

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 21 – NO. 31

also serving Erving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

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EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

JUNE 22, 2023

Solar Developer Asks DPU to Overrule Locals, Treat Energy Storage Plant as a Public Utility



“Local concerns,” says local biologist Bill Stubblefield, “are always considered to be ‘NIMBY’ concerns, however justified they are.”

By SARAH ROBERTSON

WENDELL – Local residents discussed plans for an industrial-scale battery storage facility on Wendell Depot Road at an information session hosted by the planning board at the town library Tuesday night. The project has been in the works for three years, and now New Leaf Energy is petitioning the state for an exemption to Wendell’s zoning bylaws in order to proceed.

“My disappointment with this project is these developers have come into town, disregarded our zoning bylaws, our open space plans, our wetland bylaws,” open space committee chair Daniel Leahy said at the meeting. “Every time you bring something up, they basically dismiss it.”

About 25 people attended the meeting, and many ex-

pressed concerns about the size of the proposed facility, its proximity to water resources, chemical safety issues, and its potential financial impact on the town.

“It’s the scale of this thing that’s so daunting,” said Steven Gross. “We don’t know how dangerous it is – we don’t know if they can or cannot take care of things when they go wrong. But we can imagine anything of that size will be a problem.”

Wendell’s zoning bylaws do not allow impervious surfaces larger than 13,000 square feet – a little less than one-third of an acre. The proposed battery storage facility, access roads, and other structures would require clearing around 11 acres of forested land.

Planning board chair Molly Doody said the Wendell project is one of four large-scale battery facilities in the

see **BATTERY** page A6

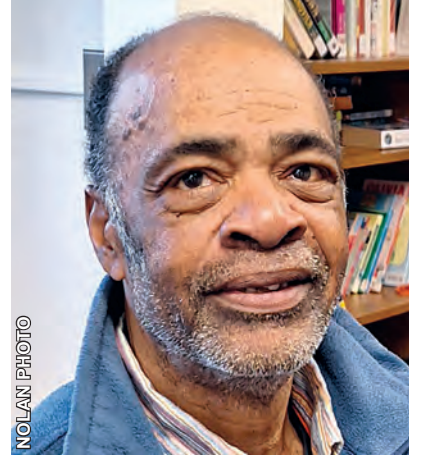
Bembury Steps Back After Four Terms on Erving Board

By KATIE NOLAN

ERVING – “Twelve years is enough,” says Erving selectboard member Bill Bembury. “I think I did a good job, but it is time for new faces and new ideas.” He is retiring from the selectboard when his term ends on June 30, after serving three consecutive terms, from 2014 to the present, and one earlier term from 2003 to 2006.

Bembury grew up in Boston. Over 40 years ago, he decided to move to western Massachusetts, and transferred from his job at UMass Boston to UMass Amherst. “I like people, I like adventures,” he explains. His family and friends were shocked that he wanted to move to “the country” and asked him, “Where are you going?”

After living in Amherst for five years, he and his wife, Linda Downs-Bembury, bought the house on Church Street in Erving where they still live.



Bill Bembury

Bembury says the early days living in a small town were “a little bit of a culture shock.” When he first moved to town, he was surprised when so many people seemed to know who he was. “Face it, Bill,” his wife said, “You’re the only Black man in town.”

What he found in Erving, though, was “a real community.”

see **BEMBURY** page A4

The Bridge of Signs?

By JEFF SINGLETON

TURNERS FALLS – Most readers of the *Montague Reporter* no doubt have traveled over the bridge at the northeast end of Avenue A, traversing the Connecticut River and connecting the village

of Turners Falls with the town of Gill. They may not be aware of two signs on one of the bridge’s downstream tower, located on the left as you enter Gill from Turners.

One sign, which dates the completion of the bridge to 1938, calls the structure the “Turners Falls-Gill Bridge.” The other, commemorating a “rehabilitation” in 2014, rehabilitates the name to the “Montague-Gill Bridge.”

At the time the rehab was completed the dueling signs attracted little attention. Montague residents, businesses, and town officials were mostly glad the bridge had reopened after four years of limited access to the downtown Turners district. But in 2020 the historical

see **SIGNS** page A4

GILL SELECTBOARD

Senator: ‘I’ll Be Damned If We Lose More People’

By KATE SAVAGE

GILL – At Tuesday’s Gill selectboard meeting, state senator Jo Comerford shared her vision of sustained economic growth for rural western Massachusetts. “The population numbers for us are very, very stark in the next census,” she told the board and gathered residents. “That’s one of the reasons I’m focusing on [the] elemental building blocks of economic development – I’ll be damned if we lose more people.”

Comerford discussed proposals to increase state support for services that can strain the resources of small towns like Gill, such as schools, transportation, housing, and administrative needs.

“I’m glad to say that funding for rural schools is getting traction,” Comerford said, pointing to \$15 million in rural school aid in the most recent budget proposal. This would be up from \$5.5 million in the current year, but short of the \$60 million recommended in the Rural Schools Commission’s 2022 report, she said, which is why she and state representative Natalie Blais have filed a Rural Schools Act, which would codify the commission’s 35 recommendations.

see **GILL** page A5

High School Sports Week: ‘Rebuilding Year’ After All



After the game-ending catch in the MIAA Division 5 Final last Friday at UMass Amherst, Greenfield Green Wave pitcher MacKenzie Paulin and catcher Ainslee Flynn celebrate at the mound, while the Turners Falls Thunder’s Madi Liimatainen meets Coach Liimatainen at first base.

By MATT ROBINSON

TURNERS FALLS – Last Friday, June 16, the Turners Falls Softball Thunder lost to the Green Wave of Greenfield, 10-2, in the MIAA Division 5 state championship game played at UMass Amherst’s Sortino diamond.

But that’s not the main story. The bigger story is how they got there.

After Blue Thunder lost their first two games this season by a combined margin of 25 to 3, Coach Gary Mullins was pretty frank with me about the prospects of the 2023 Turners Falls softball program.

Even after they outscored their opponents in the next three games 50 to 1, Mullins was still realistic.

Then a funny thing happened. The younger girls began making plays, and Madison Liimatainen began zeroing in on her 500th strikeout. It suddenly looked as if Powertown might have a winning season after all. In fact, as the sea-

son progressed, their fan base began to expect that Turners was destined to go far into the postseason.

Fortunately – or unfortunately – the Turners Falls softball program is like the ‘80s Celtics, or the Brady-era Patriots. They are expected to win the championship every year.

By the end of the regular season, Blue had won the Franklin West conference title, and were seeded number one in the Class D Western Mass tournament run by the Pioneer Valley Interscholastic Athletic Conference (PVIAC). They breezed through those playoffs, scoring 29 runs while letting up only 2, and winning another Western Mass championship.

They then entered the MIAA’s statewide tournament seeded third in their division, and battled their way all the way into the state championship game.

I’ve been pretty vocal about my disdain for the MIAA’s new and

see **SPORTS** page A5

LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

One Month to Weigh Gift Of Land for ‘Town Forest’

By GEORGE BRACE

At their meeting on Tuesday, Leverett’s selectboard heard a proposal for the town to accept a gift of land for the establishment of a “town forest.” The board also conducted, among other business, a dog hearing.

Landowner Bruce Spencer presented an offer to grant 147 acres of land near Lake Wyola, 353 North Leverett Road, to the town as a gift. Spencer and others have actively managed the property as a woodlot since 1973, and it would come attached with a conservation restriction currently held by the Franklin Land Trust.

The former Leverett resident, explaining his offer, said he had been

“treated very well” by the town when he lived there, and outlined his support for the concept of a town forest.

Asked about the costs involved, Spencer said the land currently has a positive income from the sale of firewood, which “keeps building up,” and that he would also make sure to “leave some funds to start” if the town accepted the gift. Future revenue from the land would be split between the town and the land trust.

Spencer added that he felt the land would provide a value to the town that is not monetary, and that there was also a value in educating young people on a well-managed forested property. “How do you count the value of people hunting,

see **LEVERETT** page A3

Yup, One More, and Then Biweekly. Thanks for Asking! Yes, We’re Excited.

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Founded by
Arthur Evans Harry Brandt David Detmold
August 2002

Call for Artists: Third Wrap Edition

People have probably been wrapping up presents in the very attractive pages of our eye-catching little newspaper for many years. In 2020, we decided to make those packages look even cooler by inviting seven local artists to design pages to be used exclusively as recyclable and unique wrapping paper. The project also became a fundraiser for our little independent, non-profit newspaper.

During Thanksgiving week, when we normally skip publication, we printed the Wrapping Paper Edition. Thanks to sales of this special issue, we were able to raise nearly \$4,000 toward the newspaper's operation. In 2022, we also produced a Wrapping Paper Edition just before the holiday gift-giving season, and we were able to raise \$2,200, which was less than the pandemic year sales, but still significant.

We are happy to announce a call for artists for another Wrapping Paper Edition for 2023. Artists from western Mass and southern Vermont are invited to submit designs and proposals for wrapping paper pages from now until the September 1 deadline.

We will give each artist the space of two full adjacent pages for their design, making a double page measuring approximately 20 by 22 inches. Artists may design in full color or in black and white, and we'd love to get proposals from tattoo artists, comic illustrators, graffiti specialists, painters, street sketchers, kids, photographers, geometry nerds, type designers – all are encouraged to send us ideas for cool, original wrapping paper pages!

Once again we are able to offer a \$200 stipend to each artist, thanks

to the generosity of a couple of anonymous donors. Each will also receive five copies of the Wrapping Paper Edition for their personal use.

Sales of our Wrapping Paper Edition will be available between Thanksgiving and the end of December, in local stores and online, at the special price of \$5 each or five for \$20.

Artists and designers, you may make a proposal or submit a design to us until the September 1 deadline. Send your name, address, phone number and your proposal – or completed design – for a unique wrapping paper page, to features@montaguereporter.org with "Wrap" in the subject line.

If you are making a proposal rather than submitting a design, please include three samples of finished work that represents your style created in the medium you are planning to work with.

This year, we will have a separate Youth category for artists who are 15 years old or younger, with at least one finalist selected from this group. Please tell us if your work belongs in the Youth Category when submitting it.

All proposals and submissions are due September 1. Selected artists will be contacted on Monday, September 11. You will then have the rest of September and October to get your design finished.

For more information about the project, please contact features editor Nina Rossi at (413) 834-8800 or features@montaguereporter.org.

If you are a shop or business owner who would like to sell copies of the Wrapping Paper Edition, please get in touch with our business manager Garth Shaneyfelt at garth@montaguereporter.org.



Tom Bergeron, who will mark 20 years as Montague's highway boss next February, stands in front of a former ambulance his department converted into a sewer-camera-mobile. (Useful for finding those foreign objects, no doubt...) On the side of the truck, and on the back of Montague DPW t-shirts, is a logo designed by Bergeron's son, a firefighter and paramedic who does graphic design on the side.

Letters to the Editors

More Than Sharing the Common

In recognition of Native Americans having their land usurped by early settlers by war and deceitful treaty agreements, I presented Article 24 for the Wendell Annual Town Meeting warrant to simply address the issue. The article was a resolution, not a law but a show of support and a leaning towards a most basic reconciliation.

The article stated the town was willing to share, not cede, the town common with related Natives from original local tribes, a public proclamation that no matter the current ownership of that small town space there was open-minded,

open-handed recognition of duality of ownership and about a Native presence in this area.

Many thoughtful responses and concerns arose, too many considerations, so the article was passed over. This meant further attention and revisions were in order if concerned residents presented interest. Some said there were already too few volunteers required for official boards and yet another committee would sap from that strength. Some said anyone could already request to use the common.

It is logical that the cross-section of interested or uninvolved residents who care about the injustice of our

history, especially those who espouse Native guardianship of the land, would come forward to join the proposed committee, jointly composed of residents and Natives.

At last year's Pocumtuck Homelands Festival, a well-attended gathering in Turners Falls, a speaker responded to the question, "What can we do?" The answer was to "Just do something." Any Wendell resident interested in moving the process forward can contact the Wendell selectboard at (978) 544-3395.

Nina Keller
Wendell

Snapping Turtles and More

I enjoy and admire unique photography of the wildlife in our backyard. I have an awesome idea and suggestion: how about once in while having a small collage of wildlife photos taken by contributors in our community?

There was a rare shot of a turtle with a smile on last week's Page B1 headline. Kudos to the photographer who took the fantastic shot of this turtle, near Migratory Way in Turners Falls. It made my day, because you don't see that every day.

Like I was once quoted in a press release, don't take life for granted, enjoy life and look around, take things slow – you never know what you'll see in our community. I mentioned that at the Great Falls Discovery Center at my photo show (*Photo Beat, Past and Present: Moving Forward in Time, Capturing the Moment*).

I enjoy everyone's writing, photos, and art work in the MR. Matter of fact, we have lots of fantastic photographers, writers, artists, etc. who contribute to our community paper. I encourage people of all ages to help out. You never know.

One of the many reasons I enjoy combining photography with writing is because it tells a story, a characteristic flow in the way of what's going on behind the scenes of "faces and places," etc., in our community. I

have a different perspective eye and vision, as a photo-journalist with a form of autism. Also, I have anxiety and writing and doing photography relaxes me.

While multitasking, corresponding on the other side of the river as a resident of Greenfield to get a national agriculture trade magazine called *Country Folks* the latest scope behind the scenes of local farm life in Franklin County, an area that has a rich and proud history and deep roots of farming, I always manage to spring back to our community paper, the *Montague Reporter*, reporting on the scene as the photo beat guy in our community.

One of my favorite local writers is the late Frances Hemond, and also Rosalie Bolton –they both told me they enjoyed my seeing my photos in the MR, and encouraged me to continue what I enjoy and love doing. Giving me advice and feedback put the icing on the cake.

I have questions for the person who took the photo of the turtle: What type of turtle is it? Also, does the turtle have family? Are you considering taking more photos for the *Montague Reporter*? I encourage you – you've got a good eye for seeing things like this.

Joe R. Parzych
Greenfield



*Pictured:
winning
2020 and
2022 designs
by Emma
Kohlmann,
Sunny Allis,
and Hannah
Brookman.*

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Compiled by NINA ROSSI

A big, huge **thank you to Emily Alling**, who has been editing the Montague Police Log for the *Montague Reporter* for ten years now!

Alling, a volunteer, also compiles our popular Police Log Retrospectives. Over the years she has curated incidents involving foxes, dogs, skunks, possum, and raccoons; items in the road, air, water, and on the ice; men without shirts; dumpsters, bridges, and shopping carts; hang-up calls, noises, odors, and more.

The Montague Libraries welcome youth to participate in a **Youth Advisory Committee** this Friday, June 23 to give their input into programming. Teens ages 11 through 16 are invited to the Carnegie Library from 4 to 4:45 p.m. to share their ideas and suggestions. Snacks will be provided. The committee meets on the fourth Friday of each month.

Every Saturday morning through August 26, the Greenfield Garden Cinema will show a **free kids' movie** at 10 a.m. for children and their parents or guardians. These movies have been selected to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Warner Bros. this year.

The June 24 screening is *Small-foot* (2018), July 1's is *DC League of Superpets* (2022), and July 8's is *The Witches* (1990).

The National Spiritual Alliance in Lake Pleasant will hold its monthly **Psychic Fair** this Saturday, June 24 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Book a reading with a medium by visiting spiritualallianceusa.org.

LaunchSpace, a 13,000-square-foot makerspace at the Orange Innovation Center, is hosting its first annual **ReMake Festival** this Saturday, June 24 from noon to 4 p.m. to show fun and exciting ways to repair, reuse, and upcycle household items. There will be workshops, repair clinics, demonstrations, maker challenges, and an auction. This is a free family event for all ages.

Dane Donato will lead a free **Penny Whistle Workshop** at the LAVA Center in Greenfield this Saturday, June 24 from 1 to 3 p.m. Participants will receive an introduction to this easily-played folk instrument, learn about its history, and get technical tips about playing and purchasing a whistle.

You don't need to have a whistle to take the workshop. If you want one, Donato will bring a limited number of Irish-made Walton brass whistles in the key of D, available first-come first-serve at a cost of \$10 each. Contact info@thelavacenter.org or (413) 376-8118 for more information.

The themes from *Star Wars* and other movie favorites will play under the stars during **"Music from the Movies,"** a concert by the Pioneer Valley Symphony this Sunday, June 25 at 5 p.m. at the Northfield Golf Course as part of the town of Northfield's 350th anniversary celebration.

Organizers have designed a "Tanglewood-style" evening where audience members can bring their own picnics. All seating will be on the lawn, so bringing blankets and chairs is a must. There will be food truck offerings by Myers Catering

and All Things Maple Fried Dough. Rain or shine. For more information, visit www.northfield350.org.

LifePath's **Healthy Living Program** invites community members living with challenging health conditions to meet on Zoom on the last Monday of each month with area professionals who share about various health topics. These "Wellness Unplugged" presentations will be followed by discussions about practical ways to apply the information.

On June 26, the topic is "The Other Reason You Struggle to Eat 'Healthy'" and "How to Create Confidence and Ease in Eating." The group meets from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Register at www.tinyurl.com/healthy-disc.

A **Summer Reading kickoff** on the Carnegie Library lawn at 11 a.m. next Tuesday, June 27 will include live music by Carrie Ferguson, activities, and snacks.

Don't forget about the **Antenna Cloud Farm Music Walk**, coming up on Saturday, July 1 from 2 to 8 p.m. in Turners Falls. This free, village-wide festival promises to "showcase an array of innovative and virtuosic local artists, and celebrate local businesses and public spaces."

Start at 2 p.m. with live music and family-friendly art-making at Unity Park, and then join in a children's sidewalk costume parade at 2:45 p.m. along with musicians and DCR park staff along Second Street to the Discovery Center. Make music while you walk with instruments that will be provided.

At 3 p.m. enjoy outdoor music at the Center with saxophonist Travis LaPlante and enjoy a story walk featuring David McPhail's children's book *Mole Music*. Guests are also invited to explore QR codes at "artist discovery listening stations" throughout town.

A Music Walk String Quartet plays in Spinner Park at 4 p.m. and at 5 p.m., Lily-Rakia Chandler will

fill Peskeomskut Park with "love and liberation in musical practice," followed by violinist and singer Aisha Burns at 6 p.m. and blood drum spirit at 7 p.m.

All performances and events are free, wheelchair-accessible, and open to all. The rain date is Sunday, July 2. More information is available at www.antennacloudfarm.com.

The Montague Center Firefighters Association will hold their **annual bonfire** on Monday, July 3 at the Montague Center ballfield. A food concession stand will be set up, and monetary donations will be accepted to offset the cost of building the bonfire. The fire will be lit at dusk. This event has been a tradition since the 1960s! Rain date is Tuesday, July 4.

The **Northfield Farmers Market** happens every Thursday from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. outside Fiddleheads Gallery at 105 Main Street. They are looking for vintage cars to be shown, in case you happen to have one you would like to showcase. If you buy from a vendor at the market, you will receive a ticket for a raffle at the gallery, drawn on the last Thursday of the month, for a \$20 coupon to use at the market.

MassDOT wants your input on a **survey about transportation management**.

Connecticut and New Hampshire are divided into regions, each headed by a "mobility manager" who helps older adults, people with disabilities, and others who need rides to learn about transportation options. These managers also help local organizations collaborate to fill gaps in service, and can start new transportation programs.

MassDOT is exploring whether this system would be beneficial for Massachusetts, or whether something else would work better here. Take the survey at tinyurl.com/transboss to share your thoughts

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

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**FACES &
PLACES**



JOE R. PARZYCH PHOTO

Local photojournalist Joe R. Parzych checked out the 47th Bernardston Gas Engine Show, Flea Market & Craft Fair last month at Pratt Field in Bernardston, an annual fundraiser for the United Church of that town. Crowds, and crowds of tractors, turned out on Memorial Day Weekend. "Great weather, great food, lots of turnout, as far as the eye can see," Joe wrote. Above: a vendor operates a gas-powered popcorn-popping machine.

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people hiking, walking?" he asked.

Resident Isaiah Robison questioned the move to reduce the town's taxable private land, and pointed out that the parcel was already under a conservation restriction. Along with the lost tax revenue, Robison argued, granting the land to the town would also take away a potential income opportunity for working people if it remained private, and an opportunity for younger people to learn how to manage forested property.

Robison lauded Spencer's management of the land, saying he had heard it described by one forester as "perfect," and suggested that perhaps "the right fit" could be found to keep the land in private hands and "have Bruce's legacy live on."

He concluded, however, by saying that "if Bruce trusts the town, I would have to... as well."

Town administrator Marjorie McGinnis said there were two avenues for the town to accept the gift, either through the conservation commission or by a vote at town meeting.

The selectboard decided to deliberate for one month, and to hear from Spencer again before making a decision.

Dog Hearing

The board conducted a dog dangerousness hearing following a complaint of a dog bite on Jackson Hill

Road on May 2. Lisa Warner filed the complaint on May 3, saying she had been bitten by "Odin," a dog owned by Mitchell LaClaire.

Warner provided a statement describing the incident, saying that in addition to the bite, she had been intimidated by the dog previously. Several other residents also testified they had been intimidated while walking on Jackson Hill Road. Neighbor John Johnson said he had witnessed multiple incidents involving Odin, along with being "angrily approached" in his own yard.

Board members, expressing concern over Odin's "escalating" behavior, voted unanimously to declare him a "dangerous dog" and ordered that he be restrained from contact with the public.

Several options for types of restraint were discussed, but it was left to LaClaire to decide what to do, and the matter is scheduled to be looked into again in 30 days.

Other Business

Kestrel Land Trust conservation manager Bridget Likely reported that the trust had closed on property near the center of town known as the Heronemus Conservation Area. Likely thanked the town for approving Community Preservation Act funds for the project at town meeting, and asked the board to sign a conservation restriction, which they did.

The board moved forward on pursuing several grants, including for funding to make a Council on Aging "navigator" position permanent, money for work on the Mill Yard Road bridge, and funding from the state's "Complete Streets" program.

The board signed police union and waste-hauling contracts.

Following the expiration of a two-week notice for owners to claim any abandoned boats at the public access point on Leverett Pond, the board decided to transport any remaining boats to the transfer station and grant an additional one-week grace period for claims. After the week is up, a "free" sign will be placed on any boats remaining, and they will be gradually put in the dumpster, as space allows.

Although some of the boats left at the pond were described as trash, chair Tom Hankinson commented that there were also "some good boats there."

Before the meeting closed, Isaiah Robison initiated a conversation, not on the agenda, about the desire to increase participation and voting at annual town meeting. Town clerk Lisa Stratford noted that Leverett's participation is "enormous" compared to other towns, but it was estimated that fewer than 200 of the town's approximately 1,900 residents regularly show up and vote.

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SIGNS from page A1

commissions of Montague and Gill formally objected to the name change and wrote to the state Department of Transportation (MassDOT) requesting that the more recent sign be removed.

A March 23, 2023 letter from MassDOT to the two historical commissions rejected the request because, according to the commission, removing the newer plaque would undermine the integrity of the concrete to which it is attached.

Conversations with Montague commissioner Ed Gregory, who has been leading the charge to replace the sign, did not reveal why concern about the name change had reached a critical mass approximately six years after the bridge had been completed. He was hesitant to talk about the name change, or the recent MassDOT letter, because he felt the board should lobby "on the QT."

But in 2020, when the two commissions requested that the state remove the 2014 sign, Gregory was more pointed. "I believe it was put up by some bureaucrat in Boston," he told the *Greenfield Recorder*. "The guy was probably never west of the Quabbin Reservoir in his life."

MassDOT's March letter to the Gill historical commission - signed by Patricia Leavenworth, highway director of District Two located in Northampton - says the agency acknowledges that "in previous correspondence, MassDOT agreed to remove this plaque," but explains that upon "subsequent investigation the District has found that removing the plaque would unnecessarily compromise the concrete on which it is installed."

The letter goes on to say that "[w]hile we respect the Historical Commission's concern (which is

shared by the Montague Historical Commission)... [t]he new plaque serves an important purpose to recognize the Commonwealth's \$48 million project to renew the life of this important structure."

Gill commission chair Kit Carpenter told the *Reporter* that her commission discussed the correspondence at its most recent meeting, but decided to "pass the issue on to the town." The chair of the Montague commission, David Brule, told us that the signage issue had been discussed at an April meeting before the letter was received, but was not at its most recent meeting on June 12.

The MassDOT letter notes that the agency was unable to find evidence that the bridge "had been formally named by legislation," but somewhat unexpectedly concludes that "[a]t such a time the bridge is legally named through legislation that includes instruction to erect a plaque, we will remove and replace the plaque accordingly."

In an email shared with the *Reporter* by Greenfield resident Joe Parzych, who has been helping campaign for the plaque's replacement, state representative Natalie Blais wrote that:

"As state legislators, Senator Comerford, Representative Whippis and I will always advocate with state agencies on behalf of our constituents (as we did here) and we understand that this is not the outcome you hoped for. MassDOT did note in their letter that they were unable to establish that the bridge had ever formally been named by legislation. In order for the delegation to consider a legislative solution, it would be necessary to receive a formal request from both the Town of Gill and the Town of Montague."

BEMBURY from page A1

In 2003, when Bembury first considered running for selectboard, people advised him to "wait a bit" and start by serving on a committee, so more people would know him, but he decided to file for the open seat.

He campaigned by knocking on doors "in every house in Erving," and won his first term.

In the early 2000s, when the International Paper Mill closed with no notice to the town, Bembury said he and finance committee members went to talk to IP management, but they were unwilling to talk. The town now owns the vacant and deteriorating mill buildings and has funded testing, planning, and partial cleanup with town money and grants. He regrets that "still, after all these years, there is no resolution."

When he was elected again in 2014, the board was still short one member, and the other member told him she did not want to be chair, so he became chair immediately.

In July 2015, the town's administrative coordinator retired abruptly. Bembury worked as an unpaid volunteer coordinator until early 2016, when Bryan Smith, the current administrative coordinator, was hired. Bembury recalls that he worked at town hall every day, and appreciates the help he got from town hall staff and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments.

"A lot of people came together," he says, but he admits it was a lot of work for a volunteer: "I was pretty beat afterward."

After Smith started as administrative coordinator, he and Bembury worked together to create a smooth transition. "He is one of the most driven and compassionate people I've met here," says

Smith. "He is always available to town employees and community members."

Bembury says he feels good that, when the Baker-Polito administration offered grants and technical help to towns in creating "best financial practices," Erving "jumped right on that." Previously, he says, the finance committee was dysfunctional, and the capital planning committee didn't exist. Now, he says, both are "fully functional."

Bembury also told the *Reporter* he is proud of his part in obtaining the former Lavallee property, near the elementary school and senior center, for building the new library. Although the family had previously said they were not interested in selling the property, Bembury says, "I approached them, thinking, *maybe this is the time*. We negotiated a price, and they sold it."

He says he is "really thrilled" about the construction of suicide-prevention barriers on the French King Bridge. He calls the project "a long haul," working with the state to get the construction started.

Bembury's plans include more service to the town. He is a newly appointed member of the recreation commission - "I got talked into a one-year term," he explains - and will continue in his role as chair of the senior housing committee.

That committee has been active for five years, planning and working on finding a developer to build senior housing on town land near the senior center. The town has published two requests for proposals in past years with no results, but will put out a third in July. Several agencies have already expressed interest, Bembury says: "I'm hoping this time is the charm."

AT LARGE

Stranger in a Strange Land

By CHIPAINSWORTH

NORTHFIELD - The southern border isn't the only place having a migrant crisis. The health care community is still reeling from Baystate Health's inability to acclimate hundreds if not thousands of patients into its system. The CRI migrants were set adrift in 2020 after Baystate bought out four physicians who had founded Connecticut River Internists more than two decades ago.

Doctors are notoriously lousy businessmen. After my father died in 1971, we sold the farm in Deerfield to three physicians who turned it into "Green Acres." I can recall Harry Childs having to rescue one of the docs after he got a tractor stuck in the Deerfield meadows.

CRI trusted people who made promises they didn't keep. Baystate said it would replace them with four physicians of its own on Burnham Road. Instead, Baystate sent one doctor, Catherine Dodds, and a few lesser-qualified medical personnel to care for the needs of thousands.

The dominoes started falling when Dr. Dodds quit. "I should've known better," she said. COVID-19 compounded the problem. After magazines, wall hangings, and plants were removed, the waiting area began to have a cold Eastern European feel to it.

Finally the building was closed and CRI migrants were shuttled over

to Baystate's facility near the Greenfield hospital. I am one of those migrants. In less than four years, I've had four different doctors. The first two - Dr. Dodds and Dr. Sherry Weitzen - left because they were overworked. The third was arrested on charges of possessing kiddie porn, and my current doctor, whom we'll call Dr. John, doesn't bother wearing a stethoscope.

Why should he? He hasn't touched me in two visits. He's never checked my heart or listened to my lungs or used an otoscope to look in my ears. He prescribes pills I don't want, and has stopped giving me pills I do want. He cut off one medication that had two refills left and wanted to prescribe a sleep medication that would've had me drooling.

He tried to double my 83-year-old cousin's heart dosage, and seemed miffed after my cousin said he'd stick with the dosage his heart doctor at Dartmouth-Hitchcock prescribed.

"How many specialists do you have?" he condescendingly asked.

A friend said that her mother's diabetes medication was giving her the runs, and Dr. John cut the medication by two-thirds. "Even my mother knew that wouldn't work," she said. "It only made her feel loopy."

Yet, if you go online to *providers.baystatehealth.org*, you'll see that Dr. John has 4.8 stars out of five, from 114 votes. "Did you know that?" I asked him.

"No," he answered.

"Do you think 114 patients would go online, and most would give you five stars?"

"I don't know," he said.

I read him the results of a Google search: "Choosing a New Doctor? Beware of Fake Reviews" (*today.com*, July 21, 2022); "Fake Online Reviews are Making It Hard to Vet Doctors" (*Washington Post*, June 21, 2021); "An Inside Look at Fake Online Reviews for Doctors" (YouTube, July 2022).

"When you rely on online reviews of medical providers, you're gambling with your life," researcher Niam Yaraghi of the University of Miami told NBC News.

Asked to respond, Baystate Health said it uses Press Ganey to administer provider surveys, which are sent by email and snail mail. They are voluntary and can be done anonymously, and the star rating is calculated on the basis of these reviews.

Dr. John isn't the only physician to have rave reviews on Baystate's website. Dr. Hook, we'll call him, has a 4.9 rating from 115 votes.

Then there's Dr. Kinan Hreib, who is a Baystate neurologist and its chief of medicine. Dr. Hreib came to Baystate in June 2018, around the time that a federal grand jury awarded 48-year-old Sean Stentiford \$18.4 million in damages. The suit claimed Dr. Hreib and another

doctor failed to test Stentiford for HIV. Benjamin M. Adams wrote in *hivplusmag.com* that Stentiford is a gay man "who was led to believe he'd received a negative result on an HIV test when in fact his samples were never tested for the virus."

Hrieb had a perfect five stars, from 45 reviews, when his practice was affiliated with Lahey Hospital and Medical Center in Burlington.

Other medical websites give Dr. John and Dr. Hook between two and three stars. One review is particularly cogent: "[Dr. John] is pompous, does not listen, or if he does, he seems to feel the need to disagree with anything the patient says. He refuses to consider what my previous doctor was doing to treat me and thinks up new, ineffective treatments. He is gruff, rushes through the session and achieves nothing but irritating the patient and making them feel like an annoyance to him."

Both my appointments with Dr. John - so-called "wellness visits" - have felt more like negotiations with someone holding the power of the pen and prescription pad.


Recently I crossed paths at Baystate with a nurse who'd done my vitals at CRI, and I asked her if she missed being in Montague. "Every day," she said, and she's not alone.

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

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Top: In a tight spot with the bases loaded in the bottom of the third, the Thunder infielders confer. Above: Turners' Madisyn Dietz covers the throw to first against Greenfield's Brielle Widelo's bunt in the fifth inning.

SPORTS from page A1

improved playoff brackets. I miss the days when there were only two or three divisions instead of five, and the Western Mass winner would play against a Central or Eastern Mass foe for the state title.

It now seems that Division 5 has become a Western Mass-dominated division, though 16 of its 20 lowest seeds were from the East. But back in the day, when a Western team won the state title against a city school, it made big news in the *Worcester Telegram*, the *Boston Globe*, and the *Boston Herald*.

But it is what it is. For the Turners Falls Thunder, a very successful "rebuilding year" culminated last Friday with a 10-2 loss in the state finals – by coincidence, the exact score by which they had beaten Greenfield back on May 15. Throughout Friday's game, Blue had some difficulty making contact with the ball, with batters striking out 13 times in seven innings while managing only two hits.

For Greenfield, it was another story. With seven hits, 11 walks, and several Blue errors, they threatened to score in almost every inning. But the Powertown D kept them off the scoreboard until the third, when eight Green players crossed the plate.

This turned out to be the difference, as both teams would go on to score two more runs. In the top of the fifth, Madisyn Dietz



Coach Spalls congratulates Madisyn Dietz as she rounds third base on Madi Liimatainen's fifth-inning home run. The runs would be Turners' only two of the game, and the last two of the 2023 season.

drew a walk, and then Liimatainen scorched a line-drive home run over the left field wall. In the home sixth, Green answered to bump the margin back up to eight.

In the circle, Liimatainen allowed 10 runs on seven hits, walked 11, and struck out 9. At the plate, she accounted for both Turners' RBIs off her scorcher. Holly Myers registered Powertown's oth-

er hit, while Dietz, Cady Wozniak, and Marilyn Abarua all reached base on walks.

So, Turners Falls did not win the state championship this year. That's OK. It was heartbreaking for the players, but for the fans, it was just one more wonderful season in the annals of Turners Falls high school sports.



GILL from page A1

"Any kind of advocacy you want to do on behalf of that will be most welcome," Comerford told the room.

Selectboard member Greg Snecker noted that funding isn't the only problem local schools face: they also struggle with enrollment. He asked for help with finding housing solutions, along with state support for the school regionalization process.

Comerford affirmed his concern. "We're looking at a 12,000-unit affordable housing gap in western Mass... by 2025," she said. "When we talk about affordable housing, it's not just eastern Mass – it's really all of us." Comerford expressed hope that a planned tax credit will spur affordable housing development.

Rural Transportation

Comerford opined that the Chapter 90 program, which provides towns state funds for improving roads, has "been woefully underfunded," but she pointed to a solution in the Senate budget which contains a carve-out of \$200 million for rural communities.

The senator also expressed optimism about restoring passenger rail service along Route 2, the state's "Northern Tier," which is still being studied. She said the rail line could "bolster economies and gently grow population" in western Mass, but would require a "very big people-power push" to be realized.

As a more humble option, Comerford pointed to a "snazzy microtransit" program which grants individuals rides on demand. The "public Uber" pilot project currently only serves social-service recipients in Greenfield, but Comerford said she hoped its reach will expand. "Maybe we can't run a big old bus up here 24/7," she said, "but we can send microvans up for rides on demand that are much more accessible, cheaper, and better."

Remote Participation

Prior to the pandemic, Comerford noted, if someone in Gill wanted to attend a hearing at the State House they had to drive three hours there and back and pay for expensive parking. "If anything good came out of the pandemic, it was allowing constituents to come in remotely," Comerford said. "It has changed meetings completely in the State House to have more western Mass voices."

She encouraged more Gill residents to take advantage of this. "Every time folks come into the meeting, you change the face of the legislature," she said. "It is unbelievably impactful."

Selectboard chair Randy Crochier said that when it came to local meetings, he hoped that remote participation would be allowed but not required, as some small places don't have the technical capabilities.

"What I've been very opposed to is any mandate that wouldn't come with a lot of money," Comerford told him.

Town clerk Doreen Stevens described how new state election laws expanding access for absentee and

early voters have made her work more arduous. "A lot of town clerks are the election officials too, so it's like this double whammy," Stevens said. "In the city there are election officials, and they get to deal with just the election. We do both."

"We have to get more honest with how much it costs small towns to do this," Comerford agreed.

Protecting the Environment

Comerford pointed to a group of chemicals contaminating water in the region as "a massive issue." Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) have been linked to serious health problems and break down slowly over time, earning them the name "forever chemicals."

"One of my budget priorities has been getting money to communities for municipal testing," said Comerford. Beyond that, "we have to ban PFAS products in the Commonwealth... There isn't anything to do but turn off the tap, and then deal with the water sources that have been contaminated. And so many have."

She connected this issue with the proposal to compensate towns sur-

rounding the Quabbin Reservoir for use of its water in the eastern part of the state. "I don't think that we were ever fairly compensated when we lost the four towns," that were flooded by the reservoir, she said.

"Western Massachusetts feeds the Commonwealth. Our trees breathe for the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth has potable water out east because of us. We're dealing with PFAS issues, like eastern Massachusetts – we need some recompense that's fair."

Claire Chang, energy commission member and chair of the finance committee, praised the state's new "Green Bank," which provides funding for clean energy improvements, as "an opportunity for the state to actually help towns to figure out what is the best fit for everybody in how to make progress on climate action."

But, Chang said, there were still barriers to these resources. "There needs to be some way for small towns to be able to access that money when it becomes available," she said. Without support for activities like grantwriting, she said, "we become beholden to the

wolves, basically: the companies who figure out how to take advantage of the towns, and force towns to do one thing or another."

Comerford agreed, noting that the region is particularly struggling with siting new solar development. "I'm going to speak super frankly – I know Gill appreciates candor," she said. "I'm really so sick and tired of being called a 'NIMBY' in the building.... We love solar in western Massachusetts, but we're also stewarding farmland, and we're stewarding forests, and we feel that very deeply out here – it's a gift we give back to the Commonwealth."

Other Business

The selectboard agreed to contribute \$2,500 from its own expense budget toward hiring an erosion expert for the four towns participating in the FirstLight licensing process.

According to the proposal from Franklin Regional Council of Governments, this expert will help the towns "present a strong case" to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission that "FirstLight should be responsible for taking steps to prevent and mitigate erosion under the new license" to operate its hydroelectric facilities on the Connecticut River.

"We really need to be putting money toward understanding and advocating for the erosion issue," said town administrator Ray Purington. "For Gill, the erosion issue is our most important one."

The board approved annual appointments for all town officers, and appointed Aaron Budine and Charlotte Strickland Vannah as firefighters through June 30, contingent upon medical evaluations.

Finally, the board approved a request from Purington to carry 40 hours of vacation time forward into the next fiscal year, to be used by September 30. "It's not like he uses it," joked selectboard member Charles Garbiel.



Town clerk Doreen Stevens (left) told Comerford (center) about the impact of recent election laws on small town administrators.

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BATTERY from page A1

works across the state. With all 300 of its truck-sized batteries fully charged, the facility would be able to pump 100 megawatts of electricity into the region's power grid for four hours.

"One thing we want to emphasize about this project is how absolutely unprecedented it is," said Doody. "It's been a lot of work for us, and we are ready to open the conversation up to more people in town."

Utility Players

A large binder containing the company plans, correspondence with town officials, and other documentation is available for public viewing at the Wendell Free Library. It weighs 11 pounds, a fact repeated throughout the presentations. Included in the binder is a log of all communications company representatives have had with town officials.

A representative of Borrego Energy first reached out to the planning board in May 2020. New Leaf Energy was incorporated last year when Borrego sold its solar and energy storage development business to the private equity investment firm Energy Capital Partners. Doody said New Leaf is valued at \$44 billion.

Three agencies under the state Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs would be responsible for reviewing and approving the facility: the Department of Public Utilities (DPU), the Energy Facilities Siting Board (EFSB), and the secretary of environmental affairs through the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA).

"[L]ocal by-laws are, at times, inconsistent with applicable electricity design standards," New Leaf project developer Eric Weinstein told the *Reporter* in an email after the forum. "We have identified several concerns with the Wendell by-law, like many energy project developers, and after substantial discussion with the Planning Board, determined the best approach was to follow a more traditional energy facility approach by seeking zoning exemptions. By [New Leaf] seeking DPU review, the community benefits from the expertise of professionals with tremendous experience evaluating the siting and installation of energy projects."

"This company, New Leaf Energy, is asking for this project to go through the same regulation processing as a public utility would," Doody said. "They're asking to be allowed by right, essentially, as opposed to



ROBERTSON PHOTO

Town officials' interactions with the developer are compiled in a binder at the library.

[as] a corporation."

Weinstein argued that the facility, which would allow excess energy to be stored and then used during peak demand hours, would help bring more renewable energy online, expediting the retirement of fossil fuels.

"Without facilities like Wendell Energy Storage incorporated into the grid, large amounts of renewable energy would go to waste," he wrote, "reducing the efficiency of the investment in renewable energy the Commonwealth has made in the last decade."

Backyard Blues

Bill Stubblefield, a biologist and Wendell resident, said that pressure to meet the Commonwealth's goal of "net zero" carbon emissions by 2050 could explain why it is aggressively pursuing electric infrastructure projects.

"The state has recognized it is tricky getting big projects into towns," Stubblefield said. "These are so important to the future of the state and the welfare of its inhabitants, that it should override local concerns, which are always considered to be 'NIMBY' concerns, however justified they are."

The DPU is able to grant exemptions to any local zoning regulations it deems interfere with projects "critical to the public interest," Stubblefield explained.

Becoming an "intervenor" in the DPU hearing process is long and complex, and requires lawyers, which town officials implied Wendell may not be able to afford. "What they're doing – and they've been successful to this point – is 'kick the can down the road,'" Leahy said. "If they get to the DPU or Energy Facilities Siting Board, we might get locked out of this discussion because we need a lawyer."

The planning board has been

in contact with state senator Jo Comerford and representative Aaron Saunders to seek support navigating the regulatory process.

"We're a small town – we don't have a lot of money to battle developers," Leahy said. "These companies are smart, they have \$500 lawyers, they are smug, and they flick us off like a mosquito."

Planning board members said at Tuesday's forum that they have no information about what a payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) agreement with the developer might look like, or whether the development would be taxed as a private corporation or a public utility.

"They don't really give us answers," Doody said. "They're in communication with us in a very diplomatic, legislative way."

Asked how much the facility would contribute to Wendell's tax base, Weinstein responded: "The project will also provide monetary benefits to the community including high-paying construction jobs and contributions to the town's tax base."

Doody said she expects New Leaf to sell the development rights and plans to another company before breaking ground, and the storage facility to change hands multiple times if it is built. "The people who designed and engineered this project have no responsibility to see it through how it gets built," she said.

A Steady Drone

Leahy presented the audience with information gleaned from the town's open space plan. Past studies indicate that the site abuts critical wildlife and wetland habitats, and an aquifer might be present underneath it. The study cited this aquifer as perhaps "the most promising municipal groundwater supply for the town," he read.

The property is privately owned,

and New Leaf is proposing to lease it from the current owners.

"It's like finding oil under your land," Leahy said. "Most people can't turn it down."

Wendell's conservation commission chair Ward Smith explained that Borrego's original survey of the property missed "all kinds of wetlands." The con com hired a wetlands scientist to assess the site, and informed the company that the project could not proceed as planned.

"I thought that would be the end of it," Smith said, but Borrego submitted a new plan that complied with regulations, avoiding the wetlands and a vernal pool.

"New Leaf has made several modifications to the project plan based on feedback from the Wendell Conservation Commission," Weinstein wrote, "including revising the entire facility layout to minimize wetland buffer zone impacts, wetland restoration areas, wildlife fencing, and specific seed mixes to promote native species and pollinators."

Weinstein noted that the site is not mapped as priority habitat by the state Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), and that the facility would be located "upland" relative to the wetlands.

On top of the wetlands issue, Ward said, the humming of the electric batteries and cooling systems would increase ambient noise in the surrounding conservation area. To address that, the project includes a 25- to 30-foot-high sound barrier wall. State law indicates that an ongoing increase in ambient noise is unacceptable; by policy, MassDEP considers a 10-decibel increase to be the threshold.

The con com denied Borrego's permit in December 2021, ruling that the facility would have unacceptable impacts on wildlife in the conservation zone.

"I was waiting and waiting to get notice they appealed – then they didn't appeal," Smith said. "Then I learned they're trying to do an end run around our bylaw."

Local Oversight

In 2022, after a lengthy public process, Wendell voters passed a bylaw regulating solar energy and battery storage systems. The law would have banned all standalone battery installations, but earlier this year the state attorney general's office struck down that aspect of it. Doody said the planning board is working on a new bylaw to regulate storage facilities such as the one

New Leaf has proposed.

Volunteer firefighter Matt O'Donnell raised concerns at Tuesday's forum about the fire department's ability to fight fires at the facility. "We can't put battery car fires out," he said. "I'm curious what we are doing differently with this."

Planning board member Doug Tanner explained that the lithium-phosphate ion batteries, manufactured by Powin Energy, would come equipped with internal fire suppression systems.

According to Weinstein, the systems use an aerosol agent rather than a fluid or foam, and the batteries are encased in a carbon-steel coating and do not pose a risk of leaching. The 30 transformers would also be surrounded by a spill containment system.

Board members said they would need to do more research before making any decisions based on the safety of the array, or the eventual cost of decommissioning it.

Concerned Citizens

Towards the end of the meeting, attendees started brainstorming ways to organize in opposition to the project. Attendees passed around a notebook to share their email addresses with each other, potentially to start an advocacy group.

Stubblefield said he has been involved in a campaign against a similar battery storage facility in eastern Massachusetts with a group called Save the Pine Barrens. The group raised money for a lawyer, who argued that the EFSB only has oversight over energy-generating facilities, not those designed for storage.

Late last month, the EFSB agreed – a ruling that could affect the Wendell project, but also supports New Leaf's effort to give the final say to DPU.

"When I wrote to our contact at New Leaf, they were excited by the EFSB decision," Doody said. "These companies are so confident that these systems were set up for them."

Stubblefield suggested that the best avenue for recourse is for many people to demand the state review the project under MEPA. Town officials have asked state legislators to help set up a meeting with staff of the MEPA office to discuss their options.

"If we can get a real review, that will give us quite a bit more time for us to explore alternatives and actions we might take," Stubblefield said. "MEPA is our strongest weapon right now."

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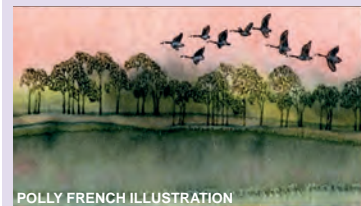
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Above: Fish, handmade with wire, migrate steadily north on Avenue A.



WEST ALONG THE RIVER
SUMMER COMES TO THE FLAT

By DAVID BRULE

ERVINGSIDE – In spite of all my cajoling, the wrens have fallen in love with the long-handled floor brush we use occasionally to wash the kitchen floor.

Now you may remember, as I told you last month, I put grandfather's trout creel up in the rafters of the woodshed to draw the Carolina wrens into using it for a nest. Grandfather, up in the Highland Cemetery for the last fifty years, no longer has a need for it, and it's such a lovely work of reeds, woven in the old-fashioned way, that I thought it best to put it to use. I found it just where he left it, down cellar, after bringing home the last creel-ful of trout so long ago.

This particular species of wren has been known for eccentric decisions as to where to build their nests. They choose all sorts of nooks and crannies. The male builds a number of possible nests, and the female decides which one she prefers. Sister Sue says that on one occasion on their winter trip down south, they had hardly set up their site in a campground in Florida when the busybody wrens took a fancy to their camper and began building in the Northerners' temporary home on wheels.

So this month, ignoring the picturesque and sturdy creel in the rafters, they determined they wanted to nest in a corner near the kitchen door, on top of the upright floor brush set there to dry after use. They used the prickly brush

part as a good foundation for their oven-like nest. They never considered what we humans were supposed to do, with their wren residence so close to the kitchen.

We go in and out that kitchen door dozens of times a day. Now we're worried about disturbing the lovely wren, who will surely be wanting to incubate quietly, without human beings passing constantly by so near her nursery.

So, just as we always did with the summer phoebes nesting on their shelf near the front door, we have to decide on a new traffic pattern in and out of the house. If both phoebe and Carolina wren had chosen to nest near our front and back doors at the same time, we would have been prisoners in our own home! Luckily, there's no phoebe out front this summer, so we can at least leave by that door.

You can be sure that brush will stay put for the full wren nesting season, and we'll have to get used to asking the wren's permission to use the back door to come out to the deck where I'm now sitting, under the shade of my cherry tree, telling you all this.

Down here on the Flat, we hurtle through time and space towards the Summer Solstice, as do you all.

My self-appointed job is simply to keep you updated as to what is really going on out here, out-of-doors, in case you miss it.

Mornings have been arriving as mornings always do, but this year the sunrise has been following frequent showers and rainstorms. May and June have been wet, which is a big switch from other years, and certainly different from other regions across the country.

We in New England have it good, generally. We're green most of the summer, and we have plenty of water. It's a well-known secret. Here, our west-flowing river rushes by, full and singing over river stones and boulders. The woods glow under a green-hued canopy. Wood thrush, veery, redstart, and yellow warbler add a background soundtrack to the summer woodlands scene. And with the regular rain showers, this year the earth drinks deep.

Last evening, we found ourselves watching the rain come down while front-porch-sitting in a thunderstorm. This is something we always do on the 1880s piazza when it rains in the summer. With the sky dark and violent, the rain fell in sheets, drumming on the green wall of maples and oaks just across the way, where the sidewalk ends and the woods begin.

A generation or two back in see **WEST ALONG** page B8

RECIPE
Vikings, Lava... and Lamb Stew!

By CLAIRE HOPLEY

LEVERETT – Getting from Iceland's international airport in Keflavik to the capital, Reykjavik, is rather dispiriting. The road crosses a forbidding lava field of dark rubble and boulders, only partly coated with a thin greenish wash of vegetation. Closer to the city this landscape gives way to warehouses, offices, eateries, and gas stations – more colorful, but scarcely more beautiful.

Things change in Reykjavik, a charming city of 140,000 clustered round a lake where ducks busy themselves in the reeds. Reykjavik also has a mighty modern cathedral, Hallgrimskirkja, standing on one of the city's few hills and overlooking restaurants and shops, some selling Icelandic knitwear and Christmas decorations, others showcasing elegant Icelandic designer clothes and household ware.

There are also museums, including a maritime museum documenting the country's early days of discovery, fur trading, and its ongoing fishing industry. As befits a capital city, it has the National Museum, the National Art Gallery, and Perlan, a new museum of natural history with an observation deck offering views of the city and even the distant glaciers.

The museum to start at is the Landnamssýningin – the Settlement Exhibition in Adalstrati. After archeologists investigated a Viking



Godafoss Waterfall, Iceland.

farmhouse in the city center, they built a museum over it so you can go down to examine the remains, and imagine its eleventh-century inhabitants clustered round the central fireplace.

Nearby cases exhibit artifacts such as brooches and weapons, with panels explaining the lives of the first settlers – Vikings led by Ingolfur Arnarson, an outlawed

see **RECIPE** page B4

TELEVISION

Two Documentaries Tell Outsiders' Tales

Clarence and Ginni Thomas: Politics, Power and the Supreme Court (PBS: Frontline, 2023)

Nam June Paik: Moon is the Oldest TV (PBS: American Masters, 2023)

PBS IMAGES



A younger Nam June Paik (top), and Clarence Thomas.

By W. KAIZEN

AMHERST – PBS has recently debuted two new documentaries about two very different people: one on Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, and one on pioneering video artist Nam June Paik. Although Thomas and Paik couldn't be more different, they share one big thing in common: they started as outsiders to US political and cultural life before rising to dizzying heights of success.

Now is an apt time for PBS to review Thomas's life, given the recent heat that he's taken for accepting lavish, multi-million-dollar gifts from white conservative uber-donor Harlan Crow. While the broad strokes are commonly known – Thomas's profound conservatism; Anita Hill and the supposed "high-tech lynching" he suffered during his confirmation hearing; never asking a public question for his first ten years on the Supreme Court bench – *Frontline* excavates a wealth of detail about his background.

see **TALES** page B5



A wren finds a foundation.

Pet of the Week



CARMODY COLLAGE

“KING”

Don't let his size fool you – at seven months old, King is just a baby boy! He is a friendly, goofy and playful puppy who immediately captured the hearts of staff and volunteers alike at Dakin.

King is fully house-trained, friendly with children and adults alike, likes to play ball and tug, and loves to go on walks. He hasn't had much experience with other dogs, but he was curious and playful

meeting another dog at Dakin.

King has cherry eye, which Dakin will repair via surgery at no cost to his adopters.

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 26 THROUGH 30

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 6/26

10:15 a.m. Aerobics
10:30 a.m. Oak Tree Chair Yoga
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
Tuesday 6/27
9:30 a.m. Tuesday Morning Knitters
1 p.m. CPR Class (call to sign up)
3 p.m. Tai Chi

Wednesday 6/28

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

Thursday 6/29

9 a.m. Chair Yoga
1 p.m. Cards & Games
Friday 6/30
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
2 p.m. By the Seat of Your Dance
3:30 p.m. Mindfulness Meditation

ERVING

Open 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Mondays through Fridays. Open for cards, coffee, and snacks daily. Fitness room open daily.

Ask the Nurse and Blood Pressure Clinic is the first Tuesday of each month. Brown Bag is the first Thursday of each month. Veterans' Services are the first Wednesday of each month. For more information, please call (413) 423-3649.

Monday 6/26

9 a.m. Interval
10:15 a.m. Stretch & Infusion

Tuesday 6/27

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

Wednesday 6/28

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

Thursday 6/29

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

Friday 6/30

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.



Sex Matters

a sex-positive health column

by STEPHANIE BAIRD

SOUTH HADLEY – We live in an *erotophobic* society – a society afraid to authentically explore and discuss sexuality and sensuality. Some of this discouragement comes in the form of blatant homophobia, fear of nudity, and fear of sexuality including sexual behaviors, despite the continued onslaught of headlines spouting “best orgasm ever.” Other discouragement may be as subtle as a discomfort in swaying one's hips, as many WASPs may experience – including myself, despite having taken salsa lessons.

This pervasive erotophobia means we are discouraged to truly inhabit our bodies and experience the full range of sensual movement available.

Luckily, many types of movement-oriented practices have evolved over the decades and centuries to counteract anti-body sentiment. An obvious, enduring global example includes all kinds of dancing, hip-swaying or not. Yoga practices, martial arts, and athletic activities also assist us in tuning into our bodies.

More recent somatic-based practices and activities have emerged to assist folks in attuning to their physical selves, such as contact improv, body scans, grounding, co-regulation, sensorimotor therapy, and EMDR therapy. However, these practices only obliquely touch upon our sexual and sensual selves.

Thank goddess that Jen Parmentier of Sacred Roots Healing in Easthampton is starting a sensual, somatic revolution right here in our Valley. I went to experience it for the first time on a recent Friday night, and am here to report that a revolution is indeed in progress.

Goddess Yoga (GY), according to Sacred Roots, is the “art of sacred and sensual movement, a fusion of vinyasa yoga and belly dance-inspired movements, mixed with kundalini breathwork.” Each class begins in a circle, creating “connection by sharing and supporting each other as women, then moving into self love rituals that awaken the divine feminine.”

Jen states that GY “helps you get in touch with yourself and reconnect with yourself,” releasing trauma from the hip area, and is a safe space to explore sensuality and a “softer side.”

The movements help “lubricate joints and body, and the sexy moving gets juices flowing,” producing

“more circulation in these areas. Women can step into feeling sexy, safely, without it being performative.” Jen adds that GY can help us remember “we all have the divine feminine, regardless of gender or biology, and holding sacred space in a circle helps us see how powerful we are as feminine beings.”

About 15 mostly femme-appearing folks attended the class, coming from as far as Belchertown and Amherst. We each sat on a mat in the twinkle-lighted warm studio.

Jen gathered us into an opening circle, where we each answered the question: “What makes you feel sexy?” Answers included watering plants naked, dancing, taking bubble baths, being touched on the legs, and having one's partner dance for them, as well as having alone time for one's mind to wander. I added that writing about sex makes me feel sexy.

We thanked each speaker out loud, and Jen noted that each time we spoke our truth was like “filling a bottle with medicine.”

Other elements of the circle included rubbing Labradorite oil onto our own hands, arms, and anywhere else that needed touching, as well as picking a “Goddess oracle card” from a deck.

Jen then pumped up the music and led us through a variety of yoga movements. The playlist featured empowering, bass-thumping songs, including one song where the singer sang over and over “I feel gorgeous,” a powerful mantra, as well as the song “Rise Up” by Andra Day. The movements were similar to many poses encountered in more traditional yoga – child's pose, backward bend, downward dog – yet we were encouraged to focus on sensual, hip-swaying movement.

I found this quite challenging for myself as my body tends towards stiffness, mostly based on tight muscles, but also thanks to my WASPY background where hip-swaying has historically been associated with unbridled licentiousness and reviled. I had to really work hard to “let go” a bit to undulate and circle my hips beyond an inch of oscillation.

Jen mentioned that traditional yoga was originally “developed by men for men, hence its more angular postures,” and that GY is oriented towards bodies with wider hips, and meant to embrace more fluidity of movement. Its founder's own background included stripping and belly-dancing.

It was truly powerful to see so many attendees following their bodies' instincts, many with their eyes closed, focused on connecting with themselves, particularly with robust hip movements. This role-modeling also helped me more fully inhabit the hip-swaying.

The class also included “shadow work” – trying to connect to the parts of ourselves that need more love and nurturing. At the end, as we lay in *savasana*, Jen came around to each of us and laid a rose on our body. We were encouraged to stroke our own arms, our face, or wherever felt sensual and loving, with this gift.

Many attendees were eager to share a bit of their experience for this article. “Every time, I find a different way to be free,” said Audrey. “I keep coming back to remember this.”

Jessica noted “Goddess Yoga is a freedom for women to feel empowered, free, and find your bliss.”

Nicole said it “liberates the power of the feminine spirit which lives within each of us.”

“I feel so safe, vulnerable, and proud to be a woman,” said Makayla, a teary-eyed first time attendee. “This class is helping me to find myself again.”

Jen noted that GY brought sensuality back into her life and connected spirituality to herself and her sensuality, stating, “I came back into myself and the beautiful divine feminine.”

While I did not find it as easy as some attendees to move and lubricate my own rigid hips, I did find that it is revolutionary to access my sacred, feminine sensuality in a safe setting, and I will return to delve deeper into this place of “sexy/sensual” possibility.

There is also a free sample video on the Goddess Yoga website, goddessyogainternational.com, though I highly recommend you check out a class in person, as Sacred Roots (www.sacred-roots-healing.com) is the only studio offering this hip-revolving class in New England and the East Coast, all the way down to Washington, DC.

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

Montague Community Television News

Still Seeking Biz Types!

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – This week on MCTV you will find the Montague finance committee, and “Composting Made Easy.”

There's always something new to watch on MCTV, and we are always up to something. We're currently looking for businesses to participate in our *Local Business Spotlight*. If you are interested in having your business featured, please reach out to infomontaguenv@gmail.com, and be sure to check our website and

Vimeo page for all our newest videos.

MCTV is always available to assist in local video production as well. Cameras, tripods, and lighting equipment are available for checkout, and filming and editing assistance can be provided. Stop by the station, 34 Second Street in Turners Falls, sometime between Monday and Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., email us, or give us a call at (413) 863-9200.

If there is something going on you think others would like to see, get in touch – we can show you how easy it is to use a camera and capture the moment.

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FROM A TEEN'S POINT OF VIEW

Game Development

By FINTAN ANDREW JONES

MONTAGUE – Recently we have been using my school's computer lab a lot. Specifically we have been making and editing 3D objects. We used this knowledge to develop a game, which I will be talking about today.

I will start by talking about 2D game development. Games like Mario Bros., Pac-Man, or Tetris are 2D games. They consist of a point of view that is locked and can't be moved. For example, if you are playing Mario you are controlling which way he goes, rather than the perspective you are looking at him from. Most of the time, 2D games are easier to code and develop. This is because you just need to worry about what the player will see, rather than what they will see and how they can manipulate that.

Another type of game is a 3D game. Some popular 3D games include *The Legend of Zelda: Tears of the Kingdom*, *Minecraft*, and much more. The future of games is in 3D, and they consistently outperform 2D games on the market.

This comes at a cost, though. It takes trained professionals, and sometimes even a big corporation to make a well-performing game. You may have figured it out by the name, but 3D games have the ability for the player to change how they see the character, kind of like looking around in real life.

Now that I have explained the types of games, I will explain how I made one, and what it was like to play. For one of my classes this year, I chose to take Game Design in the computer lab. This class basically taught students how to make and edit 3D games. We all started in a terrain editing software called Unity, which is one of the biggest game development softwares for beginners. I chose to start with a 5,000-by-5,000-foot grass block.

Just like game developers, we learned how to manipulate and change the terrain. I chose to make mountains surrounding a valley with a lake. I also made a village with a big chess set in the middle,

since I love chess. With some extra help from my teacher, I coded a way for the player to pick up and place the chess pieces. For our project we did not do too much actual coding, but worked with software that edits 3D terrain and objects.

I will move on to a brief history of game development. In October 1958, a physicist named William Higinbotham created a simple tennis game that resembles what we think of when we hear of the game Pong. The first video game hardware was created in the early 1970s, and the first at-home console was the Magnavox Odyssey. The mid-1970s were known as the "Golden Age" for arcade video games. This is when games like *Space Invaders* and *Pac-Man* were published.

In the 1990s the "console wars" started, with companies developing new flagship consoles every couple of years. It was around the beginning of the 2000s that companies like Microsoft and Sony came out with the Xbox and PlayStation. In the end, Nintendo prevailed, releasing the motion-sensing Wii and later coming out with the Nintendo Switch.

I think it is fascinating that people have been making video games since the 1960s, over 60 years ago. Video games and the ways that people make them have changed so much over those years, from one physicist at a university to full teams dedicated to making one singular game.

Aside from all of that, I am looking into programming and developing games outside of school, as I have wanted to do this for a long time. I have coded before on Scratch, a 2D coding software developed by MIT, but I feel that I want to take it to the next level.

Recently, I have been interested in the idea of whether we are living in a simulation. I have been talking to my friends, and seeing if they think we are in a simulation. I personally don't think that we are, because of some things I have researched and learned about. But I will talk about that more in my next column.

I hope you have learned something new, because I have certainly learned many things!

EVENT ANNOUNCEMENT

Kind, or Authentic?

WENDELL – How do we balance saying what is polite with telling it like it is? When we disagree, do we stick to our guns, roll over, or listen more closely to what the other is saying? Is compromise always required, or should we remain faithful to our values and beliefs? Is honesty always the best policy if someone may be offended or hurt? Is a little white lie sometimes needed to save the situation? In a world filled with advice columns and internet gurus, doesn't it come down to how each of us finds our way to kindness and authenticity?

Court Dorsey and Chris Queen will pose these questions when they host a talking circle on "Kindness or Authenticity" at the Wendell Meetinghouse at 7 p.m. next Thursday, June 29, the final event of the Meetinghouse's Thursday evening series.

Dorsey and Queen are president and vice-president of the Friends of

the Wendell Meetinghouse. Queen is a writer, retired university lecturer, and dean. Dorsey is an actor, musician, poet, and self-described "circle keeper." They will bring stories and reflections from years on stage, in the classroom, guiding meditations and leading groups, and as loving members of families that offer their own challenges.

Sitting together in a talking circle, the conversation is an opportunity to share stories and dilemmas. Knowing there are no "right answers" when it comes to human communication, bring what has worked for you and what hasn't.

Admission 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.wendell-meetinghouse.org/events or contact court@crocker.com for more details.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Lots of People Yell; Canoeists Invade Lake Pleasant; Vehicles Hit on O, 2nd, L, L, J, L, 5th, 4th, 4th, 5th, L

Monday, 6/12

6:54 p.m. Caller states that she has a video recording of a male party harassing and threatening her; she would like to show an officer. Officer advised caller of harassment prevention order options.

8:04 p.m. Caller states that a family was behind the Shea Theater and some guy was yelling at them; it seems to have stopped, but they would like an officer to drive through. Caller called back to say that the situation had escalated. Officers advise no one in the parking lot; no disturbance at this time. They will stay in area for a while.

8:31 p.m. 911 caller states that a couple of kids were vandalizing Pioneer Valley Brewery on Third Street and headed toward Unity Park. Officer searched area; only thing that may have been damaged was a DPW road sign; unclear if that damage just happened or if it was already broken.

11:59 p.m. Caller from K Street states he is disabled and someone assaulted him. Officer advises situation mediated; male parties have been separated for the remainder of the night.

Tuesday, 6/13

8:35 a.m. Caller states that she just got to her business (Swanson's Fabrics) and the front window was smashed. Report taken.

12:48 p.m. Caller from Griswold Street states that there are five foxes under her porch that she would like help removing. Animal control officer responded and advised homeowners what to do. He will follow up in two days if the foxes have not left on their own yet.

1:09 p.m. Caller from O Street would like it on record that her husband's truck was "gone through" overnight. Nothing appears missing, but the driver's door was left open.

2:13 p.m. Report of large snapping turtle in the road on Eleventh Street; people are concerned for its safety. ACO notified and responding. No turtle located.

2:29 p.m. 911 caller from Second Street states that the same dog that is always loose just tried to attack her dog again. Dog described as "pug-like" with taller legs. ACO checking neighborhood; no dogs seen.

4:02 p.m. 911 caller states that a tree fell on electrical lines causing a brush fire on Taylor Hill Road. Transferred to Shelburne Control. Fire out. Ever-source on scene.

5:42 p.m. Caller states that an old Ford truck is parked on Owasso Avenue and two people got out and put a canoe into the lake; caller is concerned that they are bringing invasive species into the wa-

ter. Area checked; vehicle gone on arrival.

8:32 p.m. Male party pacing around MPD parking lot talking to himself; walked into department three times, yelled, then walked out. Officer advised. Male party and male from across the street circling each other in the parking lot and yelling. Entered PD and continued yelling at each other in the lobby.

10:17 p.m. Caller from Nouria states that a male party is yelling and harassing people and needs to be removed from the premises. Male party advised of complaint.

Wednesday, 6/14

8:19 a.m. Report of illegal dumping on Second Street. Advised of options.

8:27 a.m. 911 caller from Second Street reports that someone broke into his vehicle overnight and stole his wallet. Two pairs of sunglasses were also taken. Suspects incident occurred around 4 a.m. Investigated.

8:50 a.m. Caller states that three dogs that live at an N Street address are running loose. ACO notified and responding. Dog owner surrendered four puppies to the ACO. He is taking them to the shelter.

12:50 p.m. Multiple callers reporting an injured fox standing on the side of Avenue A near Eleventh Street. Message left for ACO. Unable to locate.

6:22 p.m. Caller states she wants to report a theft that happened at Connecticut River Liquor & Wine on Sunday at 5 p.m. Wants call back; has video footage on her phone. Summons issued.

Thursday, 6/15

3:51 a.m. Probation officer requesting officer to go to a Griswold Street address and check on a male's ankle monitor. Officer advises monitor is working properly and secured. Probation advised.

6:52 a.m. 911 caller reports she is involved in an accident at First and L Streets. Both vehicles on scene; no injuries, smoke, fire, or fluids. Both vehicles drivable.

8:25 a.m. Caller from L Street states that his and his roommate's cars were broken into last night. Nothing seems to be missing at this time; wants on record only.

11:15 a.m. Caller from Franklin Area Survival Center states that at 4 a.m. someone opened their mailbox and took their mail. They have video footage. Report taken. Officer checking in with male party who was seen behind location this morning. Male party Mirandized; denies having been at the location; states he was at the free food cooler around the corner.

1:01 p.m. Caller from Hill-

crest Elementary School states there is a strong sulfur smell and thinks there may possibly be a leak somewhere. Call given to Control.

1:13 p.m. Chief advising telephone pole on fire at Railroad Salvage. Call given to Control.

2:40 p.m. Caller from Fourth Street reports that a dog had her trapped in her car and was barking and wouldn't let her out. Message left for ACO; officer advised.

3 p.m. Caller states she was in a car accident in the Unity Park lot. Officer advised.

4:17 p.m. 911 caller from Avenue A states that he just got home and someone broke into his apartment and stole his TV. Officers advised.

4:57 p.m. Caller from Eleventh Street states that she found an injured bird, a small one. ACO out today; number provided for emergency vet.

7:21 p.m. Caller states that there are two people on a rowboat on Lake Pleasant, and that no one is supposed to be on or in the lake. Officer made contact with two people on a canoe; advised them that they cannot be on the lake. They are bringing the canoe in now.

9:25 p.m. Caller states that a male followed her down Avenue A and cut her off on Third Street, then got out of the vehicle and punched her vehicle twice. She is inquiring whether there are cameras in the area so that she can prove he did it and get her vehicle fixed. Officer advised caller of options. She will come to the station.

Friday, 6/16

7:50 a.m. Caller from L Street states that her and her neighbor's cars were broken into last night. Some money was stolen. Referred to an officer.

9:16 a.m. Caller from J Street states that her car was broken into last night. She is missing her Red Card that she uses when delivering for DoorDash; otherwise, nothing seems to be missing. Referred to an officer.

9:19 a.m. Caller from L Street states that her car was broken into last night; unsure if anything is missing, but some items are damaged. Referred to an officer.

12:17 p.m. Caller from Fifth Street states her car was broken into; wallet was stolen, and her shoe was thrown across the road. Referred to an officer.

2:35 p.m. Caller states that a motorcycle outside Kharma Salon is tipped on its side and leaking gas. Control contacted. Owner came out from Pizza House; will remain with motorcycle until FD ar-

rives. Officer advises motorcycle left scene. A chair has been placed in the parking spot for the FD.

2:46 p.m. 911 caller from Norman Circle states that her elderly neighbor was dumping brush off the side of the hill and fell into the gully. Transferred to Shelburne Control. Officer advises male party is about 20 feet down the hill with a 30% grade.

Saturday, 6/17

9:29 a.m. While on a separate follow-up call, officer advised by Food City manager of a recent shoplifting incident. Summons issued.

2:22 p.m. Walk-in advises that the stop sign at the intersection of Mormon Hollow Road and Wendell Road is missing. DPW notified.

3:23 p.m. Caller from Fifth Street states that a letter was superglued to her windshield that stated she isn't allowed to park there. Officer advises note was taped, and confirmed which neighbor left the note. All parties advised of options.

Sunday, 6/18

3:36 a.m. Report of disturbance downtown near Subway; female party yelling and screaming; may have been involved in an incident with another party. Employee from gas station advises female party in their store saying she was robbed. Report taken.

6:25 a.m. Caller reports female party in the rear of an Avenue A apartment building is causing a disturbance. Officer advises female party moved along and shown property line.

9:16 a.m. 911 caller from Fourth Street reports her vehicle was gone through and some items were stolen. Report taken.


9:29 a.m. Caller from Fourth Street states his Jeep had its passenger window broken and some items were taken. Investigated.

10:38 a.m. Caller from Fifth Street states that her rental car was broken into overnight and some items were taken. Caller called back to say that her wallet was stolen and her credit card was used at the Gill Mill this morning. Report taken.

11:10 a.m. Caller from Fourth Street states that at about 4:15 this morning, he woke up to a man in his bedroom. Caller yelled at the man, who then started running. Caller chased him out of the building and down the street. The man got away but stole some money from a pair of jeans that were in the bedroom, as well as a cell phone. Investigated.

8:58 p.m. Caller from L Street states that his vehicle along with his cousin's and roommate's vehicles were broken into last night and that he has footage. Investigated.

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RECIPE from page B1

Norwegian who arrived in Iceland around 870. A startling statistic is that 80% of early Icelandic men had Nordic genes, while 62 percent of the women had British genes, reflecting the Vikings' invasion of coastal Britain, where they had enslaved or married local people two or three generations earlier.

Once in Iceland, the Vikings settled into farming, hunting, and fishing. Most lived in the west and northwest, where rivers rushing through wide glaciated valleys created grazing lands, and most people still do.

Occasionally there are cows, but more often there are sheep, looking like mobile pillows munching the bright grass while keeping an eye on their lambs. Other pastures are filled with herds of small Icelandic horses, often 50 or more grazing together. Both animals are unique breeds, imported from Norway before the 10th century. The Icelandic government now ensures that no other breeds enter the country to protect the genetic integrity of these animals.

Sheep and horses were vital to Icelanders. The sheep provided wool for clothing and shoes, while the sure-footed horses provided transportation, leather, and horsehair for ropes and mattresses. Both were and are still eaten, with the premium loins and racks of lamb topping restaurant menus. At home, Icelanders make the bonier necks into stews or roast legs of lamb, sometimes sold already marinated in blueberry juice, and often served with sugared browned potatoes.

Despite the grazing herds, farmhouses are widely scattered, and villages are rare. Outside Reykjavik there are few towns of any size: 21,000 people live in Keflavik, the second-largest town, followed by Akureyri in the north, which has 19,000. Sheep outnumber the 373,000 Icelanders four to one.

Akureyri, Iceland's second city, is practically on the Arctic Circle, but thanks to its position at the end of a long fjord it's often warmer than Reykjavik in the south. The effects can be seen in the large and brilliant dandelions and wild blue lupins that grow everywhere in June, and also in the extraordinary number of different flowers in the city's botanical garden.

Special delights include the alpine beds and the sweet starlike flowers that grow on the wild moorlands and even in the Arctic.



Icelandic horses grazing.

They only rise to an inch or two, but like the dandelions and lupines, their tiny blooms glow with extra brilliance thanks to summer's almost day-long sun.

The sun – and the frequent showers – allows farmers to grow hay for animals. Gardeners have plentiful crops of rhubarb, an Arctic native that's popular in desserts, sauces, and a prettily pink liqueur called Rabarbara.

In the south and east of the country there are huge greenhouses growing big crops of tomatoes, cucumbers and other vegetables. They, too, benefit from the sun, but even more from the heat supplied by the endless supply of hot water from Iceland's many volcanoes. These thermal waters also fuel natural hot springs, even hot rivers, swimming pools, and Iceland's spas, where you can veg out in hot water and get massages, scrubs, dips in cold pools, and other good-for-what-ails-you treatments.

The volcanoes are also responsible for the lava fields, and for an endless array of rocky scenery, often moonlike in its treeless starkness. Visitors to Akureyri can see more of it on a side trip to Lake Mývatn, where steam issues from the rocks

and boiling lava has left strange craters and fissures. Small rushing waterfalls are everywhere, and stupendous big ones, such as Goðafoss, are popular spots for photographers.

From Reykjavik, there are bus tours to a nearby area dubbed the

Golden Circle, which includes Gullfoss, one of Iceland's many waterfalls, geysers, steaming holes, and most impressively Thingvellir, the plain where the early settlers held annual law-making meetings.

Thingvellir is intersected by a deep crack in the ground. On the east is the tectonic plate on which Europe sits; on the west is the plate on which the Americas sit. It's thanks to these plates, moving slowly ever further apart, that Iceland is one of the most volcanic areas of the world.

The volcanic effects are most dramatic in the east, where many areas are uninhabitable, but fascinating for hikers. The volcanoes as well as the high altitude make growing crops difficult, so traditionally Icelanders' diets were very simple: fish, rye bread, oatmeal, and potatoes, with few vegetables. But Iceland now grows many vegetables in greenhouses and imports foods from Europe and elsewhere, so the supermarkets are packed with familiar products as well as Icelandic foods.

Fish remains the most important food, especially cod, farmed salmon, and Arctic char. Fish and chips are popular, and so are fish and seafood soups and casseroles. Traditional rye and oatmeal breads are still used for open sandwiches of smoked lamb, pâté, or shrimp. The country is too cold and wet to grow wheat, but it's imported, so as well as bread, bakeries have croissants, Danish pastries, doughnuts, and delicious apple cakes to appeal to Iceland's sweet tooth.

Chocolate is another favorite, and so is licorice. Why not then have licorice-filled chocolate? Sounds odd, horrid even, but there are numerous variations on this favorite Icelandic pairing.

As for drinks, tea, coffee, and beer are all popular. So are Icelandic vodka and gin – often flavored with a variety of herbs, including some Icelandic natives. *Brennivín*, a caraway-flavored spirit made from potatoes, is drunk like Scandinavian schnapps before settling down to a seafood feast, or when eating fermented shark. Both *brennivín* and shark have fearsome reputations: the shark because of its pervasive flavor, and the *brennivín* because overconsumption leads to painful consequences – hence its popular name, “black death.”

Brennivín is an Icelandic specialty worth tasting – at least once. Other don't-miss culinary treats include shrimp cocktails of Iceland's small, tasty shrimp, any seafood or fish soups, and especially the spectacular cod. The lamb is exquisitely tender and flavorful, often teamed with delicious sugar-browned potatoes. For dessert there are the traditional pancakes with berries and several variations of *eplakaka*, an apple cake topped with browned sliced apples and sometimes almonds.

While Iceland's geography limits the foods that can be raised locally, cooks use its matchless fish, seafood, and lamb with culinary flair, so that eating there is a delight.

ICELANDIC LAMB STEW

2 to 3 lb. lamb stew meat, including bones
1 tsp. salt, or more to taste
1 medium onion, peeled and chopped
4 carrots, about ¾ lb.
half a small rutabaga (optional)
4 medium potatoes
6 peppercorns
3 stems parsley

The best lamb stew is made from boney pieces from the neck, because the bones contribute to the stew's flavor and nutritional value. These are sometimes sold, already chopped, as lamb stew meat. If your lamb is very fatty, trim off the excess.

Put the chunks of lamb in a large pan and cover with two quarts of water. Add the salt and simmer gently for about an hour. Skim once or twice.

Meanwhile, peel the carrots and slice into disks. If using the rutabaga, peel and cut it in small chunks. Also peel and cut the potatoes in small chunks.

Add all these vegetables to the simmering pot, along with the peppercorns and a whole stem of parsley. Check the seasoning and add more salt if necessary. Simmer for 25 minutes.



Remove and discard the parsley stem. Chop the remaining parsley little of it. Serves four.

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TALES from page B1

Regarding Thomas's conservatism, for example, one interview subject defines the phrase "pulling a Clarence Thomas" as a black person turning their back on the black community after their ascendancy. In the late 1960s, Thomas attended Holy Cross College in Worcester where he was a member of a small but tight-knit group of left-wing black students, but after participating in the Harvard Square riots, he began to back away from violent protest.

Thomas continued along a left-leaning path until, upon graduating from Yale Law School (where he was classmates with Bill and Hillary Clinton), he was unable to get a job at a white-shoe law firm. Embittered, he began a rapid turn rightwards, diving into the Reagan/Bush White House where he quickly rose to prominence as a vocal opponent of affirmative action, of which he has arguably been one of the biggest beneficiaries. He went so far as to publicly accuse his own sister of being a "welfare queen."

The documentary has few new revelations about Anita Hill, whom Thomas encountered while head of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission under Reagan. Given the he-said, she-said nature of the accusations, it rightfully points out that either Hill or Thomas, two of the best-trained lawyers in the country, perjured themselves, not so subtly hinting that it was the latter who was lying. Seeing a young Joe Biden, who presided over the hearings, is disturbing both for his smirking youth and for the fact that he didn't give more credence to Hill.

The documentary's choicest details are regarding Thomas's difficult childhood. He was born in Pin Point, Georgia, a member of the Gullah Geechee community, and raised in his early years by a single mother in a house with no running water. He had access to an indoor toilet for the first time after moving to Savannah to live with his maternal grandfather in the early 1950s.

His grandfather, an uneducated but successful small businessman, was tough, even brutally strict. Thomas has cited his grandfather publicly as his greatest influence despite complaining privately about his abuses.

While living in Savannah, Thomas experienced black-on-black racism that left him psychically scarred. He was called "ABC," or "America's blackest child," and was mocked for his Creole accent. When he left public school to attend first Catholic school and then seminary, he suffered similar treatment from his white peers. Told by a friendly priest that he needed to learn how to speak standard English, he was humiliated and became self-conscious about public speaking, which is how he accounts for not speaking during oral arguments before the Supreme Court.

The documentary weaves Thomas's life trajectory together with that of his wife Ginni, which has been much more straightforward. She's the scion of wealthy Republican activists, and has followed a straight line from the John Birch Society to the Tea Party to QAnon.

Nam June Paik was born in circumstances closer to Ginni's than Clarence's, although they didn't remain that way for long. Before WWII, his family was one of the richest in Korea. They fled to Hong Kong where he became an accomplished pianist, playing Western

classical music. After writing a graduate thesis on Austrian composer Arnold Schoenberg, Paik moved to Germany, where he befriended Karlheinz Stockhausen and John Cage.

Infatuated with the avant-garde, Paik became a member of Fluxus, an international group that worked to destroy the conventions of Western music. One of Paik's most-heralded early performances from this time involved him raising a violin as slowly as he could over his head before, with a shout, smashing it to pieces on a table in front of him.

After a visit to Japan, he became obsessed with turning television sets into instruments people could play at home, like the early musical synthesizers that were just becoming available. He moved to the United States in 1964, bringing along one of the first portable Sony video recorders and a raft of other television-related gear. New York City would become his home base for the rest of his life, though, unlike Thomas, he never learned to speak "proper" English. (He once said proudly: "I speak nine languages. All badly.")

Paik, a Chaplinesque character on the downtown New York scene, made performances where he dragged a violin around the streets. He built a ramshackle, mixed-gender robot as a companion, with one spinning foam rubber breast. It pooped white beans. Collaborating with cellist Charlotte Moorman, he sought to bring sex to classical music, leading to their arrest after a performance where she appeared topless. The scandal made it all the way back to Korea, which shamed his family, leading to them becoming estranged.

Despite burgeoning success, Paik struggled with money all of his adult life, living off of grants and the very occasional sale of his work. Video art didn't pay, even though it went on to become one of the most lauded artistic developments of the 20th century, and he eventually became known as its godfather.

Although poor – "I'm a poor man, from a poor country," he liked to say – by the end of his life Paik received his due laurels. He had two full-scale retrospectives at museums in New York, won a Golden Lion award at the Venice Biennale, and had major solo exhibitions at countless other international art spaces both while he was alive and since his death in 2006. Not least is the recognition from this documentary of Paik as an "American Master," though this is not without irony, given how much of his work and thought concentrated on global culture.

Thomas was an outsider from within American culture, while Paik was an outsider from without. Thomas has always been deeply resentful of his outsider status, and wears it like a grudge, while Paik used his to great effect, playing the trickster or clown as a means of eliciting a deep sympathy for himself and other immigrants and émigrés around the world.

Despite their struggles, they rose to become the namesakes of their areas of expertise. Today, SCOTUS is often referred to as "the Thomas court," and, given the ascension of media-based art today, referring to "the Paik art world" is equally justified. These documentaries do justice to their strangely linked subjects by capturing the stories of perennial outsiders who nevertheless became two of the most proficient insiders in their respective fields.



TV REVIEW

Star Trek: Strange New Worlds, Season 2

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – I liked the first season of *Star Trek: Strange New Worlds* enough to want to see the second season of the show.

A couple of cliffhangers from the first season help get the second off and running. One involves the ship's security officer taking some time off to help find an individual's family. The other involves Rebecca Romijn's character, Una, being arrested for being genetically modified, which is a "no" when it comes to joining Starfleet. Captain Pike tries to help her defend herself.

This is why Spock, played by Ethan Peck, ends up being put in command while the ship is having upgrades done. Spock, to say the least, has some concerns about this. "Famous last words," he says to Pike. Spock gets some assistance in coping with any stress that might happen through the introduction of a Vulcan Lute, a musical instrument

I have seen him with a couple of times in the original *Star Trek*.

An SOS from their security officer, however, leads the ship to a planet being shared in shifts by Klingons and its inhabitants. The Klingons are trying to go to war again to make a profit on the planet.

There is usually an "upcoming" preview for the rest of the season after the first episode of the show. But I do know a few things about what is next.

I know they end up with a new engineer, played by Carol Kane. Her character is named Pelia, and she is a very worthy replacement for Hemmer, the engineer they lost. She shows herself to be smart enough to figure out how they were trying to get away to answer the SOS, and ends up helping them in that way. She also happens to know Spock's mother Amanda, so that is cool. That right there is how the writers will lead to her becoming part of the crew, I believe.

The next one is about Una, trying to get herself out of the trouble she is in and hopefully staying in Starfleet. It makes sense that the next episode is about this, because of the Captain trying to help her out with it in the premiere. I believe, from the Season 2 preview I saw, that the whole deal is going to work out for her.

Also, the preview indicates that the huge lizard monster-like creatures called the Gorn will be back – and so does a little scene that we see at the end of this premiere.

One more thing: the Kirk that we have come to know and love, played by Paul Wesley, did show up in the Season 1 finale, and will again this season.

While as I said I liked the first season show well enough to want to see the second, I had actually found the debut episode to be a little slow in places. It held my attention. The second season's premiere, I think, did a far better job with that.

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LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here's the way it was on June 20, 2013: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

Leverett ZBA Debates Gravel Pit Expansion

Following a site visit and hours of deliberation on June 13, the Leverett zoning board of appeals delayed a decision on settling a lawsuit brought by Richie Roberts and landowner Roberta Bryant over the board's 2010 decision to block the expansion of Roberts' gravel pit operation off Route 63.

Following ordered mediation, the board appeared to move closer to signing off on Roberts' plan to expand the gravel pit onto five adjoining acres owned by Bryant,

currently used as a horse farm and riding ring.

Last week, under the watchful eyes of more than a dozen abutters and their lawyer, the ZBA continued to refine a long list of conditions that would serve as a template to both settle the lawsuit and define the operation of the gravel pit.

Real Pickles Goes Coop

Local organic food business Real Pickles announced today that it has successfully converted from a proprietorship to a worker-owned cooperative. The decision was aimed at ensuring the long-term preservation of the business's social mission, according to founder Dan Rosenberg.

20 YEARS AGO

Here's the way it was on June 19, 2003: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

Double Duty?

With the hope of saving \$20,000 apiece, Gill and Bernardston are entering into discussions to share the services of Gill's chief of police, David Hastings. The Bernardston selectboard made initial inquiries to see if Gill would be receptive to the idea of having Hastings divide his time.

Appearing before the Gill board on Monday, Hastings said, "If anyone can do it, I can."

Park Fountain Falls Silent

It's a hot dry season of budget cuts in Montague, and the fountain in Peskeompskut Park has not been turned on. Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio said the decision to leave the fountain off this year was a "monetary issue."

According to Lee Brunelle of the highway department, the cost of maintaining the fountain is over \$1,000 a year, mostly because it gets clogged up regularly by leaves and other debris. Several times in the past vandals have put some sort of detergent in the fountain, forcing the department to drain and rinse it.

150 YEARS AGO

Here's the way it was on June 25, 1873: News from the Turners Falls Reporter's archive.

Local Matters

Nearly time for — Cholera morbus.

The foundation for the engine house is laid.

The High School closed a very successful term on Friday last.

A farmer amused us with the harrowing details of spring work, the other day.

The monthly temperance meeting at the Methodist Chapel last Sunday evening was well attended. The singing was unusually good.

Through the energy of our postmaster we have had another mail added — one over the V. & M. R. R. to Boston — in the afternoon.

A fire in the swamp below Nine-

teenth street, on Friday, made a few people hurry down that way. No damage of importance.

A QUESTION — In which will towns do the most good: By making donations for public libraries or local newspapers? The one entertains and instructs a few at home upon abstruse and difficult, as well as upon more pleasing subjects, and its benefits are not here denied, but it is too often without benefit; the other instructs the multitude, and represents all its best interests to the world. We invite correspondence upon this subject.

Col. D. A. Wood of Riverside, has our thanks for the finest box of Strawberries we ever saw. We were curious enough to measure them, and they varied in size from three and one-third to four and one half inches. Don't it make your mouth water?



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Dogs and Cows Loose; Humans Despondent

Monday, 5/1

12:02 p.m. Main Road caller advises there is a Labrador-type dog in the road.

Tuesday, 5/2

5:44 p.m. Motor vehicle vs. railing reported, Main Road. Vehicle has left scene.

Thursday, 5/4

4:32 p.m. Assisted Erving PD serving a warrant.

Friday, 5/5

2:12 p.m. Assisted Montague PD with protective custody of two subjects who were intoxicated at the park.

Saturday 5/6

8:12 p.m. Caller from Main Road reports her bank card and car keys were taken.

Sunday, 5/7

4:06 p.m. Caller from the French King Highway reports he had to swerve to avoid a large dead raccoon in the road. Removed.

4:58 p.m. Welfare check requested for an older male in a green shirt walking on Route 2 approximately 1½ miles from the bridge.

Monday, 5/8

3:33 a.m. Cow reported on Main Road, south of the Gill restaurant, headed toward Turners.

12:50 p.m. Warrant arrest on Mountain Road.

Tuesday, 5/9

8:45 a.m. Traffic hazard;

tractor-trailer parking on the French King Highway.

Thursday, 9/11

6:44 a.m. Caller from West Gill Road advises a gallon of paint is in the roadway and spilling. Contacted the highway department.

10:31 a.m. Caller reports a couple dogs on River Road; not sure whose they are.

Friday, 5/12

8:42 a.m. Three-vehicle crash with several injuries, French King Highway.

7:17 p.m. Bench at the Main Road cemetery has been knocked down.

9:12 p.m. Assisted Bernardston PD with a motor vehicle accident, no injuries.

Saturday, 5/13

8 p.m. Welfare check requested for a male subject on a bicycle who has fallen a few times in the parking lot, French King Highway.

Sunday, 5/14

7:17 a.m. Greenfield PD transferred 911 call from French King Highway. Believe caller is upset because they were pulled over.

Monday, 5/15

12:59 p.m. Welfare check, French King Highway. Male party slumped over wheel.

4:57 p.m. Passerby reporting a loose dog on Main Road. Unable to get close.

Tuesday, 5/16

7:50 a.m. Complaint about tractor-trailers parked on the French King Highway in the area of the Gill Mill.

6:41 p.m. Assisted Bernardston PD: served a warrant.

7:24 p.m. Search in the woods at the French King Bridge for a subject who may be despondent.

10:58 p.m. Assisted Montague PD with search on Canal Street.

Thursday, 5/18

7:44 a.m. Report of a two-car accident at the pumps of the Mobil. No injuries.

Sunday, 5/21

3:07 p.m. Assisted Bernardston PD. Caller advises he has two suspicious people on his property.

4:15 p.m. Complaint that someone threw trash all over Boyle Road.

Tuesday, 5/23

7:21 a.m. Repeat complaint of tractor trailer parked on the French King Highway.

3:59 p.m. Complaint of a monument covered.

7:48 pm. Assisted Montague PD. Asked to check area for possible suicidal subject.

8:27 p.m. Caller from Chapel Drive reporting a very large dead deer in his yard.

Wednesday, 5/24

9:55 a.m. Caller from River-

view Drive states there are multiple parking and traffic concerns in the area as a result of new construction.

Friday, 5/26

2:27p.m. Welfare check; subject found sleeping behind the wheel.

6:28 p.m. Caller from West Gill Road reports dogs constantly barking a few houses down. States this has been going on for weeks.

Sunday, 5/28

11:39 a.m. Caller from the French King Highway reports the parking lot is crowded and people going to a show are sitting around playing music. Caller states they are intimidating.

11:46 a.m. Welfare check for a female slumped behind the wheel.

5:59 p.m. Caller reports a vehicle rollover, Pisgah Mountain and Barney Hale Roads. Vehicle is on its roof, passengers are in the car and it is smoking.

Tuesday, 5/30

10:32 a.m. Complaint of a cow in the field, North Cross and Main roads.

3:15 p.m. Walk-in reported a missing receiver hitch.

7:53 p.m. Complaint that two dogs in a car in the Gill Tavern parking lot are continuously barking.

Wednesday, 5/31

10:32 a.m. Complaint of a cow in the field, North Cross and Main roads.

3:15 p.m. Walk-in reported a missing receiver hitch.

7:53 p.m. Complaint that two dogs in a car in the Gill Tavern parking lot are continuously barking.

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: *Joseph McCarthy*, paintings. Through July. Reception on Friday, June 30, from 5 to 8 p.m. during Art Walk.

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

170 Main Street, Greenfield: *Peter Monroe*, fine art photography. Appointments at 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, Thursdays in June and July. Sign up to be painted by emailing juliashirar.com. Each subject 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 this Saturday, June 24 from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.

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

Montague Center Library: *Mount Toby Paintings*, by Kate Spencer. Through July 14.

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

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

Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne Falls: *Two Conversations: Erika Radich and Sharon Myers*. Myers is a fabric, clay, and mixed-media artist, and Radich focuses primarily on printmaking. The show is a collaboration between the artists who are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. June 28 through August 27. Reception Saturday, July 8 from 2 to 4 p.m.

Shelburne Arts Coop, Shelburne Falls: *Beyond the Rain-*

bow, art and craft by member artists. Through June.

Fiddleheads Gallery, Northfield: *Regional Photography Show* by New England photographers. Through July 2. *Northfield Then & Now Exhibit*, area artists create a contemporary response to historic photographs of Northfield. July 7 through August 19. Reception Thursday, July 20 from 4:30 to 7 p.m.

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.

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.

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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 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 Sasser, 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.greenriver-festival.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.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Masala Jazz*. Free. 9:30 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.

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Judy Collins, Rasa String Quartet*. \$: 8 p.m.

Holyoke Media, Holyoke: *Sensor Ghost, Perennial, Bubble Scary*. \$: 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, JULY 2

Tanglewood, Lenox: *Robert Plant, Alison Krauss*. \$: 7 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Pad-ded Waltz, Jake Tuvek*, more TBA. \$: 7:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, JULY 6

Tree House Brewing Company, South Deerfield: *They Might Be Giants*. \$: 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, JULY 7

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Drew Paton*. Free. 6:30 p.m. *Tall Travis*. Free. 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, JULY 8

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

Stone Church, Brattleboro:

Reverend Horton Heat, The Delta Bombers. \$: 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, JULY 13

Steakback Outhouse, Brattleboro: *Lily Konisberg, Greta Keating, Ruth Garbus, beets-blog*. \$: 6 p.m.

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

FRIDAY, JULY 14

Antenna Cloud Farm, Gill: *Maeve Gilchrist, Kyle Sanna*. \$: 7 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *The Blues Dream Box, Bridge of Flowers, Owen Manure, Push Back*. \$: 8 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Delicate Steve, Ruth Garbus, Mythless*. \$: 8 p.m.

Hutghi's At The Nook, Westfield: *Lupo Citta, Slant of Light, Bruise Bath, Thee Holy Oaken String Band*. \$: 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, JULY 15

Mt. Toby Meetinghouse, Leverett: *Peaceful Means*. \$: 4 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Pete Bernhard, Eli Elkus, The Green Sisters*. \$: 8 p.m.

MONDAY, JULY 17

Belltower Records, North Adams: *Eric Arn, Glenn Jones, Zoots Houston*. \$: 4:30 p.m.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *Advance Base, Young Moon, Bobbie*. \$: 8 p.m.

looking forward...

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.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 3

Tree House Brewing Company, South Deerfield: *The Tallest Man on Earth*. \$: 7 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.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 26

MASS MoCA, North Adams: *Pixies, Modest Mouse, Cat Power*. \$: 7 p.m.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

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

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

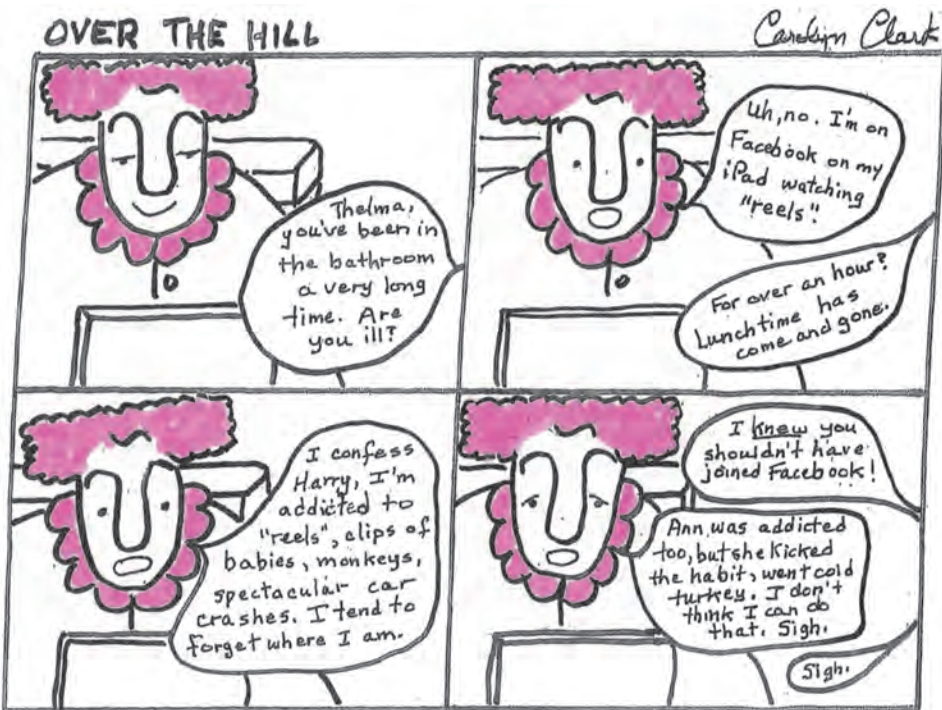
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Of Montreal, Locate S, 1, Thus Love*. \$: 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

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



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WEST ALONG from page B1

time, we would have been sitting on the same porch with our grandparents, watching the rain flood the street, making the same familiar sound of drumming on green leaves. Only back then, in the 1950s, our Irish grandmother would be sprinkling holy water all over the place, asking the Good Lord to preserve us from the lightning and to please not have the trees fall down on our roof and heads.

Oftentimes, just to be sure, she would insist that we all sit in the front hall on the stairway that goes up to the upstairs bedrooms. She figured that would be the safest place in a storm, but I don't know why; the trees were just a few feet from where we sat inside, listening to her prayers.

In fact, towering maples did line the street in those days, creating a leafy tunnel high overhead. Those 90-foot trees are long gone, victims of road salt and age. But I see them in memory, especially when I sit out on the front porch in a storm.

For a while yet, the wall of green where the street ends is still wind-whipped and wind-tossed, showing the trees' pale green undersides. Just as quickly, it is over. The woods drip with the early summer rain, and the catbirds come out to fluff and dry. The wood thrush remembers where he left off his summer song before the cloudburst, and picks up the tune, over in the greenwood.

By the next morning, all is shining and bright again at 7 a.m. Out back the sun glistens on the wet floorboards of the rain-washed deck. Nearby rosebushes bow under the weight of rainwater and the blooms of their flowers, some like full-bosomed dowagers, others like slender maidens.

There's a bumper crop of cottontail bunnies at play in the grass. They could care less about the watching dog. The towering foxgloves await the arrival of the bumblebees.

Cuckoos call, not at all like the Bavarian clocks, but with a dull pumping sound, hardly audible. They're busy seeking out the hordes of gypsy moth caterpillars. (Only now we can't call them gypsy moths – their name has been changed to spongy moths, to not offend. Being someone who loves words and the images they conjure up beyond simple definitions, the phrase "gypsy moth" evokes images of the 1940s and 1950s, moths hovering under street lights, winging in and out of the fatally attractive burning bulb. I'll get used to saying "spongy moths," but the image won't be the same.)

Those spongy moth caterpillars, in any case, are eating their way through our woods. A cascade of confetti-ed oak leaves drifts and falls from above while pellets of caterpillar poop rain down, creating the sound of minute rain drops on the woodland floor. The black-billed and yellow-billed cuckoos are arriving to eat them all, but I think we'd need an army of cuckoos to make a dent in the caterpillar population.

We know this will pass. Soon a fungus will develop among the caterpillars, those pests will die off, and the oaks will get a chance to grow new leaves. It can't happen fast enough for me.

My No-Mow May has morphed into my Just-Let-It-Go June. Buttercups, dandelions, fat grasses, and white clover cover the yard. Dog finds new luxurious nesting and bedding possibilities in the rich greenness, his Siberian husky ears straight up over the grass that has escaped the mower so far and stands at eye level. Nick must think he's sort of invisible, seeing and watching the house but not being seen.

Day after day, the dawn chorus, misnamed, actually starts way before dawn. In the darkness the robin, catbird, and wrens begin warbling, testing scales and, in the case of the wren, holding forth

with raspy scolding. The cacophony that passes for song reaches into the upstairs bedroom window, open wide to the night and now the nearing daybreak.

This is the kind of summer when, for reasons known only to themselves, flowers have decided to bloom in a wild palette of color: roses with names like the *Reine des Violettes*, Tottering-By-Gently, Tess d'Uberilles, and Teasing Georgia fill the evening air with heady perfumes. Wisteria, iris, lupin, coralbell, clematis, and all flare in the domestic garden, while lady slipper, wild cherry, forget-me-nots, and mountain laurel blossom in the woods and along the lush river shores.

June 21 brings us the Summer Solstice, with 15 hours and 18 minutes of daylight.

Some of us will notice, some not. The furred and feathered beings will carry on as they do on any given summer's day.

Some, like the tufted titmouse family band, are already bringing in the youngest members of the family to teach them how to get a quick meal without much work, just by showing up at the bird-feeder. They loop back and forth, between sunflower offerings and overhanging bare tree branch and back again. Cardinal youngsters clamor ceaselessly for snacks, while the female rose-breast takes a break from incubating.

Jenny wren – or is it Johnny? – sings from a tomato stake near the birdhouse. They are house wrens, after all. Jenny angles a long stick through the one-inch-wide doorway.

That inch is just right for the wren, but too small for the invasive house sparrows. They can't squeeze through to wreak havoc in the wren nest, though they've tried.

House wren's cousin, Carolina wren, has just started incubating in that cozy nest atop the floor brush that stands in the back door corner.

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She'll be making herself quiet and invisible as we pass within a foot of her secret niche. She concentrates on her future family, which will be hatching right around Bastille Day.

We know the summer is short and the winter long. But for now we are all knee-deep in June down here on the Flat. This month has come in riding on a chorus of bird-song and the heady odor of flowers.

Looking down over the ages of other months and future years, this is a June we are meant to long remember.

June wants me, and I'm to spare!

– James Whitcomb Riley (1849-1916)



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