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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

JUNE 15, 2023

State Checks on Farren Site After Dust Cloud Incident

By SARAH ROBERTSON

MONTAGUE CITY – Two weeks ago a chimney at the former Farren Care Center came crashing down, sending a large cloud of dust wafting into the sky. The company responsible for the months-long demolition project, Associated Building Wreckers (ABW), had received a permit from the state Department of Environmental Pro-

tection (MassDEP) to perform the work. The state agency visited the site twice last week to ensure the conditions of the permit were being met, and notified the company of steps it is required to take to manage dust and asbestos.

“Dust is a big concern to us,” ABW president Andrew Mirkin told the *Reporter*. “The asbestos has been removed, 99% of it, from see **FARREN** page A3



SUBMITTED VIDEO

Video filmed by a Montague City resident who asked to remain anonymous captured the dramatic dust cloud that wafted through the neighborhood June 2.

Gill Zips Through Annual

By KATE SAVAGE

At Monday’s annual town meeting, Gill voters unanimously approved all articles on the warrant, except for one that was passed over. Around 50 Gill residents voted to establish the budget for the year ahead, empowered town officials to pursue taxes from energy companies, and symbolically rejected corporate personhood.

Voters unanimously approved a budget of \$4,231,918 for FY’24, roughly \$25,000 less than the current year and \$11,000 more than the year before. About 40% of that,

\$1,689,154, will go toward the Gill-Montague regional school district – a decrease of about \$62,000, as Gill student enrollment in the district has fallen from 85 to 73 students.

Several articles dealt with agreements with energy companies that use town land. One vote authorized the selectboard, board of assessors, and town administrator to negotiate payment *in lieu of tax* (PILOT) agreements for solar or wind-powered energy systems. The current PILOT agreement with Kearsarge Gill LLC for its ground-mounted solar see **GILL** page A5

A Change in Leadership



SMITH-MASSA PHOTO

Rabbi Andrea Cohen-Keiner is retiring from her post at Temple Israel on June 30.

By GRANGER SMITH-MASSA

GREENFIELD – Local synagogue Temple Israel of Greenfield will soon be saying goodbye to its current rabbi, Andrea Cohen-Keiner. Rabbi Andrea, as she prefers to be called, has been serving as the Temple’s rabbi for eight years, and will retire from the position at the end of this month. Acting both as a spiritual leader and as a community leader, she has worked to foster a sense of unity both at the Temple and in Franklin County and connects others to projects supporting the area so they can do the same. Temple Israel, located on Pierce

Street, is the only synagogue in Franklin County. Having originally started as a small gathering of Jewish families in 1910, the congregation expanded until it was in need of a regular place of worship.

In 1923 the congregation purchased Hibernian Hall, which had previously been used as a private club. This building became Temple Israel, and has lasted as an important part of the local Jewish community through its many renovations and reconstruction over the years.

With classrooms, a library, a large meeting hall, and, of course, the sanctuary, the Temple now see **CHANGE** page A6

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Hard to Nab Speeders With So Few Cops, Says Chief

By JEFF SINGLETON

Montague Center residents have been complaining for years about cars speeding through the village on Main Street and not stopping at pedestrian crosswalks, as required under state law. The town has attempted to calm traffic with measures such as increased signage, radar speed displays, and bumpouts, but according to village residents – and apparently members of the town selectboard – these efforts have failed to address the problem.

The board’s meeting on Monday was well attended, and featured a discussion of the problem and potential solutions. Police chief Chris Williams gave a presentation that also addressed complaints about truck traffic in Millers Falls, as well as speeding problems in Lake Pleasant, though residents of that village were not in attendance.

“The officers have been out there in their spare time – they are actively running radar, and stopping cars,” Williams said. “It’s really hard to keep up with a town our size, with the size of the department we have.”

Williams reviewed the problems on all three roads, including the difficulties large trucks have in making the turn in Millers without moving into the opposite lane. He noted that see **MONTAGUE** page A7

G-M SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Negotiations With Teachers Trickle Into Public Arena

By MIKE JACKSON

GILL-MONTAGUE – Over forty people were on the school committee’s Zoom meeting Tuesday evening, including a large number of staff whose screen displays were set to the Gill-Montague Education Association union logo, when amid an already-chaotic meeting start one user hijacked the video conferencing software’s screen-sharing feature and began streaming pornography in a browser window.

School committee chair Jane Oakes, who was still reading through the legal preambles that begin every remote public open meeting and had been begging attendees to mute their microphones, called information technology director Tina Mahaney’s name out in alarm.

“I’m sorry – I need to end this meeting,” Mahaney announced immediately, and shut down the call.

It was a first for the Gill-Montague school committee, which has been meeting in virtual space for over three years. Zoom addresses see **GMRSD** page A2

Turners Falls, Greenfield Vie for State Title Friday



DAVID HOITI PHOTO

Turners Falls’ Addison Talbot makes the final out last Saturday night, advancing the Thunder to the Division 5 semifinals with a 2-1 win against Franklin Tech.

By MATT ROBINSON

TURNERS FALLS – The Turners Falls Softball Thunder went two-and-oh this week in the MIAA Division 5 playoffs, earning them a spot in the state title game and giving them the opportunity to wrestle back the championship belt from Greenfield.

The final game is set for this Friday at 3 p.m. at UMass Amherst’s Sortino Field.

For the Franklin Tech Eagles the season ended this week, by a single run in the sixth inning of the playoffs’ quarterfinal game.

TFHS 2 – FCTS 1

The Franklin Tech softball team and their fans crossed Millers Falls Road last Saturday in a bid to make it into the D-5 Final Four.

The Eagles, who had just knocked off sixth-ranked Taconic, had won the state small vocational championship, and had defeated the Thunder during the regular season, were on a quest to prove that the MIAA rankings mean nothing when the season is on the line.

The Thunder, the Western Mass Class D champions, had breezed through the playoffs – until Saturday, that is, when Tech came to Gary Mullins Field.

For five full innings, it was the classic struggle of the irresistible force against the immovable object. Both teams got runners on base, but neither defense cracked.

In the bottom of the first, Holly Myers reached on an error, but the side was retired on a Lillian Ross to Keira Stevens double play. In the third, Turners’ Mia Marigano was hit by a pitch, and in the visitor fourth, Tech got two runners on base.

Ross placed a one-out base hit, but a Marigano diving catch stunted the Eagles’ rally. Kylee Gamache was intentionally walked, but a three-pitch strikeout sent Turners to the plate.

And on it went. Morgan Dobias got a one-out hit in the bottom of the fourth, but Hannah Gilbert retired the side, and the threat, on back-to-back strikeouts. In the fifth, it started to rain.

With two outs, Turners ace Madison Liimatainen walked two batters on nine pitches, and then she threw a wild pitch, advancing the runners. This sent Coach Gary Mullins to the circle to calm his pitcher. It worked, and Liimatainen pitched out of it with a strikeout.

In the sixth, with the score double-goose-eggs, Franklin broke see **SPORTS** page A6

‘Foreign Objects’ Could Cost Montague Big Bucks

By JEFF SINGLETON

TURNERS FALLS – Readers who follow the sport of professional wrestling, particularly World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE), may be familiar with the concept of a “foreign object.” The term refers to any inanimate object a wrestler may use to bash an opponent while the referee tries in vain to maintain order.

In an earlier age, when the sport was regional and in New England under the control of third-generation promoter Vince McMahon, the object was typically smaller, resembling a tongue depressor or perhaps a metal shoehorn, hidden in the waistbands of trunks. The new professional wrestling world order

has expanded into an international phenomenon, though the WWE remains under the control of McMahon, and the “foreign object” has also expanded to include furniture, such as tables and chairs.

No one would have imagined back then that the town of Montague, possibly under a federal mandate, might one day be spending up to a half million dollars to remove such items from its sewer system. Yet there it was, on the town selectboard agenda for June 12: “Foreign Objects Pad At Transfer Station.”

Public works superintendent Tom Bergeron was requesting \$15,000 to hire the engineering firm see **OBJECTS** page A8

Happy Birthday

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The Montague Reporter

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August 2002

Done With Nice?

FirstLight Power must sense that it is entering the home stretch of the long process of renewing its licenses to use the Connecticut River to generate electricity, and profit, and it must feel pretty good about its prospects.

Responding Monday to formal comments critical of the settlement agreement it has signed with stakeholders about river flows and fish passage – in particular comments from the Connecticut River Conservancy (CRC), which had dropped out of the talks – the company struck a tone completely at odds with its public-relations face.

Readers can use the above QR code to check out this odd document, signed by a Washington, DC-based attorney for the company.

"CRC mistakenly assumes that FirstLight has an obligation to prioritize flow conditions for recreational boating, as well as habitat for select fluvial fish species, at any

cost," they argue. "According to FirstLight's calculations, the lost energy that would result from increasing the minimum flow in the bypass reach from 500 cfs to 1,400 cfs from July 1 to November 15 would cost FirstLight over \$900,000 per year.... In addition, further decreasing renewable energy generation for minor fishery and recreational benefits creates net harm to the environment."

There are a number of other interesting sections – too many to get into at press time – but the strangest by far is the company's motion to strike the CRC's comments from the federal record on the theory that the CRC river steward and staff member who signed the comments is not qualified to represent the group.

Does this signal a shift to a more combative style, now that the ink is drying on settlement agreements? Will this be the hydro company's *vibe* for the next half century?



GMRSD from page A1

and passwords are shared on the meeting agendas posted on the district website.

The meeting reconvened in a new Zoom room nearly 15 minutes later, and no mention was made of the event beyond an apology from Oakes for the interruption, "technology being what it is."

Later, when it was time to discuss the perennial topic of perhaps switching to in-person meetings, she suggested that once summer meeting dates are finalized, the committee could pick "just one or two meetings" to try it out.

Tuesday's meeting featured statements about ongoing staff contract negotiations. District teachers, considered "Unit A" of the contract, have been working without a contract for the entire school year, and last week announced a work-to-rule slowdown action to call public attention to their cause.

Bargaining sessions have gone into formal mediation, and union and school committee representatives both say the disagreement has been reduced to whether the workers would receive base 2% or 3% cost-of-living adjustments in the 2024-25 and 25-26 school years.

During public comment, middle-school teacher Joseph Katz read a prepared statement praising the school committee. "Your role is often under-acknowledged and overlooked," he said. "Please know that's not lost on us.... We can always work

with someone who cares."

Jayne Finn, a former Gill-Montague employee who works as an educational liaison at Clinical & Support Options, said teachers and paraprofessionals today are "supporting students with mental health issues, food insecurities, housing insecurities, and other home issues.... If they walk away to other communities, the people who will be hurt is the students."

Oakes, commenting that going into mediation means the parties have more permission to speak about the negotiations in public, later read an official statement of the committee's position that appeared in last week's *Montague Reporter*.

In other news, the committee welcomed Jacquelyn Boyden, Erving's new non-voting representative, and officially appointed Camie Lamica as district treasurer following the departure of Cynthia Caporaso.

At the recommendation of director of teaching and learning Jeanne Power, the committee unanimously approved purchasing a \$5,823 social-emotional learning curriculum, Second Step, and a \$13,268 English-learners curriculum from Vista Higher Learning.

Superintendent Brian Beck announced that a new LED sign had been installed in front of the middle and high school, and was fully operational. The sign is announcing that the last day of school is next Thursday, June 22.



Janet Masucci of Riverside Healing & Bodywork treats a client at her office on the French King Highway in Gill. Masucci has practiced acupuncture at this location since 1991, and has used hypnotherapy with clients since 1979. She is also an active community member who serves on Gill's cable and energy commissions and video-records all the town meetings and other events, which can be seen on MCTV's Vimeo channel.

OP ED

Preserving Elders' Freedom to Choose

By DEAN LAGROTTERIA

GREENFIELD – In recognition of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day today, June 15, I want to discuss a facet of elder protective services that is not well-known: the ideas of autonomy and self-determination. These terms are related to each person's ability to make their own choices in life, and to make decisions independently.

LifePath Elder Protective Services, and all elder protective services programs in Massachusetts, have a mandate to provide protection. We assess concerns related to physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, financial exploitation, and neglect and self-neglect of adults 60 and over.

Older adults and their families are often concerned when we become involved in an older adult's life, fearing that we will take away their freedom to choose how they live. While our goal is to prevent, remedy, and eliminate the effects of elder abuse, we are required to respect each person's right to self-determination and autonomy. These ideas have their roots in the French and American revolutions, with their emphasis on justice, liberty, and freedom from authoritarian rule. This refers to a communities' right to self-determination. In our culture, this has been expanded to encompass individual rights as well.

So what does this really mean in practice?

Our culture tends to look upon older adults as "others," as individuals who, by virtue of their age, are no longer able to make choices on their own. At Elder Protective Services, we believe that just be-

cause a person turns 60, it does not mean they lose the ability to make choices that affect their own lives. Autonomy is not something that is given to you, it is your right.

Autonomy and self-determination come into conflict with the wants and needs of family members, professionals, and the community at large. Elder Protective Services is often asked to solve a problem, or to "get an older adult out" of an unsafe situation. The older adult may be perceived to be putting strain on resources, e.g. with disruptive behavior, frequent visits to the ER, or multiple calls to 911, due to complex medical needs, substance use, or mental health concerns.

While we understand those concerns of the community, our role is to evaluate the risk and discuss with the older adult any changes they would like to make. If they choose to accept assistance, we can work with them until the concerns have been resolved or mitigated. They can choose to make a full change, some change, or no change. They can opt to not even discuss the concern with us. A competent older adult has autonomy and the right to self-determination, so long as they do not put others at risk. As it is with all of us, there is a limit to personal freedom. Your choices cannot harm others.

People who work with older adults often struggle with the desire to protect and help versus accepting an older adult's choices, especially when those choices seem harmful. As we go about our work we are mindful of this tension, which is why the older adult must be at the center of the decision-making process.

Keeping the older adult at the center helps to counter biases and paternalistic attitudes. Professionals will often use language to describe older adults that they think is benign, but terms like "sweet," "adorable," and "pleasantly confused" can be as problematic as more negative terms like "frequent flier," "drug addict," or "hoarder," as they all diminish the individual to a meme, making it easier to disregard their autonomy and their choices.

In Elder Protective Services, we come across a variety of risks and lifestyle choices that could have serious consequences to an older adult. Often those choices do not conform to societal norms. Our role is not to judge those decisions, or to make decisions for the older adult, but to understand those choices. Based upon the older adult's values, we will work to reduce risk with as little disruption to their lifestyle as possible. The older adult is in charge of the process, and is the decision maker.

Elder Protective Services has a mandate to provide protection. If you are or know an older adult who is being mistreated, or unsafe at home, please help. Call Elder Protective Services at 1 (800) 922-2275, or file online at www.mass.gov/reporting-elder-abuse-neglect. Some people are hesitant to report, but if you don't call, who will? All reports are confidential, and your name will not be disclosed. Your call may be the action that makes a difference.

Dean Lagrotteria is the director of LifePath Elder Protective Services's regional program for Berkshire and Franklin counties and the North Quabbin area.

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PHONE: (413) 863-8666

EMAIL:

editor@montaguereporter.org
features@montaguereporter.org
ads@montaguereporter.org
bills@montaguereporter.org
circulation@montaguereporter.org
events@montaguereporter.org
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Compiled by NINA ROSSI

I will be representing the *Montague Reporter* at the **Great Falls Farmers Market** this Saturday, June 17, between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m., and Jae Southerland will be at the table the following Saturday, June 24.

In addition to copies of the current issue and information to start a subscription, I will have sets of our historical issues, coffee mugs, and tote bags for sale, plus cookies made by our food columnist, Trouble Mandeson! We even have amazing aprons, created by a team of volunteer stitchers from fabric printed with pages of our paper – anyone who makes a donation of \$100 or more can get one of these cool cover-ups as a premium. Stop by and say hi!

Teens in the **Valley Playwright Mentoring** program will give a special free performance, *A Day in Our Lives*, at Hawks & Reed in Greenfield this Saturday, June 17 at 1 p.m. The actors created a performance that addresses bullying, school shootings, homelife comedies and challenges, and more. There will be live music and readings. The event is recommended for ages 13 and up due to some mature content. Reserve tickets at ptco.org.

Antique and recently-made quilts will be on display from noon to 3 p.m. this Saturday, June 17, at the Athol Historical Society, 1307 Main Street, Athol. Local quilters Diana Cooley of Petersham; Gayle Bassett, Jeanette Calvi, Charon Maier, and Chelsea White of Athol; and Clare Barnes of Barre made the present-day quilts. Cooley said the local quilters participate in sew days that may last as long as 12 hours.

The antique quilts were usually made by women working alone or at group sessions called quilting bees, often from recycled fabric from discarded clothing or other

useful items. The present-day quilts are made from store-bought fabrics.

A staged reading and fundraiser by Real Life Theater, *When The Mind's Free*, will be at the Shea Theater this Saturday, June 17 at 7 p.m. It is described as a dance-theater piece that lifts language, ideas, and story from Shakespeare's *King Lear* and places them in a contemporary context: that of a lesbian couple dealing with early onset Alzheimer's, and the opioid addiction of their youngest daughter. The language is modern.

Attendees may enjoy free food and a cash bar as well as the staged reading. This event also serves as a fundraising gala. Real Life Theater writes that they are "building momentum for the world premiere in 2024, followed by a national tour in 2024-2025."

The deadline to register to walk in, drive in, or submit a float to the **Northfield 350th Anniversary Parade** is right around the corner. The September 30 parade will feature dance troupes and singing groups, farm animals and tractors, muscle and antique cars, the Springfield Shriners, and floats by community organizations and businesses, elected officials, and first responders. It will be followed by music and fireworks at Four Star Farms.

Any group or business that would like to support Northfield and strut their stuff must register by June 20. Registration forms and information are available at www.northfield350.org, or by contacting Magda Ponce Castro at Northfield350parade@outlook.com.

The **South Deerfield Tilton Library** is holding a fundraiser at 4:30 p.m. next Wednesday, June 21 for the expansion of the library building at Quonquot Farm in Whately, "Stories on Simmer" will feature award-winning chef and

author Sandy D'Amato, who will share kitchen stories and offer a taste of one of his mouth-watering desserts from his memoir and cookbook, *Good Stock: Life on a Low Simmer*. Light fare and signature drinks are included in the \$60 fee. All proceeds benefit the Fund for the Library, and tickets are on Eventbrite under "Tilton Fund."

Marina Goldman will present at the Local Author Series at the Montague Center Library next Wednesday, June 21 from 6 to 7 p.m. Goldman was a poetry student of Paul Mariani, and recently published her first chapbook, *Spring Thaw*, of poems she has written during the pandemic, paired with artwork by Micha Archer. There will be refreshments, and all are welcome to attend. Al Miller was originally scheduled for this date but had to postpone.

LifePath and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments are helping our area become more age- and dementia-friendly. Community members are invited to an in-person conversation and information session about the **Age- and Dementia-Friendly Project** next Thursday, June 22, from 2 to 4 p.m., with a resource fair beforehand from 1:30 to 2 p.m. hosted by Greenfield Community College.

The event is free, and refreshments will be served. The four areas that will be discussed are affordable housing and accessible outdoor spaces, information technology and social and civic participation, health-care services, and transportation. Registration is suggested, but not required. Call (413) 773-5555 x 2225.

The LAVA Center in Greenfield is starting a monthly workshop series, "**Puppetry Percolator**" next Thursday, June 22 from 5 to 8 p.m. The series is described as "an informal exploration of the worldwide art of puppetry. Drop in to examine puppetry's history and evolution as an art, play with different forms, and workshop simple puppets and performance."

The series is facilitated by Jovonna Van Pelt, former director of Puppet Showplace Theater, and geared towards teens and adults. Free, and donations are welcome. Contact info@thelavacenter.org

for more information.

Greenfield's Crossroads Cultural District committee is looking for artists to provide art for approximately 40 to 50 light pole banners, which they plan to spread throughout the downtown "cultural district."

"All artists will receive a \$50 stipend and will keep their original art," states the call. "Art does not have to be created specifically for the banners; existing art can be submitted. Depending on the number of submissions, one artist's work may be on one or multiple banners."

The deadline is June 23. For details, go to www.tinyurl.com/banner-district or contact Caitlin von Schmidt at caitlin.vonschmidt@greenfield-ma.gov.

Pinball fans who mourned the disappearance of Mystic Pinball in Turners Falls will be glad to know that a **new pinball gallery** has opened in Brattleboro. Gravitare, at 42 Harmony Place, has 16 machines playable for a flat \$10 fee. They offer free pinball during the monthly Brattleboro Art Walks. Find them at gravitatepinball.com.

Artspace Community Arts Center in Greenfield announces that it has received a \$14,000 grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council to construct a **community ceramics studio** and program. The accessible studio will be designed to serve multi-generational audiences in Greenfield and broader Franklin County.

The Athol Bird and Nature Club has passed along information for educators about a **School Book Fund** sponsored by the Brookline Bird Club. The fund will donate up to \$750 for books, optical equipment, or other educational materials used to support bird and nature study in K-12 schools or programs anywhere in Massachusetts. The club has accumulated substantial funds, and is seeking applications to put the money to good use. There is no timeline or deadline. To apply or for further information, contact Dave Williams at davewilliams6@gmail.com or John Nelson at jnelson@northshore.edu.

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

FARREN from page A1

the building prior to demolition."

The inspections were prompted by a complaint sent to MassDEP by a local resident who filmed the chimney demolition on June 2 and sent a video of the ensuing cloud of dust to the state agency.

The video showed that the dust was generated "despite the application of water during the demolition," MassDEP spokesperson Kathleen Fournier told the *Reporter*. Under the demolition permit, ABW employees are required to use water to settle dust and contain it to the site.

The video shows an excavator toppling the chimney, and a lone worker spraying a water hose into a four-story cloud of grey dust as it billows up from the rubble and blows east.

According to Mirkin, his company spent five months removing asbestos from the building before beginning to demolish the complex. Trace amounts of asbestos remain in the original 1900 portion of the building, he said, which is allowed under the terms of the special permit granted by MassDEP. "They're on board, and they know," he said.

Joanne Flescher, an asbestos inspector with MassDEP's emergency response unit, visited the site on June 5 in response to the complaint.

"Equipment operator Jaimie Bryson states that he demolished the chimney in the boiler room on [June 2] because it was undermined and in danger of collapsing," Flescher wrote in her report. The report indicated that prior surveys had found no asbestos-containing materials in samples taken of the chimney on the complex's northern wing, built in 1938.

Flescher reported that she informed the workers of the need for additional dust suppression during demolition, and left after 40 minutes. Two days later, she returned for a meeting with contractors and consultants, outlining steps necessary to remove asbestos and quell dust.

"A dust boss and high range sprinklers will be brought on site to increase dust suppression capabilities," Flescher reported after the second meeting. DustBoss is a brand name for a fan-driven mist "cannon."

"Associated Building Wreckers wrote to MassDEP on June 7th indicating they would increase dust control efforts that includes the use of high range sprinklers," Fournier said.

A pipe running between the 1938 and 1958 wings of the building and waterproof coating on the foundation of the 1975 building must be abated of asbestos "conventionally," Flescher wrote.

Asbestos in the roof over the 1938 portion

and small amounts of the 1900 portion are covered under a "Non-Traditional Asbestos Abatement Work Practice Approval" previously granted by MassDEP. The *Reporter* was unable to obtain copies of this work plan from the agency by press time.

"The 1938 section was abated. It had asbestos at one time, but it was abated prior to demolition," Mirkin said. "The old boiler room, and the stack."

Montague public health director Ryan Paxton said his department has not received any complaints of dust at the Farren. "From a Board of Health prospective, we would defer to [MassDEP's] judgement on these matters as they are the regulatory authority for air pollutants." Town administrator Steve Ellis did not respond to inquiries as of press time.

Based in Springfield, Associated Building Wreckers has been in the demolition, recycling, and waste disposal business since 1933. Crews are expected to be working on the Farren demolition project five days a week through October.

"We do this every day. We're very familiar with procedure," Mirkin said. "It's a sentimental thing. A lot of people are upset it's going, I'm sure."

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OP ED Burning Questions

By **GEORGE SHAPIRO**

LAKE PLEASANT – When MassWildlife began its latest management plan for the Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area in 2016-17 it was explained to me, as a resident of Lake Pleasant, that the plan was built on careful science. A study showed that, by the composition of tree species, what looked like natural forest was in fact a product of soil disturbance from attempts at farming on the Plains stretching back beyond the 19th century. What looked natural, to a casual observer, was unnatural.

That solution was effectively clear-cutting over a thousand acres of forest with massive logging machines and using controlled burns to restore the understory to its natural, fire-dependent, sandy state. Well, controlled burns and industrial-scale brush mowing, after it became apparent that the burning by itself was too slow and uneconomical to do the job.

Six years and another cycle of mowing and burning later, scientists are in the curious position of arguing that what to every observer has become a highly disturbed area is, if not in a state of nature, fast approaching one under the plan's ten-year timeframe for restoration.

It is important to note that while early burn experiments involved flamethrowers, that proved too uncontrolled. The current regime is more like controlled singe, performed by a large, expensive machine that looks like an inverted gas cooktop. This is important because the plan depends upon drastically reducing the amount of biomass available for uncontrolled fires us-

ing controlled burns. Otherwise, fast-accumulating biofuel – such as the black birch trees which have colonized the former pine plantation area – combined with the wide expanse of clear-cuts create the potential for a serious brush fire.

Time will tell whether this science experiment proves successful but, regardless, the state must be satisfied with the project from a management perspective.

In 1999, when the Montague Plains were transferred from corporations controlled by electric power utilities to public ownership, the property was overdue for a 50-year fire. It's hard not to believe that this transfer was driven by the desire to protect the high-voltage transmission lines that criss-cross the parcel dating back to failed plans to build a nuclear power plant.

Thanks to the clear-cut, those transmission towers are now safe from a major fire for another 50 years, and their wooden or otherwise vulnerable structures have been replaced, signaling that they will be a permanent feature of the landscape, and a continued intention to combat fire in a fire-dependent ecosystem. Furthermore, if you ignore the mowing and burning, the project looks suspiciously like other logging projects on public lands, such as the one currently underway just across Route 63 from Lake Pleasant in the less-sensitive habitat of the Montague State Forest.

The trees logged from the Plains were entirely wood-chipped and converted into pellet fuel as part of the benighted, multi-decade effort by the Commonwealth to ignite a local green energy economy based on biofuels. While it is debatable



Flames approaching Lake Pleasant in April.

whether burning biofuels helps stop global warming, it's undeniable that subsidizing its production has raised the land value of forest held by some of the largest land-owning families in New England.

At this point, one must be tempted to mutter "forget it, George, it's Western Mass" and move on. However, there are inescapable larger issues. Can our society put the preservation of the natural environment first, over other concerns?

The signs of climate change have become hard to ignore, and many believe that after years of stalling, our society is on the verge of responding seriously to the causes. If you think critically about what is happening on the Montague Plains, though, that belief is hard to sustain.

Any serious plan to restore this sensitive habitat should have started by removing those transmission lines, critically reducing the liability of fire in an ecosystem defined by fire. Would this have been expensive? Surely, but the electrical grid must be massively reconfigured anyway if it is to be decarbonized.

Ultimately, it is unclear whether the transmission lines – or, say, the pump-storage system in Northfield Mountain – are necessary if ex-

cess electrical power is generated in off-shore wind farms instead of nuclear, coal, or gas power plants.

With respect to the forest itself, the debate over logging public lands is stuck between proponents and opponents of logging. The issue of whether public lands must be subject to *commercial* logging – that is, whether the products of that logging must be sold for a profit – is never discussed. Logging purely for habitat maintenance rather than commercial profit would surely increase local employment in the forestry industry.

That the Commonwealth insists on logging very low-value public forests to generate revenue suggests that the point isn't the revenue at all. It insists, backed up by scientists and local academics, that the only way the natural environment of Western Massachusetts can be preserved is if the market for products of that environment expands.

In the end, do you believe that a society which applies this belief to a small patch of sandy forest is capable of responding to the largest, gravest, and most costly habitat restoration project of all?

George Shapiro lives in Lake Pleasant.

NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Town Crams a 'Special' Into Last Week of FY'23

By **KEITH WATERS**

The bulk of the Erving selectboard's meeting Monday night was spent with the finance and capital planning committees. The main topics were wage increases for town staff and the warrant for a special town meeting (STM) on June 28.

Jacquelyn Boyden, newly appointed to the recreation commission, presented a plan to put \$18,000 of the \$28,000 unspent in the commission's coffers into an account for improvements to Betts Field. Any amount over \$10,000 in the account after July 1 would otherwise be transferred to the town's general fund.

This led to a lot of discussion. Selectboard chair Jacob Smith and capital planning member Debra Smith both mentioned multiple times that the rec commission is not doing things in a timely manner, and Boyden responded each time that she is new to the commission, and that the new appointees are doing their best to fulfill its responsibilities.

Boyden said former commissioner Jeffrey Rollins had relocated and "failed to leave any information regarding what work has been done, or still needs to be done," and "wouldn't answer our questions anyway."

Debra Smith proposed any money left over from a capital project be returned to the capital fund. Town administrator Bryan Smith explained that this would require STM articles. Jacob Smith said it might be a good idea, but that there was not enough time to write articles for the June 28 STM.

One resident offered to try to facilitate an information exchange with Rollins. He also asked about a proposal to cut the funding for a grantwriter, pointing out that the return on in-

vestment in a grantwriter is likely very good. Crunching the numbers, the committee members admitted that grantwriters have been worth the investment in recent years.

One interesting fact that came up in talks about the recreation commission was that according to current regulations, with current technology, playground equipment is only usable for five years.

Stepping It Up

Raises and cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) for town employees in FY'24 were unanimously supported, but plenty of time was spent discussing exactly how, and how much.

Selectboard member Scott Bastarache presented a plan to simplify the salary scale from 15 steps to 10, eliminating the lowest five steps. Staff currently at "Step 1" would be moved to "Step 6."

Jacob Smith presented a method he said would adjust the salaries more fairly, but would cost the town \$20,000 more. Finance committee members asked if the town could use these fairer raises without adding the \$20,000, and Smith said he thought \$20,000 was small enough that the town could just find it. He also argued that it would make the town's wages locally competitive.

Bastarache said that Erving had moved into the top 10% of Franklin County towns in terms of wages a few years ago, after raises were given for that reason, and that it didn't seem fair to use it as a justification again.

The board agreed to remove the first five steps, and to return on June 26 to review the impacts of setting the COLA at 2% or 4%.

Time Keeps On Slipping

Also on the agenda for the joint meeting was

a comprehensive review of the FY'24 budget that passed at the annual town meeting, and longer-term budgetary planning.

It was agreed to ask the heads of all town departments what the impacts of the recent cuts have been, and to make their ideal budgets for the next few years based on minimum necessary services. The committees debated whether having a long-term plan ready in 90 days, as had been suggested, was feasible, and agreed to continue the discussion on June 26.

Other Business

In the brief portion which was not a joint meeting, the selectboard covered several other topics. Many residents were appointed to boards and committees, but there are still a number of vacancies.

Declaring two dugouts at Zilinski Park surplus and removing them was approved. Surplussing of a tilt skillet was put off so time could be spent looking into whether it is worth anything.

Updates to the town policy on "hazardous communication" was discussed for the third time, including where in the policy a list of hazardous chemicals should appear. Members agreed that if the list were included as an appendix, someone could be put in charge of the appendix, and thus the list could be updated without the entire policy having to be reviewed.

This brought attention back to the ongoing need for a job description for the proposed health safety officer. Bryan Smith said he would work on it, and the policy vote was tabled to the next meeting.

The next selectboard meeting will be held June 26, followed by the STM on June 28 at Erving Elementary School.

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GILL from page A1

installation on Main Road contains some ambiguities, and both parties wish to negotiate a new agreement.

“We feel the value of the real estate on which the solar panels are installed is *not* included in the PILOT,” explained town administrator Ray Purington, “and the owner of the solar installation thinks that the real estate is. That’s a pretty big dollar difference in land that we’re taxing.”

Another article would have presented a new PILOT agreement between the town and Kearsarge, but the details were reportedly still being worked out between lawyers, and residents voted unanimously to pass over the article. Once the negotiations are complete, a special town meeting will be scheduled to present the deal for the town’s approval.

Voters also approved putting money into an account to pay for tax appraisals of property owned by FirstLight Power, National Grid, New England Power Company, and others, and add \$6,000 to an account to pay for state Appellate Tax Board litigation. Kearsarge, First-Light, and Eversource have all appealed their property tax valuations for multiple years.

“As I understand it, very substantial amounts of potential tax money are at stake here,” said finance committee member Tupper Brown. “So while the legal fees may seem high [...] it’s not a foolish expenditure by any means.”

Ambulances and Other Expenses

The town authorized paying the town of Northfield \$15,000 to provide ambulance service in the year ahead. The agreement became necessary after area ambulance services announced they would begin invoicing towns for requested service to the region. Ambulances can charge patients for transportation, but don’t recoup any costs when patients refuse transport.

“We’ve been very lucky, for 30 years, to not have to pay for some coverage,” said selectboard chair

Randy Crochier. “Franklin County is sparse in its ALS coverage. It’s damn scary in parts of this county. We’re fortunate that we have an ambulance provider in the next town over who wants to serve us.”

Other articles fixed salaries and stipends for town officers, gave the police chief a 5% cost of living increase, and gave all other town employees 6%. The police chief’s most recent employment contract included a “significant increase” to this salary, according to the notes provided with the article, so the smaller increase was deemed fair by the selectboard.

“Just as importantly, I think the chief believes it’s a fair number too,” said Crochier.

Another vote gave the assistant town clerk a yearly stipend of \$2,000. The position has existed for years as an unpaid volunteer, but new laws have made work around elections more complex and time-consuming.

Voters also agreed to put \$23,100 in local tax money toward the highway department in order to seal cracks on the town’s asphalt roads.

Moving Money

Several votes dealt with unappropriated funds from the previous year, also known as “free cash.”

\$40,000 will go toward reducing the tax rate and stabilizing the tax levy for the year ahead, while \$150,720 will go into various funds to deal with future expenses.

Voters also authorized putting \$11,000 from last year’s building repairs and maintenance account into the account specifically for refurbishing the Riverside municipal building. The money will go toward replacing the concrete steps at the building’s west entrance.

Voters authorized setting up an “opioid settlement stabilization fund,” which will receive payments from nationwide financial settlements with opioid manufacturers, distributors, and pharmacies. While recent settlements will distribute \$46.3 billion to

state and local governments, Gill is only expected to receive \$6,790 over 17 years, averaging to around \$400 a year. There are currently no planned uses for the fund.

The town also added a section to its bylaws regarding revolving funds used by various departments, boards, and committees for programs that fund themselves through fees or other charges. When asked why the change was necessary, Purington gave what he called “a slightly tongue-in-cheek” answer: “We’re doing it because the state says we have to.”

“For many, many years, what worked quite well was we approved these revolving funds at town meeting,” Purington elaborated. “The state decided that needed fixing.”

The town will still have to vote on spending limits for the funds, and all changes or additions to the fund will be considered a bylaw amendment. Voters then approved the same spending limits for the funds as last year.

Praise for Public Servants

Crochier opened the meeting by thanking the town hall staff for preparing the space. “As you know, in early February we had a major plumbing leak that caused significant damage to the basement and first floor,” he said.

Last Friday, when the staff was moving the town offices back downstairs to clear the second floor for the annual meeting, the elevator broke. But the work continued. “The staff at town hall have gone way above to work through this situation,” said Crochier. “Their leadership and dedication to Gill allows this meeting to be held in this room tonight.”

Crochier also sang the praises of town clerk Doreen Stevens. In her four years in the role, Stevens has held elections in four separate locations and overseen town meetings in three – “thankfully not a fourth tonight,” he added. Crochier said Stevens has “weathered the local changes in voting rules,” including staffing

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voting locations for multiple days and providing for mail-in voting, all with “a department of one – there is no additional staff.”

“Most importantly,” he concluded, “in spite of all the obstacles and challenges, Doreen has ensured that our sacred right to vote has not been compromised, at any time, in any manner.”

Cemetery commission member Joan Pillsbury thanked Shirley Flagg for serving two terms on the elected body. Pillsbury praised Flagg’s “many talents [...] complemented by a wealth of knowledge about our town.”

Crochier pleaded for new volunteers to serve on Gill’s boards, committees, councils, and commissions. He singled out the need for more members of the finance committee. “It is a huge committee when it comes to making the budget,” he said. “I’m gonna be politically incorrect – it really could use some young blood.”

Tupper Brown turned around to scowl at Crochier, to the laughter of the crowd.

Gill vs. Corporate Personhood

The only vote that ended with approval was the unanimous approval of Article 7, a resolution instructing members of Congress to vote in favor of a constitutional amendment limiting corporate personhood and restricting money in politics.

“For many of us there are issues we’re concerned about, whether they’re national, state, or local,” said Steve Bathory-Peeler, who worked to get the article on the warrant. “In our efforts to make change, we contact our elected officials, we speak out, we vote. Currently however, the principle of ‘one person, one vote’ has been decimated by the 2010 Supreme Court ruling known as *Citizens United*.”

The text of the resolution came from the nonprofit American Promise, which aims to have the amendment passed by July 4, 2026.

“This is the root of democracy, right here,” said resident John Ward, speaking in support of the article. “This is where the important work starts.”

NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Town Crier and Museum to Handle Present, Past

By JOSH HEINEMANN

At its June 7 meeting, one day after the three-hour annual town meeting, the Wendell selectboard hosted two citizens with separate, but related, ideas.

Dressed for the part wearing a tricornered hat, Kathy Becker advocated for restoration of the position of town crier. The role would be unpaid, she said, and not part of the town government, but the crier can announce town functions such as elections, and can publicize actions and decisions made by the town government and any other event in town.

Becker said appearing before the selectboard was her audition, and after her appointment, which was made willingly, she was allowed to be a member of the guild. The appointment is annual. Besides Wendell, only two other Massachusetts towns have criers, Provincetown and Nantucket, but Becker said the tradition is big in Canada.

Citizen Ed Hines said the publicity would be good for the town and his project, the Wendell Historical Society, and its efforts to research Wendell’s history and make it more accessible for interested people.

Towards that end the Historical Society plans to create a museum in the former Wendell Depot Post Office to hold artifacts and documents.

Hines said the organization was in the process of raising money to buy the building,

needed to have \$45,000 within five days, and had raised \$8,000. When the *Reporter* spoke with him a few days later, he said the five-day limit was flexible.

The Historical Society applied for 501(c)(3) non-profit status and were told they would have to wait six months, Hines said. They asked for help from US congressman Jim McGovern and were granted 501(c)(3) status eight days later. The designation will allow the organization to apply for grants and makes contributions tax-deductible.

Hines thanked McGovern, state senator Jo Comerford, and state representative Aaron Saunders for their support, and every member of the Historical Society’s board of trustees for their donated expertise. The Society is not a political organization, he said, but it can provide information that can be used in political discussions, arguments, and decisions.

Potato Still Hot

Project manager Phil Delorey said the repair of the Mormon Hollow Road culvert, which failed earlier this year, is coming together. It is mostly hand work, replacing the foundation of sand and gravel with large stones. The engineer, SVE, is charging \$9,172 for the repair design.

Selectboard chair Laurie DiDonato said she thought Wendell should not be responsible for the added expense, and asked if SVE had been notified that Wendell does not con-

sider the town responsible for the repair cost. Delorey said the contractor knew, but was not sure about the engineer. He said town counsel had not determined who should pay for the repairs.

Selectboard member Gillian Budine asked if the town will have to pay for an on-site engineer.

Barn Dirty

Town coordinator Glenn Johnson-Mussad said the highway workers “don’t demand a clean workplace.” The garage needs a general cleanup, and as highway commission chair, Delorey asked if town custodian Eric Shufelt can add the highway barn to his list of responsibilities. Shufelt has not needed to work all the hours he is authorized, and is willing to do it. He will need a mop, a bucket, and a toilet brush.

Selectboard member Paul Doud questioned the \$500 expense, but Johnson-Mussad said the equipment is heavy-duty, and may be that expensive. Board members suggested several sources for the money, but treasurer Carolyn Manley cautioned that it should be isolated from highway department’s operating expenses.

Other Business

Up to nine people, including selectboard member Paul Doud, attended the June 6 annual town meeting by Zoom, and were allowed

to watch, but not vote. Doud and selectboard recording secretary Cynthia Bollard said they were able to follow the comments, unless the speaker was far from the microphone.

Johnson-Mussad said there were some copies of the warrant, but the budget hand-out ran out. He suggested anticipating questions for the next town meeting and preparing a handout. Manley suggested handing out a spreadsheet about the time left on debt services.

Selected paving work is underway, and tree cutting around the library and playground is in the works. Town accountant Erin Degnan said the \$6,000 line item for tree maintenance from FY’23 can be rolled over and added to the FY’24 tree maintenance budget.

DiDonato said she no longer can represent Wendell at the Franklin County Solid Waste District meetings. Asa DeRoode is willing to take over. He may need to be allowed special employee status.

DiDonato said the memorandum of understanding between Wendell and New Salem – part of the search for replacing Joe Cuneo after he retires as the towns’ shared fire chief – came back from the New Salem lawyer with big changes. Wendell’s town counsel has it now.

With DiDonato recusing herself, the board approved a pole replacement near the McAvoy Pond dam. Two trees will be cut in the process.

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Winners' circle: the Thunder celebrate their narrow quarterfinal victory last Saturday.



DAVID HOIT PHOTO

Pitched battle: Two stellar pitchers, Turners Falls' Madi Liimatainen (left) and Franklin Tech Eagle Hannah Gilbert (right), went head to head last Saturday night at Gary Mullins Field. Each limited the opposing team to just three hits. The tie was broken in the sixth inning when Thunder baserunner Ivy Lopez made it to the plate off a wayward pitch.

SPORTS from page A1

the stalemate. Gilbert cracked a base hit, stole second, and was batted in by Cordelia Guerin. Just like that, Tech was on top 1-0.

In the home sixth Liimatainen answered, blasting a double. Myers was intentionally walked, and was replaced on first by Ivy Lopez. Dobias hit a bouncer into right field, scoring Liimatainen and sending Lopez to third.

Gilbert threw a wild pitch, and Lopez sprinted for home. The ball was bobbled and the run counted, putting Thunder up 2-1. And that's how it ended: Tech went down in order in the seventh, and Turners Falls advanced into the semifinals.

Ross, Guerin, and Gilbert got Tech's three hits, with Guerin registering the RBI and Gilbert scoring the run. Kendra Campbell, Gamache, and Kyra Goodell reached base on walks. In the circle, Gilbert allowed three hits, two runs,

and two walks, and struck out 10.

The playoff loss does not diminish the wonderful season the Franklin Tech Softball Eagles have had. They finished with a 21-4 record, won the Franklin East title, advanced in both the MIAA and PVIAC tournaments, and repeated as state champions in the small vocational division.

Not to mention that they lost, by a single run, against a team who will play for the Division 5 state championship.

TFHS 9 – Hopkins 7

On Tuesday, the Turners Falls Blue Thunder "hosted" the Hopkins Academy Golden Hawks at Westfield State University. It was hot, muggy, and humid at game time, and I was not the only person suffering from the conditions. After four pitches, the game was paused because of a medical emergency in the Turners Falls dugout. The indi-

vidual was carted away by ambulance, and play resumed.

Hopkins is a prolific team who had just defeated second-seeded Mount Greylock by the football-esque score of 27-14, and they kept that hit parade going, cracking two hits in the opening inning. But Turners has a great defense, and kept the Hawks off the scoreboard.

In the bottom of the first Liimatainen led off with a base hit, and Myers was walked and replaced at first by Lopez. Dobias clocked another hit to send Liimatainen home and advance Lopez. Cady Wozniak was walked next, and then Janelle Massey batted a double to clear the bases and to give Powertown a 4-1 lead.

That's when Gold replaced their pitcher.

Hopkins eked out a leadoff hit in the second, but the next three batters were retired in order. In the bottom half, Madisyn Dietz reached on an error and advanced to second on the errant throw. Liimatainen hit a double to score her, and then Myers batted Liimatainen home, widening Powertown's lead to 6-0.

The Hawks loaded the bases in the third inning, but could only put one run on the board. In the home third Addison Talbot reached on a base on balls and Marilyn Abarua bunted, beating the throw to first while Talbot sprinted toward third. The throw went wide and she stole home, making it 7-1. Mariginano then sent Abarua home with an RBI sacrifice, and Powertown had an 8-1 cushion.

Hopkins can score runs, especially late – in their previous game they had scored 19 runs in their last two at-bats – so a seven-run margin did not mean a whole lot. Sure enough, the Golden Birds proceeded to score two runs in the fourth inning, and two more in the fifth. It was a three-run game.

In the sixth inning, the Thunder got one run back. Liimatainen reached on a single, advanced to second on a Myers pop-out, and was batted home by Dobias. Turners was up 9-5, but still had to get three outs. Hopkins didn't make it easy. They scored twice more in the seventh before Blue iced the win.

In Tuesday's game Liimatainen

struck out five, surrendered eight hits and seven runs, and hit one batter. At the plate she hit a double and a single, was walked once, scored all three times, and batted in two others.

Dobias sliced three hits, including a double, scored a run and had two RBIs; Massey hit a double, drove in two and scored a run. Myers and Mariginano also drove runs in, and Abarua, Dietz, Talbot, and Wozniak all crossed the plate.

The victory sends Turners Falls, once again, to the state championship game.

Across the river, the Green Wave keeps rolling along. Greenfield defeated Tahanto in the second game at Westfield on Tuesday. The two teams will face off this Friday afternoon at UMass Sortino field for the MIAA Division 5 state championship.

Note: One of my sources pointed out an error in last week's article. I mistakenly wrote that the backstop at the Newt Guilbault Little League field was dedicated to George F. Bush. It wasn't the backstop – it was the George F. Bush Batters' Box.



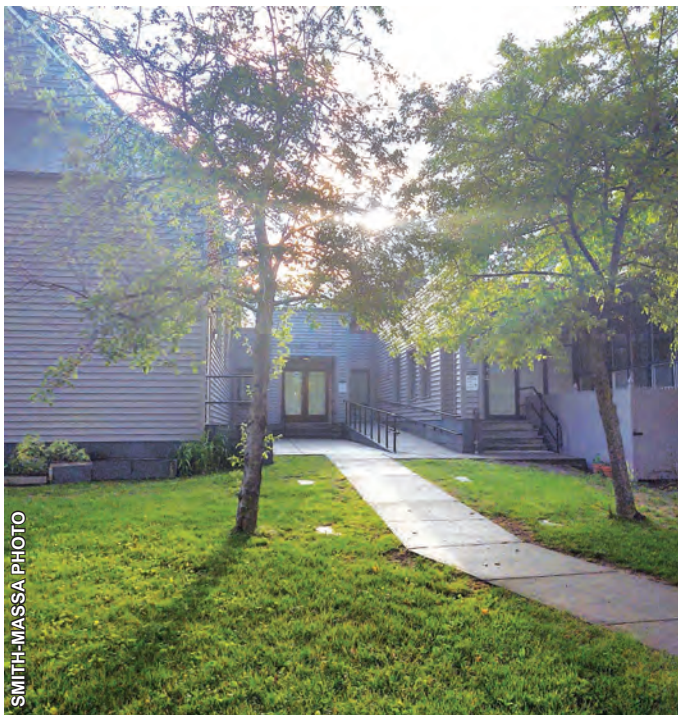
CHANGE from page A1

serves around 150 members as a space for religious gatherings and programs. Events such as holiday celebrations, workshops, lectures, and more have been held there, and during the ongoing pandemic Rabbi Andrea has facilitated many of these events as hybrid programs, holding over Zoom as well as in person. (Disclosure: this reporter works for the Temple as an AV tech, helping with these hybrid programs.)

Both playing an active role in many of the events at the Temple and working behind the scenes to organize them, Rabbi Andrea has had many responsibilities as a spiritual leader and in her work for the local area. She initially came to Franklin County to learn more about sustainable agriculture, and took the job of rabbi as well.

In this leadership role she has supported the congregation through spiritual practices and services as well as through counseling. "Listening to people from your heart is the main thing you have to do, in terms of counseling and teaching," she says. She says she considers prayer a way to talk to God directly, and has worked to make translations from prayer books that are meaningful and connect with the congregation.

Rabbi Andrea also says she feels a strong sense of what the word "creator" means for herself, but understands that not everyone has the same concept of God. She stresses that she believes anyone can be involved in Judaism regardless of their personal idea of God. Instead, she sees building a harmonious society and creating a meaningful life as more important to Judaism. She puts this into practice with her own work as a teacher, counselor, and community leader, which she calls



Temple Israel in Greenfield is Franklin County's only synagogue.

"life work," and through leading services with prayers that have meaning to both her and the congregation.

Since her job as rabbi is considered part-time, Rabbi Andrea has been able to use her time flexibly to help facilitate events that support and shape the wider local community. The com-

munity of the Temple itself has connected with and supported the wider area. Rabbi Andrea has spread awareness and taught about Judaism, and has helped to facilitate programs against racism, or in support of immigrants and refugees, and she says she intends to continue to help Franklin County grow.

Being part of the local Interfaith Council, Rabbi Andrea says she has found that there is more alike in different religions than some may think at first. In her experience with Abrahamic religions, including her own, she finds that there's a shared goal for what she calls the "messianic age": the idea that through supporting others, everyone can live in a better world.

"That's another reason I love interfaith work," she says. "It makes my religion feel bigger, because it's shared with all these other hands and feet and hearts and voices." She has worked to find ways to help people connect with their skills and interests so they can volunteer in the community.

After Rabbi Andrea retires from her position as a religious leader, she says she plans to continue facilitating community projects, particularly with her interest in sustainable agriculture and other parts of her life work. "It's a lot to carry people's burdens with them," she says, "so that's the part of the job I'm putting down. But I'm staying in the area – I hope to be a friend to most of these people."

The Temple, likewise, intends to continue supporting the larger area of Franklin County. Rabbi Andrea's optimism has been infectious, and her teachings can be considered a guide for how to bring about a better world for everyone.

After she officially retires on June 30, she will be succeeded by Simcha Halper-Hanson.



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MONTAGUE from page A1

the town has installed three speed-monitoring signs in Montague Center.

Corey Sutton, who lives on Millers Falls Road near the corner of New Street, said he recognized that the department has a large area to cover “outside of our little quarter mile,” but noted that a large number of children cross Millers Falls Road to get to the village’s playground.

Sutton suggested raising the posted limit from 20 to 30 miles per hour, which he said he believed might be more enforceable, and encouraging large trucks to enter Montague via Turners Falls instead of Miller Falls.

Michael Marcotrigiano of Montague Center, who had spoken at the previous week’s meeting, recommended that the town hire a consultant specializing in “traffic calming.” “There’s so many places that have stuff that apparently is not objectionable... [but] I don’t see any of it being entertained here,” he said.

Selectboard member Matt Lord described driving north from Sunderland, which he called a “windy 40, 45-mile-an-hour hilltown-type road,” and then entering Montague Center where the road widens and the tree cover disappears, encouraging drivers to pick up speed.

The board did not take a vote on the suggestions, but chair Rich Kuklewicz tasked assistant town administrator Walter Ramsey and town planner Maureen Pollock to investigate traffic-calming measures at UMass Amherst, as suggested by Marcotrigiano, such as making streets more “wavy.”

Police Empowered

While at the front table, Williams requested that the selectboard sign an agreement with the state police for Montague to participate in their Internet Crimes Against Children task force. Williams said the state police had approached his department to help them with several child pornography cases in Montague because “they are overwhelmed.”

Lord said that he thought child pornography was a “terrible thing,” but objected to a clause that held police on the task force harmless for “negligence or any unlawful conduct.”

The board approved the agreement by a vote of two to one, with Lord voting in the negative.

Autumn Gathering

Library director Caitlin Kelley, representing the “Falls Fest 2023 organizing committee,” came before the board to request support for the festival, which will take place from noon to 6 p.m. on Saturday, October 21.

The event is being organized as a successor to the discontinued Great Falls Festival, originally known as Franklin County Pumpkinfest. However, Kelley told the board, Av-

enue A will not be closed and lined with dozens of vendors. Instead organizers will focus on a concert in the bandshell at Peskeomskut Park and encourage residents to attend events at venues like the Shea Theater and the Rendezvous.

Kelley introduced John “Klondike” Koehler, a retired sound engineer living in Turners Falls, who is helping organize the main concert. Koehler said he hopes to hire the band NRBQ, “a local favorite in the Valley for years,” and estimated costs could run “around \$5,000” for the band plus additional equipment and travel expenses. He said the town-owned Shea Theater will be the conduit for financing the event at the park.

The board unanimously voted to allocate “up to” \$12,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for the event.

Projects

Walter Ramsey presented an update on the implementation of capital projects the selectboard had approved the previous week to be funded with ARPA money.

For the first priority, installing a solar array on the roof of the town hall annex, he proposed issuing a request for proposals this summer and scheduling the project for late summer or fall.

Ramsey said he would like to hire a “building professional, an architect or something similar,” to coordinate plans for multiple projects at the old town hall in Montague Center. The priority would be repairs to the slate roof. Other plans include replacing windows and making repairs to the masonry, the latter funded by a previous town meeting appropriation rather than ARPA. He said he would like to “package it all into one project done at the same time.”

He said a fourth ARPA-funded project, enhanced lighting at the Unity Park skate park, could “move at its own pace,” based on the recommendation of the parks and recreation commission.

Ramsey did not mention a scaled-down project for the Montague Center Park, which would focus on upgrading playground structures. At a previous meeting he recommended treating this as an “add alternate” project, dependent on ARPA funds being available after the other four priorities.

In other infrastructure news, the board executed a \$205,000 contract with Triumph Roofing, Incorporated of Baldwinville for the renovation of the roofs of the Shea and Colle buildings. Town administrator Steve Ellis said this could be implemented in September.

The board approved a change order of \$7,048 for work on the Avenue A Streetscape project in front of the Shady Glen and extended the contract, set to expire on June 30, until September 30.

Wage Study

Acting as the town personnel board, the selectboard heard a proposal from Ellis to hire a consultant to implement a new wage and classification study, which would evaluate the compensation and job descriptions of the town’s workforce. The study would be funded by a state grant. Ellis proposed hiring a consultant from the UMass Collins Center for Public Management, where he used to work, commencing in July.

Finance committee member John Hanold asked what his committee’s role in the process would be, noting that during a previous wage study he had been told the research was “none of my business.” He said he hoped the fin com would be given the opportunity to “comment on things.”

Ellis said the finance committee’s role would be “most robust” when the town considers funding an implementation plan.

“I’m excited that we are doing this thing,” said Kuklewicz, “and nervous that we are.”

“I feel the same way,” said Hanold.

Ellis said he would bring a contract to the board’s next meeting.

Other Business

The selectboard approved a request from Steve Valeski of the Pioneer Valley Brewery for an entertainment and one-day beer and wine license on Saturday, July 29 for the annual “Christmas in July” event, on Nova Motorcycles property near Unity Park.

Ann Fisk of the Congregational Church in Montague Center was also approved for the use of public property for the annual Montague Center mug race between 7 a.m. and noon on Saturday, August 19.

Peter Wackernagel of Youth Climate Action of Franklin County and the Brick House received permission and support to apply for a \$5,000 grant from the FirstLight Power company to “enhance” pollinator gardens at town hall and next to Unity Park.

At Ellis’s request the board approved a memorandum of understanding with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments extending an “age-friendly” planning grant into the coming fiscal year.

Ellis then updated the board on his work as a member of the state Economic Development Planning Council. He said he was working with Linda Dunlavy, executive director of FRCOG and a “key member of the state Rural Policy Advisory Commission,” and another group focusing on “towns that are dealing with mills.”

The selectboard retired to an executive session to discuss collective bargaining strategy. The board’s next meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 26.



**LOOKING BACK:
10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK**

Here’s the way it was on June 13, 2013: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Abutters Weigh in on Leverett Gravel Pit Expansion

Richie Roberts has asked the zoning board for a special permit within one of Leverett’s three small commercial zones to expand his gravel mining and landscaping business on the west side of Route 63 to include about five acres of land he would lease from Roberta Bryant, who owns the horse farm just south of his current operation. When the ZBA denied his request, Roberts and Bryant sued them.

“The probability of success of the Roberts/Bryant lawsuit is very small,” attorney Charles DiMare said Tuesday night, speaking for a group of more than a dozen neighbors to Roberts’ gravel pit at a ZBA

hearing on a proposed settlement of the case. “The decision of the board was based on substantial evidence... that the extension of the gravel pit would have an adverse impact on the neighborhood character as well as the natural environment.”

Tech Upgrades at G-M Schools

At the June 4 school committee meeting, acting superintendent Marty Espinola presented a request for technology upgrades that he says reflect the district’s highest-priority needs. This would be a one-time expense, using revenue from school choice tuition.

The technology would be reflected as a line-item transfer from teachers’ salaries in the 2013 budget, but consultant Mark Chapulis assured the committee that this would not affect teachers’ salaries in any way.

20 YEARS AGO

Here’s the way it was on June 12, 2003: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Town Coordinator Search Continues

The selectboards of Wendell and New Salem met together on June 4 to narrow the field of applicants for the position of town coordinator. Donna Walters was hired for the post in mid-February, but quit at the end of March, citing a lack of office equipment and furniture. The temporary absence of a coordinator has proven to be a challenge.

Erving Sells Crown Vic

In open session, the Erving selectboard made a motion to accept sealed bids for the 1999

Ford Crown Victoria formerly used by the chief of police. The board established a minimum bid of \$4,500 and said the bids would be opened on July 14.

The auto was recently taken out of service when the town acquired a new four-wheel drive Ford Expedition.

Art Auction at Studio B

This Saturday, art donated by area artists will be auctioned at the old firehouse at 24 Third Street.

The featured work of the night is *The Bridge*, a four-foot-by-eight-foot woodcut print on fabric, so big the town of Montague had to help print it with one of their steamrollers in Peskeomskut Park. The lead artist, Jeremy Latch, had help with the carving from teens of the Brick House’s Hot Spot Teen Center.

150 YEARS AGO

Here’s the way it was on June 16, 1873: News from the Greenfield Gazette and Courier’s archive.

Montague

Arza Bardwell of Montague, now in his 85th year and always engaged in farming, is still able to turn a furrow and drive a team, and has driven oxen to plow 78 consecutive years, having commenced the use of the whip the spring he was six years old.

Greenfield Items

The Selectmen have undertaken, the past week, to fix up the clay hole on Hope Street, in front of the County House, by digging out a wide trench, filling in with stone, and then covering it over with gravel. If it has the desired effect it will be money well expended.

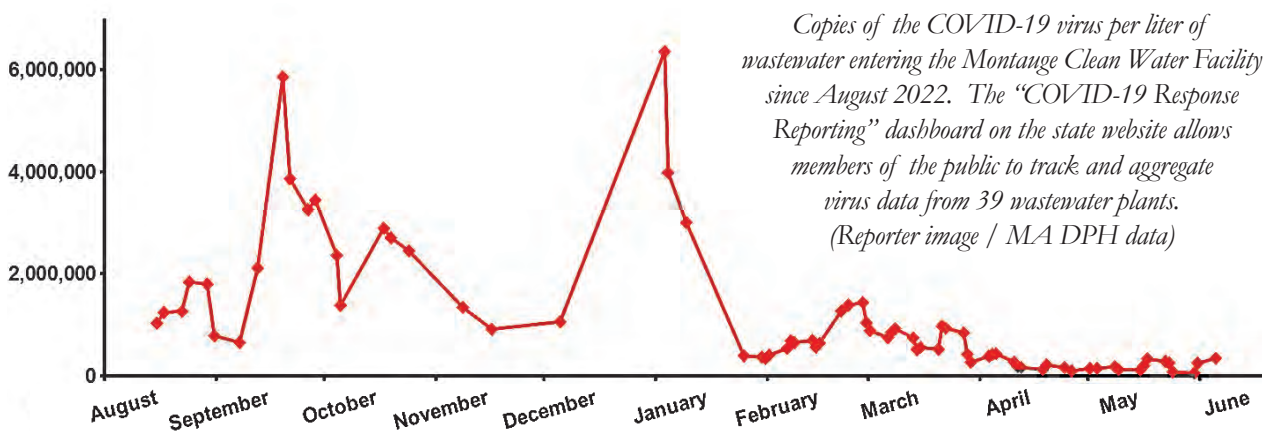
Lucius Nims and one or two other farmers in the Meadows employ German women to do much of their work this spring. These women are quick and handy in weeding out tobacco beds, setting out plants, etc. Mr. N. takes his women out to their work from the village, and while their husbands are earning their daily wages in the cutlery, they are contributing their share to the family support from their labors in the field.

Mount Toby

Rector L. Goss, Esq., of Montague City, who now owns Roaring hill, the top and east side of Toby, and a part of Ox hill, is constructing a carriage road to the top of Toby. Starting from the railroad track nearing Roaring brook, it winds up the mountains through a heavy forest, the home of ferns and wild flowers... A tower seventy feet high is to be built on the summit immediately, and, after rising above the trees, it will afford an outlook in every direction.



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OBJECTS from page A1

Weston & Sampson to design the pad, where these objects would be dried out and removed to a dumpster, and the remaining sewage pumped to the Clean Water Facility (CWF) for treatment. Bergeron said the removed materials would include "grit" that collects at the headworks of the CWF and "roots and stuff" from sewers and catch basins.

The money for the design phase would come from American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds allocated to wastewater management. Assistant town administrator Walter Ramsey said preliminary cost estimates for the total project ranged from \$200,000, if the pad is constructed "in house," to \$500,000 if it is bid out.

"A lot of the cost is in the sewer pump station and the water, sewer, and electrical line, which have about a 500-foot run to get to our proposed location," Ramsey said, sharing a picture of a very watery drying pad in Greenfield. The pad would be located at the transfer station on Sandy Lane, which abuts the Judd Wire factory, the transit authority's new maintenance garage, and several large solar arrays.

Ramsey also noted that Montague is undertaking the second phase of a feasibility study for a sludge-composting facility, which may be located in the same area, and "could tie into this pump station."

The board unanimously approved the design study.

Town officials did not respond directly to a question from this reporter asking how foreign objects have been eliminated in the past, and whether the new plan is a re-

sponse to a state or federal mandate. "We really have no place to put them," said selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz. "And if we put them in the wrong place, we could end up with a fine." He said the town had recently brought such material to Greenfield for processing, or "hired a third party to do it at pretty considerable expense."

"Provisions for proper treatment of this waste are a compliance requirement of the town's [National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System] permit," Ramsey explained in an email, "and MassDEP is requiring the town to provide infrastructure for the treatment of this waste."

The origins of the term "foreign objects pad" also remain something of a mystery. A source at the Greenfield water department said their version is called a "vactor dumping station," and a memo from Weston & Sampson refers to the project as a "sludge drying bed."

Ramsey told the *Reporter* that "the actual product is better described as a 'sanitary sewer drying pad,'" and CWF superintendent Chelsey Little told us she did not believe that the phrase "foreign object" is "standard terminology in the field of wastewater treatment."

Assistance and Aid

In other wastewater news, the selectboard approved a request, submitted jointly by the Turners Falls municipal airport and Franklin County Technical School (FCTS), for a permit to extend a sewer line from the industrial park pump station to a new building the school plans to construct. The building,

on land leased from the airport and town, will be used for a new airplane maintenance program.

The board also appointed Mitchell Ryan, a recent FCTS graduate, to the position of "summer help" at the CWF. Little reported that Ryan had been awarded a scholarship by the national Water Environment Federation to train as a wastewater operator.

Little reviewed the latest monthly report on the CWF's discharge into the Connecticut River. All required measures fell well within federal and state criteria, including total effluent flow from the plant, biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) – a measure of organic matter removed from the sewage – and total suspended solids removed (TSS). Data on *E. coli* bacteria and chlorination levels also met the criteria.

Little presented seven requests for abatements of sewer bills from the second half of this fiscal year, FY'23, which were calculated based on readings of water usage taken a year prior. All those requesting abatement, she said, had presented evidence that they had resolved the issues causing high water usage, and she recommended the board approve them. The board approved all seven.

Spotlight on Sewage

The board discussed a proposal by town administrator Steve Ellis for what he called a "sewer commission planning retreat." In Montague, the sewer commission is simply the selectboard deliberating on sewer issues. The "retreat" would be a publicly-posted meeting, conforming to the state open meeting law but perhaps with limited time for public participation.

Ellis suggested a half day in July, and selectboard members were amenable, favoring a four-hour meeting on a Thursday or Friday. Ellis said he would set up an online poll to determine a good date and time.

Ellis said he was proposing the retreat in response to the growing complexity of the wastewater department, and the more intensive level of state and federal regulation.

While town meeting had approved the creation of a new collection systems operator position at the public works department, he said, "we never got the chance to take that big step back and talk about this as a whole mission, if you will."



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SUZETTE SNOW-GOBB PHOTO

Jamison, a foreman at Grass Roots Landscaping, installed the base earlier this month for the town's new signage on Canal Street.

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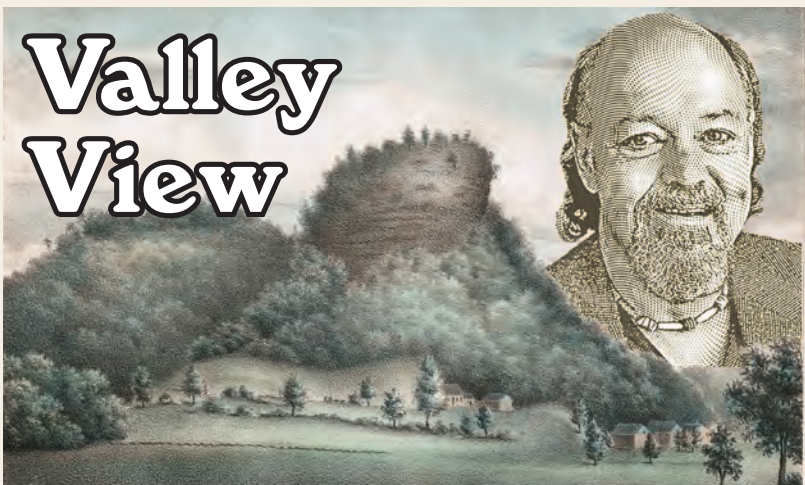
NINA ROSSI PHOTO

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OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER

JUNE 15, 2023

Above: Ne'er-do-wells loiter in a downtown Turners Falls alley.



Valley View

ORRA WHITE HITCHCOCK PRINT

By GARY SANDERSON

GREENFIELD – Early June – front yard sweetened in pink weigelia, peony and mock-orange fragrance – 2023's Connecticut River American shad run down to a trickle.

Although the announced June 8 tally of 269,720 could grow slightly by the time all fish passageways are closed, it'll be irrelevant. The run's over. Chalk it up as another so-so spring run, in keeping with recent trends. Although the number is about 80,000 better than last year's, it pales in comparison to the glory years – 1983, 1984, 1991, and 1992 – when over a million shad entered the river, and to many other years with a half-million or more. Since 1976, the average run stands at 316,415.

The numbers don't mean what they once did. Officials stopped compiling a total Connecticut River basin count in 2017. Now the tally is limited to shad passing the counting stations at the West Springfield and Holyoke dams.

From my punky perch high in the crown of an old, riverside sycamore, the Connecticut River anadromous-fisheries program seems to have taken a significant step back due to reduced funding since the cooperative, multi-faceted Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program died in 2011. Plain and simple, the cash cow was slain when the salmon-restoration plug was pulled.

With salmon now out of the mix – four thus far this year, none last year – the landscape has changed, and it's starting to show in the fish-passage infrastructure. For years, migration past the Turners Falls dam has been under attack as ineffective. Now, the Rainbow Dam on Connecticut's Farmington River is closed due to poor performance. So there you have it: one less outpost on a beautiful, important Connecticut River tributary. It promises to get worse in the years to come, as climate change sounds a death knell of rising river temperatures and shifting migration ranges.

I have now reported on the annual upstream migration of shad and other fish through our valley for parts of five decades. That would include American and gizzard shad, alewife and blueback herring, American eel

and sea lamprey, striped bass, shortnose sturgeon, and still even an occasional wayward Atlantic salmon. My primary focus has always been gamefish. That means shad, American shad, and, to a lesser extent over the past quarter-century, stripers. I have also watched with interest the demise of blueback-herring runs, which once far outnumbered shad and are now reduced to irrelevance.

By a wide margin, American shad are the gamefish of our annual spring migrations, and many recreational anglers take advantage of the approximately six-week-long sporting opportunity. The annual run begins in late April, when water temperatures rise into the 50s Fahrenheit, and peaks when river temps reach into the 60s. It stops when they rise into the upper 60s and low 70s, signaling spawning time. Then shad establish fixed spawning lairs, and stop running.

This I have learned not only from personal observation during many enjoyable years of shad fishing, but also from countless conversations and email correspondence with experts employed by a network of state and federal agencies.

As a longtime recipient of the weekly Connecticut River anadromous-fish-migration reports issued by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, I look forward to them, and have learned to independently interpret numbers that ebb and flow relative to river flow-rates and water temperature. Once snowmelt is out to sea from the upper extremes of the Connecticut Valley in northern Vermont and New Hampshire, river temperature and volume are controlled exclusively by the weather, especially rainfall.

River temperatures rise during clear, sunny, warm weather and drop during the inevitable flooding brought by spring rains. The mix of rising river temperatures and a moderate, steady flow produces optimal shad runs. On the other hand, the runs slow dramatically when heavy rain events raise the river to turbulent flood levels and drop the water temperature.

Whether these dynamics would exist on a Connecticut River without dams is a question worth pondering, because some of the see **VALLEY VIEW** page B3

THE MAKING of a MAP

By KAREN GUILLETTE

TURNERS FALLS – Eileen Fortin and Pam Grimard, who worked together for ten years as special education paraprofessionals at Sheffield Elementary School, often discussed how they would like to see engaging learning activities provided for the children during recess.

Both knew that it was important for students to know the names of the states, and both felt strongly that a map of the United States on the schoolyard would be a great learning tool for students, and a resource for teachers. They proposed the idea for numerous years, says Grimard, but “there was always a reason why it didn't happen!”

Fortin, unfortunately, passed away after a brief illness in February 2023. Grimard turned her sadness at the loss of her friend and colleague into a creative effort to honor her dream. Thus, the Eileen Fortin Memorial United States Map was born.

Grimard, as it turns out, is a formidable organizer, and was able to rally a wide variety of collaborators to the cause. Once she got the project approved, GMRSD facilities manager Heath Cummings



GUILLETTE PHOTO

Sheffield Elementary School staff spent time after school painting the new mural on the playground. (Pictured: Susan Pelis, Rosa Kessler, Rue Walther, Nikki Henderson, Tracey Glaszjer, Pam Grimard, Carrie Burke, Paul Ross, and Abe Klein.)

worked with the Montague public works department to lay down a patch of blacktop in the Sheffield schoolyard, adjacent to the playground, on which to paint the map.

Sherwin Williams of Greenfield donated some paint, and Aubuchon Hardware in Turners Falls supplied brushes. Seth and Stephanie Smith built a wonderful, sturdy kiosk to

house a memorial poster, designed by Turners Falls High School graphic arts teacher Leslie Charles, as well as a key to the map of the United States.

Grimard was also able to inspire school staff to get involved with some creative fundraising to pay for the lumber for the kiosk, and see **MAP** page B8

THEATER REVIEW

The Cake Slices Into a Hot-Button Topic

By MAX HARTSHORNE

SOUTH DEERFIELD – Anyone who, like me, has been a theater watcher in the Valley has been inspired and entertained since 2014 by Silverthorne Theater, the Greenfield-based troupe that pres-

ents shows in their cozy and intimate headquarters above Hawks and Reed downtown.

But Silverthorne's goal is to reach out further and bring people who might not want to drive to Greenfield into their audiences. So this new production of *The Cake* by

Bekah Brunstetter was performed at Emily Dickinson Hall at Hampshire College. Professional director Gina Kaufmann was in her own 'hood – she is a professor of theater at UMass. If you've never been to a play by this superb company of actors in Greenfield, this is a chance to see them in another location. Live theater is like nothing else!

Theater companies in 2023 face uphill battles, mostly because the audiences willing to pay for equity-level actors are generally getting quite old. New venues like this one at Hampshire can bring in more students and younger theater lovers, and in the audience at Sunday's matinee in Amherst, this was the case.

Though I make it a point not to read too much about plays before I set out to review them, I did talk briefly about the topic of *The Cake* with my cousin Stephen. We agreed that ordering a cake for a same-sex marriage from a conservative Southern baker could be a minefield, a hot-button topic, something that polarizes and causes bickering.

see **THEATER** page B5



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Della the baker (Elizabeth Aspenlieder) and Macy (Tahmie Der) in The Cake, a Silverthorne Theater production playing this weekend at Hampshire College.

Pet of the Week



CARMODY COLLAGE

“BROWNIE”

Brownie is Gorgeous with a capital “G.” She loves being petted. This kitty has lived with other cats but she felt lukewarm about them, truth be told. She has met dogs while in foster care and would be happy to live with polite dogs. Being a sophisticated lady, she isn’t into the play scene. That’s so juvenile. Brownie isn’t into dazzling kids with her hijinks, either; she just keeps a low profile with kids and visitors.

If you are looking to adopt a gorgeous gal who’s content to soak in serious petting and not make a lot of demands of you, this is your gal.

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

Senior Center Activities JUNE 19 THROUGH 23

LEVERETT

Chair Yoga classes are held on Zoom on Wednesdays. Foot care clinic is held monthly. For more information, contact the Leverett COA at (413) 548-1022 x 2, or coa@leverett.ma.us.

GILL and MONTAGUE

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

Monday 6/19

10:15 a.m. Aerobics
10:30 a.m. Oak Tree Chair Yoga
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
1 p.m. Kitchen Club
Tuesday 6/20
9:30 a.m. Tuesday Morning
Knitters
10 a.m. Money Matters
3 p.m. Tai Chi
Wednesday 6/21
9 a.m. Veterans’ Hours
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
11:45 a.m. Friends’ Meeting
12 p.m. Bring Your Lunch Bingo
1:30 p.m. Western Mass Food Bank
4:15 p.m. Mat Yoga
Thursday 6/22
9 a.m. Chair Yoga
1 p.m. Cards & Games
Friday 6/23

10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
12 p.m. Pizza Party
2 p.m. By the Seat of Your Dance
3:30 p.m. Mindfulness Meditation

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10:15 a.m. Stretch & Infusion
Tuesday 6/20
9 a.m. Good For U
10 a.m. Line Dancing
Wednesday 6/21
9 a.m. Cardio Low Impact
10:15 a.m. Chair Aerobics
11:30 a.m. Bingo
Thursday 6/22
9 a.m. Core & Balance
10 a.m. Barre Fusion
Friday 6/23
9 a.m. Quilting & Open Sew

WENDELL

Foot care clinic is the first Wednesday of each month. Call Katie Nolan at (978) 544-2306 for information or appointments. Senior Health Rides are available. Contact Jonathan von Ranson (978) 544-3758.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Fly Away for Father’s Day!

TURNERS FALLS –The Franklin County Radio Control Club is hosting its annual Fun Fly on Father’s Day, this Sunday, June 18 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Gate 4 of the Turners Falls Airport. Spectators are welcome, and admission is free. There will be food, demos, raffle prizes, radio control (RC) simulators, and the opportunity to fly an RC airplane.

This year the club will continue to raise money through FCRCC’s “Flights for the Fight” to benefit those still under fire in Ukraine. Funds raised at this event will go directly toward providing medical supplies to the front lines. As the fighting in Eastern Europe continues, FCRCC’s own David K., Iryna, and their daughter Mary are showing their support by asking for your support of this great program that has saved many lives already. Donations are direct, which maximizes every dollar pledged for items such as tourniquets, trauma kits, blood

clotting agents, and other items in short supply in the region.

For over 40 years the club has been operating safely next to the Turners Falls Municipal Airport. This unique location within an industrial park allows hobbyists to operate away from the airport, and away from the general traffic patterns.

The club also works with the airport staff and neighbors to integrate safety and education into the diverse general aviation community. FCRCC feels privileged to be a part of the Turners Falls crowd.

The club has grown and shrunk and grown again over the years. Interests in each category of the hobby have changed over time, from the original stick-built airplanes with FM transmitters, to helicopters, to more modern ARFs, Park Flyers/Foamies, Electrics, Glow & Gas, to multi-rotors.

In 2014 members voted to resurface the runway, and chose to go with a geotextile fabric since the

ground is susceptible to the frost that New England provides every year. This has been a great improvement to the club, and members and guests love flying off the surface.

FCRCC provides a variety of opportunities for both its members and the community. Members have worked with local schools, home-school groups, Civil Air Patrol, Boy Scouts, and a variety of other organizations to assist with aviation-related subjects through safety and education.

FCRCC also welcomes the new and interested RC Model Aircraft enthusiasts to see what the club has to offer. The club takes part in the AMA Intro Pilot Program, and can get you up in the air to start working on your skills as a model aircraft pilot with a “Buddy Box” to keep you safely inside proscribed flight patterns, and without having to accelerate your skills too quickly.

For more information, visit www.rcplanereviews.com/Franklinrc.

EXHIBIT

Montana Comes to Massachusetts: Paintings by Kate Spencer

By RICHARD ANDERSEN

MONTAGUE CENTER – There’s an old saying that you can take people out of the places where they were raised, but you can’t take the places out of the people.

Kate Spencer grew up in the Big Sky Country of Montana, which she describes in an artist’s statement as blessed with “golden wheat fields” and “purple mountain majesty.” But the colors that have the strongest hold on her imagination come from the “sunsets filled with prairie dust radiated reds and yellows, pinks and oranges.” These colors, says Spencer, are “in my bones.”

They’re also on her Montana-size canvases. They punctuate in varying degrees each and every painting in Spencer’s current exhibit at the Montague Center Library.

“New England is too green,” she says. It needs some of those Western color schemes to make it brighter, livelier, more intense, more dramatic. While Montana and Massachusetts each provide excellent vistas, it’s the combination of their contrasting colorations that makes perfect Spencer’s imaginative landscapes.



Cranberry Pond, a painting by Kate Spencer.

Come see for yourself between now and July 15. The Montague Center Library is open Mondays and Wednesdays from 2 to 7 p.m. and on Fridays from 10 a.m. to 1

p.m. If you have works of art that you would like to see exhibited at the library, please contact Kate Martineau during opening hours at (413) 367-2852.

EVENT ANNOUNCEMENT

Discover Yourself With Waffles

WENDELL – On Thursday, June 22 at 7 p.m., Joshua Jay Waffles will present “Transmogrify, Discover Your True Self” as part of the Thursday evening Spirit Circles series at the Wendell Meetinghouse.

Waffles writes, “The challenge of my existence has been to overcome 1000’s of years of negative conditioning and discover my true self.” Each attendee will receive a copy of his 28-page booklet, *Transmogrify! Ten Condiments for a Delicious Life*, and he will discuss their importance in the search for what he calls “True Self.”

“I remember the day when I woke up to the fact that I was sitting in a cubicle, in an architect’s office in New York City, designing parking garages. Yikes! I immediately quit and began driving a cab,” he writes. “The search was on.”

Joshua Jay Waffles was born in Brooklyn in 1941. He obtained a BS and BA in architecture in 1966. He

was honorably discharged from the US Army in 1969 and worked as an architect in NYC from 1969 to 1973. He has designed and built playgrounds and solar homes, served as headteacher at Easy Street preschool, created a waffle restaurant, and began performing as Waffles the Clown for schools, libraries, community centers and museums. He has been an Artist in Residence, and has been arrested many times as a non-violent political activist.

The newly-renovated Meetinghouse is located at 1 Morse Village Road in Wendell. Admission to this series is free, with donations strongly encouraged. Proceeds benefit the Friends of the Meetinghouse and support programming and the continued renovation of the historic structure. Visit www.wendellmeetinghouse.org/events for more details. Upcoming events in the series include “Kindness or Authenticity,” a Talking Circle with Court Dorsey and Chris Queen, on June 29.

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VALLEY VIEW from page B1

migration slowdown caused by flooding results from temporary closure of fish passageways at overburdened dams. Nonetheless, my sense is that even without dams, the flood waters would slow shad and other migrating fish, which seek refuge along the edges during turbulent events.

In a perfect world for shad runs, snowmelt and spring rains would raise the river slow and steady to a crest, then gradually recede through to the peak, after which the shallows become calm for optimal spawning. But it never quite happens that way. Instead, weather events produce erratic annual runs. Nonetheless, by early June, the run is typically over, and spawning has begun.

I vividly recall one notable exception to this formula. Relying on memory alone, I would have said my recollection occurred on Memorial Day weekend in 1984; however, thanks to a tool I wouldn't have had back then, I Googled it and found that the flooding event actually took place on the weekend after the holiday, the worst occurring between June 1 and 4.

I was a 30-year-old (soon to be 31) *Greenfield Recorder* sports-writer at the time, with a weekly outdoor column running each Thursday. The *Recorder* was then an afternoon paper with a Saturday a.m. edition that necessitated Friday split-shifts, with a skeleton night crew responsible for production of the Saturday morning paper. My Friday-night post was the so-called "sports slot," with a midnight deadline for production of the sports section. I'd work to a furious deadline crescendo, wait for the press to roll, take one last look at my pages, and head for the South Deerfield Polish Club for last call to wind down before hitting the hay.

That June 1, driving home to South Deerfield during the midnight hour, I had to drive a quarter-mile or more through foot-deep floodwater that spilled over onto Route 5 between the current Old Deerfield Antiques shop and the northern entry into Old Deerfield. The river crested at 15 feet above flood stage the next afternoon in Hartford, Connecticut, temporarily halting what would become the second straight shad run of more than a million.

When all was said and done and the river finally settled down, the river-basin shad count was 1.231 million, which stands today as the third-best run since numbers have been kept. The previous year produced the second-best total, 1.574 million, bettered only by 1992's record 1.628. The only other count to top a million was 1991's total of

1.196 million.

Those numbers will almost certainly never again be approached.

Back then I was an avid shad angler, making my own lures by soldering stainless-steel willow-leaf blades to large, hollow, stainless-steel hooks. My preferred tackle for the Holyoke tailrace was an 8½-foot graphite fly rod, equipped with 6-weight sink-tip line, rigged with a creative string of leaders separated by bead-chain trolling sinkers. I had learned this deadly setup from commercial fly-tier "Indian Al" Niemiec, founder of Indian Nymphs and Flies, later politically corrected to Native American Nymphs and Flies.

Once sinker adjustments were made to deliver the willow leaf to the proper depth in the shad-migration channel, the action was incredible. Many a day we left the site arm-weary, following several enjoyable hours of toe-to-toe battles with pugnacious shad.

Because that '84 flood delayed the run for weeks, I was still catching shad hand over fist into July, working a busy channel three-quarters of the way across the Deerfield River below the mouth of the South River. I had shifted to trout-fishing on that familiar stretch of river with a precious 4-weight Tonkin-cane rod after things slowed down in Holyoke. I remember fishing dry flies and cream-colored Caddis Emergers there on my 31st birthday, June 30, when I noticed the unmistakable silver flash of small shad schools passing up the channel.

No problem. I dug into my vest for the Velcro-sealed fabric bag that held my extra spool of sink-tip line, snapped it into place, and had a blast catching shad on light tackle with a variety of colorful streamers. Though I feared breaking my delicate Thomas & Thomas Hendrickson bamboo rod, it passed the test with backbone to spare.

I returned to the scene for three days with heavier shad-fishing gear and homemade willow-leaf lures, and enjoyed continued success. Then came the Fourth of July holiday, by which time I found shad circling spawning beds in the shallows. Experience told me the season was over.

I briefly stood still to observe the spawning ritual, knowing they would no longer strike shiny objects. Then I turned tail to hike back up the steep deer run to my Jeep and call it a season – one extended a month by a flood the likes of which hadn't been seen since the Hurricane of 1936.

It was a year to remember in Mother Nature's classroom – my kinda place.



Montague Community Television News

Brand New Biz Beat

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – MCTV is featuring local businesses in our new series, *Local Business Spotlight*. This week we have an episode about Swanson's Fabric's Stash House.

If you are interested in having your business featured, please reach out to infomontaguetv@gmail.com, and be sure to check our website and Vimeo page for all the newest videos. This week you will find Gill's annual town meeting, the Montague selectboard meeting, and the GMRSD school committee meeting, as well as the FAB Fashion show-

case and the Unity Park Makers Market. There's always something new to watch on MCTV!

If you have videos of your own you would like to put on TV or our Vimeo page, send them over, and if you need help, 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.

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

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Vehicle Ransacking Continues; Fight Behind Shea; Bear and Cubs; Camaro Guy; Canal Paddleboarder

Monday, 6/5

8:15 a.m. 911 abandoned call from Federal Street. While PD was responding, Shelburne Control received a call about an elderly male with difficulty breathing at this location, and they toned out Montague Center fire department.
 9:27 a.m. Caller from Bangs Street states that the same two pitbulls are loose again and are in his yard and a neighbor's yard. Animal control officer notified. Both dogs recovered and placed back in house.
 10:36 a.m. Report of deceased cat on Millers Falls Road across from Chester Street. DPW notified.
 2:19 p.m. Caller from Union Street states that a white/brown pit mix dog with a chain collar is running loose around the neighborhood. ACO contacted.
 3:13 p.m. Caller from H Street states that her little brother was bitten by a dog while walking home. Declined EMS but will bring him to the ER after they speak to an officer. Officer advises that victim's mother will bring him to the ER; he will follow up with dog owner.
 4:40 p.m. 911 caller from Keith Apartments states that her neighbor is in the hallway yelling and screaming. Officer advises involved party back inside her apartment and quiet. Neighbors advised of options.
 8:11 p.m. Caller from L Street noted on a security camera that someone went into her vehicle; unsure if anything was stolen, but concerned about it happening to other cars. Caller states it happened at 7:44 p.m. Suspect identified as a thin female with dirty blond and bright pink hair. Officers out with female party matching description at Creemee. Summons issued.

Tuesday, 6/6
 9:21 a.m. Officer advises that a bear and four cubs just crossed Montague Street in front of him and are walking towards Dell Street. Gathering dispersed. No Environmental Police officers available;

someone from Fish and Wildlife may be available in a few hours.

1:21 p.m. Walk-in from Avenue C reports that somebody went through his truck last night and "ransacked" it. Report taken.
 1:58 p.m. Caller states that it looks like there is a vehicle upside down in the river underneath the train trestle off Bridge Street. Investigated. Not a vehicle, but old train wheels sticking up from the water.
 2:12 p.m. Caller from Avenue A states that a male party was just urinating on the dumpsters outside of the business. Unable to locate; will follow up for video footage.
 3:09 p.m. 911 caller from Country Creemee states that a female party just stole the tip jar off of the counter. Female located and transported to hospital. Tip money recovered and returned to caller.
 3:23 p.m. Caller following up regarding threats including mention of a gun that were made at the Greenfield courthouse today. Determined that involved party does not have a license to carry or any registered firearms. Officer made contact with involved party, who stated that she was just frustrated and did not intend any harm. She stated she will apologize to them on Thursday when she sees them.
 4:16 p.m. Caller from Montague states that there is a dead baby coyote in his yard and he would like assistance having it removed. Advised to call Environmental Police or Fish and Wildlife.
 4:45 p.m. Caller from High Street reports that her car was broken into this afternoon; \$20 and some change was stolen. While cleaning out her vehicle, caller noticed a knife left behind that does not belong to her. Officer advises item disposed of.

4:57 p.m. Caller from L Street states that her vehicle was broken into sometime between yesterday and today. Her purse and some change were taken.

Wednesday, 6/7

8:59 a.m. 911 caller states that he was just in an accident with another vehicle on North Leverett Road. Airbags have deployed; possible injuries. Both vehicles towed. One operator transported to BFMC.
 10:55 a.m. Greenfield PD received a 911 misdial from J Street. No issues; they have a phone there that dials 911 occasionally for some reason.

5:13 p.m. 911 hangup call from Wrightson Avenue. Female party called in stating she was checking out at the store, and when she walked out the caller was screaming at her that she's

violating a restraining order and is going to be arrested. Officers advise there is no active order in place; order expired in 2021.
 6:28 p.m. Caller from Ripley Road states that for the past couple of nights, a motorcycle has been burning out and doing donuts up and down the road; it is very loud. Referred to an officer.
 6:42 p.m. Caller from Montague City Road states that there are some skunks in his yard and he believes they may be living under his patio. Wants ACO aware.
 6:46 p.m. Caller reports very loud motorcycle speeding up and down North Leverett Road, misusing lanes. Area checked; nothing seen at this time.

7:16 p.m. Caller from Main Street states her neighbor is harassing her because her dog got out; states this has happened before and officers told her she couldn't request a restraining order as it's not happening often enough. Officer advised. Male party called in stating female threatened to kill him after he asked her to make her dogs stop barking.

9:33 p.m. Caller states that a loud party with music is going on behind the Shea Theater, and it's too late. Multiple 911 calls state there has been an assault. Suspect has left scene in a black SUV headed toward Greenfield. Female party states that the male who started the fight has driven by twice and is yelling out the window that he's going to "spray" people. States he's driving a black Jeep with two red lines on top. Reports both the male and the victim both go by the nickname of "Gobby." Officers advised. Additional caller states her daughter was sitting outside and saw the SUV drive through the parking lot the wrong way twice. Area checked; not seen at this time.

Thursday, 6/8

2:19 a.m. 911 caller from Ivy Street states someone appears to be attempting to steal his daughter's car. Officer advises nobody around upon arrival; description provided to officers was a "dark shadow." Area checked. All vehicles secured.
 10:43 a.m. Housing manager would like an officer to come and pick up a white, powdery substance that was found inside an apartment that maintenance is cleaning out. Services rendered.

Friday, 6/9

2:05 p.m. Caller from Avenue A states someone is loitering on his property; he wants them removed prior to him showing up tonight, or else there will be a fight. No one in front

of property at this time.

Saturday, 6/10

10:44 a.m. Caller states that there is a loose brown and white pitbull near Swamp and Turners Falls Road; he has not been able to catch it and is concerned it is going to get hit. Dog returned home by officers. No active tag for dog. Copy of call printed for ACO.
 12:31 p.m. Caller from Food City requesting an officer as he witnessed a woman steal over \$30 worth of alcohol. Reports this also happened yesterday. Report taken; summons issued.
 2:36 p.m. 911 caller states that there is a man at Peskeomskut Park swearing and chasing children; unsure if he is playing with them or trying to harm them. Officers advised that two male parties left the scene; other male parties who were not part of the issue were just sitting and spectating. They were also advised of the complaint.

4:15 p.m. Caller from Randall Road inquiring about when people are allowed to ride dirt bikes on the trails; he thought it was just on Sundays, but they are doing it all the time and it is loud and disruptive. Advised caller that they are allowed to ride on private property. Advised to give us a call when they are riding, and we can come out and assess the noise level.
 4:24 p.m. 911 caller states that the party in the orange Camaro that has been driving in the area lately is back again doing burnouts; was in the Camaro; now he is in an older-style maroon pickup truck. Unable to locate. Officer advises he drove by the residence and the party was not home.

Sunday, 6/11

1:46 a.m. 911 caller from Keith Apartments states her neighbor is screaming and banging on the walls and just woke her up. All quiet upon officer's arrival; female would not answer the door. Caller given statement form to fill out and return to station.
 8:25 a.m. Neighbor complaining of loud yelling and banging going on on Fourth Street for over an hour. Advised of complaint.

12:14 p.m. Employee from Northfield Mountain Project advising that there is someone on a paddleboard in the canal; requesting an officer tell them to get out of the water. Male party located and told to come out of the water. He is complying.
 4:23 p.m. Caller from Second Street states that kids in the area threw bricks at her building and tossed around the building materials that are there for a construction project. Officer will attempt to make contact with the children.

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60: Josephine Foster

Interview by J. BURKETT

TURNERS FALLS – Josephine Foster is a singer/songwriter who has made a name for herself in the past 20 or so years with her unique voice and memorable albums that tap into the past and the future. We highly recommend her newest, *Domestic Sphere*, on the Fire label. She has been called “one of this generation’s great original voices.”

It was so cool to check in with her! She grew up in Colorado and was back there recently, visiting her parents, when we interviewed her.

MMM: Thanks for wanting to talk to the Montague Reporter! How are things?

JF: They are all right. There’s a big storm coming any minute, with very ominous clouds, which is kind of exciting. The storms that come here in the summer are pretty special. This usually happens in July, every afternoon there is a storm! Wonderful thunderstorms. It will be clear, with a little rain, and then there’s beautiful light in the mountains, there is this kind of weather pattern.

Seems to be an unusually wet May and June, it’s been highly unusual. It’s very green and lush at my parents’ place. It will probably be all right if it doesn’t flood, but the

creeks are very, very full, so hopefully it won’t flood. There was a horrible flood here 20 or 25 years ago.

MMM: What is your big secret? How do you keep putting out cool records and do tours and all that?

JF: Do I have any secrets? How do I do it? Um, I guess I don’t think that I “do it”... I think it just happens! It’s a compulsion, and it’s hard *not* to do it.

So my question for anyone else is: what’s their secret? How do they “not do it”?

MMM: Are there any records that made a deep impression on you early on?

JF: I listened to the radio a lot, both AM and FM radio. I listened to the oldies station, and then I got interested in classical music, and started going to the library to check out vinyl records of classical music. I was really interested particularly in the sounds of early music and pastoral music, and I liked the sound of early 20th century popular music too, and the music of other countries.

When I was maybe in fifth grade, my uncle gave me an 8-track of *Bat Out of Hell*. I was actually scared of it, because the cover was so scary-looking.

But the first record I remember really liking – this was a vinyl that

was not classical, I was 10 or something – I had a cousin or a neighbor who gave me a Men At Work record, and I really liked it. And around fifth grade I started to really like particular artists more. I liked Cyndi Lauper, and her song “Girls Just Want to Have Fun.” I still love that one. I got Prince – *Purple Rain* for Christmas.

And I really liked singing along to the radio: The Mamas & the Papas, Peter, Paul & Mary, Simon & Garfunkel. I really liked harmonies then, harmony singing. There was no shortage of stuff I liked.

MMM: You were on one of my favorite *Cherry Blossoms* albums, *Mystery Meet*. Was that fun?

JF: Oh, it was so fun! We would just hang out, on a few afternoons and evenings, and we made up songs and played some other favorite songs. We are great friends. In fact, we recorded an album last year that we are excited to share, hopefully in the next season or so.

I talked to Peggy today. She just lost her main squeeze. She’s very bereft, really struggling with grief.

MMM: Oh no, I’m so sorry. How did you meet those guys?

JF: I first met Chris Davis, uh, somewhere at a show, maybe in Wisconsin or something. He invited me and Jason [Ajemian] to come play in Nashville – we were doing some shows for a record called *Born Heller* and we called our duo Born Heller.

So we went down, and *Cherry Blossoms* played too. I actually heard their record the night before the show – I didn’t know their music, and Kris Abplanalp played me their record. It was kind of a rare moment. I wanted to hear their record top to bottom and was loving every minute of it. I was so very happy to discover them and meet them, and we made fast friends.

That was, it’s hard to believe, about 20 years ago. That record that I was touring with Jason at that time just got reissued! It’s kind of nice to share that music once more.

MMM: Your newest album seems a little different. Did you take a different approach to it?

JF: Well, I did decide to use some field recordings. I guess that’s pretty new. I haven’t done that before.

It was the only record that I did everything on, except for this record called *What Is It That Ever Was* that was a lot of home-recorded stuff.

Some of that was slightly improvised, but for this one, I did every song in one take. And I was dead set – I wouldn’t bother with doing lots of takes. Then I improvised some harmonies on it. I just wanted it to be simple with voice, play around with voice a little. Distorting the range a bit, that was fun. Making it sound like a flute, and kind of bopping these field recordings into the tracks. Like Daniel Blumberg, a wonderful composer friend of mine in London.

MMM: It’s really special. Have you thought about doing a compilation of tracks from your different albums? You have so many songs now!

JF: I did one once – I made a tour compilation, just for Japan. But that’s an idea. I have a lot of albums, and people haven’t heard of most of them, so I guess it’s time for a *Greatest Hits*, or a *Greatest Mis-steps*.

MMM: Do you have any touring stories, or other music-playing stories, you want to share?

JF: Crazy touring stories? That’s such a big question! That’s like when someone asks your favorite book and you can’t think of anything because you have so many favorite books.

In 2005, I was driving to New York City and back from New Jersey, and the brakes went out, crossing over the state line. I had to drive the whole length of Manhattan in rush hour with no brakes. That was a crazy time. I had to use my emergency brake to stop. There was so much traffic, and people were darting out, and it was terrifying. I drove all the way to Tonic.

Then I had tendonitis for about six months. I hurt my arm with that damn emergency brake. I got the brakes kind of patched up by some mechanic in NYC and I made it to Charlottesville, VA, and then the car had more problems and troubled me so much that I gave it away.

MMM: That sounds horrible.

Since you mentioned books – are there any books or authors that you really like?

JF: I have been reading Harry Crews’s *A Childhood*, do you know him? And then a book called *Diary of a Cleaning Lady* by Lucia Berlin. I recommend them both.

MMM: I know of Harry Crews, but never read any of his books. How about dreams? Are dreams important to you, and do you have crazy or interesting dreams?

JF: Well, sometimes. There haven’t been as many as usual lately. I think that’s because I’m pretty calm. I’ve had seasons where I’ve had only nightmares, for a long spell every night, but that’s unusual. That kind of went away.

I do have interesting dreams, but I haven’t been remembering dreams in the last year or two, since I changed my diet. I think that has made me healthier, and my nervous system has been not as stirred up.

MMM: Oh no... nightmares are no good! How did your diet change?

JF: Well, I started following this medical medium, Anthony Williams. His book *Cleanse to Heal* saved my life I think. He’s a great healer, known around the world, and he guides you through a very specific plant-based diet. And it kind of saved my life.

MMM: Wow, I’m glad you were saved! ...Do you have any western Mass stories?

JF: Is Walden Pond out there?

MMM: Um, not really. That’s closer to Boston.

JF: Well, I swam in Walden Pond once, and really liked it.

Um, I might not have big stories, but I think it’s awfully beautiful. I really enjoyed this last trip, playing at the Dream Away Lodge [in Becket]. Is that considered western Mass? That was fun. I got to sing out by the campfire with some kids that came, and we sang rounds, and then we went marching around the forest, singing. That was definitely a very recent good time.

Oh, and I played with Donkey No No there once. They were great.

ANNOUNCEMENT

New Exhibits in Brattleboro

BRATTLEBORO – A new round of exhibitions open inside and outside Brattleboro Museum & Art Center (BMAC) on Saturday, June 24, at 10 a.m. An opening celebration with the exhibiting artists and curators, free and open to all, will take place at 5 p.m. featuring music by DJ Bux Wilder, live drag performances, a cash bar by Saxtons River Distillery, and free tacos courtesy of Tito’s Taqueria.

The new exhibits feature an abundance of materials, textures, colors, and forms, according to BMAC director Danny Lichtenfeld. At the entrance to the museum will be *Human Nature Walk*, an immersive site-specific installation by artist Aurora Robson, fashioned entirely from plastic debris. Visitors are invited to contribute to it by collecting and cleaning plastic bottle caps and then placing them in specially designated sections of the installation.

In the South Gallery will be *GLASSTASTIC*, BMAC’s bi-annual homage to youthful creativity and artistic ingenuity. This year’s menagerie of glass creatures, dreamed up by children in grades K-6 and brought to three-dimensional life by professional glass artists, totals 500 imaginary creatures on view in the gallery.

Pride 1983 explores the origins and legacy of Burlington’s first Pride celebration through pho-

tographs, artifacts, and audio recordings.

I Land Therefore I Am, a solo exhibition of artwork by Anina Major, explores the relationship between self and place, belonging and identity. The ceramic sculptures and other objects in the exhibition act as present-day manifestations of the traditional weaving technique known as *plait*, taught to Major by her grandmother. Alec Egan’s *Drawing Room* paintings and Roberley Bell’s sculpture and drawings in *Where Things Set* fill out the offerings inside the museum.

The exhibitions will remain on view through October 9, with the exception of *Human Nature Walk*, which will stay up through February 11, 2024. While they are on view, BMAC will present a range of events and activities enabling visitors and participants to learn more about associated ideas, themes, and people. These include artist talks with Roberley Bell (July 20), Anina Major (July 27), and Lela Jaacks (August 10); a River Walk and Cyanotype Workshop (July 15); a River Cleanup and Found Materials Sculpture Workshop (September 23 and 30); a Queer Dance Party (July 28); and more.

BMAC is open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free. For more information, call (802) 257-0124 or visit brattleboromuseum.org.

SHOW REVIEW

Coop Concerts – Again!

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – It had been a while since I had seen one of the concerts in the Energy Park in Greenfield called Coop Concerts. June 1 was the second one to happen in this year’s Thursday summer concert series.

Jim Eagan performed first. I heard him the first time I listened to one of these concerts. Jim Eagan played Americana folk music, as it’s called, on his guitar. He also sang while he was doing it. I like guitar music, and he was good. His singing was decent. I didn’t mind hearing him again.

This time around, I also heard some different performers than the ones I heard when I first saw him.

133 Skeelee is a three-person band that features two guitarists, one of them a female, and an accordionist. When they first started I could tell from their singing they were a folk music band. I liked the male guitarist’s singing particularly well. Both guitarists ended up singing a song or two together. It wasn’t a bad duet to hear.

All three were synched in with each other’s playing, and with the singing. They

continued to be that way as they performed. The female guitarist’s voice sounded like she could sing a ballad very nicely. In fact, I think she did at one point. I enjoyed listening to them.

The Brookside Project was a four-person band, with guitarists and an accordionist. One individual played and sang like they were doing country music. I rather like that. The other guitarists helped with sounding like they were doing that nicely. One was almost playing his guitar like a fiddle at one point.

I found the singing by that guitarist to be great. In fact, I found that guitarist to be the best one in the show.

One song even kind of sounded to me like a country song. That one got a huge applause from the crowd at the park. Out of the three bands there, I would say Brookside Project was my favorite. I liked the concert a little better than the last Coop Concert I went to.

Coop Concerts continue every Thursday night from 6 to 8 p.m. at Energy Park in Greenfield. See the Arts & Entertainment listing on Page B7 for upcoming lineups.

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THEATER from page A1

The way this play unfolded, a few touches of slapstick comedy lightened the load. After the play, Steve said that all of the bickering was jarring, but to me, the intellectual sparring and the topical references made for a fun back-and-forth.

The set was a bakery and two bedrooms on either side of it. Della the cake baker, played by Elizabeth Aspenlieder, is spinning a cake and waving a cake knife, paddling buttercream icing onto a freshly-baked creation. It's the kind of tiny bakery that has a little bell that rings when someone opens the door, the kind of small-town shop you find in many towns in the South.

Della's accent sets us right there – Winston-Salem, North Carolina – and she begins to make the self-deprecating comments and clichés that mark her as an undereducated but hard-working member of Southern society. (Kudos to Lindsay Forauer, the show's dialect coach, for helping Aspenlieder get the Piedmont accent down perfectly.)

Della knows no pleasure as keen as the taste of one of her cakes. She only uses the traditional methods and ingredients – lots of butter, fat, and sugar – and she gets part of her inspiration from the Lord. Oh yes, the Lord is important, she says, as are the teachings of Jesus that are all laid out in the Bible.

All of the New Englanders in the audience at this point knew what

this meant: *she's one of those religious people, with the funny accent and dogmatic beliefs... and, gasp, she probably voted for the other guy. You know, him.*

After the soliloquy on the virtues of butter and old-fashioned baking is done, we meet the person who asked Della the question – Macy, a female African-American visitor who is clearly not from around here, played by Tahmie Der.

Der recently turned in a strong performance playing a 1900s seamstress in Silverthorne's production of *Intimate Apparel*. Here we get to see her in 2023 attire, and she does a great job presenting a stark contrast to the ever-smiling Della, who tries to get her to try a slice of her latest cake.

"I don't do cake," Macy says, turning and taking out a little notebook to scribble notes. She settles for a cup of coffee. "Do you have soy milk?" No. She takes it black.

We learn that Macy is from Brooklyn, and is not afraid right off the bat to challenge the platitudes and religious references that Della airily throws out. Macy is a real 2023 woman: she writes a blog, she's got a nose ring, she lives with a woman, and her father was a strict preacher who tried to shame her for everything. She's not a pushover.

Della is excited about becoming a participant in a reality TV baking show, but Macy doesn't watch TV, so she isn't impressed.

The already-contentious scene is lightened a bit when we meet Macy's girlfriend, Jen, played by Claudia Maurino. Jen grew up in this town, and her late mother was Della's best friend. Della rushes to hug her. "Jennifer!" she says, but Macy corrects her: "It's *Jen*. Not Jenny, not Jennifer."

At this point we've been presented with two very interesting opposites, each playing her part to the extreme: Della, spinning out platitudes in her Southern drawl about why high-fat butter is a gift from Jesus, and Macy, the down-to-earth agnostic whose historical citations crush much of what Della tries to proclaim.

Even their looks are so polar opposite, it's a wonderful contrast... then Jen comes in, and there is more intrigue after she tells Della that she is getting married.

"Who is the lucky guy?" It takes only a few seconds for Macy to pounce: "I'm the other bride," she proclaims.

Della steps back with a silent gulp. *This isn't what people in Winston-Salem do*, she's thinking, but again, Jen is a family friend, and she's a wedding cake baker. The couple asks her if she will be able to make a cake for them, and Della fumbles through her calendar binder and throws out an excuse about being too busy that weekend, six months from today.

All three women know what a ruse this is, and Jen tries to let Del-

la down easy. Jen is not as forceful; she grew up here, and knows how important religion is even though she is now living the life of a lesbian in a Brooklyn neighborhood where queerness is pretty much the norm.

That TV baking show comes back several times during the play, with a God-like announcer named George throwing down commands like lightning bolts, first to push Della to bake harder. "Make a cake without sugar, butter or flour that tastes good!" he thunders.

Later, George throws out a bizarrely vulgar come-on that shocks the demure Della and inspires some sexy antics that will not be revealed here. He goes on to challenge Della, "Are you a bigot?" setting a different course in her mind as she recalls her own history, her love of a woman, and the sexless marriage she is now in.

The scene cuts to one of the two bedrooms, and we meet Della's husband—Tim, a plumber, played by Sam Samuels. Samuels is a very experienced actor who put in a strong performance last year in Silverthorne's fantastic *The Mystery of Irma Vep*. His range is striking as we hear his dialogue match Della's perfectly honed North Carolina twang.


Tim hears about the couple's cake, and it doesn't take long for him to put his foot down – after all, he's her husband, and she knows the pecking order: God, Tim, Della.

The richness of Brunstetter's

script is in the authenticity of the characters. We see Jen admit that there are things about her old life growing up here that she still relates to. Her life in Brooklyn is filled with fellow lesbian couples, those horrible seaweed snacks, agnostics, and vegans, not believers and right-wingers. She is torn because while she loves Macy, there is still a warm spot for the South, and all that it entails.

Della sees the real love, real sex, and affection between the lesbians... she has none of this, and she wants it. Tim is humiliated when Della's pent-up desire, fueled by memories of past loves, finally drives her to do something I've never seen done on a stage. Sadly, her ploy falls flat. Despite that, the play provides a satisfying resolution to Della and Tim's intimacy problem.

The Cake brought an empathic tear to my eye, and I felt every character except George was truly realistic and believable. I think this is a great reason to travel to the Emily Dickinson Theater, all the way down to Amherst, and see it for yourself.

The *Cake*, produced by Silverthorne Theater Company, is playing at Emily Dickinson Hall, Hampshire College, 893 West Street, Amherst on June 15, 16, and 17 at 7:30 p.m. with a 3 p.m. matinee on June 17. Sliding scale ticket sales and information are at tinyurl.com/thecake23. 

EXHIBITS

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Visions of the Connecticut River Valley*, work by regional artists featuring the nature of the river. Through June 30.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Crapo Tarot*, tarot cards by Trish Crapo. Through July 15.

Barnes Gallery, Leverett Crafts and Arts: *Fiberistas: Fiber Connections*, work by eight fiber artists. Through June.

Goose Divine Energy, Greenfield: *Unbroken Rainbow*, prints by M. Rudder exploring the connection between indigenous Aboriginal teaching and the Pride flag.

TEOLOS Gallery, Greenfield: *Anja Schütz and Paul Teeling*, fine art photography. Through August.

170 Main Street, Greenfield: *Peter Monroe*, fine art photography. Make an appointment by emailing estherwasmydog@yahoo.com. Through July.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *The Sky is Falling*, mixed media and assemblage by Tom Swetland. Through June.

Looky Here, Greenfield: *Live Portraiture* by Julia Shirar. Sign up to be painted on Thursdays in June and July by emailing juliashirar.com for an appointment. Subjects will be given a reproduction of their portrait. Closing reception on Friday, July 28.

Leverett Library: *Anne White*, paintings and more. Through June.

Northfield Public Library: *Botanical Dreams*, whimsical acrylics by Kaylee Pernice. Through July 1. Reception next Saturday, June 24 from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.

Wendell Free Library: *Watercolor Landscapes*, new paintings by Christine Teixeira. Through June 30.

Montague Center Library: *Mt. Toby Paintings*, by Kate Spencer. See the review in this section for details. Through July 14.

Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne Falls: *Apricity*, photographs by Carin Teresa; *The Worlds Below Us*, paintings by Rosa Beryl. Through June 26.

Art in the Hall, Art Bank Building, Shelburne: *A Pastoral*, Christin Couture's surreal pastoral scenes. Through July 7.

The Art Garden, Shelburne Falls: *Annual Teen Art Exhibit*, through July 8.

Shelburne Arts Coop, Shelburne Falls: *Beyond the Rainbow*, art and craft by member artists. Through June.

Fiddleheads Gallery, Northfield: *Regional Photography Show* by New England photographers. Through July 2.

Jewish Community of Amherst: *The Art of Collage*, mixed-media collage by Micha Archer. Through July 28.

Burnett Gallery, Amherst: *Nancy Emond*, watercolors. Through June 30. Reception this Sunday, June 18, from 3 to 4:30 p.m.

Gallery A3, Amherst: *Emily Dickinson's Ghosts*, accordion books and photographs by Laura Holland, with oil paintings and sculpture by Nancy Meagher; inspired by Dickinson. Through July 1.

Anchor House of Artists, Northampton: *Eden*, David Moriarty's sculpture and paintings; *Leslie Dahlqvist*, new works; *Mama Data*, multimedia by Christina Balch; *Labor*, group show about labor in mothering and parenting. Through June.

Gallery in the Woods, Brattleboro: *William H. Hays*, reduction woodcut and linocut prints. Through June.

OUT OF THE PARK JUNE 2023

By JON DOBOSZ

UNITY PARK – Happy June everyone! Summer is here – pretty much – which means a busy time for Montague Parks & Recreation.

Panicking parents, please note that our **Summer Camp** is almost full, and starts Monday, July 3. We have a lot in store for our campers this summer, including a bunch of great field trips, special events, and fun daily activities. We also take weekly trips to Laurel Lake, so your kids will certainly keep busy.

Our camp operates Mondays through Fridays, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., with early and late care available. The program runs through August 18, and what better way for your kids to stay active this summer!

For more information we recommend visiting www.montague-parksrec.com, and clicking on the "Summer Camp" link. The camp is licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, so we take our jobs quite seriously. Don't let your kids miss out, call us now before all the spots are filled!

We also have our films planned out for the **Movies in The Park** series. Our first showing will be *Field of Dreams*, scheduled for Friday, June 23. On July 21 the mov-



ie will be the animated *Song of the Sea*, and *The Princess Bride* will be shown Friday, August 18.

This series is in partnership with RiverCulture and the Turners Falls High School Music Boosters. The movies are held at Peskeomskut Park in downtown Turners, and start at about 7:30 p.m. RiverCulture will also be presenting musical acts before the movies, so be sure to get to the park early – bring a blanket or lawn chairs!

If your kids want to get prepared for the upcoming soccer season, we'll also be sponsoring **Youth Soccer Clinics** for kids going into grades 3 through 7. The clinics will be held at Highland Park in Millers Falls from June 22 through August 17, 6 to 7:30 p.m., and are the ideal opportunity for your player to work

on his or her skills. Montague residents are \$15 per player, while non-residents are \$20. Please note that these are not drop-in sessions, so plan on playing throughout the summer.

Let's not forget about our **Night Skates**, either. We already had one during the Unity Fest, but mark your calendars for Saturday, July 29 – during the Franklin County Boat Club's "Christmas in July" – and Friday, September 8.

Now that we're talking about September, our annual **Montague Soap Box Races** event is scheduled for Sunday, September 17. To register, log onto www.montague-soapboxraces.com. Start building your carts now!

That is about it for now. Be sure to visit our website and Facebook page for updates, and if you have immediate questions, feel free to call us at (413) 863-3216. Also log on to www.riverculture.org for a full calendar of events in Montague this summer. It is going to be a packed summer of wonderful events, so check it out! We will talk to you in July!

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

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Aquí se habla español

Esta es la página mensual en español del *Montague Reporter*. Aquí podrá encontrar cuestiones acerca de la comunidad hispana en el área, eventos de interés, curiosidades, y noticias mundiales en español. Si quiere participar o compartir alguna sugerencia, envíenos un correo electrónico a spanish@montaguereporter.org.



La música mexicana de nuevo de moda

Por VICTORIA MAÍLLO DE AGUILERA

GREENFIELD – Si ustedes son seguidores del programa nocturno de Jimmy Fallon habrán visto la actuación de un hasta entonces casi desconocido cantante llamado Peso Pluma presentando su disco *Ella baila sola*. El joven se presentó en el programa nocturno con un peculiar corte de pelo y acompañado de cinco músicos que tocaban guitarras eléctricas y bajos. En este famoso programa presentó su canción cantada completamente en español que cuenta una historia de un amor peculiar en la forma musical que es la reinención del corrido típico mexicano, el corrido tumbado.

Pero, ¿quién es Peso Pluma? Peso Pluma, también conocido como Doble P, es un cantante originario de Jalisco, México. Tiene 24 años y su verdadero nombre es Hassan Emilio Kabande Laija. Empezó a tocar la guitarra y a escribir canciones cuando era un adolescente, siempre inspirado en las canciones populares de la música regional mexicana.

Doble P denomina su estilo como *corridos tumbados*, es decir, corridos con un toque de música urbana, *trap*, *hip hop*, y una pizca de *reggaeton*. El corrido tumbado lleva en sus letras contenido más explícito sobre sexo, drogas e incluso violencia que en los corridos tradicionales en los que estos temas se esconden tras ciertos eufemismos.

Peso Pluma ya supera a Bad Bunny en números de reproducciones en Spotify y YouTube. Bizarrap, el productor musical que está de moda por haber creado las últimas canciones con Shakira y sobre su ruptura amorosa con Piqué, ya cuenta con él para trabajar juntos en próximas canciones.

Si están leyendo estas líneas y no son muy duchos en música latina o mexicana se estarán preguntando, ¿qué es esto de música regional mexicana? Seguro que todos ustedes han oído alguna vez la palabra *ma-*



Grupo de mariachi tradicional.

riachi, esas bandas que ustedes habrán podido ver y escuchar en alguna celebración en restaurantes mexicanos de la zona o incluso en muchas películas de Hollywood.

Aunque la música tradicional mexicana es un poco más complicada a la hora de definirla que solamente el mariachi. La música regional mexicana está formada por diferentes subgéneros como el *mariachi*, la *banda*, el *corrido*, y el *norteño*.

Son géneros diferentes, pero todos ellos son corales. Tienen y han tenido mucho éxito tanto en México como en los estados de la frontera de Estados Unidos donde viven miles de inmigrantes llegados del país vecino.

Uno de los grupos más famosos, son Los Tigres del Norte, que han grabado más de 80 discos y recibido la distinción de los Grammy Latinos. Los Tigres del Norte reconocen a Johnny Cash como uno de los músicos en los que encuentran inspiración ya que sus canciones contaban también historias. Algunas de sus canciones, como “Contrabando y traición,” han originado controversia ya que aparecen temas del llamado Narcocorrido que tratan temas de drogas y alusiones explícitas a contrabandistas, aunque ellos siempre han negado tener nada que ver con estas actividades.

Los Tigres del Norte revitalizaron el género y lo hicieron de nuevo popular entre la gente joven que llenaba sus conciertos.

Otra famosa cantante del género tradicional mexicano, en este caso el ranchero, es Paquita la del Barrio. Sus letras luchan contra la cultura y la violencia machista y son himnos feministas para muchas mujeres. Su más famosa canción, “Rata de dos patas,” en este caso una canción no dedicada a su ex amante como muchos piensan, sino al expresidente Carlos Salinas de Gortari.

Uno de los más famosos cantantes actuales de mariachi es Christian Nodal, y también el inspirador del nuevo género mariachi en el que se miran jóvenes como Doble P. Es natural del estado de Sonora en México. Ha ganado tres Grammy Latinos y dos Billboard Latinos. Su álbum más famoso es *Me dejé llevar*.

En 2017 con su primer sencillo “Adiós, amor” con más de 1,200 millones de reproducciones en YouTube. Viene de una familia de profesionales de la música y de pequeño aprendió a tocar la trompeta, el piano y la guitarra. Ha cantado con el español David Bisbal por lo que también triunfa en Europa y en Miami.

El precursor de los corridos tumbados es Natanael Cano, un joven cantante mexicano de 22 años con el cuello tatuado y que aparece en las secciones de noticias por los problemas y peleas en las que se ve envuelto. Su fama es tan grande que ya está ganando unos dos millones de dólares por actuación. Ha actuado recientemente en el Wizink Center en Madrid con muchísimo éxito acompañado de los instrumentos tradicionales: guitarras, trompetas y acordeones.

Fusiona la música regional mexicana con el *trap*. En el año 2020 fue entrevistado por Jimmy Kimmel y fue participante de una promoción publicitaria de Univisión para instar a los latinos a participar en el censo demográfico.

Y no puedo olvidarme de otro grupo que ha reinventado el género

OPINIÓN

Noticias locales

Por VICTORIA MAÍLLO DE AGUILERA

TURNERS FALLS – Como supongo que ustedes ya saben Asociación de profesionales de la educación en Gill-Montague (GMEA) ha estado trabajando sin un nuevo contrato desde julio de 2022, ya que pese a los esfuerzos que se han llevado a cabo, no se ha conseguido llegar a un contrato satisfactorio para ambas partes por lo que el contrato anterior se ha extinguido.

GMEA insta al comité escolar de GMRSD a que reconozca el valor de sus empleados para seguir siendo competitivo en el mercado laboral mediante la financiación adecuada de sus contratos. (*Nota del autor: Perteneczo al claustro académico, y soy miembro de GMEA.*)

GMEA solicita aumentos salariales del 2%, 3%, 3%, y 3% para los maestros durante cuatro años, a partir de 2022-23, solamente una diferencia del 2% respecto a lo que ofrece el comité escolar.

Los maestros de GMRSD están mal pagados en comparación con otros distritos lo que hace que exista una rotación de maestros que afecta a los estudiantes y a su educación. La tasa de retención de maestros es del 77%, un 8 ó 9% más baja que en otros distritos.

¿Cómo pueden ustedes mostrar su apoyo a los educadores de GMRSD?

• Pueden asistir a la reunión del

comité escolar. Si además quiere ir más allá y se sienten cómodos haciéndolo, puede enviar un correo electrónico al secretario John Irminger (john.irminger@gmrso.org) mostrando su interés en hacer un comentario público.

• Escriba una carta al comité escolar de Gill-Montague a este periódico. Estoy encantada de recibir sus misivas en español.

• Sigán la cuenta de GMEA en facebook. “Gill Montague Education Association Public Outreach.”

• Contacte con la asociación en gmeacontact@gmail.com.

¿Qué es lo que los maestros están haciendo para reivindicar sus derechos?

• Los miembros de la asociación GMEA han votado para comenzar una acción llamada en inglés *work to rule* (trabajar para gobernar) en respuesta al fracaso del comité regional de Gill-Montague para llegar a un acuerdo de un contrato justo.

• Los educadores solamente trabajan las horas y las tareas descritas en el contrato actual. Esto significa que entran y salen en sus horarios establecidos, no antes ni después.

• No se ofrecen como voluntarios para tareas que no estén descritas en el contrato.

• Usan el tiempo de preparación de clases solamente para preparar clases, no para otras tareas como la cobertura de maestros ausentes.

• Proporcionan ayuda a los estudiantes solamente durante el horario escolar.

norteño: Grupo Frontera. El grupo de chicanos han colaborado con el famoso cantante Bud Bunny y llegaron a estar en el número cinco del Billboard. Han participado también en el festival de música de Coachella donde tuvieron un auténtico éxito de público y crítica.

Así pues, la música tradicional mexicana se ha revitalizado y ya no se escucha solamente en México o en Texas. Durante años la música tradicional mexicana era solamente para mayores y campesinos y no era considerada *cool* por el público de México o Estados Unidos. Ahora ha vuelto a estar de moda y forma parte de las listas de Spotify de jóvenes de Estados Unidos, México y Europa. Los jóvenes latinos de Massachusetts también prefieren a los cantantes que he nombrado anteriormente y se sienten cercanos a ellos porque comparten unas mismas raíces y cultura.

Los nuevos cantantes mexicanos ya no llevan el traje charro ni los grandes sombreros, tampoco las

pañolotas en la cabeza que eran el símbolo del movimiento *cholo* de Loas Angeles de hace años. Ahora los músicos llevan zapatillas de tenis y gorras de béisbol, muchos cordones de oro y marcas y coches de lujo para aparentar y enseñar su éxito. Tatuajes en sus brazos, caras y cuellos. Y no podemos olvidarnos de los cortes de pelo con diferentes capas que son un símbolo para las nuevas generaciones.

La música tradicional con sus historias cantadas les inspira para crear canciones con un lenguaje nuevo y acerca de temas que les afectan. A los jóvenes latinos les gusta esta música porque la entienden y porque forma parte de su propia identidad y no se sienten identificados con cantantes como Taylor Swift.

Por supuesto, siempre hay voces puristas que se muestran contrarias al giro que está dando la música tradicional y consideran que es una falta de respeto a la tradición mexicana. Aún así es difícil parar este tremendo tirón popular.



Peso Pluma es un cantante originario de Jalisco, México.

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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, JUNE 15

Montague Village Store, Montague Center: *Big Destiny*. Free. 5:30 p.m.

Academy of Music, Northampton: *David Cross*. \$. 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Sarah Bernstein & Kid Millions, Gold Dust, Luxor Rentals*. 9 p.m.

FRIDAY, JUNE 16

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *When the Mind's Free*, staged reading. By donation. 6:30 p.m.

Mt. Toby Friends Meetinghouse, Leverett: *Joe Jenks*. \$. 7 p.m.

Bookends, Florence: *Fran, Ruth Garbus, Steady Lean, Magick Lantern*. \$. 7 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Souls of Mischief, Subtex, Brandie Blaze, Dos, DJ Rec*. \$. 8:30 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Belloweer, Warm, Necralant*. \$. 8:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, JUNE 17

Pines Theater, Northampton: *Gin Blossoms, Toad the Wet Sprocket, Juliana Hatfield, Kay Hanley*, more. \$. 1 p.m.

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *The Wonder Yearz*. Free. 7 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *When the Mind's Free*, staged reading. By donation. 7 p.m.

John Doe Jr., Greenfield: *Connect Four, Nick Neuberg, Kevin Murray, Hedgewitch*. \$. 8 p.m.

The Drake, Amherst: *Mal Devisa, Gods Wisdom*. \$. 8 p.m.

Hutghi's At The Nook, Westfield: *Shirese, Mountain Movers, Gluebag, Red Herring*. \$. 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, JUNE 18

Bombyx Center, Florence: *The Niels, Kalliope Jones*. \$. 6 p.m.

Next Stage Arts, Putney, VT: *Sia Tolno & Afro Dead*. \$. 6 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Oozie, The PAs, The Mighty Suicide Squirrels, Tombstone*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

MONDAY, JUNE 19

Tree House Brewing Company, South Deerfield: *Jeff Tweedy, Le Ren*. \$. 7 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Open mic*. Free. 8:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Wes Brown and Friends*. Free. 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, JUNE 22

Energy Park, Greenfield: *R&D, the frost heaves and hales, Boys of the Landfill*. Free. 6 p.m.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Mojo Wagon, Beau Sass-*

er, Lauren Fleit, Kade Parkin, Brother Sal. \$. 8:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, JUNE 23

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *Electric Carnival Band*. Free. 7 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Cajun Country Karaoke and Two-Step Night*. Free. 7 p.m.

Tanglewood, Lenox: *Steve Miller Band, Bruce Hornsby*. \$. 7 p.m.

Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: *Tree, Death Ray Vision, Medicated Savage, Hero and the Horror, Carried by Vi*. \$. 8 p.m.

Hutghi's At The Nook, Westfield: *Anthropophagous, Corrode, Yambag, Wormface*. \$. 8 p.m.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY, JUNE 23-25

Franklin County Fairgrounds, Greenfield: *Little Feat, Sierra Ferrell, The Wood Brothers, Rubblebucket, Felice Brothers, Sandy Bailey, Winterpills, St. Paul & the Broken Bones*, many more. \$. See www.greenriverfestival.com for info.

SATURDAY, JUNE 24

Pioneer Valley Brewery: *Rock 201*. Free. 7 p.m.

Race Street Live, Holyoke: *Jungle Brothers, Edo-G, special guests*. \$. 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, JUNE 25

John Doe Jr., Greenfield: *Meow, Old Pam, Noise Nomads*. 4 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28

Bombyx Center, Florence: *Vieux Farka Touré*. \$. 7 p.m.

THURSDAY, JUNE 29

Energy Park, Greenfield: *Kathy Sylvester, Austin & Elliott, Small Change*. Free. 6 p.m.

Forbes Library, Northampton: Flywheel Arts presents *Christa Joy, OcCult Classic*. Free, outdoors. 6 p.m.

FRIDAY, JUNE 30

Nova Arts, Keene: *Faun Fables, Christa Joy & the Honeybees*. \$. 7 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Bag Lady, Dance Cancer, Leave It Behind, Unagi*. \$. 8 p.m.

Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: *Spouse, Bunnies, Deathnave*. \$. 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, JULY 1

Downtown Turners Falls: Antenna Cloud Farm presents *Music Walk*, feat. *blood drum spirit, Aisha Burns, Lily-Rakia Chandler, Travis LaPlante*, more. Free. 2 p.m.

Deja Brew Pub, Wendell: *Deja Brew Meltdown* feat. *The Humans Being, Rabbit's Foot, Immortal Jellyfish, Whalom Park, The Faith Ann Band, Splash Nebula*. \$. 2 p.m.

Tanglewood, Lenox: *Elvis Costello & The Imposters, Nick Lowe & Los Straitjackets*. \$. 7 p.m.

looking forward...

SATURDAY, JULY 8

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Rare DM, DJ Gus* (mem. Boy Harsher), *LUCY*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, JULY 13

Dream Away Lodge, Becket: *The Lentils, Lina Tullgren*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, JULY 20

Daily Operation, Easthampton: *Swirlies, Frankie Rose*. \$. 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, JULY 23

Antenna Cloud Farm, Gill: *Sam Amidon*. \$. 7 p.m.

SATURDAY, JULY 29

1794 Meetinghouse, New Salem: *Patty Larkin*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 11

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Sweeping Promises*. \$. 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 25

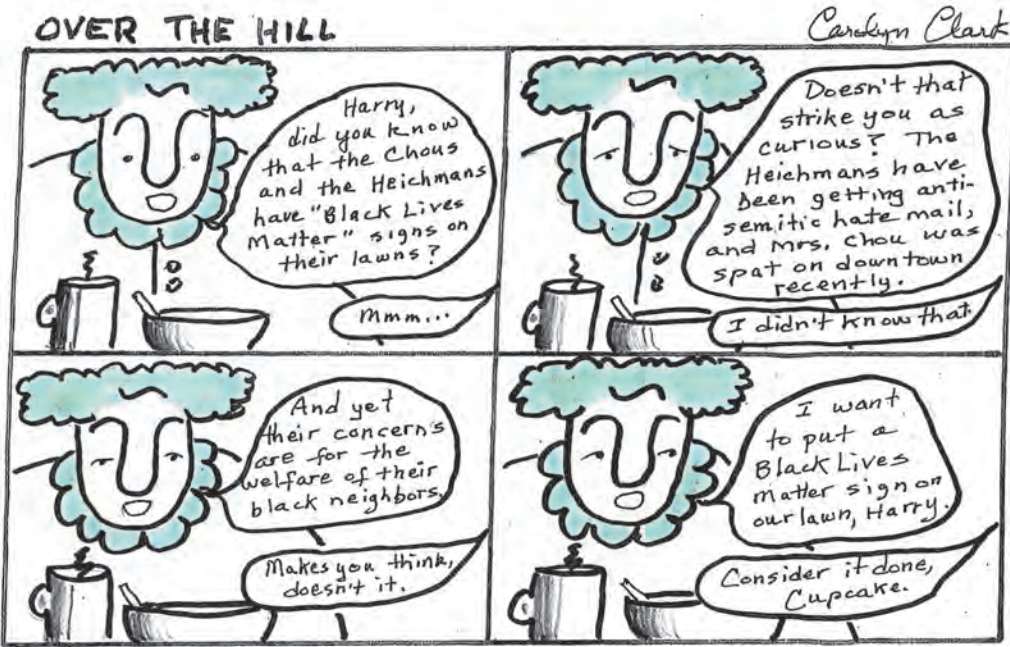
Nova Arts, Keene: *William Tyler & the Impossible Truth, Garcia Peoples*. \$. 7 p.m.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

Palladium, Worcester: *Godspeed You! Black Emperor*. \$. 7 p.m.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Henry Rollins*, spoken word. \$. 8 p.m.



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Lily Sumner, Aaron Neupane, Ivy O'Donnell, and Brenna Guilbault enjoy the new map.



Mural project leader Pam Grimard stands by the kiosk at the Sheffield Elementary playground.

MAP from page A1 purchase additional paint supplies. A staff member could “purchase” a state for \$20, or just simply donate to the project. The group raised over \$1,000 in this way.

For weeks, Grimard organized a cadre of about 16 core staff in the creation of the map itself. After a long day teaching, a half-dozen staff members would put on their painting clothes, get down on the asphalt, and paint the states until 5 p.m. each night, weather permitting.

After several weeks, despite many days of inclement weather, the Memorial Map was completed. It was dedicated last Friday at a ceremony at the school attended by classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, a counselor, and the principal.

Fortin’s adult son Jordan also drove up from Connecticut with

his wife and children for the event. He was thrilled, he said, to see his mother honored in this way, and grateful for all the effort that went into creating the schoolyard map.

“I attended the Federal Street School in Greenfield as a child, and there was a map like this on the playground,” said Fortin. “I could name every state and capital, and I developed a big interest in geography as a result. It was inspirational!”

Teaching staff report that they are enthusiastic about the potential of this school yard map.

Special education teacher Rue Walthers noted that “this map really gives the children a hands-on – and feet-on – way to understand the size and shape and location of the states. It provides an engaging, outdoor, kinesthetic way to learn, which is fun for everyone and par-

ticularly effective for students with learning challenges.”

“I’ve been thinking about a lot of different games we can create for the children to use with this map during recess,” Walther added. “I know there are also many map-related games that can be downloaded from the internet. There is so much we can do with this map!”

Special education teacher Robin Whitman suggested that a “geography bee” would also be fun and challenging.

Fourth grade teacher Amy Eichorn, who is taking a graduate course on the US Constitution and has been talking a lot with her students about the states, said she believes that the map will be helpful in refreshing their geographical knowledge and reinforcing what

they have been discussing in class.

It turns out that the students also had some ideas of their own. They were allowed to explore the map at recess the following Monday, and before the school staff had a chance to suggest or direct an activity, a group of fourth graders had invented their own map-based version of Simon Says. “Go to Pennsylvania!” shouted Cameron McCaffrey, and a half dozen children raced to where they thought Pennsylvania was on the map. Some had to check the map in the kiosk to find its location, as the map on the blacktop does not provide the states’ names.

According to fourth grader Ed-

die Pfisterer, “Kids like a challenge, and this map will help us learn.”

At the dedication ceremony, Grimard received applause for her amazing efforts, and a laugh from the crowd during her brief remarks.

“Eileen, we did it!” she said. “We miss you, but you will forever be in our hearts – and always on recess duty with us!”

Karen Guillette works as a substitute teacher in Gill-Montague district schools, often at Sheffield Elementary, in addition to writing for the Montague Reporter.

GUILLETTE PHOTOS



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