

The Montague Reporter

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

OCTOBER 13, 2022

Organizers Announce Final Great Falls Festival

By MIKE JACKSON

TURNERS FALLS – “We didn’t want to announce it after the event, and have a lot of people disappointed they missed it for one reason or another and wished they were able to go to the last festival,” Mike Nelson says. “We’re hoping that people are able to come down and join us for one last hurrah.”

Nelson is the president and founder of The Great Falls Festival & County Parade, Inc., formerly

Franklin County Pumpkinfest & Parade, Inc. Before that, he was simply Michael Nelson d/b/a Franklin County Pumpkin Fest, organizer of a wildly successful autumn street fair in Turners Falls.

After next weekend, that will all be in his past. “An event of this magnitude,” Nelson announced on social media last Thursday, “takes an unfathomable amount of planning and execution and my team of volunteers is beyond exhausted.”

see **FESTIVAL** page A4

Election Casts Rare Light On Governor’s Council

By JEFF SINGLETON

FRANKLIN COUNTY – The race for Governor’s Council in western Massachusetts may well be competitive this coming November, as concern over judicial appointments mounts in the wake of recent federal Supreme Court’s decisions – and following the surprise victory of a North Adams school committee member, Tara Jacobs, who prevailed in the race for the Democratic nomination in District 8.

But what is the Governor’s Council, and what constitutes “District 8?”

“I get asked that question almost every day,” says Jacobs in a video on her campaign website.

Her Republican opponent John Comerford, though on the other side of the political spectrum, would agree with her on that. “It is not very well understood by voters,” he told the *Reporter*.

“I don’t think most people know what they do,” Montague town clerk Deb Bourbeau said of the Council. She noted that the red information pamphlet issued by the state for the coming election does not even define it.

According to the Governor’s website the Governor’s Council, actually called

see **COUNCIL** page A7

Narrow Path Forward for Rural Housing Affordability

By SARAH ROBERTSON

GREENFIELD – Roughly half of all the people renting homes in Franklin County are paying too much based on their income level, according to a recent presentation hosted by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG). Attendees at Tuesday night’s meeting, titled “Diversifying Rural Housing Opportunities,” discussed the nationwide housing crisis, and ways local zoning laws and infrastructure limitations may make it harder to build more affordable units.

“There are state rules that make it very difficult for many of the smaller towns,” said Susan Worgaftik, a member of the local advocacy group Housing Greenfield. “Issues around sewage systems make it more difficult for smaller communities to build new [housing].... If you want to see a community go against an affordable housing project, just ask them to pay for something they can’t use.”

FRCOG is working with the Boston-based nonprofit Citizens’ Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA) to examine these issues, under a five-year state grant aimed at supporting community health in aging populations.

“The goal of our work is to make sure that people have access to affordable homes that are appropriate for them, in the communities that they choose,” said CHAPA municipal engagement director Dana LeWinter.

Lily Linke, a municipal engagement associate with CHAPA, opened the presentation with statistics. According to the 2020 US Census, 71,015 people live in Franklin

see **HOUSING** page A3

Premiere Event Planned for Power Canal Documentary



COURTESY OF THE MONTAGUE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The canal that shaped a village is the subject of a new short documentary film.

By MIKE JACKSON

TURNERS FALLS – “You want people to learn something, but you want them to be entertained,” Chris Clawson tells me. “There has to be that balance between information and visual things.”

Clawson is a member of the Montague Historical Society as well as its public counterpart, the Montague historical commission, and is one of the curators of the Western MA History Collective,

which is developing an online archive of local historical material. He also is the person hard at work behind a string of well-received history videos: a 1943 tour of Millers Falls Tool; a floating Fourth of July celebration above the dam at Unity Park; and last year’s 40-minute documentary on the history of the Franklin County Fair.

Clawson and fellow Montague historian Ed Gregory now have a new release up their sleeves, a

see **CANAL** page A2

GILL SELECTBOARD

Riverside Residents Seek to Bulk Up Sewer Commission

By KATE SAVAGE

Sewer troubles were the main topic of Tuesday evening’s Gill selectboard meeting. The Riverside neighborhood’s sewer system, serving around 113 households, relies largely on aging equipment. “Nothing has been updated down there since 1977 when it was all installed,” said highway superintendent John Miner.

Miner described valves that can’t be turned because they’re frozen, pumps frequently blocked with clothes, and individuals who “don’t want to go down in the hole anymore because it’s unsafe.”

Sewer usage rates also seem to be higher than they should be. Town administrator Ray Purington distributed a graph showing usage –

the volume of sewage pumped from the neighborhood to Montague – dropped significantly during the summer’s drought. This supports the theory that stormwater is inappropriately draining into the sewer, increasing costs for users.

A group of Riverside residents including water commission chair Jeff Suprenant, Dave Conway, and Peter Conway floated an idea to address these many needs: expand the town’s sewer commission.

“We’re homeowners down in Riverside, and it’s very costly for us,” explained Suprenant. “We’ve Wgot to do something about this.”

Under one model, two to four additional members from the Riverside neighborhood would join the three selectboard members to

see **GILL** page A8

LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

New ‘Heritage Trail’ Pitched

By GEORGE BRACE

At their meeting Tuesday night, Leverett’s selectboard considered a proposal to use a parcel of town land for a “heritage park or trail” which would preserve and showcase Leverett’s history and provide natural recreational space for residents. The board also received further information and deliberated on a potential conflict of interest involving a historical commission member, and addressed a conflict between the recreation and school committees regarding the construction of a tool shed.

Samuel Black, representing the Friends of the North Leverett Sawmill (FONLS), presented a proposal to construct an informational trail, or heritage park, in an area adjacent to the Sllarrow sawmill. The proposal would combine 2.6 acres of land owned by the FONLS with a 2-acre parcel of conservation land owned by the town and managed by the

conservation commission.

Black said the FONLS envisioned a trail with two-by-three-foot informational signage next to remnants of industrial activity related to an iron works and other historically significant artifacts on the parcel.

The project would also involve landscaping work to remove approximately 30 trees, and replace invasive plant species with local plants. Black said the conservation commission was in favor of the project, but did not want responsibility for any work involved.

Town administrator Marjorie McGinnis said state conservation laws may prohibit calling the area a “park” or installing of benches or other structures without the involvement of town meeting and the state, but that workarounds might be found if necessary.

Selectboard member Melissa Colbert said she liked the idea, but

see **LEVERETT** page A7



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Tara Jones of North Adams (top) and John Comerford of Palmer (bottom) hail from opposite corners of District 8, and their viewpoints on the Massachusetts judiciary are just as far apart politically.

High School Sports: ‘It’s The Emotions’

By MATT ROBINSON

TURNERS FALLS – The Franklin Tech Football Eagles let up five touchdowns against the Ware Indians this week after shutting them out in the first half. The second half was painful to watch as missed opportunities led to 33 unanswered points.

Closer to home, the Turners Falls Volleyball Thunder roared into a first-place tie in the Northern Volleyball Conference by beating one of the best teams in the state.

Because I was in isolation, we sent a 96-year-old stringer to report on the victory.

Volleyball

TFHS 3 – Pioneer 0

TFHS 3 – Wahconah 1

Last Tuesday, October 4, the Turners Falls girls volleyball team shut out the Pioneer Black Panthers, 3-zip. I was still in isolation at the time, but *Reporter* photographer David Hoitt attended the game, and provided the stats. Powertown won it going away, 25-9, 25-13, 25-14.

Mario Pareja was the player in the middle, setting up 17 assists and serving up five aces. Madi Liimatainen was the Killer Queen, recording 11 kills and placing two aces, and Jill Reynolds scored seven aces.

Then last Thursday, October 6, the Wahconah Warriors came to town. Coming into the game, the Warriors were undefeated in the Northern Volleyball Conference,

see **SPORTS** page A5



DAVID HOITT PHOTO

Turners Falls’s Mario Pareja sets the ball for bitter Madi Liimatainen as the Thunder sweep three sets at Pioneer Valley Regional School in Northfield last Tuesday. Pareja earned 17 assists in the win, and Liimatainen notched 11 kills.

Shhh / Peaceful

Local Briefs.....	A3
Faces and Places: Handmade Cards.....	A3
Wendell Selectboard Notes.....	A4
10 Years Ago This Week.....	A7
Bridge Beat: Coats of Several Colors.....	A8
West Along the Ancient Flat.....	B1
Review: Wild Child Memoir.....	B1
Film Nerds Bear Down on Former Grange.....	B1

Out of the Park.....	B2
Montague Police Log.....	B3
Review: Pabst Run to Nam.....	B4
Heartfelt Café: Fennel Everywhere.....	B5
Our Monthly Children’s Page.....	B6
Entertainment Calendar.....	B7
Three Comics and a Puzzle.....	B7
Preview: Stunning Quilt Show.....	B8



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CANAL from page A1

short-form look at the Turners Falls power canal and the little industrial village that grew up around it. *The Genesis of the Turners Falls Community* makes its world premiere Saturday, October 29 at 1 p.m. at the Great Falls Discovery Center with a discussion to follow, after which it will be uploaded for free viewing online.

"We got lessons as kids sitting on the street from the local drunks," Gregory says. "There'd be three or four of us on a bench, and somebody would pop out of out of the Bridge Café, or Carney's, or the VFW, or wherever we might be sitting. And they'd come over and they'd shoot the breeze with us: 'Well, I'll tell you what happened back when I was a kid...' We always had kind of a dangling interest in the history."

These characters from Gregory's 1950s childhood connected him directly to the town's industrial heyday: they worked in the mills along the canal; their parents worked in the mills along the canal.

For many, that connection has become remote. Today, the canal is used to generate electricity, and many of the mills have been torn down, with a number more disused and distressed. Preservation of these structures is a hot topic around town – and both historians serve on the historical commission, so they have a say on the matter. But both are circumspect on the topic, emphasizing the importance of preserving historical records, if not structures.

"Once you grow your corn, the stalks turn white and fall over," Clawson reflects. "But all events in history have consequences into the future – our lives are enabled by these events.... We learn and benefit from our past, and are wiser collectively."

Clawson and Gregory say they hope documentaries like the one debuting on the 29th will help make the past feel more personal to younger generations, and capture their interest.

"It's going to be riveting," Gregory promises. "I've seen it a number of times through the editing process, and each edit that we've done, it gets better and better and better.... He's done a hell of a job with it."

"It's a little over 20 minutes," says Clawson. "People aren't going to be fidgeting."



This still from *The Canal At Montague* shows stereogram cards of the power canal.

Clawson moved to town later in life, but brought with him the existing interest and skill set to help develop a local historical archive. In recent years he has been spearheading an effort at the Historical Society to collect and digitize old film before it deteriorates.

"I used to drive my mother crazy, because I was always pulling antiques out of the dump," he remembers. "I was always respectful of antiquities, but I was also very much involved in technology."

The pair helped contribute to another recent public history project, the cellphone-enabled Peske-

ompskut Audio Tour, which begins at Unity Park and provides a self-guided series of vignettes and stories exploring Native, colonial, industrial, and more recent eras of the zone around the Falls.

The idea for a new documentary film was emerging when the group was approached last summer by Montague libraries director Caitlin Kelley, who wanted to organize a series of events this month focusing on the canal.

Clawson, who Gregory calls the "driving force" behind the new project, flew a drone to secure aerial footage for the project, which



A still rendered from *The Canal At Montague: The Genesis of a Modern Community*, the *Historical Society's* new film.

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NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION

Kate Martineau has been the librarian at the Montague Center branch library for two years. The new *Library of Things* has been popular, she says, especially the ice cream maker and the games. She likes to play the Robot Face Race game with her own family. The library has also been hosting art exhibits.

Letter

to

the

Editors

Story Missed a Beloved Doc

Compliments to Jeff Singleton on his article on Connecticut River Internists closing in Montague City.

But, it would be unfair not to mention another founding Doctor: Dr. Bruce Van Boeckel, who was my primary care physician for years, fellow fisherman, card player, rugby and touch football player, and all around great human being!

He passed away tragically at the tender age of 55.

Please include his name in a follow up article. He had numerous patients in Franklin County, and also was one of the founding fathers of Hospice of Franklin County!

Rick Kostanski
South Deerfield

IMPORTANT CORRECTIONS

A grave error in last week's A2 illustration caption indicated that Skeleton Crew Theater's Halloween Week at Ja'Duke Theater was scheduled for October 13, 14, and 15. We tragically missed an email attempting to correct this *before* publication, as the correct dates were October 7, 8, and 9.

We realize this may have caused readers to miss the show entirely and we apologize profusely to SCT, Ja'Duke, and the world. But check out the Theater in action during next weekend's Great Falls Festival!

In the same edition, in the Sirum auction photoessay on Page A5, we switched the names of auctioneers Donald Raucher and Malcolm Speicher in photo captions.

This was a way better mistake, but we apologize to the Raucher and Speicher families.

WE WELCOME YOUR LETTERS!

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Compiled by CHRIS PELLERIN

This week features many creative and nature-focused activities in our area.

As part of their *Heart's Desire* art show and celebration, the local group "art + soul" is offering a series of events during the month of October at the LAVA Center in Greenfield to inspire and stretch your imagination.

This Thursday, October 13 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. there will be a "Creating Contemporary Icons" work-

shop, and next Thursday at the same time, the workshop is *Sacred Space: Creating Portable Altars and Shrines*. **Art materials will be provided**, and there is a suggested donation of \$10 to \$25 for each workshop. These workshops are intended for those 14 and above and will be at 324 Main Street in Greenfield.

On Sunday from 1 to 5 p.m., LAVA hosts an afternoon of joyful celebration at a different space, 479 Main Street. Wander among the showcase of art created by the art + soul community over nine

years, listen to live and virtual readings, travel in time through a visual chronology of the group's story, dance to live music by Kate O'Conner and Rico Spence of Westhampton's A Beautiful Future Band, and bid on a variety of items and experiences offered to nurture the group's work. Refreshments provided.

This Friday, October 14 Jeff Johnstone leads **Early Bird Birding**. Join Jeff and the Athol Bird and Nature Club for a look at the local fall bird migration. Gather at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street in Athol, at 7:30 a.m. Call Jeff to reserve your spot at (978) 249-9052. Due to construction on Canal Street, Jeff asks that everyone meet in front of the Center on Main Street.

Also at the Millers River Environmental Center, the Central Massachusetts Nature Club is meeting on Tuesday, October 18 at 9:30 a.m. for nature journaling. RSVP to thewaltons@gardnerale.com if you can make it.

This Saturday, October 15 at 11 a.m., **certified master beekeeper** Art Canterbury will present *Honeybees and How They Prepare for Winter* at the Carnegie Library in Turners Falls.

Art and his family manage 30 colonies of honeybees in Montague. The presentation will include information on what honeybees have been doing all summer to prepare for winter, the life of a worker bee, and what bees do to survive New England winters. There will be an observation hive with live honeybees and a queen which participants will be able to view. Call (413) 863-3214 with questions.

October 15 is also a **clean-up day** at the Montague Center library. "Our much beloved branch could use some TLC," they write. Volunteers are offered pizza at noon. Call (413) 367-2852 to sign up for a shift.

Take an **afternoon walk on Warner Hill** with Emily Boss of the Franklin Land Trust as they celebrate the Warner Hill Landscape Partnership, a community effort to preserve more than 800 acres of lush forests, hills, and fields, on Sunday,

October 16 from 2 to 4:30 p.m.

This hike traverses conserved land in Rowe and Charlemont. About five miles round trip, the trail is a moderate hike, suitable for wild-life viewing, with just two steep inclines on the meadow portion. The foliage should be stunning!

The **Wendell Energy Committee** invites residents, and those interested, to a community discussion on the draft Community Solar Action Plan for the Town of Wendell. A presentation on the process and plan will be made by Zara Dowling, research fellow at the UMass Clean Energy Extension, at the Wendell Free Library next Tuesday, October 18 at 7 p.m. Masks are encouraged.

Next Wednesday, October 19 from 7:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., join Athol Bird and Nature Club president Dave Small for a rare introduction to the **Quabbin Reservoir by private vehicle**. This tour will focus on migrating waterfowl and other birds as well as any interesting flora and fauna.

This is a limited participation trip which often fills up quickly; registration is required at tinyurl.com/QuabbinTrip. High-clearance vehicles are needed to navigate the gravel roads, and carpooling is necessary. If you have any questions, email Dave@atholbirdclub.org.

From 6 to 7 p.m. on Wednesday, October 19, Montague Center author Bruce Watson reads from *Bread and Roses*, his fast-paced retelling of the **1912 textile strike** in Lawrence, Massachusetts, at the Montague Center branch library. Refreshments will be provided. The event is part of the branch's monthly local author series.

Attention artists: Madhouse Multi Arts Creative Workspace will be hosting a **Bring Your Own Art Show** the fourth Sunday of each month, beginning October 23. This "open mic" for visual artists will take place from 4 to 6 p.m. at 479 Main Street, Greenfield. They invite you to bring whatever you want to show and they will interview you, document your work, and promote you on Instagram.

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

FACES & PLACES



After reading our September 29 article about Marion Ryan turning 100 (Page B1, "Marion Celebrates a Century"), Turners Falls High School junior Syna Katsoulis organized a card-writing effort at Marion's alma mater. Syna delivered 37 handmade cards, which capped off the birthday celebration.

HOUSING from page A1

County, only 8% are non-white, and the majority are over 50 years old. There are 34,436 housing units in the county, and the average household income is \$61,198. It is the state's most rural county.

"We can see pretty high rates of cost-burdened renters, especially compared to the rates of cost-burdened homeowners. It's really quite exceptionally high for renters," Linke said. "There is a lack of research and resources for how to address these problems in a rural context."

The term "cost-burdened" refers to anyone spending more than one-third of their income on housing. Gill appears to be the most affordable town for renters in this newspaper's coverage area, with about one-third of renters paying more than 30% of their income towards housing costs.

In Montague, between 41% and 50% of renters are considered cost-burdened, despite the town being one of the more affordable communities in Franklin County. In Erving and Greenfield, between 51% and 60% of renters are cost-burdened. Rental units in Wendell, Leverett, Shutesbury, and Sunderland are among the least affordable in the county, with 61% to 70% of renters considered cost-burdened.

Attendees at Tuesday's meeting discussed how towns can vote to amend zoning laws, which are seen as preventing communities from increasing housing density. Laws that allow for

accessory dwelling units, or decrease the minimum home lot size, could help rein in housing prices by allowing local supply to increase.

Franklin County Opioid Task Force member Jerry Lund cited changes to Massachusetts law in 2021 that allow certain amendments to zoning bylaws to pass by simple majority of town meeting, rather than two-thirds.

"In this part of the world, everything is done by volunteers," said Lund. "It's easier now, given the changes in the zoning requirements, to get a zoning amendment through."

"In our communities, we have significant opportunities to renovate and rehabilitate buildings that can become multi-unit [housing]," said FRCOG project coordinator Jennifer Audley. "But [in] all the examples I can think of where we've recently used municipal and state programs to do that renovation and rehabilitation, the developers who have had the capital to participate thought it wasn't economically viable to turn those into affordable units."

"It's important to figure out how we can create deeded affordable housing – and naturally affordable housing – that does not rely on the private real estate development market," Audley argued.

FRCOG director of community services Phoebe Walker pointed out that local demand for housing is being driven in part by external

forces. The median home price in Massachusetts is around \$600,000, she said, and in Franklin County it is around \$350,000.

"That's driving people with incomes far beyond what people who grew up in Franklin County have, out here, to pay... and it's pricing everyone else out," Walker said.

Conway planning board member Beth Girshman said that lately more homes in her town are second homes, vacant for long periods of time throughout the year. "Things that maybe previously were rental units seem to be short-stay vacation units so I think that exacerbates the problem," she added.

FRCOG's Small Town Housing Work Group has calculated a 47% increase in short term rentals, such as AirBnB, between July 2019 and April 2022 from 152 to 223. For context, the group cites a 2021 estimate by the UMass Donohue Institute that the "housing gap" between supply and demand in Franklin County is 1,232 units.

"Communities happen by design," CHAPA engagement director DeWinter told the attendees. "They don't happen in a vacuum – they don't just get created and plopped down out of nowhere. These trends we're seeing, on aging or cost burdens or how much housing is built, those things happen by design. Someone, somewhere along the way, has had a hand in that happening."

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FESTIVAL from page A1

The twelfth and final Festival kicks off at noon Saturday, October 22, on Avenue A. If the weather holds up, as it has eleven times so far, downtown will be packed with kids' crafts, food vendors, dance troupes, raffle tables, and costumed revelers. Bands will play on two stages, and Peskeompskut Park will be transformed into a beer garden.

"We're an all-volunteer staff," Nelson tells the *Reporter*. "The general public probably has no idea the hundreds of hours that this takes.... We all have families, and it takes a huge amount of summertime planning. We're looking to finally relax and be able to enjoy the fall season."

A Turners Falls native and 18-year veteran member of the Montague board of health, Nelson learned large-scale event planning with his involvement at the Frank-

lin County Fairgrounds, where he is now president, and the Relay for Life. Inspired by the Fair and other regional vegetable celebrations, he started Pumpkinfest in 2010 with a group of friends, and was as shocked as anyone when an estimated 8,000 attendees materialized on the Avenue.

The event has followed a tried-and-true formula ever since, though the number of pumpkins carved and brought for display by the public fell sharply after the first year, and liability-related rules against candles and pumpkin knives didn't help the cause. The event was rechristened the Great Falls Festival in 2017.

"My committee has been actively talking about wrapping up for a couple of years now," Nelson explains. The 2020 event was canceled by the pandemic, and the group was motivated to help provide the community

a return to normalcy in 2021.

"This year we were batting around the idea of whether or not we wanted to do it," he continues, "and we ultimately said we'll do it one more year and wrap up on a high note."

Nelson manages a team of 60 to 70 volunteers on festival day, but says a core group of about a dozen work from early summer to make each event happen.

He gives special credit to several: his high school friends Scott Kuzmeskus and Chad Cadran, the director of entertainment and director of the beer garden ("When you're in a volunteer role, you can make up titles," he laughs); his wife Bethany Nelson and her friend Linsey Paulson, the volunteer coordinators; and Ashley Laramie, the kids' activity coordinator.

"We're proud to have been part of what we have been able to accom-

plish, and looking forward to a little bit of a well-deserved retirement," Nelson says. "There's a lot of incredible momentum downtown in our community, and it's great that we were able to be part of that."

"I know a lot of people are really disappointed about it," he adds. As of press time, according to Nelson, six parties have inquired about taking the Great Falls Festival reins, and all six have "politely declined" upon learning how much work it entails.

His advice for would-be fall event planners?

"Start small," he says with a laugh. "Even with a decade of planning experience behind me before starting this festival, it took a few years for us to really get settled... You don't have to do a big event for people to want to participate and to feel engaged and want to bring their families."



NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Bike Trail Proposed Along the Millers

By JOSH HEINEMANN

Newly promoted Erving town planner Mariah Kurtz met the Wendell selectboard at their October 6 meeting seeking Wendell's support for a proposed trail from Riverfront Park in Erving, across the Millers River, along the Wendell side of the river, and ending on Sears Road in Wendell Depot. Kurtz said there is currently no safe way to ride a bicycle from Farley to Erving Center without traveling along Route 2, which is not safe.

The proposed trail would be shared-use, not level but with a smooth stone surface, suitable for walking, biking, or skiing. It would not be a challenging mountain bike trail. Most of the trail would pass through state forest, and some through private land. "Are you comfortable with me moving forward?" Kurtz asked.

"It sounds like an excellent idea," selectboard chair Laurie DiDonato replied.

Open space committee chair Dan Leahy said the state land the trail would pass through is classified as "reserves," identified as critical natural landscape, and wondered if there would be intensive recreational use. The first step is a feasibility study, which the selectboard agreed to support.

Fast Cars

Citizen Ed Hines met the board with two items to discuss: vehicles speeding past his house, and historic documents.

Hines owns land on both sides of Montague Road, and said he has had many close calls bringing wood in or clearing his driveway. He said police officer Gould told him speeding is the police department's number one complaint. An electronic monitoring system would cost \$10,000, but there are less expensive alternatives that photograph offending vehicles.

DiDonato said she thought there was a state law against using cameras, but suggested a committee to explore traffic-calming strategies. For example, the town center historic district includes Hines's house, Wendell's old parsonage, and the speed limit could be reduced within the historic district.

Selectboard member Gillian Budine said the town has \$12,000 set aside in its budget for additional policing, which can be used if necessary.

Paper Stash

Hines also wanted to start a conversation about storage of Wendell's historic documents. He suggested a temporary storage area in the

back of the upstairs meeting room over the fire engine bay. The front of that room is used for highway commission meetings and fire department training, but the rear could be sectioned off, leaving a route to the exit door.

Hines said everyone who might be impacted supported the idea. The simple plans he got from Hal Flynn did not include a cost estimate.

Former Turners Falls librarian Linda Hickman asked about climate control. Highway commission member Phil Delorey answered that the engine bay underneath is kept warm so water in the vehicles does not freeze.

Hickman said she was more concerned about heat and humidity than she was about cold.

The selectboard supported the plan, as long as the repository is temporary.

Tree Controversy

The power company National Grid has marked numerous trees in town that their arborist considers a threat to their wires, and because citizens had objections about some of the trees, tree warden Cliff Dornbush held a hearing. A number of attendees said the identification of the affected trees was not totally accurate or clear.

That hearing was continued without a decision, and Dornbush came to the October 6 meeting to discuss the continuation with the selectboard and a National Grid representative. The company's representative, Lance Wade, had trouble joining the meeting and connected to the meeting late in the conversation.

Dornbush said he thought he, a representative of the company, and concerned citizens including Pru Smith, who has studied trees and wants to keep as many as possible standing, should walk the route of proposed cutting together and discuss each tree.

Selectboard member Dan Keller encouraged that effort, as well as a continued tree hearing.

National Grid's plan, Dornbush said, is generous to Wendell. Trees that threaten the roads and wires will be cut down or trimmed and debris removed, with the cost borne by National Grid. Clearing trees that fall or drop branches afterwards will cost the town money, Budine pointed out. The National Grid cutting may save Wendell's fire department calls for a tree on a wire and burning.

Guns for Hire

Robert Zarnetske from HCH Enterprises of Warwick, Rhode Island met the selectboard to

describe the services HCH offers, which include grant-writing and compliance regarding use of federal money.

Zarnetske said we are in a "golden age" of federal grants, since the government is trying to help with many municipal needs exacerbated by the pandemic. He said the amount of federal money available is more than was spent on World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War, combined and adjusted for inflation.

HCH offers three levels of subscription ranging from \$1,995 for 10 hours of their time to \$9,000 for 50 hours. Wendell's project coordinator, Phil Delorey, said it seems like a small amount of money considering all the money that is out there, and the intricacies involved with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding.

Zarnetske said he doubted the town would be eligible for a grant to reimburse it if it uses ARPA money to pay for PFAS remediation at Swift River School. The plan now is to take the money needed from stabilization, with the hope that a grant will cover some of the expense after the money is spent. He added that ARPA grants of less than \$10 million can be classified as compensation for lost revenue and used for general town expenses, but that he could give no definitive answer, just an off-the-cuff thought.

"I feel we need some guidance," Budine said, adding that Wendell officials are all part-time.

The selectboard will discuss contracting with HCH at their next meeting, October 19.

Acorn Kingdom

Citizen Adam Zakosky asked if he could buy or take over town use of Stone Cutoff Road. He owns land on both sides of the road, and his farm is the only private property on that road. He offered to maintain the road, but said he would like to have a gate so his livestock can forage for acorns on both sides of the road.

Leahy said a whole section of the town's 2004 development plan was on roads and their layout, and mentioned a state handbook on roads. He added that a 1988 town meeting discontinued several roads, but did not specify which ones those were.

Delorey said there is a difference between discontinuing a road and discontinuing maintenance on it. A town meeting vote is needed to discontinue a road. He said he would be happy to get together with Zakosky and discuss the situation.

DiDonato said research is needed before a decision can be reached at a future meeting.

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NOTES FROM THE GILL-MONTAGUE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Last Meetings Before Budget Season Quietly Savored

By MIKE JACKSON

GILL-MONTAGUE – The regional school committee focused on regular fall business on Tuesday, hearing official school improvement plans presented by the building principals, and approving official goals for superintendent Brian Beck to pursue this year and be measured against in the spring.

At the middle and high school, Christopher Barnes said counselors are combining students with “similar concerns” into support groups and helping some seniors develop post-graduation plans, and teachers are using a range of assessments to identify those in need of extra academic help. He said he plans to make this year’s open house better-attended than usual.

Sheffield Elementary principal Kerry Heathwaite outlined a number of ways her staff will communicate with families, and opportunities students will have to present what they have learned, as well as a long list of academic support initiatives. Montague committee member Jennifer Waryas asked how this year’s plan was different from previous years. Heathwaite said that it

was her first year on the job.

Business manager Joanne Blier said she has started in on the FY’24 budget, compiling packets for department heads and principals to support them submitting their budget requests. The November 8 school committee meeting will focus on the district’s capital plan, and preliminary budget discussion begins on November 22.

Blier said one conclusion of an audit of student activity funds is that the district needs better internal controls over receipts. The committee is in the process of updating policies about these accounts.

Director of teaching and learning Jeanne Powers and director of pupil services Dianne Ellis gave an update on the district’s efforts to promote equity. A new position, English as a Second Language Department Leader, has been created, and Lea Wulfkuhle hired into the role.

Administrators are “looking closely” at issues of attendance, as there are “equity issues that emerge,” in Ellis’s words, around absences and how the district handles them. Efforts are also underway to re-institute the “walking school bus,” a chaperoned group walk from downtown Turners

to the elementary schools on the Hill for students who live too close to be eligible to ride the bus.

Beck reported that the district is helping families learn about the federal Affordable Connectivity Program, which gives households up to \$30 a month for internet bills and offers a subsidy toward the cost of a computer.

Beck also introduced the committee to Marci Kelley, a new executive assistant hired after the retirement of Sabrina Blanchard, so they could “put a face to the voice that will be answering the phone.”

Student representative Syna Katsoulis returned for her first meeting of the year. “I’m glad to be back,” she said. Katsoulis reported on a range of spirit-boosting initiatives currently underway at the high school, many involving themes and colors and costumes and the competitive accrual of points by classes.

The Homecoming Dance will be held this Saturday, in a heated outdoor space as it was last year, and its theme involves Las Vegas. Katsoulis said she hoped for higher attendance this year. “I think there are more kids at the high school this year,” she noted.

Gill member Bill Tomb said more information about the six-town school district planning board will be made public soon. Beck said he hadn’t attended its meetings since June, and Tomb said he hadn’t missed much. “There were a few meetings over the summer, but they were well-spaced,” he said.

The committee continued discussing the resolutions for this fall’s Massachusetts Association of School Committees conference on Cape Cod. Waryas said she was “struck” by one resolution in support of troubled districts retaining local control rather than coming under state receivership, and pointed out that it did not address any positive plan to support districts in that situation.

Chair Jane Oakes said delegates may amend the resolutions from the floor, and after some more discussion, it seemed possible that as Gill-Montague’s delegate, Waryas would attend with an amendment in hand.

“It’s a weird process,” said Montague member Heather Katsoulis, who offered to draft an amendment before the next school committee meeting, which is scheduled for October 25.

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SPORTS from page A1

and had already beaten Turners 3-1 on September 14.

One of my friends turned 96 years old this week. Because I was still feeling COVID-y he went to Thursday’s volleyball game in my stead. I told him I would not use his name.

Before he left for the game, he said, “You know? Wahconah is number 1.”

“OK,” I replied.

“And we’re number 2,” he said.

As it turns out, the second-place Blue Thunder beat the top-seeded Warriors 25-17, 15-25, 25-23, 24-19 to nose into a two-way tie atop the NVC.

After the game, my friend said, “I told [coach] Kelly [Liimatainen] that Turners beat Wahconah because of experience. You see, when we lost to them in Dalton, we were a young team, and Wahconah had all experienced players. The girls have played several games since, and now we have experience.”

Then he said, “And traveling an hour on a cold night might have affected them.”

On his birthday, my friend went into greater detail about the game. In his opinion, “We were the better team.” Then he evaluated the stellar performances of Taylor Greene, Madi Liimatainen, Abby Holloway, Tatiana Carr-Williams, and Stephanie Peterson.

When I received the stats from David Hoitt, I discovered that my source was spot on. Greene gave 24 assists and served four aces. Liimatainen shot nine kills, placed three aces, and made five digs. Holloway made 10 kill shots and dove for two digs. Carr-Williams blocked three shots and made two kills, and Peterson had five kills and four aces.

“Adam [Graves] called me to wish me a happy birthday,” my source said after analyzing the game. “Did you know that Turners is now sixth in the state?”

When I looked it up later, I discovered that the Turners Falls Girls Volleyball team



Turners’ Jill Reynolds served up seven aces against the Pioneer Panthers as the Thunder rolled 25-9, 25-13, and 25-14 over Pioneer at Northfield.

is indeed ranked sixth in the state by the MIAA in Division V, while Wahconah is ranked tenth in Division IV.

It’s so nice to get the perspective of someone who was playing little league at Unity Park 89 summers ago. Keep it up, my friend. For years to come.

Football Ware 33 – FCTS 0

On Friday, October 7, the Franklin Tech Football Eagles were shut out by the Ware Indians 33-0. Tech, who had stifled the Indians for the entire first half, missed an opportunity to break the tie in the third quarter. From there it was all downhill as Ware scored 33 unan-

swered points to win the game going away.

“Our team played with a lot of heart, passion, and intensity in the first half,” coach Joe Gamache said after the game. “And we had many opportunities throughout the game.”

Ware is a difficult venue to play at. There are no visitor bleachers, the scoreboard wasn’t working, and the announcer failed to give a play-by-play. Fans had to squint at the field just to find out what yard line the ball was on, and I had to rely on the refs for the time.

But the people from Ware were more than welcoming. From the ticket-taker who joked with me about a potential name change to the “Ware Wolves,” to the police officer who gave up her inspirational bracelet to a toddler, to all the fans who mingled together, two of whom discovered that they were both the parents of Eagle scouts.

The only complaint voiced by the Ware crowd was, “Why can’t the announcer tell us what’s happening on the field?”

Tech’s first opportunity came in the first quarter. They shut down Ware’s offense and drove the ball down the field, setting up a first-and-ten from Ware’s 30-yard line. But they couldn’t convert, and Ware took over deep in their own end.

The Eagles again shut down the Indians, forcing a fourth-and-12. Tech took over and moved the ball all the way to the 8-yard line for a first and goal, but an interception squashed the drive.

For the rest of the half, Tech’s D kept Ware off balance, as Ware couldn’t buy a first down. Going into halftime it was still a scoreless tie.

Franklin’s next opportunity came early in the third quarter. Ware fumbled it away and Tech took over on Ware’s 24. Again, the Indian goal-line defense tightened up, and Tech gave up possession on downs.

That’s when it all went haywire.

“It’s the emotions,” one of the grandfathers told me as Ware broke tackle after

tackle on their way down the field.

“That’s right,” another man agreed. “They couldn’t score, and now they’re deflated.”

From first and goal from the Eagles’ 8, Ware’s quarterback banged into the end zone to finally break the tie. Tech did their best to keep up, but Ware scored again at the end of the quarter to take a 14-0 lead going into the fourth.

The Birds’ next drive stalled on two sacks and an incomplete, and Ware scored again to take a 20-0 lead with 10:15 left to play. Three minutes later, they were up 26-0, and they scored again at the end of the game to win it 33-0.

Gabriel Tomasi went three for nine under center, for 8 yards. His targets were Shaun Turner, Ethan Smarr, and Nathaniel Fuess.

Josiah Little carried the ball 19 times for 54 yards, and Tomasi, Jet Bastarache, Zaydrien Alamed and Landen Hardy also ran the ball for Tech. Dillon Gagnon ran back a kickoff 17 yards while Tomasi returned one for 12. Vincent Renaud returned a punt for 11. Hardy made eight tackles and had a sack, while Shaun Turner was in on seven tackles.

Tomasi and Tyler Yetter both knocked down passes, and Camryn Laster caused a fumble, which was recovered by Bastarache.

So where does Franklin Tech go from here? They dominated in the first half, but fell apart in the second. After the loss, the Eagles are 1 – 1 in the Intercounty North Conference, and this Friday they have a home game against another ICN foe, the Green Wave of Greenfield.

“The hope is that we can work hard this week,” Gamache said. “To put a complete game together.”

And they’ll need to play a complete game. Especially against a very good Greenfield team, who are still smarting from an overtime loss to the Athol Red Bears.



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LEVERETT from page A1

was interested in knowing the age of the trees to be removed, out of concern for preserving “old growth.” Black said he didn’t have that information, but would probably be consulting the state Department of Environmental Protection on the project, and believed it would result in more protection for such trees in the area.

Conflict Avowed

In a related matter, historical commission member Susan Lynton provided a statement to the board saying she would recuse herself from any commission votes related to either the FONLS or the Leverett Historical Society, due to her membership in both private organizations. This includes anything pertaining to the sawmill or Field Museum.

Lynton had previously filed conflict-of-interest paperwork with the board, saying the state attorney general thought doing so was a good idea.

One resident commented that the state’s conflict-of-interest law has three pertinent provisions, two of which are financial, but also a third which prohibits town officials from “acting as the agent or attorney” for such private organizations.

Shed Furore

The board discussed a complaint from the town’s recreation committee that a tool shed being constructed with funds raised by the Leverett Education Foundation in an area behind the greenhouse at the Leverett Elementary School, and adjacent to the town’s athletic field, violated a town meeting resolution adopted in 2021.

That resolution addressed “the open space between the elementary school and the library,” and said that “any permanent change in use or structure to the field needs to go to town meeting for approval.”

No representatives from either the school committee or the rec department were on hand to present their

cases, but selectboard chair Tom Hankinson said that rec committee chair Diane Crowe had stopped in at the police station to report the shed was being constructed illegally due to the 2021 article.

Hankinson said that no formal boundaries exist in the area in question, and since the lumber was already there and Crowe’s authority was “dubious to begin with,” he was inclined to let construction proceed.

Planning board member Richard Nathhorst said he thought the article was “bad law,” and should be repealed. No vote was taken.

Other Business

The board decided to waive the \$25 fee for use of the town hall for both the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust and the Leverett Educational Foundation, and henceforth look at charging the use fee on a case-by-case basis, though they added that the overall issue may need to be looked at again in the future.

Arguments in favor of the waiver included the public good done by town volunteer groups, and the probable low cost to the town of allowing such use.

The board was notified that the Leverett Elementary School had received an estimate of approximately \$500,000 to insulate the area surrounding the school’s sprinkler system. The estimate was sought following two cases of burst pipes in the last several years.

The news motivated the board to choose to use an available grant application to fund an assessment of the situation, rather than apply for a piece of equipment sought by the fire department.

The board appointed three new substitute librarians, at the request of library director Hannah Paessel. Paessel said the three would be assets to the library and would add flexibility in scheduling and covering vacations and sick days for current staff.

The board appointed Carol DiSanti to the historical commission.



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COUNCIL from page A1

the “Executive Council” under the state constitution, meets weekly and approves the Governor’s “judicial appointments,” which include “judges, clerk-magistrates, public administrators, members of the Parole Board, Appellate Tax Board, Industrial Accident Board and Industrial Accident Reviewing Board, notaries, and justices of the peace.”

In addition to making these appointments the board – which consists of eight elected members, plus the Lieutenant Governor in an “ex officio” capacity – records “advice and consent” on warrants for the state Treasury and commutations and pardons.

This reporter reviewed two recent meetings of the board, which consisted primarily of lengthy hearings on appointments to clerk magistrate positions in municipal courts and regional housing courts. Treasury warrants and lesser court positions were approved with little discussion. No pardons or commutations were observed, and there was virtually no opposition to the higher judicial candidates discussed.

The Governor’s Council is often viewed as a relic of the colonial era. According to a history of the board in the state archives, its origins are in the early 17th century, when the Governor was the president of the board of the Massachusetts Bay Company and Council members served for life.

As the Council continued into the 19th century, its role and the method of choosing membership periodically shifted with the twists and turns of British colonial policy and the American Revolution. A constitutional amendment in 1840 provided that members be chosen “by legislative election from the population at large,” which was changed in 1855 to “popular election” from eight districts.

There are still eight members on the board, elected from districts

which do not coincide with any legislative districts. The eighth district currently consists of 95 towns in Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden counties, plus the town of Royalston in Worcester County.

Periodically members of the media, advocacy groups, and the legislature call for abolishing the Council. In 2017, for example, the *Merri-mack Valley Eagle-Tribune* advocated the Council’s abolition after one meeting over a judicial appointment descended into a shouting match, where one member was accused of being a “bootlicker” and another was criticized for “spending half the meeting in a bar across the street.”

The *Eagle-Tribune* suggested that judicial appointments could be made by the state Senate.

Judicial appointment policies vary greatly from state to state, creating a “dizzying assortment of methods,” according to a study by the Brennan Center for Justice. These range from the use of independent commissions, as in Massachusetts, to direct election, to Governor’s appointment with legislative approval, to even appointment by the Governor but re-appointment by election.

Given its obscurity and idiosyncratic role, the Council has often been the object of humorous ridicule in the media. During the recent state primaries, for example, Boston radio station WGBH focused on “various dubious endorsement claims” made over the years by veteran incumbent Marilyn Devaney of Watertown.

According to the station, Devaney falsely claimed support from Congressman Jim McGovern, who then denied having endorsed any candidates for the Council. Nevertheless, Devaney narrowly won the Democratic primary in her district.

Neither Jacobs nor Comerford, in speaking to this reporter, advocated abolishing the Council.

“I think it plays an important role,” said Comerford, who said he

decided to run for the board when he heard that a judge had encouraged an “illegal immigrant” before her court to exit by the back door to avoid a federal immigration official. “I think appointed judges should commit to obeying the law,” he told the *Reporter*.

Jacobs said she sees the Council as playing an important role in encouraging greater racial diversity and “equity” in judicial policy. She mentioned the statistical inequities in the current prison population, and said she would work to recruit more qualified officials from under-represented communities to apply for board positions.

The two candidates, who are scheduled to debate later this month, disagree on a number of key issues, including commutations – generally defined as the change of a prison sentence for one less severe – which are reviewed by the board. Comerford opposes commutation while Jacobs sees it as a “useful tool” in some cases, noting that it is rarely invoked.

But both agree that the board plays an important role in state policymaking, and should be more transparent. They both support continuing Zoom meetings as initiated during the recent pandemic, in order to create better access for District 8 residents, and both said they would consider requiring the Council to abide by the state open meeting law, from which it is currently exempt.

And both agreed on the need for greater diversity on the Council, although they may frame the concept differently.

Jacobs, who has served on her local school committee and as a library trustee, noted that virtually all the Council members come from the legal community, while she is not a lawyer. Comerford stressed his military experience and his work on regional veterans’ boards, as well as the fact that if elected, he would be the “only Republican” on the Governor’s Council.



LOOKING BACK:
10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here’s the way it was on October 11, 2012: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Gill Will Play Active Role
In Mountain Relicensing

The Gill selectboard is anticipating calling a meeting of “stakeholders” in the relicensing of the Northfield Mountain pumped-hydro facility once FirstLight Power files a notice of intent to hold hearings on its upcoming federal relicensing.

“We may be the ones who push for that meeting,” said selectboard member Randy Crochier. “We’re one of the towns most affected.”

Selectboard chair Ann Banash said the meeting would focus on improvements to the utility’s operation town officials and other stakeholders would push for in the review process, as the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission decides what modifications, if any, to make to Northfield Mountain’s license, which is up for renewal on April 30, 2018. Banash said the town of Erving gets “all of the benefits,” of the Northfield Mountain project, which pays the lion’s share of property taxes in Erving, “without the disadvantages.”

Crochier added, “We end up with most of the erosion.”

The topic of erosion, which farmers and other landowners along the river hold Northfield Mountain responsible for, has been contentious for years. Utility spokespeople typically blame riverbank erosion on the swells created by recreational motorboats, but Northfield

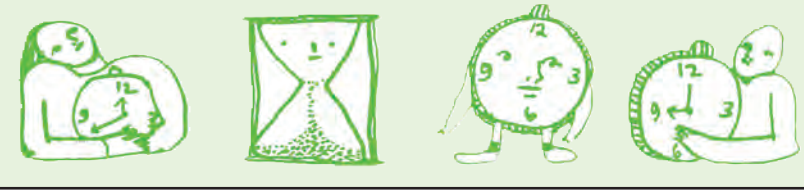
Mountain has nonetheless been engaged in a long process of erosion remediation, in consultation with a committee of landowners, assisted by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments and state Department of Environmental Protection.

Banash said with the recent switch to using tree stumps and other woody debris to stabilize the riverbanks, “I think they are doing it right. I just don’t think they are doing it fast enough. One thousand feet [of riverbank erosion remediation a year] is not enough.”

Banash, selectboard member John Ward, and town administrative coordinator Ray Purington were among the participants in a tour of FirstLight’s facilities last week. Banash said the tour guides seemed surprised to see the number of town officials who turned up for the boat cruise and walk-through of Northfield Mountain.

Banash said it was particularly striking to see how the riverbank had eroded along the stretch of land across from the intake tunnel to the utility’s upper reservoir, a stretch of land owned by Skeezy Flagg.

She said the utility blamed the failure of erosion control there on Flagg’s cows getting loose and eating the material the company had used to prevent bank erosion. Flagg, in return, has contended it is the utility’s job to put up a fence to keep his cows from wandering onto the section of the riverbank the company claims a right to as utility property. Apparently, the utility did build such a fence, but the cows broke through it anyway.



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GILL from page A1
address problems with Riverside’s sewer systems.

Charles Garbiel and Greg Snedeker, the two selectboard members present, expressed enthusiasm for the idea. Four additional sewer commission members could help carry the heavy workload, and “would give people down in the district the majority” for sewer votes, Snedeker said, which would ensure their representation and “make a better statement.”

Purington said he suspected the expansion could be done simply by amending the sewer regulations, without needing to be voted on by town meeting, but wanted to look deeper into the necessary process. “I think it’s doable by the end of the year,” he suggested.

One issue a larger sewer commission could address is the increase in pump blockages. Miner reported four new instances where blockages had to be removed from the sewage pumps. Each time the items appeared to be articles of clothing and adult diapers.

Miner reported that since February, these blockages have cost “over \$10,000 for contractor services, and just under \$5,000 for our pay.”

“I just don’t know how they get it down the toilets,” he concluded.

Snedeker brought up the option of installing grinding sewage pumps, which pulverize obstructing materials and have been used in Deerfield to solve a similar problem. The group expressed interest in learning more about the pumps.

The Riverside residents also proposed that an expanded sewer commission could reconsider the low minimum fee paid by inactive sewer users – currently \$4 a year. Dave Conway mentioned that there are still maintenance and operating costs which the sewer must pay, even when a user is inactive.

One possibility, Purington noted, is dividing sewer expenses into two categories: sewage disposal costs, which are charged to each user according to their water use; and operating and maintenance fees, which would be divided evenly by all sewer users. Using current costs and doing some back-of-the-envelope math, this would come out to a minimum fee of around \$330 a year for each user.

Though a discussion of changing rates to customers was on the meeting agenda, Purington said the current sewer operating budget is expected to be able to cover the

THE BRIDGE BEAT



“Northern Construction is a hard-working group,” writes photo correspondent Ed Gregory, who continues to track their work on the General Pierce Bridge and shared this documentation of the four-stage process of applying an anti-moisture membrane. Top left, September 23: “A sealer is sprayed on to the concrete deck.” Top right, September 30: “An 80-mil. yellow Methylacrylate coating is sprayed over the initial sealer coat. Tiny stone fragments are spread atop the yellow coating to aid in the adhesion of the next coating.” Bottom left, October 1: “A 40-mil. gray sealer is sprayed atop the Methylacrylate.” Bottom right, October 4: “A liquid bituminous coating is hand-applied with squeegees to seal the three undercoatings. After a seven-day dry time, a 1 1/2-inch asphalt application will complete the ‘new’ deck of the Bridge.” Thanks Ed!

ED GREGORY PHOTOS

bills for the year, and no vote was taken. The board did vote to approve a sewer commitment authorizing \$49,596.72 in bills to be sent to customers for usage from July through September.

“I’m going to throw out one more thing,” said Dave Conway. “Grease traps.”

Fats, oils, and grease can clog and damage the Riverside sewer system. Dave Conway claimed that the restaurant Cielito Lindo doesn’t have a grease trap, though he said they do properly dispose of their used cooking oil in a barrel, and that The Mill convenience store doesn’t clean their grease trap often enough. The residents called for clearer rules around grease traps, with some sort of enforcement. The selectboard said they would look into this.

For bigger projects, the town would likely need to pursue grants. “We’ve got to start digging here to get some money to get this thing up and fixed,” said Suprenant.

Purington shared that many grants have a competitive application process, and in the past the commission has found that sometimes “sewer pumps just wasn’t sexy enough.”

“Are pumps any sexier if they have underwear stuck in them?” asked Snedeker.

Everyone laughed except Miner, whose department is responsible for removing the blockages. “No. They’re not,” he sighed.

Equipment and Supplies

After a process that took years, the highway department finally has its new plow truck, replacing an old one that reportedly emitted so many fumes it left workers literally exhausted.

To keep the plow truck drivers safe on icy roads, the selectboard approved the purchase of four studded tires and rims, which will cost \$2,172 from Pete’s Tire Barn. This money will come from the budget approved for the plow truck

“and accessories,” which still has \$3,338 remaining.

Gill is also about to receive a new police cruiser, which means it will need to dispose of an old 2013 model. Miner and selectboard members expressed interest in selling it to the Warwick police department.

“We’re in a position to help another small town,” said Miner, noting that Gill once benefited from Deerfield finding itself in a similar position.

Miner also quickly reviewed the completed highway department projects from FY’22. Five road improvement projects added up to \$264,313. This was almost double the yearly budget, but was said to make up for an earlier year when no projects were taken on.

As we head into winter, the highway department is facing additional costs for snow and sleet removal. Miner reported that salt is 22% more expensive; regular sand 16.4% more expensive; and coarse sand 31.5% more expensive than

the department had budgeted – but that fuel prices are currently lower than budgeted.

Announcements

Gill is preparing to start the FY’24 budget cycle, and has two open seats on the finance committee. The committee helps prepare the town budget.

“A budget is a moral document,” said Snedeker. “That’s the process [to] set priorities for the town.” Gill residents interested in volunteering may contact Purington or finance committee chair Clair Chang via contact information on the town website.

The “Clean Sweep” Bulky Waste Recycling Day for Gill is scheduled for Saturday, October 22 from 9 a.m. to noon at the Northfield Highway Garage, 49 Caldwell Road in Northfield. No pre-registration is required, but most items require a cash-only disposal fee. Details can be found on the town website.



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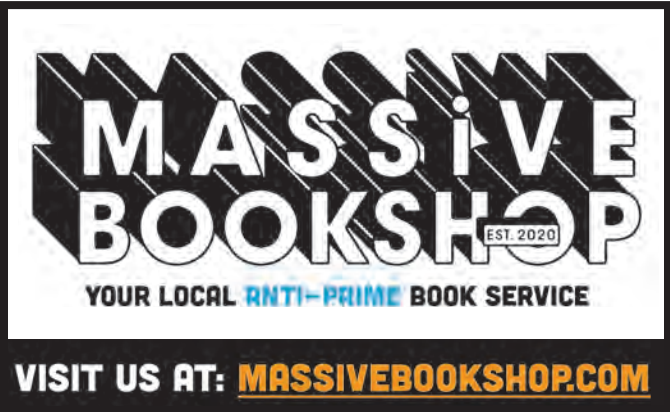
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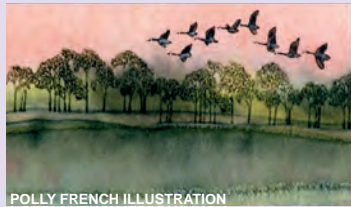
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Amanda Gorman, *The Hill We Climb*

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WEST ALONG THE RIVER
LIVING ON THE
EDGE OF THE FLAT

By DAVID BRULE

*The Flat is at once a real
and an imaginary country...*

ERVINGSIDE – Not many people call this place where I live “the Flat” anymore. But for more than 200 years that has been the name of this curious place.

The Flat actually *is* flat, a broad floodplain terrace that fans out a square mile or two along the *paguag*, or Millers River. Our river bore down through the till and sandy sediments left by the last glacier 15,000 years ago, when post-glacial Lake Hitchcock drained.

That ancient lake had been formed when a significant part of the modern-day Connecticut River Valley was dammed up by glacial debris at Rocky Hill in Connecticut. Melt waters backed up as the glacier retreated, and eventually flooded the valley for about 4,000 years. The ancient Millers flowed into this lake, and spread out an underwater fan delta that we now recognize as the Montague Plains.

When the lake did dry, of course, the wind carried sands of the delta and beach shoreline to form the gently rolling sand dunes of the now pitch-pine covered landscape.

Prior to the first white settlements here in 1802, the Pocumtuck, Nipmuc/k, and their close allies the Sokoki peoples lived and raised corn crops here since before the Year Zero. Paleo and Archaic Peoples came here even 10,000 years before them.

This is an old place. Every stone, tree, and singing riffle in the river has an ancient story to tell. Vestiges of those first people are found from time to time on the edge of the Plains. We even found a projectile point in the backyard, a spearhead that dates back 7,000

years before the Current Era.

My great-grandfather Judah Smith and his wife Lizzie Moir Smith decided to buy this house and land for a few hundred dollars in 1882. This is the house, and the now re-forested land, where I live and write, coming here 90 years after that founding couple bought the place.

By the middle of the 1880s they were not alone down here. Many houses and cottages had been built by the Millers Falls Company, then under the ownership of its founders, Mssrs. Gunn, Pratt, and Amidon.

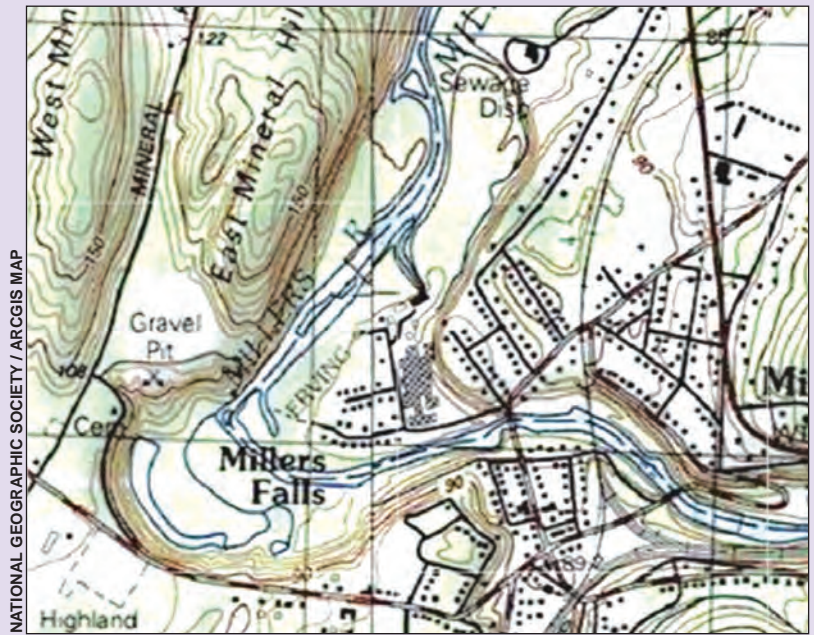
The shape of the settlement here is the curious part. Nowadays, the river encircles and wraps itself around the neighborhood of about two dozen houses. These houses were built on the next-to-most recent floodplain terrace. When the leaves are down, you can look up and see the more ancient terraces and floodplains where the river began its drilling down to its modern-day course.

One terrace up there has its matching terrace on the other side of our valley, about 200 feet above us. The current floodplain riverbed is about 15 feet below our house, on the edge of the Flat. The river is still doing its work, flowing by here day and night.

There’s only one way in and one way out of the Flat. One street leads down into the neighborhood past the old Millers Falls Company buildings, and three dead-end streets fan out from there. The land that Judah bought forms a woodland green belt encircling the whole settlement.

The river flows west, coming down from branches that start out near two mountains revered by the first Indigenous peoples: Mount Monadnock in the north, and Mount Wachusett in the east. It runs up smack into the red

see **WEST ALONG** page B2



The Flat is the lowest of several terraces carved by the Millers River.

Above: Late-season corn, under sunny Gill skies.

Saturday at the Common Hall:
Short Films on Place and Placemaking

By EASTON SMITH

MONTAGUE CENTER – “What’s this place where I live? What makes it special? How is it different from Boston or Texas, or the rural South, or Uganda?”

These are some of the questions posed by Sarah Bliss, who is co-curating *Up and Down the River*, an evening of “artist’s film on place and placemaking,” this Saturday in Montague.

“What kind of culture is grown out of being here?”

The event, which will be held in the Montague Common Hall on October 15, will feature eleven short films from artists who, as Bliss describes them, “either live or work, or have lived or have worked, up and down the Connecticut.”

The event begins at 7 p.m. and there is an optional donation of \$5 to \$15 upon entry. The space will open a half hour early, at 6:30 p.m., for a hands-on demonstration of the editing process using 16-millimeter film.

“Come and put your hands on film!” says Bliss, who says she “likes being able to actually feel the physical material of the film, put my hands on it, mush it around, and see what happens.”



A still from Josh Weissbach’s short film To All Those, among those showing this Saturday at the Montague Common Hall.

The use of physical film – as opposed to digital video – is a central focus of Saturday’s event. Bliss, her co-curator David Bendiksen, and several of the other featured filmmakers are part of the Boston-based AgX Film Collective, which describes itself as “part of a global community of artist-run film collectives and laboratories who share resources, equipment, knowledge and a physical space focused on the creation and appreciation of photo-

chemical filmmaking.”

“Experimental film generally has a much smaller audience,” says Bliss, when asked why she wanted to bring this sort of film to Montague Center specifically; she explains that she wants “this art form that I’m so passionate about to expand its audience, beyond academia and these small film festivals, to my friends and neighbors... We specifically chose not to screen

see **FILMS** page B8

BOOK REVIEW

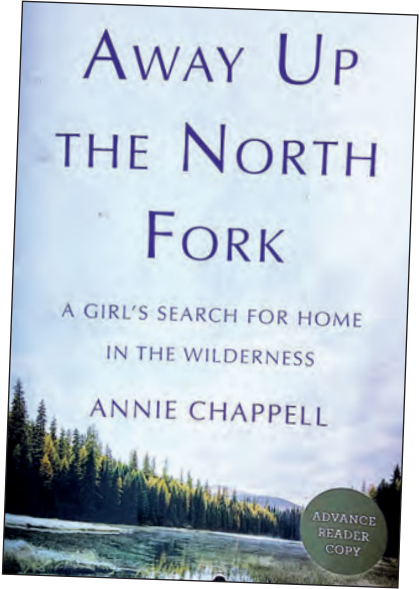
Away Up the North Fork: A Girl’s Search for
Home in the Wilderness (She Writes Press, 2022)

By CHIP AINSWORTH

NORTHFIELD – In the autumn of 1973, Annie Chappell and several of her chums at the Emma Willard School in Troy, New York, jammed into a taxi and drove to the Albany airport. Chappell got out and took a flight to Chicago, and the others went back to school. At O’Hare she called her sister to say she was *en route* to Great Falls, Montana, to live with the mountain man of her dreams.

Away Up the North Fork: A Girl’s Search for Home in the Wilderness (She Writes Press, 2022) is Chappell’s story about living with Bill Atkinson on the North Fork of the Flathead River near the Canada border, and what happens when fantasy charges head-on into reality.

Chappell grew up in Denver where her father owned a manufacturing business and her mother painted landscapes and portraits – “imagine a blend of Georgia O’Keefe, Edward Hopper and an artful paint-by-number style.” Below the surface of this idyllic home life was an undercurrent of unrest: her mother was alcoholic; her brother-in-law was a sexual predator; her grandmother was addicted to Percodan; and Chappell’s own bad behaviors were taking a toll.



“I was trying to escape,” she said in a telephone interview. “I was thinking, there’s gotta be a place I can go where life is simple. I wanted to step back in time. I thought I could.”

One day while she was hanging out at her friend Cini’s house, her parents walked in and introduced them both to Bill Atkinson. Chappell was instantly smitten by this stranger with the long dark hair who smelled of wood smoke and was dressed in buckskins.

“I felt disoriented and overwhelmed by the image

of this man who seemed to have appeared from a different era,” she wrote. “My future life came into focus as certain, simple and honest.”

Atkinson was peddling jewelry, antler carvings, and other Native artifacts to her friend’s parents, who owned a high-end Western art gallery. He regaled them with tales of living in a cabin in northern Montana, of killing a mountain lion with a single-shot

see **NORTH FORK** page B4

Pet of the Week



“PUIPUI”

Adorable Puipui was one of 13 kitties that came to Dakin due to the terrible disaster that Hurricane Ian left in its path. Shelters in the disaster zone transport animals they already have up for adoption to other shelters like Dakin, making room for pets of people who have been displaced.

We don’t know anything about this kitty’s previous experiences or preferences. They should be introduced slowly to any resident animals in your house.

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

WEST ALONG from page B1

bedrock of Mineral Mountain, which towers over our neighborhood, does a 90-degree turn at our bend in the river, and then actually flows north to meet the Connecticut at the French King confluence.

We always have called it Mineral Mountain, but it is sometimes called a hill. To be sure, the old-timers here often noted that there were “no minerals, and it’s not much of a mountain!”

Some of the oldest deeds hint that it is likely John Pynchon of Springfield who got the mountain away from the stewardship of Mashalisk, the powerful sachem of the Pocumtucks, just before she died in the 1670s, on the eve of the beginning of King Philip’s War. It is possible that Pynchon thought that he might mine it for feldspar, used in making munitions. Hard to tell if that’s true or not.

Nowadays it is protected land, home to bears, wildcats, and great horned owls.

Fortunately for me, Judah bought the last house on the edge of the Flat, on the edge of the terrace that overlooks the west-flowing river. In our backyard, the terrace comes to a point, carved by the river that turns abruptly north at the bend, on the edge of Judah’s pasture.

We have our campfire site at that point of the terrace. It feels like the prow of a ship, and we can see up and down river from that vantage point. But we weren’t the first to choose that camping site. This is where we found the spearhead-shaped projectile point, worked by a human being and then dropped or buried more than 7,000 years ago. This is one of the places where the real and the imaginary



Another terrain map shows the contours shaping the author’s neighborhood.

intersect. I have many stories that have come from this spot, and there are many more to come.

Judah bought eight acres of pasture land that spread out along the river below the point where we found the Archaic Indian artifact. When he bought the land, it was already cleared, likely by the Pocumtuck or Sokoki. I don’t find it ironic that great-grandfather Judah chose this spot. He himself was part Indian, a Nehantic far from his ancestral home of the Black Point Reservation at the mouth of the mighty Connecticut.

We still call Judah’s piece of land the Pasture, even though it has gone to woodlands since the great floods of 1936 and 1938, when the river scoured away all the topsoil and

covered the pasture and fields with river-bottom stones.

Even though I spent a lot of time visiting grandparents in this ancestral home, I never thought I would leave my life in France to spend 50 years in this old house on the Flat. But that’s what I’ve gone and done. Guess that’s what I was supposed to do, to come back here to tell stories both real and imaginary about our corner of the world.

I marvel at the possibilities of this age of satellites and Google Earth. You can see the Flat from outer space, but just the same, you can’t see the stories that have come from here.

For that you need a dash of reality, and plenty of imagination.

Senior Center Activities OCTOBER 17 THROUGH 21

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.	Thursday 10/20 10 a.m. Fruit and Financials Series 1 p.m. Cards & Games 4 p.m. Exercise Friday 10/21 10:15 a.m. Aerobics 11 a.m. Chair Aerobics
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 .	ERVING Erving Senior Center is open 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Mondays through Fridays. Open for cards, coffee, and snacks daily. Brown Bag lunch is the first Thursday of each month. Veterans Services the first Wednesday of each month. Erving van services available: Must call 24 hours in advance for a ride to any scheduled appointment. For more information, please call (413) 423-3649.
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 10/17 10:15 a.m. Aerobics 11 a.m. Chair Exercise 1 p.m. Knitting & Handcrafts Tuesday 10/18 10 a.m. A Matter of Balance 1 p.m. Chair Yoga Wednesday 10/19 9 a.m. Veterans’ Agent Hours 10:15 a.m. Aerobics 11 a.m. Chair Aerobics 12 p.m. Bring Your Lunch Bingo 1:30 p.m. Mobile Food Pantry 4 p.m. Mat Yoga
	Monday 10/17 9 a.m. Interval 10:15 a.m. Seated Workout Tuesday 10/18 9 a.m. Good For U 10 a.m. Line Dancing Wednesday 10/19 9 a.m. Cardio Low Impact 10:15 a.m. Chair Aerobics 11:30 a.m. Bingo Thursday 10/20 9 a.m. Core & Balance 10 a.m. Barre Fusion Friday 10/21 9 a.m. Quilting & Open Sew

OUT OF THE PARK OCTOBER 2022

By JON DOBOSZ

UNITY PARK – Hello everyone, it’s been a while! We had a great summer and hope yours was the same. Glad to reconnect with you this most wonderful time of year. The leaves are starting to turn color, the air is crisp, and we’re making homes for our Jack-O-Lanterns and scarecrows! As we walk into the fall season, take a gander at what we have to offer this season....

The Bluefish Swim Team is about to start, and we’re accepting names for our new/prospective swimmer list. The Bluefish is a competitive and recreational swim team that competes in the Pioneer Valley Swim League and has served area youth for over 40 years.

Swimmers will be accepted on an as-needed basis and must be able to successfully complete an in-pool swim test. The Bluefish is not a learn-to-swim program, and all prospective swimmers must have basic knowledge of all four strokes.

Practices are held Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings, and meets – both home and away – are on Saturdays. The season is held from mid-October through mid-March. Fees vary, but for more information you can either give us a call or visit the team website at www.montaguebluefish.com.

To get into the spirit of the spooky season, we will be showing a

Monster Movie in the Park on Friday, October 14 at Peskeompskut Park! We will be showing the Disney/Pixar classic *Monsters, Inc.* with a showtime of 7 p.m., so be sure to bring a couple of blankets with you. The rain date is Friday the 28th. We are partnering with the Turners Falls High School Music Boosters, who will be providing snacks for moviegoers.

We’ll also be hosting the Pumpkin Decorating Station again at this year’s Great Falls Fest. The festival will be held Saturday, October 22, with decorating from noon until dusk, while supplies last. We’ll be in the same spot as years past; the corner of Avenue A and Second Street. Stop by and bring your artistic talents!

On Tuesday, October 18 registration for our Youth Basketball program will begin for Montague residents. Youth B-Ball is held from December through the end of February. We offer an Instructional Program for children in kindergarten through 2nd grade, Junior Travel for kids in 3rd and 4th grade, and a Senior Travel Program for those in 5th and 6th grade.

Our Instructional Program goes from early January to mid-February at Sheffield Elementary, and the travel teams participate in the Tri-County Youth Basketball League with other area communities. Registration for non-residents

begins Monday, November 7. Spots fill up fast, so register early!

Pre-registration has also begun for our Annual Sawmill River 10K Run. The Sawmill Run is scheduled for Saturday, December 31, and is our major special event of the winter, as well as our first in-person race since 2020. If you’re a runner, hope to be one, or know of someone who does, this is *the* perfect way to finish the year! You can register online at www.runreg.com/sawmill-river-10k-run.



Of course, you can find additional information on all these programs – and more – on our webpage, www.montagueparksrec.com, as well as our Facebook page. That’s about it from here. Enjoy the rest of your October and we’ll talk to you next month!

Jon Dobosz, CPRP, is parks and recreation director for the town of Montague.

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NORTH FORK from page B1

muzzle loader, and of strangling a wolverine that he subsequently fashioned into a winter hat.

A Vet Seeks Refuge

A Jacksonville, Florida native, Atkinson was an honorably discharged Navy corpsman who took wounded soldiers off of helicopters in Vietnam, sometimes putting them straight into body bags. He sought refuge and found it deep in the wilderness, in a haven he called Val Halla from a verse in Norse mythology.

He didn't know he'd put an arrow through a young girl's heart, and was unaware of her first try to meet him. After landing in Great Falls, Chappell was summoned to the airport telephone. "Do you know what you've done?! What were you thinking?! The school called. We thought you were dead!"

After making the requisite apologies, Chappell returned to Emma Willard. She was an honor student and member of the student council and her behavior was attributed to teenage whimsy.

Undaunted, she wrote to Atkinson and told him she wanted to live with him. His response: "Whoa, Annie Chappell..."

What man wouldn't warm to the idea of having a young woman help with the chores, cook dinner and be a companion? First, he told her, she'd need to learn how to "ride a horse bareback at breakneck speed, throw a tomahawk, gut a rabbit, kill with a rifle..."

These challenges only added to her resolve, and at the end of June 1974, her mother loaded her up with birth control pills, and she got a ride 1,000 miles north to the outskirts of Val Halla. "He saw me as a kid and not a mate," said Chappell. "He tolerated me. He could be fun. He could be kind, but he could get really pissy. He was never a brute, and he never really frightened me."

Chores included doing laundry outside in a gas-powered washer machine, cranking the grinding wheel for Atkinson to sharpen blades, lighting the morning fire, and shivering her way to the outhouse.

Ultimately, she wrote, "The solitude was not the comfortable peace I expected."

She never complained. She washed feces out of a bear's intestines until the river water flowed through it like a hose. She killed chickens and helped Atkinson slaughter the pig she'd come to call Woink.

During a hot spell in July she went to the stream to feel "the cool air flowing along the water" and saw a grizzly bear rise from the bushes. "Shimmering a tawny gold, [she] was slightly above me and looked enormous. We looked at each other and she turned her head and slowly continued on her path."

Recounting the experience she chuckled and said, "That could have been the end of me. No book."

Living on Life's Terms

She wrote home constantly to rail against the government and warn her parents: "Rip out the roses and plant a huge vegetable garden... chuck all the appliances and get two goats."

After one particularly vitriolic missive her mother rebutted: "What I don't understand is your total denigration of 'White Man' & your complete sympathy with the American Indian. They didn't choose their way of life, they were faced with it..."

The letters home, said Chappell, "helped me process my confusion. My parents were concerned, and they were forgiving of my fits and starts."

In October when the cold seeped through the cabin and flurries swirled in the wind, Chappell decided she'd had enough.

Atkinson of course remained and still lives in wilderness, albeit in Wyoming and not Val Halla.

"The world I launched into was trial by fire and I ultimately didn't survive."

She returned home, enrolled at Colorado College, and got on with her life. One day her mother said, "Babes, I've saved all the letters. It would be a great book."

Away Up the North Fork will be released on November 8, and Chappell has two options. She can sell it herself for the full \$17.95 value, or list it on Amazon and get \$3 per sale.

"I'm selling it myself," she said, and added that a portion of the proceeds will go to Save the Yellowstone Grizzly.

She lives with her husband in Northfield where she teaches drawing, tends to her garden, and plays old-time string music with friends.

"Everybody has a coming of age time in their life, and this was mine," she said. Then, in her usual mirthful manner, she added: "A second book is definitely not in my future."



MR Wrapping Paper Edition Artist Profile #2

By REPORTER STAFF

This summer we invited people to submit design proposals for a special Wrapping Paper Issue, to be printed in November. This fundraiser for the Montague Reporter will feature full color designs printed on double pages of newsprint, meant to wrap presents in. We received 34 submissions to our call.

Seven of these pages will feature the work of local artists chosen from the proposals we have received, with a cover image created using MoRe headers from the past year.

We are so excited to bring these wonderful designs to life in this special issue, which will go to press on Thanksgiving week! We have asked each artist the same three

questions.

Sunny Allis answers us this week. Sunny presented a design of bright, multi-colored, abstract shapes sprinkled across the page.

MR: What would you want your wrapping paper to say, and feel like, for the person it is being gifted to?

SA: I want my wrapping paper to communicate joy, exuberance, and play for the person it is being gifted to.

MR: What gifts would you want to receive wrapped in your paper?

SA: Books, toys, homemade cookies, preserves, or other hand-made holiday treats.

MR: What other gifts have newspapers given you over the years?

SA: Newspapers help me stay connected to my local community, and provide me with a variety of perspectives that expand my understanding of the world.

I love sitting with a cup of coffee in the morning and reading the newspaper – it's one of my favorite activities! A great way to start the day.



EVENT ANNOUNCEMENT

At the Brick House: Solidarity With Phillipine Farmers!

TURNERS FALLS – Farmers make up the majority of the Philippines' population. Despite this, the majority of Filipinos experience food insecurity and poverty due to economic policies in the country, which are imposed by a puppet government retained by the US. Filipino landless peasant farmers are especially vulnerable, and suffer from land-grabbing, resource theft, and state violence at the hands of landlord and state forces.

Through centuries of colonial and neocolonial subjugation, the people of the Philippines have never ceased to struggle for their self-determination and sovereignty, and today serve as an inspiration to liber-

ation movements across the world.

Join the Liyang Network Western Mass and the Anti-Imperialist Action Committee to learn more about what that struggle looks like today, and why international solidarity is crucial.

Advocates and student researchers will report back from their time with farmers in the Philippines at the Brick House Community Resource Center, 24 Third Street in Turners Falls, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. next Sunday, October 23.

Masks are required, and onsite childcare is available. For more information and accessibility needs, contact liyangwesternmass@gmail.com.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

MOVIE REVIEW

The Greatest Beer Run Ever (AppleTV, 2022)

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – The Greatest Beer Run Ever sounds like such a ridiculous story that it can't be true. But it is a true story about this guy named John "Chickie" Donohue, played by Zac Efron, who went to Vietnam in 1967 to deliver beer to his friends who were serving over there. This ended up having a documentary made about it, and a best-selling book to its name.

This film was an AppleTV original which premiered on September 30 in theaters, including the Greenfield Garden Cinema. The Garden likes doing promotional events in connection with certain films playing there, and this movie is no exception; during the film's premiere week, they sold Pabsts for a dollar. They even had a big sign for the deal outside of the theater. Besides the beer, employees wore hats with the logo of the brand, which I believe was the same beer the guy gives to soldiers in the movie.

Chickie is a guy who sleeps till noon, and doesn't really follow through on things. The idea didn't



even come from him. It came from a friend of his, played by Bill Murray. He decides to do this, and he ends up getting lucky and finding a ship going to Vietnam.

A few relatives of the soldiers give him things to give them along with the beers. However, a family member and the soldiers there act like it's insane for him to be doing this. He does end up giving the beers to some of the friends he encounters, but he also experiences some of the realities of the Vietnam War.

The film does a very good job of capturing how unpopular this war was in some scenes, and with a few lines that people said. One is "Telling the truth is supporting them." "You don't have to be here, but you came here" is the other.

After some time, he starts to get a pretty good idea of why people feel the way they do about his idea, and because of that, he tries his best to get out of the place. He runs into a few bumps along the road.

He does have one bit of luck when he is mistaken for a CIA agent, which allows him to get help with getting to certain locations, but that backfires on him. A photojournalist played by Russell Crowe tries to help him get out, but that had a detour to it when he learns of the possibility of another friend being killed. He is able to find out what has happened with the photojournalist's help.

He is doing this just as he learns that another friend has been reported M.I.A. I don't want to spoil the whole movie for you, but the friends who he ends up encountering over there do make it back home. This movie held my attention.



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ROASTED FENNEL


Using fresh fennel, cut off the greens and reserve them to use elsewhere – you can add them to soups, stews, pestos, or vinaigrettes for added flavor. Remove the tough outer layers of the bulb, cutting each one into wedges. Toss with olive oil and kosher salt, and spread onto a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Bake at 450° for 20 minutes until browned. The bulbs will become tender and juicy with just the right amount of caramelization for sweetness. Squeeze on some lemon juice, and enjoy.



Slice a fennel bulb into wedges, drizzle with olive oil and a pinch of kosher salt, and roast at 450 for 20 minutes. The result is juicy, tender, and sweet from caramelization. Try adding fennel when roasting root veggies.

FENNEL SALAD

Remove the greens and tough outer layers of the bulb, and slice it as thin as possible. (I use a mandoline.) Cover with lemon juice – try it with Meyer’s lemon juice, which is a bit less tart – and let it marinate for a couple of hours in the fridge to soften. Add a handful of parmesan cheese, salt, and pepper, and enjoy.



Thinly sliced fennel macerating in lemon juice overnight will tenderize it. With the addition of parmesan cheese, kosher salt, and pepper, it makes a tart, lemony treat.

EXHIBITS

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Migrations*, celebrating the human and natural diversity of the upper Connecticut River Valley and the Americas. Colorful paintings curated by GuateMaya Art and Culture Connection depict scenes integral to village life, Mayan culture, and the history of Lake Atitlan. Through November 1.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Interotine*, mixed-media work by Turners Falls resident Desi Lowit. Through November.

Leverett Crafts & Arts, Leverett: *Out of the Shadows*. Twelve artists traverse the border between worlds and find refuge in hidden realms. Through October.

Artspace Gallery, Greenfield: *Botanical Portraits*, by fine art flower photographer and grower Jean Gran. Through October 28.

LAVA Center and Looky Here, Greenfield. *Heart’s Desire*, Susan Crolius and Art + Soul. A retrospective of art and events over the last nine years by the Art + Soul community. Listen to live and virtual readings. Events throughout October listed at localaccess.org.

Memorial Hall, Deerfield: Landscape paintings by *Robert Strong Woodward* (1885-1957). Through October.

Fiddleheads Gallery, Northfield: *Sticks & Stones*. Artists interpret the whimsical theme of sticks and/or stones in sculpture, mixed media, mosaic, fiber art, and more. Through November 6.

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♥ NOTES FROM THE HEARTFELT CAFE ♥

♥ BY TROUBLE MANDESON ♥

GREENFIELD – This month I’ve decided to further investigate fennel, a member of the *Apiaceae* family that includes carrot and parsley. It can be found now in farmers’ markets and in your farm shares. A cousin to cumin, dill, caraway, and anise, all of which have aromatic fruits commonly called seeds, fennel is a perennial herb that is used as a vegetable, a kitchen herb, and as a medicine.

There are many varieties of fennel, including common fennel, sweet fennel, wild fennel, bronze fennel, Florence fennel, bulb fennel, finocchio, Roman fennel, and wild pepper fennel. What we grow here in western Massachusetts is more likely the common variety, sometimes also referred to as sweet or wild fennel.

Indigenous to Mediterranean shores, fennel became naturalized in northern Europe, Australia, and North America and is cultivated worldwide, especially on dry soil near the ocean and on riverbanks. Most fennel seed that we use in the US is imported from Egypt.

Used by ancient Egyptians as food and medicine, as a snake bite remedy in China, and hung from doorways to drive away evil spirits during the Middle Ages, fennel also has a long history of use as a weight-loss aid and as a “carminative,” a treatment for flatulence and bloating. The latter use was approved by the German Commission E, a scientific advisory board, along with the seeds and oil, both used as short-term treatments for dyspepsia and upper respiratory catarrh (a buildup of mucus).

Fennel produces a crisp white bulb that can be eaten along with the young, tender fronds and celery-like stems. It’s used in salads and added to grain and fish dishes, and the seeds can be brewed into a stomach-soothing tea recommended for colicky babies.

As mentioned, it helps with gas and bloat, so adding about a half-teaspoon of crushed fennel seeds to the cooking water of cabbage, onion, and broccoli will reduce the gas-provoking compounds present in those foods.

During Lent and other fasts, fennel seeds are consumed to stave off hunger, and if you’ve ever eaten in an Indian restaurant, you’ve often



After cutting off the green fronds of fennel and setting them aside for another use, the author removes the tough outer leaves from the bulb before chopping or slicing it.

found a small dish of them by the cash register; they’re offered as a breath freshener, as they stimulate saliva production and sweeten your breath. Fennel oil has been said to be antimicrobial and antioxidant, in addition to its use as an antispasmodic to control gut issues like irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).

Fennel has been used for millennia to encourage menstruation and lactation; to facilitate birth; and even as an aphrodisiac, believed to increase libido because of its high levels of phytoestrogens. In the 1930s, some interest was shown in using it as a source of synthetic estrogen for hormonal balance.

One historical tidbit about fennel is that in the Greek language, fennel means “marathon.” In 490 BC an Athenian named Pheidippides carried a fennel stalk on his two-day, 150-mile run to gather up soldiers in Sparta to fight the battle of Marathon against Persia. The battle is said to have been fought in a field of fennel.

When considering whether to grow fennel, know that it’s a great choice for a perennial garden in Zones 4 through 9, while planted as an annual in the colder zones. It is a great addition to an herb garden, not just for its beautiful feathery fronds and great taste, but because it attracts Swallowtail butterflies to gardens. The larval Swallowtail feeds on the leaves of fennel without destroying the plant, and the adults act as pollinators.

In the kitchen, fennel seeds can be used to bake into bread, biscuits,

stuffing, and Italian sausages, added to sweet pickles and sauerkraut, and served as a complement to asparagus, tomato, and cucumber. Stems can be grilled with fish, meats, and vegetables, and leaves can be added to salads, olives, fish, and snails, or used as a garnish. Bronze fennel makes an especially attractive garnish.

The essential oil extracted from fennel seeds is added to perfumes, soaps, pharmaceuticals, and cosmetics. Its familiar flavor can be tasted in liqueurs like sambuca, in non-alcoholic beverages, and, with its breath-freshening properties, in toothpaste.

I was not exposed to fennel until I came to New England. I’m sure it was available on the west coast, but it never seemed to have made it into my mother’s kitchen. Now that I work on a farm and have been introduced to new things like fennel, kohlrabi, and celeriac, I can’t get enough of eating them all.

My favorite way to consume fennel is to roast it coated in olive oil and seasoned with kosher salt or marinate it in lemon juice with parmesan cheese, salt, and pepper. Both preparations soften and sweeten the bulbs. I’ll leave you with two simple recipes to make both versions.

Trouble lives in Greenfield with Wifey and Mama Catt Elliott and manages the office part-time for a nearby farm. She loves to talk, read, write, garden/farm, cook, and make art.

Montague Community Television News

Drained & Explained

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – Follow along on a stroll during Canal Draw Down Week to learn about the history of the Turners Falls power canal, and observe the canal while it is empty. MCTV follows Janel as she answers questions and explores the history and ecology of the Turners Falls Dam.

And you can “Let Food Be Your Medicine” with Lenore Alaniz, as she presents the art show she installed at the Great Falls Discovery Center.

Last week’s Montague select-board meeting and dog hearing are also updated on the MCTV Vimeo,

and will be playing on Channel 17.

All community members are welcome to submit their videos to be aired on Channel 17 and featured on the MCTV Vimeo page. MCTV is always available to assist in local video production as well. Cameras, tripods, and lighting equipment are available for checkout, and filming and editing assistance can be provided. 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 infomon-taguetv@gmail.com.

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The Children's Page

YONERDOD ILLUSTRATION

THE LOVELIGHTS HIT HARD TIMES
PART 2: VIOLA LOVELIGHT
WORDS BY BEVERLY KETCH
PICTURES BY HANNAH BROCKMAN



VIOLA WAS PAINTING ON A LOVELY TRAIL BY THE RIVERSIDE. LEAVES RUSTLED IN THE WIND AS SHE MIXED COLORS AND DABBED PAINT ON HER CANVAS. THE WHITE OF THE CANVAS DISAPPEARED AND THE BEAUTIFUL RIVER SCENE EMERGED IN A RIOT OF COLORS.

JUST AS SHE WAS ABOUT TO PUT THE FINISHING TOUCHES ON HER PAINTING, VIOLA FELT SOMETHING BRUSHING AGAINST HER LEG. SHE LOOKED DOWN TO SEE A POOR STRAY CAT WITH A BADLY HURT LEG! THE CAT LIMPED AND LOOKED UP AT HER WITH SAD EYES.



NO SOONER HAD SHE SEEN THE CAT THAN SHE PUT AWAY ALL HER PAINTS, SLUNG HER TRAVEL EASEL OVER HER BACK AND SCOOPED UP BOTH THE CAT AND THE PAINTING IN HER ARMS. SHE SET OFF FOR DR. FUZZY, THE TOWN VETERINARIAN.



AS SHE HURRIED OFF AS FAST AS SHE COULD WHILE CARRYING SUCH PRECIOUS CARGO, VIOLA SAW OLD MISS PATCHES WITH HER FEET IN THE RIVER, LOOKING VERY SAD.



HELLO, WHAT IS THE MATTER, OLD FRIEND?

OH LOOK! MY SOLE FELLOFF MY SHOE, AND I WAS WALKING ON GRAVEL! NOW MY FEET HURT AND I HAVE TO WALK HOME.



I'M AFRAID I CAN'T HELP YOU HOME, BUT HERE IS SOME MONEY SO YOU CAN TAKE YOUR SHOES TO BE REPAIRED.

OH THANK YOU VIOLA!

VIOLA SET OFF AGAIN WITH THE CAT TUCKED SAFELY TUCKED UNDER HER ARM.



AS THEY WALKED INTO TOWN, VIOLA SAW A DELIGHTFUL GROUP OF DANCERS TWIRLING AND SWAYING ON THE SIDEWALK. SHE STOPPED TO WATCH WITH SHINING EYES AS THEIR DANCE CAME TO AN END AND A LITTLE CROWD APPLAUDED. AS THEY PASSED THE HAT, SHE MANAGED TO REACH INTO HER APRON POCKET BY HOLDING HER PAINTING UNDER HER CHIN, AND CONTRIBUTED GENEROUSLY.



THEN VIOLA MADE HER WAY TO DR. FUZZY'S NEAT LITTLE OFFICE.




I WILL NEED TO KEEP THIS CAT HERE OVER NIGHT. AND I WILL NEED A ONE HUNDRED DOLLAR DEPOSIT.

OF COURSE!

VIOLA WROTE DR. FUZZY A CHECK AND PETTED THE STRAY CAT TO SAY GOODBYE. (TO BE CONTINUED!)

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



The Reporter is looking for volunteers to help us curate this listing. Interested? Contact us at editor@montaguereporter.org!

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13

Palladium, Worcester: *Carnifex, Spite, Oceano*, more. \$. 6 p.m.

The Drake, Amherst: *The Huntress and Holder of Hands, Dead Gowns*. \$. 7 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *June Star*. Free. 9 p.m.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14

Pioneer Valley Brewing, Turners Falls: *The Upstairs District*. Free. 7 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Soul Magnets*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Other Layers, Ice Rasta, Heartballoon, DJ Kief Sweat*. \$. 8 p.m.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *The Wallbangers, Shri! Pill, Eleanor Levine*. \$. 8 p.m.

The Wheelhouse at Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Jules Findlay*,

FB Blacc, Kiexiza Rodriguez, Tuneleef, more. \$. 10 p.m.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15

Element Brewing, Millers Falls: *Cyrus & Oz*. Free. 4 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Skel-lz, The Humans Being*, more. \$. 5 p.m.

Pioneer Valley Brewing, Turners Falls: *Chick-n-Wire*. Free. 7 p.m.

Luthier's Co-op, Easthampton: *The 413s*. \$. 7 p.m.

Nova Arts, Keene: *The Huntress and Holder of Hands, Dead Gowns*. \$. 7 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Cinemastorm* movie double feature: *Back to the Future* (1985), *Children of the Corn* (1984); discussion with the films' editor, Harry Keramidas. Free. 7 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Red Jasper, Ollie Schechter, DJ Bux Wild*. \$. 8 p.m.

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

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Spirits of Leo, Old Moon, Dutch Experts, Clock Serum*. \$. 7 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Goblet, Faced, Screams of Hockomock, Machine Gun Mayhem, Bent*. \$. 7 p.m.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 17

DCU Center, Worcester: *Iron Maiden*. \$. 7 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Wes Brown with Matan Rubinstein*. Free. 8 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Sam Amidon / Marc Ribot Duo, Chris Weisman*. \$. 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Eleanor Levine & Band, Ruddy Duck, 2/3rds the Bird*. \$. 7 p.m.

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

The Drake, Amherst: *Imarhan, Harman, The Haughey Cello*

Project. \$. 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Eggtooth Productions presents *A Happening*. \$. 7 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: Dance party with 2 Car Garage. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Pioneer Valley Brewing, Turners Falls: *Halloween Party with Bobby C*. 8 p.m.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: Film, *Belladonna of Sadness* (1974) with live soundtrack by *The Emptyreans*. \$. 8 p.m.

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Jonathan Richman, Tommy Larkins*. \$. 8 p.m.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Liz Bills & the Change, Sandy Bailey* (full band). \$. 9 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *A.P.I.E., Luxor Rentals, Blues Ambush* (solo). Free. 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22

Great Falls Festival, Turners Falls: *After Glo, James Blonde*,

Curly Fingers Dupree, Jimmy Just Quit, No Joke, Tommy Fuentes Band, Adelaide Faye & Peter Kim, Eli Elkus, many more performers, vendors, children's activities, etc. Free. 12 p.m.

Shutesbury Athletic Club: *The Cropdusters, The Green Sisters, Wild Bill and the Flying Sparks, The Pistoleros*. \$. 4 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *La Neve, Feminine Aggression, Valley Gals*. \$. 7 p.m.

The Drake, Amherst: *Fracture Type, Crash the Owl Party, My Friend Tony*. \$. 8 p.m.

Race Street Live, Holyoke: *Titus Andronicus, Country West-erns*. \$. 8 p.m.

Hutghi's at the Nook, Westfield: *Wishful Thinking, The Agonizers, The Schenectavoids*. \$. 8 p.m.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Wild Pink, Gold Dust, Lost Film*. \$. 9 p.m.

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



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FILMS from page B1

this not at one of the five colleges, but at our own Common Hall.”

The longest of the event’s 11 films has a run time of 22 minutes, and the shortest just two minutes. The theme that unites all of the films is “place and placemaking,” which in Bliss’s words includes “the interweaving of human life, and more than human life.” The concept of place, she explains, includes the rhythm of the seasons, human labor, agriculture, and ecology, and place-making “is the way that we actually actively engage with that.”

While none of the films are about the Connecticut River itself, about a quarter of them were shot in the Connecticut River Valley, and are about people and places here.

One film, *Helios*, is a five-minute time-lapse film capturing cacti and succulents over the course of a year. Another, *Łódź*, is about violent trauma and dislocation during World War II, and its lasting impact on a family through many generations.

The second-shortest film, called *Quaker City Home Movies: Pressing Cider*, is an impromptu recording of an apple cider pressing in a New Hampshire community. Bliss’s own film *Unless You’re Living It* will also be among the works presented.

Most of the films being presented on Saturday have been shown before, but one will be making its premiere: an “exquisite corpse” film created collaboratively by each of the featured artists. The project began with

100 feet of film, and each filmmaker was given a certain portion of the roll to shoot however they pleased. The physical film was shipped from artist to artist, each shooting their portion without seeing what had already been captured on the film.

The final work is to be presented unedited at Saturday’s event with live, improvised musical accompaniment from Montague musicians Brian Rodrigues and Leo Hwang.

“People are used to thinking about moving image as entertainment or educational,” Bliss told the *Reporter*. “But this sort of moving image – this experimental or artist film – really opens up into a whole other category. It’s film as art, film as poetry, film as a place that engages memory and history and beauty and light and rhythm... It’s an art form where maybe more questions are raised than answered.”

Bliss says she’s been interested in putting this collection together to try to raise one question in particular: “Could we say that there are any particular qualities that distinguish filmmaking that comes out of this region?” She hopes that audience members will ponder this as they watch the films, and discuss it during a question and answer session with some of the filmmakers after the screening.

“I have some of my own conclusions,” she adds, “but maybe I want to leave that for people to think about for themselves.”



EXHIBIT PREVIEW

Not Your Everyday Quilts: Stunning Work by Ann Feitelson

By RICHARD ANDERSEN

MONTAGUE CENTER – You may find it interesting to know that master quilter Ann Feitelson has multiple degrees in art, including a Master of Fine Arts degree from the highly regarded Tyler School; seven artist residencies, including a stay at the famous Yadoo Colony; 10 achievement awards, including the Purple Ribbon Exceptional Merit Award from the Vermont Quilt Festival; 15 book covers and articles featuring her work and commentary about her quilts, as well as *The Art of Fair Isle Knitting*, a book she wrote that has been in print for more than 17 years.

Fortunately, you don’t have to know any of this to understand, appreciate, enjoy, and reel in delight over the glorious coalescence of colors and designs and images that explode from the quilts on display at the Montague Center Library from October 24 through November 9.

Ann expresses what you’re looking at this way: “Little patterns and big patterns heighten each other and fall into place against each other. This ideal world of gorgeous color and rhythmically playing patterns allows me to express what seem like my deepest yearnings and deepest truths.”

How does Ann manage to bring together the many varying tasks of imagining, selecting, measuring, cutting, piecing together, pressing into place, and finally stitching the patterns that hold the top, bottom, and backing together to form a work of art that is unlike in range, depth, and material expression anything you have probably ever seen before or ever will see anywhere else?

She slows down and concentrates. Deciding which shape goes with which color, and “where I can change and add and subtract



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

Feitelson’s 40-by-56-inch quilt Full Circle (2014) is on display with two others at the Montague Center Library later this month.

major and minor elements,” Ann says, “can take up to a year to complete.” You really have to love what you do to spend a year of your life working on a single quilt. The average size is a little more than 40 by 56 inches.

Ann developed a passion for sewing and knitting under the inspired and inspiring tutelage of her mom. Whatever projects they worked on, their focus and most of their pleasure came from the myriad of intense colors they were able to produce.

But for Ann, sewing and knitting didn’t quite measure up to art with a capital A. Swayed by her ambition (with a capital A), she earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts at Middlebury, learned about Big Art from studying the Renaissance masters in Rome, completed a Master of Fine Arts in Art History from the University of Massachusetts, and taught at both Hollins College and Syracuse University before recognizing and accepting the truth of a revelation at the Abstract Design

in American Quilt Exhibit at the Whitney Museum in 1971.

Like many revelations, this one took some time to become an epiphany. Since 1999, however, Ann has been channeling her art school ambition into what she sees she was destined to do since she was a child creating shapes and colors alongside her mom.

The quilts that have resulted, Ann says, are about “our place in the cosmos, the rivers we flow along with the thrills of our senses, and all the feelings of being human.”

A reception for this show will be held at the Montague Center Library on Wednesday, October 26 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. All are invited. The library’s regular hours are Mondays and Wednesdays from 2 to 7 p.m. and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Should you like to have work displayed at the library, visit librarian Kate Martineau during opening hours or telephone her at 367-2852.

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