, one paw lifted in the air, wondering if I could spare some sunflowers. He informs me that he needs them for his winter nest. He spends all these summer days hoarding seeds away, winter necessities spurring on his anxious comings and goings.

The house dog struts out the kitchen door and down into the dew. This is his property, his domain, and his responsibility. Plume tail held high, he glances with a certain disdain at the annoying grey squirrels who scatter as he prances by, pacing out his private territory. Then he lifts a leg on the bed of black-eyed Susans. Nothing like the first morning pee.

Chipmunk now looks into my empty coffee cup. Nope, no seeds in there.

Bear broke a branch of the flowering dogwood last night. I think he was eyeing the dogwood berries not yet ripe. He must be hungry as a bear, to coin an appropriate phrase, given that there is not much to eat out there on the drought-stricken blueberry and winterberry shore on the river’s edge. Bad summer for berries and bears.

The wild-sown elderberry we let grow where it wished withers at the edge of the lawn, its droplet bunches drooping on the end of the branches, its leaves all yellow and hanging limp. In spite of our carrying buckets of water to it every evening. The clusters of berries arranged in a veil-like ring have already been stripped away by hungry catbirds.

Another morning brings us a pause in the summer heat. This time the sky is an unfamiliar gray and the deck is wet with a silent rain that fell sometime during the night, unnoticed.

Just beyond the treeline, at the edge of the woodland’s terrace, the river barely makes a sound. Last summer a torrent ripped down the village streets, shoving cars around and forcing a house off its foundation, but now the ancient river is hardly more than a trickle. It still makes its way around smooth stones and boulders, sometimes hinting at its name.

A whole family of mergansers, ten of them, perch daily on the biggest boulder, the size of a dining room table and just as flat. Just right for the large family to sit and watch their river flow lazily by.

I step out from the river’s treelined edge, and they reluctantly slide off their table rock. They bob slowly down the weak current, crooking a neck and watching me over a shoulder.

With little else to occupy me, I’m looking for the August cardinal flower. In the past I’d note their blooming with mixed emotions. Back then, the sight of them meant the return to the classroom world of school bag, gradebook, and lesson plans.

But not any more. This here schoolmaster has left that all behind – all good memories for the most part, but glad to be on permanent vacation. On occasion, though, a nightmare comes to see **WEST ALONG** page B8



Bumblebee, *Bombus* sp., visits the sedum flower.

Mother Turtle and the Art of the Pour

By DONNA PETERSEN

TURNERS FALLS – I was told to look for a row of white garage-type structures next to the Nova Motorcycles in Turners Falls, abutting Unity Park. The door I

wanted would have some flowers near it. Okay – I find a rather unassuming set of doors and bays looking all the same but, yes, there were some flowers at the door. I knock and a voice calls out “Come in!” I open the door and an explo-

sion of color on a long low table and on the walls greets me.

Welcome to the compact studio of Marsia Shuron Harris, also known as Mother Turtle. We recognize each other from my two years working at the Wendell Free Library, when she lived in Wendell back in the 2010s. With a warm smile, she invites me to sit down and we talk about her art and music as well as her personal coaching offerings.

Marsia has interest and talent in various creative endeavors; as she puts it, she has “hands in a lot of different pots.” She attended the Art Institute of Boston where she focused on photography, and spent time pursuing her creative outlets in Key West, Florida, and Vermont. She ended up in Western Massachusetts about 22 years ago.

She told me she was a musician most of her adult life, and was in a band called Mother Turtle as a songwriter. The band tended to play soul- and rock-flavored music with a bit of jazz in the mix. Marsia considers herself “a musician at my core.” She was the only

see **THE POUR** page B3



Marsia Shuron Harris with two of her poured-paint wall pieces.

EXHIBIT On the Camino with Don Pedro Pepito

By RICHARD ANDERSEN

MONTAGUE CENTER – Meet Don Pedro Pepito. A small cat with a big name that he lives up to as he travels with his human friend Lucía on her pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. It’s a long walk of many miles that takes most people a long time to complete – weeks. The “purrfect” venue for adventures.

Pepito and Lucía discover many marvels on their way, including the latest of many generations of chickens to inhabit a huge cage above the entranceway to the Church of Santo Domingo de la Calzada, and the eight men it takes to swing with ropes the incense burner that hangs from the ceiling of the cathedral that is their final destination.

These wonders are beautifully illustrated in Kate Spencer’s soon-to-be-published book *The Cat Who Walked the Camino*. Along with the chickens and the world’s largest *botafumeiro*, or censer, there’s the day Pepito and Lucía meet the grumpy woman who doesn’t allow cats in her *pensiones* and the vicious dog who almost deprives Don Pedro of one of his nine lives. You can meet them all, and more, in the exquisitely rendered watercolors cur-

rently on exhibit at the Montague Center Library.

Although oil is Spencer’s preferred medium, she chose what she calls “the glow and delicacy of watercolor” so evident in the works of Beatrice Potter and Ralph Steadman as her medium. A highlight of the illustrations is Spencer’s use of the tiny, multi-colored spots and streaks that seem to splash randomly across almost every page of the book. These dots and sprays “do a good job of unifying the series,” Spencer points out, but they also give her

book a vibrant energy that underscores the actions of her characters.

The result is nothing less than a signature achievement.

The Montague Center Library is open Mondays and Wednesdays from 2 to 7 p.m. and Fridays from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information about Kate Spencer, visit katespencerart.com. If you wish to have your artwork considered for an exhibit at the Library, stop by or contact Kate Martineau at (413) 367-2852 during the library’s hours.



An illustration from Kate Spencer’s forthcoming book.

Pet of the Week



CARMODY COLLAGE

“HATTIE”

This fashionable gal may be shy at first, but once she warms up and gets to know you she'll be out and about. She likes to be petted and very much enjoys toys with feathers on them – they're her favorite!

Hattie has lived most of her life as the only pet. When her person became ill, she moved in with a family member that also had dogs and did okay with them, although it was a

little much at times. She's a beautiful senior girl looking for a new home.

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SCENE REPORT

The Pioneer Valley Kennel Club Show

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – On August 6 and 7, the Pioneer Valley Kennel Club had a dog show at the Franklin County Fairgrounds in Greenfield, which they called the All Breed Obedience and Rally show. I went to one of the two days of the event to check it out.

They had four rings for these dogs to be in as a part of the show. I saw one owner and their dog obviously practicing working in one of the show's rings. One type of breed that was part of the show was an Irish Setter. I also saw two sets of owners and dogs walking around for a judge in the show. They both did it like they were pros.

There were actually several Irish Setters in the show. A handful were spotted, and a couple were brown. Besides that breed there were also Golden Retrievers, several non-long-haired collies, a couple of sheep dogs, a couple of pugs, and an Australian Shepherd. Some of these dogs were being groomed by their owners on site.

Most of these dogs were Shepherds of some kind,

hunting dogs, or just with another one of their breeds as a pair, but there was a bit of an oddball or two among the breeds at the show – those being a Bernese Mountain Dog, a spotted Great Dane, an Afghan dog, and a Briard. I heard one of the Irish Setters and the dog's owner won “Best of Opposite” in the show.

I would also like to point out that beside some pugs being there, in terms of small dogs, there were Corgies, a Pomeranian, and four Shetland Sheepdogs. I later learned that practicing with your dog for being in the ring was called “gating.” I saw that being done one more time with an owner and their Golden Retriever.

This dog show certainly has a variety of dogs featured in it. Most were what I expected to find in a dog show. One or two were not what I would expect, which were a Bernese, a Leonberger, and a Newfoundland.

Dogs were also judged for “Best of Breed,” and I learned that the “Best of Opposite” was for the opposite sex from the winner of “Best of Breed.” I ended up witnessing the judging for “Best of Breed” for Golden Retrievers.

It was a good show to be at!

late summer libraries listing..

Montague Public Libraries

Turners Falls: Carnegie (413) 863-3214

Montague Center (413) 367-2852

Millers Falls (413) 659-3801

Erving Public Library (413) 423-3348

Gill: Slate Library (413) 863-2591

Leverett Public Library (413) 548-9220

Northfield: Dickinson Library (413) 498-2455

Wendell Free Library (978) 544-3559

MONTAGUE

Every Wednesday: *Story Time Outside.* Meet Meghan Doyle for stories, songs, and a Take-and-Make craft. Carnegie tent, 10 a.m.

Every Thursday: *Playgroup Plus.* Guided and free play with music and activities. Designed for preschoolers; older children welcome. Carnegie tent, 10 a.m.

Thursday, August 25: *Intro to Genealogy.* Carol Ansel, director of the Godfrey Memorial Library, demonstrates the basics of searching Ancestry Library Edition and *FamilySearch.org*. Email librarydirector@montague-ma.gov or call (413) 863-3214 for the link. Zoom, 6 p.m.

Saturday, September 10: *Children's Author Visit and Yoga Session.* Meet local author Sue Fuller as she shares words and poses from her book. Carnegie tent, 11 a.m. to noon.

ERVING

Every Wednesday: *Bilingual Storytime and Playgroup.* Hora Del Cuento y Grupo De Juego Bilingue. 10 to 10:45 a.m.

Monday 9/5
9 a.m. Interval
10:15 a.m. Seated Workout
Tuesday 9/6
9 a.m. Good for U
10 a.m. Line Dancing
Wednesday 9/7
9 a.m. Cardio Low Impact
10:15 a.m. Chair Aerobics
11:30 a.m. Bingo
Thursday 9/8
9 a.m. Core & Balance
10 a.m. Barre Fusion
Friday 9/9
9 a.m. Quilting & Open Sew

Senior Center Activities

AUGUST 29 TO SEPTEMBER 9

WENDELL

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.

LEVERETT

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 coa@leverett.ma.us.

GILL and MONTAGUE

The Gill Montague Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information please call 863-9357.

Monday 8/29

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

Tuesday 8/30

1 p.m. Chair Yoga
3 p.m. Tai Chi

Wednesday 8/31

10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
12 p.m. Bring Your Lunch Bingo
4 p.m. Mat Yoga

Thursday 9/1

10:30 a.m. Brown Bag
12 p.m. Senior Farm Share
1 p.m. Cards & Games

Friday 9/2

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

Monday 9/5

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

Tuesday 9/6

1 p.m. Chair Yoga
3 p.m. Tai Chi

Wednesday 9/7

9 a.m. Veterans' Agent Hours
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
12 p.m. Bring Your Lunch Bingo

Thursday 9/8

12 p.m. Senior Farm Share
1 p.m. Cards & Games

Friday 9/9

10:15 a.m. Aerobics

ERVING

Erving Senior Center is open 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Mondays through Fridays. Open for cards, coffee, and snacks daily. Fitness room open daily. Erving van services available (must call 24hrs in advance for a ride). For more information, please call (413) 423-3649.

Monday 8/29

9 a.m. Interval
10:15 a.m. Seated Workout

Tuesday 8/30

9 a.m. Good for U
10 a.m. Line Dancing

Wednesday 8/31

9 a.m. Cardio Low Impact
10:15 a.m. Chair Aerobics
11:30 a.m. Bingo

Thursday 9/1

9 a.m. Core & Balance
10 a.m. Barre Fusion

Friday 9/2

9 a.m. Quilting & Open Sew

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THE POUR from page B1

woman in Mother Turtle, and people just started calling her “Mother Turtle,” so she went with it.

Concerned about offending Native sensibilities because many Native tribes have turtles as central to creation and sacred beliefs, she consulted a Native elder to ask if being called “Mother Turtle” was appropriate. The elder looked at her seriously and silently for a while and then smiled and said, “You’ll grow into it.”

I tell her that as a child I was told the area where we both grew up in New Jersey was home to the Turtle Clan of the Lenape Tribe, before – well, you know.

When I first looked into Marsia, I loved the art and functional art she is working on currently. Her website and Facebook pages burst with color from the paint-pouring method she applies to everything from wood to glass and different kinds of art board. She says she “went through a horrible time” and discovered this method of painting, and “dove into it – art saved my life, as did music.”

This fluid art form uses resins and epoxies applied to a base, and the result is full of color and motion. Mastering this method came with a learning curve for Marsia. She states she was never really a painter, and had to understand the densities of the epoxies, paints, resins, pigments, and how they behaved. “I love the color aspects” of the media, she says, and the forests of Wendell “really got me back in nature and to respect the greens, and the blue sky.”

Looking around the studio, I see paintings hung on the wall or leaning on it. They bring to mind, for me anyway, cosmic scenes of nebulas or star clusters, and some look like undersea scapes with weird, wonderful life forms. She loves the same color palette I do – blues, aquas, greens, all aswirl with movement.

And drying on the studio table is a large circular piece that looks like an ocean and clouds and sand. Marsia creates many functional art

pieces on board or glass, that can become small table tops or wall hangings. Or something small, like her lovely coasters.

She also works with wood, creating cutting boards and charcuterie boards inlaid with color. Many of the items are custom orders for wedding gifts, or special pieces for the home. There is also a display of gorgeous earrings and pendants. Full disclosure: we did a little bartering. She gave me a very cool turtle pendant, in exchange for a tall shelf I offered for drying her and her students’ work on.

Yes, Marsia is offering lessons in the techniques she has learned. She claims that poured painting has sort of exploded in popularity, and she has been teaching classes that students seem to find very therapeutic. Ideally, there are six students in each two-hour class, and she can tailor the class to the desires of students. “Oh, so relaxing” and “Oh my god, I’ve never felt this relaxed in my life” have been a couple of comments participants have made.

Sounds good – so maybe pouring paint and watching it dry is not boring!

Therapeutic: that is another aspect of Mother Turtle’s teaching. She has been coaching people with a course called “Healing the Stories We Tell Ourselves” to help them move toward desires rather than limiting beliefs. More information about this is on her website, www.mothersurtle.com.

Mother Turtle’s pieces can be seen at her website and Facebook page, and she sells primarily through social media. (Look for “Mother Turtle Photography” or “Mother Turtle” on Facebook, find links on her website, or contact her directly at mothersurtlephoto@gmail.com.)

I ask Marsia where she sees herself going with her work, and she says she needs to “up her game” to stand out among the increasing number of people using the poured-paint method. She wants to also offer more classes, and get back into making the music she loves.



NINA ROSSI PHOTO

Harris offers classes in poured paint, a method she used to create the tabletop seen here.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Overly Pushy Solicitation; Creemee Escalation; Vodka Switcher; Two Exotic Birds; Buzzer Slammer

Monday, 8/8

7:33 a.m. 911 caller calling to speak with an officer about federal stalking. When advised an officer will call him back, male started getting agitated about not having police available right away.

12:30 p.m. Walk-in from Dell Street reports the neighbor’s son has been riding a four-wheeler on his property and it is disturbing her peace. Advised of options.

3:37 p.m. 911 caller states that a man at Peskeomskut Park is being aggressive towards him. A 64-year-old Turners Falls man was arrested and charged with two counts of assault and battery on a police officer, one count of disorderly conduct, and one count of resisting arrest.

Tuesday, 8/9

1:07 p.m. Caller states that a couple of females are going into a recently deceased person’s apartment and taking things. Situation mediated for now. Parties agreed to separate.

3:11 p.m. Female party alleges male has stolen her car keys and work laptop. Officer spoke with male party, who states he doesn’t have either of those items. Female advised of civil options.

4:45 p.m. Following a vehicle stop on Turners Falls Road, an adult male was charged with operating a motor vehicle with a revoked registration; uninsured motor vehicle; and unregistered motor vehicle.

5:12 p.m. Following a vehicle stop on G Street, an adult female was charged with unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle.

Wednesday, 8/10

9:22 p.m. Erving PD out with a male party on the French King Bridge; requesting another unit. Party removed to hospital.

11:42 a.m. Caller from J Street states that some young kids are chasing after a dog. The caller is concerned about the kids running into the road, and that the dog looks “too skinny.” Unable to locate.

1:20 p.m. Two boxes and one large envelope reported stolen from back stairs on Fourth Street.

10:10 p.m. Caller states that they have been playing loud music all night somewhere on Park Street, and now it’s after 10 p.m. and caller has to work in the morning. Unfounded.

11:47 p.m. Officer checking in at a Turners Falls Road residence as he observed a pulsating light that may be a sign of distress. Officer spoke to homeowner, who forgot to turn off light. No signs of distress.

Thursday, 8/11

3:14 a.m. Suspicious person report on Randall Road. Area search negative.

9:34 a.m. Owner of Millers Falls Laundry Company reporting washing machines were vandalized overnight; identified responsible parties on surveillance footage. Summons issued for malicious destruction of property worth more than \$1,200 and disorderly conduct.

10:09 a.m. Officer located crew doing work in road at Seventh and L Streets without a detail officer. Officer requesting emergency detail.

10:50 a.m. Caller from Randall Road states that a young male let himself into her screened-in porch and was speaking in a very pushy manner. He then walked past her and sat at her kitchen table. She asked him to leave, and he did without incident, but she was very uncomfortable.

Friday, 8/12

12:43 a.m. Officer conducting a motor vehicle stop at Millers Falls Road and Industrial Boulevard; involved vehicle is an unregistered moped. Assisting officer almost struck by passing vehicle. A 28-year-old Greenfield man was arrested and charged with a marked lanes violation, operating under the influence of liquor or .08%, unregistered motor vehicle, resisting arrest, and unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle.

Saturday, 8/13

1:51 a.m. Suspicious person report on Randall Road. Area search negative.

7:48 a.m. Chief Williams was told by a motorist that there is a grate of some kind sticking up on Turners Falls Road. Officer located a loose manhole cover, pushed it back into place, and alerted the DPW foreman of the issue.

8:15 a.m. Walk-in reporting water bubbling up from the ground on Montague City Road. Water Department supervisor notified.

8:42 a.m. 911 caller reporting that she just found a gun in her mailbox; unknown if it is real or fake. Determined to be an Airsoft gun. No issues.

10:01 a.m. 911 caller from Turnpike Road states that the neighbor behind them is arguing with her husband and things are escalating. Peace restored.

1:37 p.m. Caller from Ran-

dall Road was made very uncomfortable by a male solicitor earlier today. He was overly pushy and was pushing his way into her home. Second complaint of this type of behavior in two days. Officer believes a permit review is needed.

5:53 p.m. 911 caller from Third Street states that he was attacked by a dog and the owners are on his property causing a disturbance. Caller not injured. Dispute over property lines. Situation mediated.

6:25 p.m. Caller from Unity Street states that the involved male keeps riding by her home on his bike and setting off her car alarm because he has the black remote to lock/unlock her car. Report taken.

Sunday, 8/14

10:07 p.m. Officer conducting vehicle stop on Fifth Street. Summons issued for operating a motor vehicle with a revoked registration; uninsured motor vehicle; and attaching plates to a motor vehicle.

Monday, 8/15

11:46 a.m. Building manager from Avenue A reporting that a tenant has been making threats to people in the building and was trying to break into another employee’s car. Investigated.

6:10 p.m. Caller from Second Street reporting graffiti on the fence at his rental property. Unsure when it was put there; his tenants just reported it to him today.

Tuesday, 8/16

1:01 a.m. 911 caller requests police assistance on her friend’s behalf; friend is being harassed, and caller is worried involved male may cause harm to people who reside there. Summons issued for criminal harassment.

9:14 a.m. Detail officer requesting patrol units respond to Third Street and try to get all of the cars moved off the street so that roadwork can be done. Officer requesting tow truck for two vehicles blocking road construction. Attempts were made to reach owners.

11:14 a.m. Report of vandalism on playground structures at Unity Park. Summons issued for vandalizing property.

11:16 a.m. Report of vandalism to exterior of Shea Theater. Three summonses issued for vandalizing property.

2:33 p.m. Caller from Fourth Street states that her purse was stolen from the laundry room of her apartment building while she there doing laundry. Advised of options.

10:07 p.m. Caller reports that a sedan pulled into Unity Park and people are playing basketball, causing a noise disturbance. Officers advised parties of park hours. They left the area.

Wednesday, 8/17

1:49 a.m. Officer checking on vehicle in Aubuchon parking lot. Female using wi-fi from library on her phone. No issues.

6:36 a.m. Caller reports

ing on forklift parked in roadway on K Street. Made contact with owner; advised of complaint.

6:29 p.m. Caller states that she believes a party is going on near the high-tension wires, and people are riding dirt bikes. Officer spoke to two male parties and advised them of rules and regulations. They are leaving the area.

10:03 p.m. Caller from Fourth Street requesting officer to come to his residence to assist with an ongoing dispute. Continuation of same incidents over the last few weeks.

10:10 p.m. Officer advises all units are checking on a disturbance at Fourth Street and Avenue A. Peace restored.

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see MPD next page

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MPD from page B3

that a skunk was struck and killed at the Third Street intersection. Message left for DPW. 6:55 a.m. Caller from Hillside Road reports that sometime last night, someone caused damage to his house and broke a window. Report taken.

1:45 p.m. Caller from Fourth Street requesting to speak to officer about an ongoing larceny issue.

4:01 p.m. Caller from Avenue A states that she was bitten by a dog; requesting to have someone come look at it. Officer advises minor wound; tried to make contact with dog owner, but she was not home. Dog owner called station to speak to officer; officer advised owner of options. Message left for ACO.

5:26 p.m. Caller from Montague Village Store states that the store clerk advised him that a male comes into the store with a vodka bottle filled with water, puts it on the shelf, and takes a new one without paying for it. Officer spoke to involved party on phone; will continue to investigate.

6:22 p.m. Caller from Grand Avenue requesting assistance with something flying around in her house, but it went out the door while she was on the phone.

Thursday, 8/18

3:51 p.m. Following a 911 hangup call on Ivy Street, a summons was issued for failure to use care in starting, turning, backing, etc.; operating to endanger; and motor vehicle operator refusing to identify self.

4:01 p.m. Caller from Randall Road requesting to speak to officer re: ongoing harassment from neighbors. 6:46 p.m. Caller states

that two exotic birds have been hanging out outside the Baptist church at Prospect and Central Streets all day. Message left for ACO. 6:51 p.m. Caller states that she would like it on record that she put sculptures around town and two of them have been damaged.

Friday, 8/19

12:46 a.m. Report of loud yelling and some sort of dispute occurring at Avenue A and Second Street. Unable to locate.

12:47 p.m. Caller reporting tree crew without detail officer on Millers Falls Road. Crew out of road; advised to call for a detail if they will be in road. 4:26 p.m. Caller states there is a female dancing in the roadway on Avenue A. Officer made contact with involved party, who will stay out of the street.

4:56 p.m. Caller from West Main Street states there is a female party in a cowboy hat, backpack, and glasses talking to herself and hollering and bothering kids as they walk by. Unable to locate.

8:16 p.m. Caller reporting that she was recording a male party who was allowing a small child on a skateboard at Unity Park; she didn't feel that it was safe. They got into an argument and he put his hands on her and she then put her hands on him. Officer spoke with all involved parties. Video shows caller was the aggressor. Parties advised of options. Involved male declined to press charges.

Saturday, 8/20

1:53 a.m. Caller states a female is causing a disturbance again at Powertown Apartments; she loses her keys a lot and then slams on the buzzers to have someone let her into the building; she does

this by just leaning on the panel and buzzing all apartments. Caller states she has been told not to do this. Advised caller to call when this is in progress so it can be logged.

9:24 a.m. Report of female undressing in the street on Fourth Street. Unable to locate.

8:38 p.m. 911 caller states that 10 to 15 middle school kids are by the volleyball courts at Unity Park yelling at each other with mention of knives. Officer advises nothing showing; spoke to a few people at the park who did report seeing the incident.

Sunday, 8/21

3:56 p.m. Caller from Marshall Street reporting a lost or stolen pistol. Paperwork completed; gun entered as lost/stolen. 5:20 p.m. Caller from Fifth Street states that two males are fighting, yelling, and throwing things. One of them is not supposed to be on the property. Landlord is en route. All quiet on arrival.

6:41 p.m. Caller from L Street states that a raccoon has been bringing veggies from the garden onto her back deck and just lying around all day. Caller tried spraying water at it to get it to move and also sprayed some Listerine at it; it continues to just lie on the deck. Caller has tried calling animal control but has not heard back; unsure what to do next, but afraid raccoon is not acting normal. Services rendered.

7:20 p.m. Caller states a cat is locked inside Aubuchon Hardware and it looks thirsty; she found a note on the door saying that there is a store cat, but was still concerned about it not having any water. Referred to an officer.



SUBMITTED PHOTO / MAGIC STARS

No. 51: Tom Leonard

Interview by J. BURKETT and TROY CURRY

TURNERS FALLS – This week we are talking to Tom Leonard!

Tom is a great and often overlooked musician in the underground rock world. He has been involved in the Twisted Village label since the early '90s, and with the band St. Johnny since before that. He put out a few of the best solo albums back then, too, under the moniker "Luxurious Bags" (one of which, 1994's *Frayed Knots*, was finally released on vinyl a few years ago).

Tom has also been part of the band Major Stars since the very beginning. Go see them ASAP if you are up for a dose of the loudest, heaviest psych jams around. Thanks to Tom for his time...

MMM: Hi Tom! What are some things you were listening to around the time you started the earliest home recordings of *Luxurious Bags*?

TL: I was probably into psych, noise, minimalist, and experimental melodic stuff. 13th Floor Elevators, Red Krayola, Can, Sonic Youth, Live Skull, Pussy Galore, Spacemen 3, My Bloody Valentine. Chrome was especially important, because their unorthodox recording techniques made a big impression on me.

Later on, thanks to Wayne [Rogers]'s Smithsonian-grade record collection, I picked up on a wide array of fantastic music. Krautrock, South American psych, free jazz, British folk, American primitive. Labels like K and Xpressway.

MMM: How did you meet Kate and Wayne?

TL: At UConn's radio station, WHUS. The station was an oasis

for me because I was bored to tears by my classes and classmates. I met a lot of important people there, like Terry and Josh!

MMM: Any insights into the *Twisted Village* label?

TL: Twisted Village was sprung from the mind of a teenage Wayne as a way to release his own music. Later, with Kate, they turned it into an indie label, got kind of burned in the process, and scaled it back. Now it's "whatever Wayne feels like putting out."

As a record store for 14 years, it was one of those special places, kind of an incubator for creative endeavors. It's damaging to lose spaces like that.

MMM: How old were you when you joined St. Johnny? Are you still in touch with them?

TL: I was 21 or 22. I'm not in touch, but I did let Bill and Wayne L. know about Jim [Elliott]'s passing a few years ago. I'd say we're all on good terms, but leave the past in the past.

MMM: "Voluntary Lifelong Quarantine" [1992] is a wild title now, so many decades later. Do you have any comments about *Lux Bags*? Did you ever think about playing live?

TL: That record should come with a "if you or anyone you know is struggling..." sticker, because it's kind of a downer. I guess I still make sad white guy music, but I'm not as bummed out as I used to be so playing any of that stuff live would probably ruin it.

MMM: Was being obscure and hard to find something that was intentional at that point, when you

thought about making albums?

TL: It was more like a lack of funds combined with low expectations. Press as many records as possible that might actually sell, without going broke in the process.

MMM: Have you ever spent time in western Mass? Do you have any favorite western Massachusetts stories?

TL: Growing up in north central Connecticut, western Mass was a lifeline. Riverside Park and the Big E when I was a kid.

When I got older, it was Zone Art Space in Springfield and hanging out in downtown Northampton – places like Dynamite Records, and seeing shows at Pearl Street, the Iron Horse, and L'Oasis.

I drove out a few years ago to ride the beautiful rail trail from Amherst to Northampton. On the way back a hairy dude in overalls passed me on his bike and gave me the Pioneer Valley Salute – flipped me off for no apparent reason. I wasn't even mad because it was such a perfect moment.

MMM: Any memorable concerts you would like to talk about, that you played or went to? Or most memorable tours?

TL: Most memorable show is the 2006 All Tomorrow's Parties Festival in Minehead, UK. We weren't memorable because our set was plagued with gear problems. But the rest of the bill was insane: Wolf Eyes, Dinosaur Jr., the MC5, and the Stooges.

Most memorable tour was Japan, because it's an amazing country. Visit if you have the opportunity.

MMM: Do you have any favorite records you would like to share with the readers of the MR?

TL: Departmentstore Santas: *At the Medieval Castle*.

Plagal Grind: The six-song EP. Chrome: Most of their catalog, but especially *Half Machine Lip Moves*.

Beat of the Traps (MSR Madness Vol. 1).

Nina Nastasia: Everything. Black Moth Super Rainbow: *Dandelion Gum*.

Incredible String Band: all the duo records, plus the first one with Clive.

Boards of Canada: Everything.

MMM: Any recent news about Major Stars? How is that band different from or similar to the other bands you have been in?

TL: We're working on a bunch of new songs, and had our first post-pandemic show at Tubby's in Kingston, New York in May.

Major Stars has been going for 25 years, and we're all friends and love each other, and it just works for some reason.

Montague Community Television News

Relive the Fun Fest

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – MCTV has uploaded all of the performances from this summer's Música Franklin Fun Fest at Unity Park, including student performances and Carry Ferguson's Grumpytime Band. It's very cute!

On our Vimeo page, which can be found by clicking "Videos" at our website montaguetv.org, you will also find newly added footage from the Assistant Town Administrator interviews with Walter Ramsey and Kevin Flynn.

You will also have access to all updated and archived meetings from the Montague and Gill selectboards, as well as GMRSD school

committee meetings, which now take place via Zoom.

All community members are welcome to submit their videos to be aired on Channel 17, as well as featured on the MCTV Vimeo page. MCTV is always available to assist in local video production as well. Cameras, tripods, and lighting equipment are available for check-out, 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 how easy it is to use a camera and capture the moment. Contact us at (413) 863-9200 or infomontaguetv@gmail.com.

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MOVIE REVIEW

A Love Letter to *The Worst Person in the World* (2021)

By NATHAN FRONTIERO

TURNERS FALLS – Among the myriad charms of writer-director Joachim Trier's latest film is that recommending it, or even referencing it, sounds at least slightly hostile. Consider a few examples:

You would probably like *The Worst Person in the World*.

The Worst Person in the World was nominated for an Academy Award.

The Worst Person in the World made me laugh, cry, and think hard about love, passivity, and the trajectory of my life.

I promise I'm talking about a movie, but those seeking a cinematic kiss-off would also do well to look elsewhere. The film's title references a Norwegian colloquialism used for playfully excessive self-criticism rather than strictly hard feelings.

At its center is Julie (Renate Reinsve), a woman we follow from her late twenties to early thirties as she tries to find an anchor in her personal and professional life. She changes career pursuits from doctor to psychiatrist to photographer, with accompanying sartorial and hairstyle updates. She leaves a relationship with Aksel (Anders Danielsen Lie), a 40-something comic artist, for one with Eivind (Herbert Nordrum), a charming barista around her age, but is dogged nonetheless by constant uncertainty. No matter where she runs, between men or the streets of Oslo, she can't get away from herself.

Trier and co-writer Eskil Vogt blend layers of romantic comedy and melodrama in their screenplay's 14

parts, occasionally referencing the grim escalating crises of the broader world. They imbue Julie with a bracingly recognizable sense of Millennial dread, the feeling that you have to find the answer to some ineffable existential question before everything passes you by or falls apart.

Reinsve – in her first leading role – brilliantly telegraphs her character's shifts between wistful, flirtatious, and even callous. Her effervescent charm buoys her insecurity and ambivalence, and the film leaves room for more intuitive than literal emotional beats, where Reinsve's microexpressions or tonal differences evince some but not all of Julie's interiority. In one scene, Trier tracks Julie in the lower center frame as she walks home from a glitzy celebration for Aksel's latest work, and Reinsve's pensive gaze suggests the weight of the Oslo skyline and twilight clouds pushing directly down on her.

During the prologue and in select scenes throughout the film, a narrator (Ine Jansen) offers perspective on Julie's life in wry, clinical tones, sometimes while talking over the characters. On first encounter, this device baffled me. Upon revisiting the film, however, and notably in a tense scene near the middle, that voice crystallized into something like a close third person, more compelling when it seems to offer Julie a way to test out her feelings rather than diagnose them. When Reinsve delivers as a question something the narrator declares moments before, it appears as if Julie is contradicting an inner monologue offering her received wisdom.

Danielsen Lie and Nordrum excel in their supporting parts. When Julie lashes out as her angst resurfaces post-honeymoon phase with Eivind, Nordrum's pauses and gentle timbre convey mountains of hurt. Later, as Aksel laments a bygone era of cultural connection based in physical objects, Danielsen Lie heartbreakingly conveys the clear-eyed desperation of someone staring down their mortality.

It's in Julie's searching desire for vocational, and decidedly non-vicarious, fulfillment that Trier lands several of the film's most affecting moments. To wit: during a reset button breakup with Aksel, whose success and desire to have children become tacit pressures, Julie admits, "I feel like a spectator in my own life. Like I'm playing a supporting role in my own life." Reinsve's weary, pained delivery makes the line hit like a Mack truck. Of course, taking the reins doesn't mean she finds sudden contentment, only new questions and problems to focus on, but you can't help but feel thrilled for her inertia.

This is best captured in the film's gobsmacking slide into fantasy. In a pivotal scene, Julie flips on a kitchen light and stops time, freezing everyone in Oslo except her and one other person to whom she runs across the city. The reverie that unfolds is achingly romantic, and consists almost exclusively of in-camera effects, thanks to meticulous planning by Trier and wizard cinematographer Kasper Tuxen, whose 35mm imagery renders the city in soft, dreamlike colors with mostly natural light. Composer Ola Fløttum further elevates the swoony



Renate Reinsve delivers a brilliant performance in her first leading role.

moment with soaring, arpeggiated strings and contemplative, melancholic piano that keep pace with Reinsve's on-screen strides.

When Julie first encounters Eivind after some discreet wedding crashing, Fløttum employs a tenser *motif* that seems to blend organic and synthesized strings. As the pair navigates mutual attraction and stretches the line between infidelity and an intimate impasse, the music sneaks in like guilt, arousal, yearning, regret, the breathy anticipation of grabbing one's life by the shoulders and remaking it. In other scenes, needle drops including Billie Holiday, Christopher Cross, Harry Nilsson, and Art Garfunkel complement the narrative in whimsical and sardonic fashion.

Between its stylistic leaps and more straightforward sequences, the film articulates with brutal precision what sparks connection and freights it with tension. Whether lost in the thrill of novelty or mired in the throes of conflict, Julie, Aksel, and Eivind offer reminders that you can be in love and still chafe against the fact that you're different types of social animals, or have fundamentally dissimilar

communication styles, or are moving through disparate life stages.

The film importantly avoids vilifying anyone in its cast. Each upbeat point of its main love triangle resonates, as do the shape of their arguments. Maybe you've felt yourself feed the glow of a loved one's life more than you tend your own, or maybe you've been the one to leave or be left behind when what's difficult becomes irresolvable. Trier understands that who and how we love can inspire both immense joy and profound dilemmas, and at no point do the discomforts of his astuteness become displeasures.

To evoke Annie Dillard's immortal phrase, "how we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives." Maybe all of our biggest choices would be a little easier if we could just press pause and see what another one would be like. *The Worst Person in the World* offers an incisive, and deeply heartfelt, rejoinder.

The Worst Person in the World is available streaming on Hulu, on Blu-ray and DVD via CW MARS interlibrary loan, and for purchase from the Criterion Collection.

EXHIBITS

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Let Food Be Your Medicine*. Leonore Alaniz's imprints capture the anatomy and life force of edible plants, which grow wild and are cultivated in local farms. Includes works by other artists and poets. Through August.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Everything Can Be Fixed*, abstract multimedia works by Turners Falls resident Susan Blauner. A portion of sales benefit Ukrainian relief organizations.

GCTV Studios, Greenfield: *Alternative Abstracts*, Drew Hutchinson paintings. Through September.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *Why I Stand*, statements, video, and banners about and by participants in weekly vigils on the Greenfield town common, curated by the Traprock Center. *The UK Farm Belt*, observational stories and photographs of life in East Sussex after lockdown by Alfonso Neal. Both through August.

Leverett Crafts & Arts, Leverett: *All of the Things*, paintings by Susan Valentine. Through August 28.

Looky Here, Greenfield: *Smoky Puddle*, works by Cathy Wusocki and Wayne Hopkins. Through August 27.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *Unseen Rhythms*. Jude Danielson presents quilted textiles that navigate the realm between pure

color perception and recognizable form. Through August.

Fiddleheads Gallery, Northfield: *DVAA Members Exhibit*, through September 18.

Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne Falls: *Lisa Beskin*, underwater photography; *Julie Crabtree*, embroidered scenes inspired by the Bridge of Flowers. Through August. Opening September 1: *William Hays*, reduction woodcuts and linocut prints; *Carolyn Webb*, drawings and prints. Reception Sunday, September 25, at 2 p.m. Through October.

Shelburne Arts Coop Gallery, Shelburne Falls: *Flights of Fancy*, paintings, photography, mixed media by member artists. Through August.

Mill District, Amherst: *Valley Artist Portraits*. Isabella Dellolio photographed 20 local artists for a project putting their portraits on Valley Bike kiosks. Through August in the windows of District businesses.

Gallery A3, Amherst: *Seventh Annual Juried Show*. Featuring art by 41 artists. Through August.

Anchor House of Artists, Northampton: *Jules Jones*, mixed media paintings; *Dean Nimmer*, abstract paintings. Through August.

Brattleboro Museum & Art Center: *Felt Experience*, group show of felt artists. Also exhibiting: Beth Galston, Frank Jackson, Mie Yim, Nebizun, Roberley Bell, and Oasa Duverney. Through October 10. www.brattlebormuseum.org.

MOVIE REVIEW

Hallelujah: Leonard Cohen, A Journey, A Song (2022)

By REBECCA TIPPENS

COLRAIN – I see quite a few movies, and this documentary is one of the most moving, inspiring films I have ever seen. Others in the audience felt so, too. Theatergoers at the Amherst Cinema typically share a polite Yankee reticence. Yet, though beginning somewhat shyly, the audience broke into applause as the film ended. Those who congregated in the bathroom said, "I want to see it over and over again."

I felt the same. I left almost shaking because of its powerful effect. The film is able to convey Cohen's deep spirituality and somewhat magically communicate that spirituality to its audience. It pierces deeply.

We are able to savor Cohen's quality and essence through interviews with him, through his performances, and through vignettes of those who have performed his song "Hallelujah," including testimonials on what the song meant to each of them.

There are further interviews with people who were close to him as fellow collaborators and/or esteemed friends, like Judy Collins who encouraged him in his work as a singer/songwriter, covering his "Suzanne" as soon as he shared it with her, and Larry "Ratso" Sloman, who often wrote for *Rolling Stone* and in interviews comes across as a knowing mate. They also pull some from the esteemed biography written in 2012, *The Holy Or the Broken: Leonard Cohen, Jeff Buckley, and the Unlikely Ascent of Hallelujah*.

I had seen k.d. lang perform "Hallelujah," and was saddened that though they showed others singing this work, they had not included her version – until the tippity end, when they featured her powerful rendition of "Hallelujah" at his memorial service. (Cohen died peacefully in 2016, at age 82, during a period of prodigious work.)

The film is not a biography, but rather a portrait of his craftsmanship as seen through the process of writing "Hallelujah" – striving over years to get the precise words to meet the truth of what he meant. He

was forced into no timeline but that which his art demanded. That earnestness and devotion shows in the film and in part informs his spirituality, and that is conveyed to the viewer.

But also alluded to are his committed deep relationships... old lovers remain as friends; he may not have had contact for years, but then powerful connections are revived, such as when eight years later he and his fellow collaborator John Lissauer reconnect.

The outrageous theft of all of Cohen's money by his business manager pushed him to return to touring and performing when he was 74 years old in 2008, which at the time was somewhat unusual for someone his age. He was surprised to discover that the audiences adored him and his band, and how much he adored his audiences. That deep love also is conveyed in the film and seeps through to its viewers despite the fact that we are not with him in person.

Cohen was also steeped in religious traditions, owing to his Judaic faith and then to his meditation practices and connections with spiritual teachers, including five years in a Zen monastery. However, he was not one to follow dictates; these traditions suggest a framework, a pathway, a hint that meaning might be found.

Some have called Cohen a prophet. I am not sure what that means, but I would say he is a teacher who shows us the commitment and time necessary to get to the truth of one's intent. From that you learn of the struggle necessary to commit to the journey towards Truth, and such is the film and Cohen's sublimity.

Several audience members expressed that they wished they had this film in their possession so that they might watch it almost as a daily prayer, as it brings you closer to the path of grace. I hope that those of you who read this will be able to partake in the experience of the film as well.

Hallelujah is now playing at least through September 1 at the Amherst Cinema – apparently it will be streamed come October, yet I cannot find which service will feature it.

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the
poetry
page

It is difficult
to get the news from poems
yet men die miserably every day
for lack
of what is found there.

– William Carlos Williams

edited by Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno
Readers are invited to send poems to the
Montague Reporter at: 177 Avenue A
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or to: poetry@montaguereporter.org

Our August Poetry Page

Harbors Are Not Removed from the Sea

Harbors are not ever removed from the sea.
From the sound. From the bay.
It is a never-ending poem.

* * *

She sometimes stole small skiffs and dories from the harbor to take a row around late at night.
They were other people's and you couldn't go out for long.
People went to restaurants and walked the wharf for ice cream and hot dogs.
You'd have to bring the boat back to its same mooring
Secretly tie up
Do your best bowline.
Dreadfully fun.
If somebody swiped that mooring while you were adventuring the owner would know.
"Something's up." "Something's different." "Something happened."

Such exquisite pleasure.
She saw some of them from the water – walking around looking for their mooring.
Remembered before the gin and tonics.
With flashlight beams they jabbed at any figure moving on the wharf in the moonlight.
They delighted to nab some from the dock.

How long could joy and secrecy last out on the water in a stolen boat? For anyone?
In the embrace of slippery quiet.
In the safest of harbors swallowed in darkness and shapes.
One eye on what waves ahead.
Ears for the "splish" of the oar; silken sounds.
One eye on the dock.
Was that someone coming to grab the open mooring?

* * * * *

Sometimes, and for years, she had looked hard for where he had wandered when he stood
right in front of her.
She would insinuate, probe, and scan... but nothing.
Not moonlight, not water. No mooring what so ever.

* * *

He favored the "side of the road in the hard dirt" and growing flowers.
Fatuuous about his plantings, she said: "These dahlias are so beautiful, I'd rather kill a cow than pick one"
(and didn't really mean it).
He said: "Yes... and leave its forlorn babies to cry for milk" (he laughed).
Walking by sinking corrupted double-deckers
with spanking red white blue bunting festooned for the 4th
His urban vision unpacked: "That bunting really snaps up the look of that house" (and laughter).
Today's horoscope told her: "Do something new in the kitchen."
He said: "We can have sex on the floor."

* * * * *

After these years the poems were never ending
coming too hard, too fast to allow quick slippage over, and through me.
And to disappear in rowing motion.
I want a flashlight.
I will find my mooring for what's hard and what's coming.

Harbors are not ever removed from the sea
The sounds, the bay
The clinking on the masts, the small lowing bells will live in dreams
Tie lines completed in tandem, and differently.

– Edna French
Montague

Hot for Midnight

It's hot for midnight
Sticky, clinging
Dank fog enveloping
Reeks and rot hanging
Slender grey trunks rising
Scraping the tired stars
Leaves withering on sinewy branches
Hiding impossibly dark places
Distant sounds hanging in the thick air
And dropping into the marshy night
A heat felt within
And cloaking my still form
Better to stay unmoving
And dream of autumn

– R.M. Garcia
Erving

I Meant To

I meant to put those
sixty-three names
and email addresses
in the BCC blind copy
space, not the CC
copy space. I meant to

send it to him, not her.
I meant to swallow not
drool, on the computer,
my lap, your sleeve, my
arm, the floor, that first
edition, in the drawer.

I meant to walk and
move with that feline
grace someone once
said I had, not wobble
and stagger like an
old wino. I meant to

hit the "y" not the "t"
the "h" not the "g"
the "b" not the "v",
return not send,
amends not amen.
I meant to stand up

straight not bend, to
sit upright not slouch,
to not fall down and
get stuck between the
couch and a hot pipe
that burned my back

like the prolonged
sting of a fierce slap.
I meant to stay twenty-
nine or forty-nine, not
be seventy-nine turn-
ing eighty in May this

way, drooling and
stumbling and un-
able to make a fist
with my right hand
or grasp a utensil in
the proper way but

instead need foam
additions to the
handles for my one
or two fingers that
can still curl without
help. I meant to be

the exception to
obviously aging or
a long gone legend
by now not a bent
over drooling old
man who still often

feels like a woman
inside but I'll accept
what I'm left with for
as long as I can and
still be grateful for all
that I've been and am.

– Michael Lally
Maplewood, New Jersey

Contributors' Notes

Edna French has lived in New England, and in the town of Montague, for years. Also a photographer, a recent focus included urban structures imprinted by human nature: "Town Without Pity" and "Town Without Pity (next door)." Professional success includes proposal writing and research for education, arts and community health fundraising.

R.M. Garcia, when not cooking gourmet meals for his family and friends, or wandering through the woods, or writing the occasional poem, or watching the river run and the hawks and eagles soar, works at the USGS Silvio O. Conte Anadromous Fish Research Laboratory.

Multi-published, multi-award-winning Michael Lally has been writing poetry for as long as he can remember. Not even Parkinson's disease has been able to slow him down. "I Meant To" was named a best poem of 2020 by *Best American Poetry*.

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WEST ALONG from page B1

trouble my sleep: the haunting fear of being late for class, arriving at the school door, too tardy by an hour, with the principal glaring at me for neglecting my classroom full of expectant scholars. I know a number of other teachers who have the same recurring nightmare, even though we've been gone from the classroom for more than 20 years.

A bit further downriver, I visit my favorite spring-fed pool. Summer after summer it was filled and fed by a random spring, rising to the surface from the Plains aquifer on the high plateau above my valley. This private icy pond, even cold on a blistering hot day, was my oasis. With a few breast strokes I could glide in three feet of spring water among tadpoles and minnows. Surrounded by towering grasses and open to the sky, I could contemplate high-flying swallows and swifts, the darting dragonflies.

But this summer it's barely a puddle, mostly gone dry. There's nothing but baking stones and pebbles, some arrowhead and duckweed drawing what they can of water just below the rocky surface.

I pass the old pond with a wistful and baleful eye. All has gone dry this year.

All over the planet.

These last days of August, the cicadas drone on in the heat, even raising their electric buzzing by the very first rays of the sun. Crickets ring constantly, random bumble bees visit the jewelweed. Other bumbles still doze, late to awake and reluctant to leave their fragrant Joe Pye weed blooms, the cushiony sedum flowers, or the safety of the huge sunflowers.

Those bumbles may just be one of our last hopes to save the world. With pollinators dwindling, the sturdy bumble bee carries on, the dependable workhorse of the bee world. He's strong enough and large enough to carry great loads of pollen from flower to flower.

The house is quiet, the yard as noisy as a day or a night in the jungle. By noontime, however, the heat

will silence all, save for the penetrating buzz of the cicada. The shade provided by the towering oaks and the old maples will be the only relief.

The one thing this heat has been good for is to dry the firewood, stacked away since March. The burning sun and dry weather draws out the lingering sap and moisture so that by October, when we toss the small split wood into the Greenwood C cookstove, it'll crackle and snap when the flame from the match kindles it.

Falling acorns already cover the ground. This early drop has not been lost on the flock of turkeys who somehow got the word to come to check on our old oaks. We are told that in times of stress, oaks produce thousands more acorns as a hedge to assure there'll be more oak seedlings in the future. The squirrels and turkeys may take their share, but the bumper crop of fruit promises that great-grandfather oak will have descendants for generations to come.

And now at this end of dry August, leaves are starting to fall. We haven't had to mow the lawn for months!

With the coming of twilight, we gather on the back porch at the table that serves as workbench and feeding shelter for birds that cluster there in a snowstorm.

Windows now wide open in the upstairs bedrooms, the house breathes stale air out, freshening air from the river is breathed in.

Overhead, the last few swifts are already moving away from us, joined by the migrating night-hawks, the first to go. We try to convince them to linger a bit longer, not to signal the end of summer just yet. But in a way we don't mind so much, knowing that September, just around the corner, may bring us some relief from the relentless drought.

In spite of all, we manage to continue to live in harmony with what has been given us this year. But that doesn't keep us from praying for rain, from dreaming about snow.



MONTAGUE

PHOTO COURTESY OF JEAN DEMPSEY



REPORTER

Top: David and Jean Dempsey, Rose, Kate and Jim Martineau, Brita Dempsey, and Cal Dempsey Knox visited Montague, Prince Edward Island!

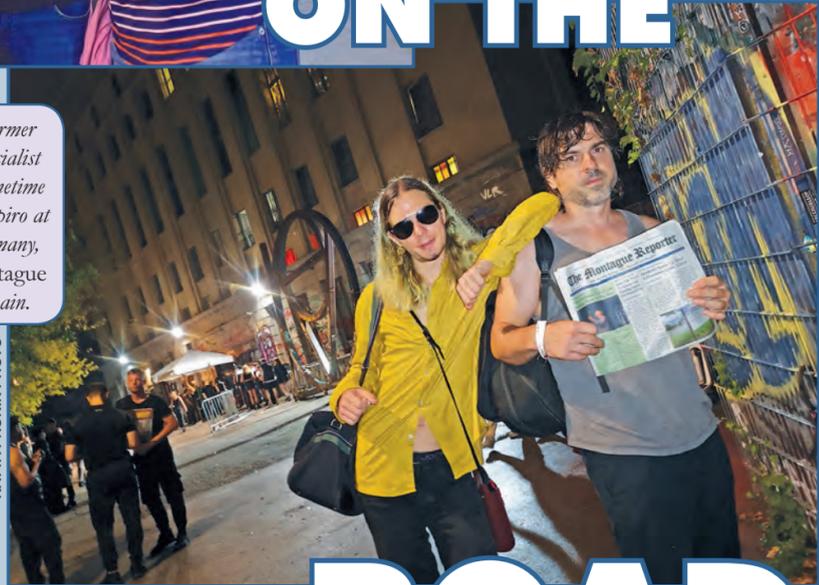
Left: Leo Hwang and Debbie Way of Montague took a trip to Scotland for the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LEO HWANG

Right: We got in?! Former newspaper delivery specialist Fedya Michael and sometime contributor George Shapiro at 4 a.m. in Berlin, Germany, after bringing the Montague Reporter into Bergheim.

KATYA PRONIN PHOTO



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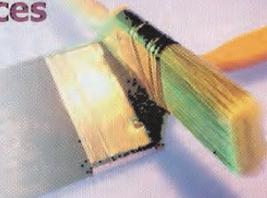


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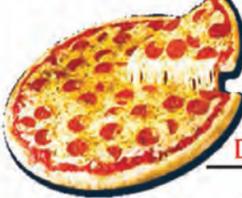


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