

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 21 – NO. 34

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

JULY 27, 2023

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

JimBob Buys Decaying Bus Barn For \$400,000, Finishing GMTA



The sale would allow the transportation area to be dissolved, 99 years after its founding.

By **JEFF SINGLETON**

At the Montague selectboard's meeting Monday night, town administrator Steve Ellis announced that the Greenfield building which long housed the Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA) bus maintenance facility will soon be sold to JimBob Realty, LLC, a real estate company that owns several properties associated with Toyota of Greenfield.

The sale, scheduled for August 15, is expected to mean the imminent demise of the Greenfield-Montague Transportation Area (GMTA), an organization created in the 1920s to publicly manage the trolley system that served

the two towns. GMTA became a bus system in the 1930s, and its routes were eventually absorbed by FRTA in 2006. But GMTA – called the “Greenfield Montague Transportation Authority” in the purchase-and-sale – continued to own its old car barn at 382 Deerfield Street, and lease it to FRTA.

In recent years, the lease agreement between GMTA and FRTA has become contentious. Greenfield, which is assumed to own 70% of the GMTA's assets, threatened to terminate the lease because former mayor William Martin believed the city might need the property to house its fire department temporarily. Montague, see **MONTAGUE** page A7

Intense Storms Keep Flushing Greenfield Sewage Into Rivers

By **MIKE JACKSON**

GREENFIELD – “We’re getting unprecedented rains in a short amount of time,” Greenfield public works director Marlo Warner told the Reporter when asked about the conditions that have led to three events so far this month in which a mix of untreated sewage and stormwater was directed from a holding chamber into the Green River.

“We could get four inches of rain in a week, and we wouldn’t even be close to tripping this chamber,”

Warner explained. “But if you get four inches in an hour, it completely overwhelms both our stormwater systems and sewer systems.”

According to Warner, the city’s wastewater department has been struggling in recent years to track down and eliminate sources of inflow and infiltration (“I&I,” in industry parlance) of rainwater into the sanitary sewer.

Unlike in Turners Falls, Greenfield’s residential sewer system has been entirely separated from see **SEWAGE** page A6

LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Single Recusal, Single Refusal Force Pond-Pull Funding Punt

By **GEORGE BRACE**

At its July 18 meeting, Leverett’s selectboard tabled a request from the non-profit Friends of Leverett Pond for a town contribution of funds to their annual cleanup of invasive weeds in Leverett pond. Among other business, the board also decided that further deliberation was needed before making a decision on accepting a gift of land to be used for the creation of a “town forest.”

Friends of Leverett Pond (FLP) member Mitch Mulholland said the group had received a permit from the

state to remove plants on the town-owned pond, and asked for \$300 in town funding towards an overall expense estimated at \$16,500. He said the balance had been raised, with difficulty, through private contributions from FLP members and other residents, and that the project would proceed whether or not the board approved a contribution.

Mulholland gave a slideshow presentation showing thick areas of invasive weeds in the pond and outlined the group’s plans for dealing with them. He noted that the plants were propagated by contact see **LEVERETT** page A5

GILL SELECTBOARD

Facing a Future Of High Water, Responders Ask For Faster Boat

By **KATE SAVAGE**

At its July 17 meeting, the Gill selectboard discussed changes to the sewer commission and debated preparedness needs for rescue missions on an increasingly erratic river.

“I’m sure everybody’s seen an article, or heard, that there was somebody who decided to swim across the river and ended up getting trapped on the buoys,” said deputy fire chief William Kimball, referring to an incident that occurred July 12. With a swift current and flood debris, it took around a dozen agencies about an hour to rescue the individual.

“We came together and worked as a team to effect a rescue without any injury or loss of life,” said Kimball, “so that was a successful mission.”

But the experience also revealed potential weaknesses in the response to emergencies on the Connecticut River. “We have 11 and a half miles of river in our jurisdiction,” Kimball told the board. “None of the agencies on the river have what would be considered a swift-water or riverboat, something that is capable of handling moving water.”

During the July 12 emergency, responders twice attempted a rescue with an inflatable paddle boat, but the current was too swift. Kimball was eventually able to pilot an environmental police boat to rescue the stranded swimmer, but coordinating with the other agency took time. see **GILL** page A8

TURNING POINTS

Stoneworker Leaves Cemeteries To Pursue a Creative Vision

By **KATE SAVAGE**

TURNERS FALLS – When you walk along the Canalside Rail Trail you might come across a secret garden. Amid the flowers and trees, stones have been fashioned into chairs, couches, undulating walls, birdbaths, planters. There’s an outhouse and old railroad signs. There’s an antique car with log bumpers and boulders for wheels.

This is the realm of Mike Fleming. Go ahead – cross the little homemade bridge onto his property. He wants you to look around.

“I’m glad you came here,” Fleming told me. “Someone could open the paper and see ‘Mike Fleming’s retiring from mowing the cemeteries,’ and think, ‘He must be 65 years old.’ I want them to know why I’m leaving.”

After 20 years of maintaining the grounds of town-owned cemeteries, and over a quarter century of landscaping work, Fleming is dedicating himself full-time to his passion for stonework. This includes building walls, patios, and stairs for customers – but also see **PURSUE** page A4



Cemetery commissioners say Mike Fleming’s work maintaining the town cemeteries was fastidious – and inexpensive. “He really kind of cut us a break,” said one.

SCENE REPORT

Wake of the Flood: State Legislators Announce \$20 Million Emergency Aid Package for Farms

By **JEFF SINGLETON**

HATFIELD – The route to South Street in Hatfield, where leaders of the state Senate were announcing a \$20 million supplemental budget appropriation Monday afternoon to aid farmers who have lost crops to recent extreme

weather, is probably not terribly complicated, if you follow Siri’s advice. But this reporter disdains artificial intelligence and prefers to rely on maps and personal instinct, as he has since the spring of 1964.

So, after crossing the bridge from Sunderland on Route 116 I took the left onto River Road through

Whately, which becomes Main Street in North Hatfield. I sensed I was on the right track, but made the mistake of asking several local residents and employees of small markets where South Street was.

No one seemed to know, and my confidence evaporated. Was I about to miss the important media event?

Arriving at a confusing intersection in the southern part of Hatfield, I asked a man who seemed to be fixing a roof if he lived in the area, and if he knew where South Street was. “Yes. It’s right over there. Are you going to the party?” the man asked, pointing enthusiastically to a dirt road less than a block away. “Are you a reporter? They’re all down there.”

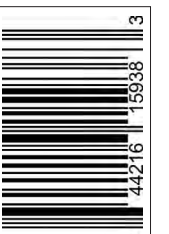
After a short drive down “South Street,” which very quickly became a narrow dirt road bordered by fields lined with crops, and a quarter-mile hike past a long line of cars, I arrived at a large cluster of people with notepads. They elbowed each other in their efforts to buttonhole various farmers and state officials in the rutted, sandy soil. see **FARMS** page A6



Hatfield farmer Bernie Smiarowski, who helped host the press conference, discussed the importance of no-strings-attached farm aid in the wake of devastating weather.

‘To Say What You Feel Is To Dig Your Own Grave’

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SUMMER SCHEDULE
VOL. 21 #35: AUGUST 10
VOL. 21 #36: AUGUST 24
BIWEEKLY AND PROUD!

The Montague Reporter

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Founded by
Arthur Evans Harry Brandt David Detmold
August 2002

Wanting to Believe

Wednesday's hearing in the US House of Representatives concerning "unmanned aerial phenomena" was, at the very least, fascinating popcorn politics, though it was somehow eclipsed in the news cycle by a bad day in court for Hunter Biden and a scary moment behind a podium for Mitch McConnell.

David Grusch, the main "whistleblower" testifying about the Department of Defense's alleged decades-long top-secret space-craft-recovery programs, spoke under oath and seems plausibly to believe the things he has been told.

We don't need to declare for or against Grusch's narrative of powerful "non-human" babysitters; everyone deserves a crack at arriving

at their own position, and since the public has yet to see any hard evidence, this seems to be our fate.

A more immediate question to puzzle through is this: Maybe there are no super-intelligent space beings, but there does seem to be some institutional investment in creating the *impression* that these programs exist. Why is that? Speculating on psychological operations and disinformation is its own hall of mirrors, though, and it makes sense that many Americans simply touch on the story and back away.

There's enough other crazy stuff happening right now – a runaway ocean heat peak, for one thing. If the aliens decide they want to help they can feel free. Now's the time.



NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION

Jade Strong, administrative assistant for Hired Hands Signs, poses next to a newly completed sign inside the Turners Falls studio for Greenfield Records, formerly John Doe, Jr. Strong says the shop has been "crazy busy" this summer and scheduling around the many rain storms has made things difficult.

No Letters to the Editors?



ELLIOT LEVIN PHOTO

Here's one to hang onto: reader Elliot Levin shared this drone photograph of the very low water levels at Barton Cove, and the very high flow of water over the dam, back on Wednesday, July 12. FirstLight Power had reportedly anticipated a higher crest of water coming downriver that Tuesday, and erred on the side of caution to avoid any flooding of the Turners Falls and Riverside neighborhoods.

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Compiled by NINA ROSSI

Reminder: our next paper will come out Thursday, August 10! Subscribers will not receive a paper on August 3. We run biweekly in July and August.

Over the next few weeks, the Finders Collective in Turners Falls will be collecting supplies and transporting them to their connections in Vermont for distribution to mutual aid disaster relief efforts after the severe flooding there. They are looking for all kinds of cleaning supplies and tools, buckets, flashlights, bug spray, baby formula, and non-perishable food items. Heavy-duty tarps are especially sought after. Extra items will be distributed locally.

Bring supplies to 104 Fourth Street during regular hours of 3 to 6 p.m. on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Email finders@riseup.net for more information, or to arrange a different time to drop things off.

A "stand out" protest of the Northfield Mountain pumped-storage station will be held this Friday, July 28 from 4:30 to 6 p.m. on the Turners Falls-Gill bridge. The event is organized by the Connecticut River Defenders.

"This river-killing, fossil fuel-guzzling, greenback-sucking facility is in the process of seeking relicensing for another 50 years," explains Dorothea Melnicoff of Greenfield, a member of the group. "We all must stand firmly and publicly in opposition to its relicensing."

Local artist Julia Shirar has been painting portraits at Looky Here in Greenfield since the beginning of the summer, and has completed 16 portrayals of 18 people who represent a combination of walk-ins and those who signed up for a sitting. Shirar uses salvaged materials as surfaces, and works exclusively from observation and memory rather than photographic references.

A closing reception for the series will be held this Friday, July 28 from 5 to 8 p.m., during the monthly Greenfield Art Walk. Looky Here is

at 34 Chapman Street in Greenfield.

The National Spiritual Alliance will host a Psychic Fair from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. this Saturday, July 29, at Thompson Temple, 2 Montague Avenue in Lake Pleasant. To register for a session, or for more information, visit spiritualallianceusa.org/calendar.

Wendell author and illustrator Sylvia Wetherby has just published a children's book titled *Madame Monarch*, published by Haley's in Athol and aimed at children in preschool and early elementary grades.

Wetherby will be signing her books at Hogsmeade Fair this Saturday, July 29 at the Orange Airport; Sunday, August 6 at the Athol Bird and Nature Club in Athol; and at Wendell Old Home Day, which will be held Saturday, August 12.

The next Cinestorm double feature at the Shea Theater in Turners Falls is this Saturday, July 29 at 7:30 p.m. The theme is "Hack the Planet!" and the two films showing were both released in 1995.

Hackers is described as a "visually stunning cyber-thriller, immersing us in a world of tech-savvy teenage rebels taking on techno-terrorists in a dangerous game of high-stakes hacking." *Johnny Mnemonic*, which will be shown in a newly remastered high-contrast black-and-white version, is described as "a striking new vision of a neo-noir future that feels far more akin to a grungy mid-'90s indie. A personal favorite of its star, Keanu Reeves plays a down-on-his-luck courier with a deadly brain implant full of stolen Yakuza data."

The movies are free, the bar will be open for snacks and drinks, and there will be the usual trivia and prizes.

Mary Kay Mattiace wrote to say that the play *The 39 Steps*, performed at the Actors Theatre Playhouse in West Chesterfield, New Hampshire, is a "laugh out loud" funny, fast-paced comic tale.

"It is a thrilling comedic adventure played by exceedingly talent-

ed actors," she said. "I kept asking myself, where in the world did these people come from? The extra effects are striking and exquisitely managed; laughter and entertainment abound."

Readers can catch the final performance this Saturday, July 29 at 7:30 p.m.

The annual "Christmas in July" boat parade and fireworks event – along with a Night Skate at Unity Skatepark – is scheduled for this Saturday, July 29, courtesy of the Franklin County Boat Club and the Montague Parks and Recreation Department. The Night Skate starts at 6 p.m. View the fireworks by the riverfront at 9 p.m., and hear them all over town.

Enjoy spirited klezmer at Peskeompskut Park in Turners Falls next Thursday, August 3 at 6 p.m. with the Myrtle Street Klezmer band. RiverCulture, one of the sponsors of these free summertime concerts in the park, says the band, led by clarinetist Jason Ditzian, is an "ecstatic, experimental exploration of the musical tradition of the Ashkenazi Jews of Central and Eastern Europe."

Bring a chair or blanket to sit on, and donations to the band are encouraged. The rain date is Friday, August 4.

The No Strings Marionette company will present "Wasabi: A Dragon's Tale" at Peskeompskut Park at 10:30 a.m. on Friday, August 4. The original modern-minded fairy tale is about Princess Aja, who is about to marry Prince Olaf until the fire-breathing Wasabi swoops from the sky, reduces the palace to ashes, and carries her off.

The free show is presented by the Montague Public Libraries.

The tenth annual Pocumtuck Homelands Festival is coming to Turners Falls next Saturday and Sunday, August 5 and 6, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day. This free two-day celebration at Unity Park is sponsored by the Nolumbeka Project and RiverCulture.

The festival combines live music, drumming, dancing, storytelling, native crafts, and food. For details, check out the insert in this paper or visit nolumbekaproject.org/events.

The Friends of the Library host their monthly book sale, Saturday August 5 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Carnegie Library. At this month's sale, every child will

receive a free book of their choice!

This year's Free Admission Day at Historic Deerfield is Wednesday, August 9. Enjoy free entry to the museum from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. and participate in a variety of activities including demonstrations, hands-on crafts, and games. A full calendar can be found at www.historic-deerfield.org/events.

The next Writers Read event at the LAVA Center in Greenfield will feature local writers Kaia Jackson, Mishie Serrano, and Moonlight Davis on Wednesday, August 9 at 7 p.m. There is a \$5 suggested donation. Visit thelavacenter.org or call (413) 376-8118 for more information.

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources invites tourist attractions, agricultural commodity groups, non-profits, and other organizations who would like to have booths at the Massachusetts Day at the Big E on September 21 to submit their applications by August 10.

The event showcases the state's culture, agriculture, and tourism, but is not a "selling show." Find out more and apply at tinyurl.com/massbigeday.

The next Great Falls Coffeehouse is on Friday, August 11 from 7 to 9 p.m. The Hampton Trio and special guest Michael Nix will provide classical and contemporary music for mandolins, mandola, and guitar. Refreshments will be available, and attendees are encouraged to make donations in support of educational programming at the Center. Meet in the Great Hall at the Discovery Center.

The Friends of the Franklin County Regional Dog Shelter plan to hold a Mutts in Need fundraiser at the Millers Falls Rod & Gun Club on Saturday, August 12 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. There will be live music, barbeque, raffles and silent auction, photo booth, agility course, and dog massages. Advance tickets are available at fcrdogkennel.org or by calling (413) 676-9182.

If you know someone who is 14 to 20 years old and experienced school-based discipline for cannabis use or possession, they might be eligible to participate in a research study at the UMass Amherst School of Public Health about youth perspectives on school-based discipline and criminal justice involvement related to cannabis.

Each participant will get a \$30 gift card for a 45- to 60-minute Zoom or phone interview. All information will be kept confidential. Call Faith English at (802) 387-0634 to find out more.

Rare local examples of lithified armored mud balls were discovered by geology professor Richard Little. These can be seen in Greenfield, Gill, and Turners Falls.

Little has started a petition, with support from state representative Susannah Whipps, to have Jurassic Armored Mud Balls designated as our official "State Sedimentary Structure." Find out more about the mud balls on his website, armoredmudballs.rocks, and if you think it's a good idea, sign the petition at tinyurl.com/mud-balls.

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

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Items of interest: These lilies, reportedly affiliated with Bob Walker of Montague Center, were in full bloom on Monday.

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PURSUE from page A1

creating an eclectic array of artwork. "Life is too short," he explained. "I want to do what I want to do." Fleming has had more opportunities than most to ponder life's brevity. If you've visited any of the eight cemeteries owned by the town of Montague, you've benefited from his work mowing, trimming, and clearing the grounds.

"Maintaining cemeteries is hard work, and there are not a lot of contractors doing it," said cemetery commission member Judith Lorei. "You're mowing, but you're also having to trim around the headstones. People don't realize how labor-intensive it is."

When I visited the East Mineral Road Cemetery with Fleming, he pointed out patches between headstones too small for a lawnmower to fit. "They're not like the big cemeteries that have all those even rows. Everything is kind of weird, you know."

Fleming admitted he might have made his job harder "either from superstition or out of respect." He would use a trimmer to cut grass around flat headstones rather than letting his mower pass over them. He also put extra time into headstones that are already surrounded by trees and brush.

"That stone out in the woods is just as important as this one out in the open, as far as I'm concerned," he said. He feels the same concern for the smallest cemetery. He cited a cemetery on Route 63 where there are only three stones remaining. "Some people would be like 'Oh, what are we bothering with that for?' Well, to me, that one is just as important as this one or the next one," he said. "I guess it's a respect thing for every individual who's been there."

"I always felt like it wasn't just a job for him," Lorei said. "He wanted to do right by the cemeteries. It's been very easy to work with him, and I feel he has given the town a really good price for what he's done. He really kind of cut us a break."

With Fleming's departure, the commission has had to request more money from the town budget to pay new landscapers. But Lorei said she is pleased that he is following his passions. "It sounds like he really loves the stonework that he's doing," she told the Reporter. "I hope that not having the responsibilities of caring for the cemeteries will really free him up to do more of what he loves. We're really very happy for him."

Fleming also seemed energized about his new path. "The stuff I do now just stimulates your brain," he said. "I'm very creative with what I do, and it's a lot more fun. I enjoy going to work every day."

Fleming works with mica schist quarried in Goshen. The stone was formed 400 million years ago from the sand and mud at the bottom of an ancient sea. It naturally forms flat layers ideal for walls, stairs, and paving stones. "This is great stuff to work with," he said. "The colors are amazing. They're from the minerals and the water that were in the layers. I love them."

Fleming started experimenting with stonework decades ago. "I never really had the confidence that I could do it full-time," he said. "I felt like there wasn't enough money - I was always going to have to mow lawns."

But now his customers seek him out from neighboring states to procure his unique pieces. These include stone chairs, each with recycled school bus leaf springs and



SAVAGE PHOTOS

A late-1930s Plymouth sedan with stone wheels (top) and intersecting stone bird baths (above) are among the attractions at Fleming's outdoor showroom on J Street.

rotors worked into the design to allow the piece to move and adjust to one's weight.

From one of these shockingly comfortable chairs, I watched catbirds drinking from bird baths carved to look like two stones intersecting through water. "People don't want to spend \$400 on a bird-

bath," Fleming said. "Well, go to Walmart then. Get one that's going to break in a year. But this one your kids' kids are going to have."

Whether or not his neighbors buy his birdbaths, he wants them to understand the work he's doing. "Not that I need the exposure - I'm busy, I can only do so much. But I still want the community."

Fleming celebrates other local artists and small businesses collaborating to make Montague "a point of destination." He explained: "I want someone who lives in Boston to say 'I heard about this cool little place, I heard the town is really cool.' And then it brings people here, they go to a restaurant, they go to a brewery."

This broader vision drives some of Fleming's zanier projects, like the "Flintstone car" with rock wheels, which he will eventually give stone seats and a wooden steering wheel, and make available for anyone walking by to sit in and take a picture.

"I'm doing it because I want to build it," Fleming said. "When it's done, people will maybe catch wind of it and think it's a cool thing. It's just going to take some time."

Looking over his many creations, Fleming said, "The projects that are funnest are your own, you know? Even when you're not making a dime off of 'em."


To see Mike Fleming's creations, visit him at 108 J Street, or check out fleminglandscaping.net.



Mike Fleming spent the last two decades maintaining the town's eight cemeteries, but is moving on to pursue a stoneworking career. Above: Eunice A. (Goddard) Brown died in Millers Falls at the age of 25, and is buried at the East Mineral Road Cemetery.

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LEVERETT from page A1

with boats and trailers using the town-owned boat launch, and described a number of problems he said they caused.

Mulholland said the group will be using a new "Eco-Harvester" machine to get rid of the weeds, which he described as more environmentally friendly than the machines used in the past, and as a better alternative to herbicides.

Contributions from the town, Mulholland said, had been approved in the past, and the amount the FLP was requesting was based on the area that would be cleared near the public boat launch.

Selectboard chair Tom Hankinson, president of the FLP and a pondfront resident, recused himself from the discussion and turned the meeting chairmanship over to member Melissa Colbert.

Patricia Duffy, the third member, spoke against the funding request, saying she felt the plant removal was "not in the best interest of the health of the pond" and that she had received letters from residents opposed to using taxpayer money for the effort.

Duffy disagreed with many of Mulholland's assertions about the negative environmental impacts of the weeds, referring to them as "scare tactics," and pointed to potential harms that could be caused by their removal, particularly a loss of habitat for pollinators during "high summer."

Duffy and Mulholland briefly debated a number of points during the discussion, with neither moving from their positions.

Colbert said that the plan to pull the weeds, rather than use more extreme methods, sounded reasonable to her, but that she was not an expert on the environmental consequences. She added that Duffy seemed to be saying the project was "more

cosmetic than functional."

With Hankinson recused and Duffy opposing the funding, Colbert decided to table the request due to a lack of consensus.

Town Forest

The board decided more information was needed before making a decision on accepting a gift of land from Bruce Spencer for the creation of a public town forest. At issue were potential costs to the town, particularly in taking responsibility for a bridge on the property which provides access to a house.

Board members and other town officials expressed support for the idea of creating a town forest, but Hankinson said the town had no cost analysis on maintenance requirements for the bridge.

Town administrator Marjorie McGinnis said she was "all for the concept of a town forest," but she was "very afraid" of accepting the parcel because bridges were "expensive" and a "huge liability."

The board postponed action on accepting the land so they could do more research and hear additional public opinion on the matter.

Dog Absences

A resident who had been ordered at a prior dog hearing to restrain his dogs and provide an update on the restraints failed to appear for the update. The board issued him an invitation to appear at a future meeting to provide the update.

Board members reviewed the status of a second dog hearing order, for which the respondent also failed to appear for an update. Members said the complaint, which concerned barking, was being monitored, and that the barking may have abated, but the dog's owner had filed an appeal of the order at the state district court in Orange.

The board discussed a need to

hire a new dog officer, a position that has been open since May. Town clerk Lisa Stratford noted the current yearly budget of \$1,500 for a dog officer would probably need to be raised in the future due to the town's difficulty in attracting applicants.

Turf Concern

The board reviewed a complaint from the chief of police in Shutesbury that Leverett police had been operating in his town without notifying Shutesbury officials.

Board members said the complaint revolved around a renewed search for the body of Leverett resident Richard Drury, who went missing in 2020, which was being conducted jointly with the state police. Hankinson said he felt there had been a miscommunication between the two departments, and that Leverett police had shuttled state police searchers into Shutesbury but had not operated there themselves.

All three board members expressed support for Leverett chief Scott Minckler, and a desire for the two towns to have good relations. The board offered to have a member facilitate a discussion between the two chiefs to clear the air if they thought it would be helpful.

Other Business

The board voted to give their blessing for the construction of an outdoor challenge course at the Leverett Elementary School, as long as it does not encroach on the adjacent town recreation field.

The board appointed Ralph Horowitz to the position of substitute librarian. Horowitz is a Leverett resident who worked at the Jones Library in Amherst for 24 years.

The board discussed various options for applying to the state's "Complete Streets" grant program, but did not vote on the matter.



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NOTES FROM THE GILL-MONTAGUE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Another One Bites Proverbial Dust

By MIKE JACKSON

GILL-MONTAGUE – Summer meetings have been short this year for the Gill-Montague regional school committee, but members' vacations are becoming a topic of concern as continued attrition may make reaching a quorum a challenge. During Tuesday evening's breezy, 35-minute zoom call, chair Jane Oakes announced that no community members had volunteered to fill the Montague seat vacated last month by John Reynolds, and that Nick Licata has now also tendered his resignation.

Despite only having seven active members, Oakes warned, the number required for a quorum remains at five. This week six were in attendance.

Business was light – the committee voted unanimously to re-appoint Dr. Dean Singer as the district's school physician consultant, and heard a report-back on the six-town regional planning board, which is studying a recombination of local towns into a larger district.

Gill representative Bill Tomb said a forum the board held recently in Erving was "engaging," with better attendance than many previous public outreach sessions. Erving and Warwick, he said, are both considering "tuitioning" students into a larger district, just as they now do into Gill-Montague and Pioneer Valley respectively.

The longest topic of discussion was a disclosure from superintendent Brian Beck that the administration is considering hiring his sister-in-law for a job in the middle and high school guidance office.

Beck outlined in detail the steps he has taken to ward against a conflict of interest, and told the committee they could remove him from the hiring chain, authorize him to hire a relative if she is the best candidate, or do nothing, in which case she could not be hired, according to advice from the state ethics commission.

"I would not be the direct supervisor, or evaluator," he clarified.

Tomb said he would favor removing Beck from the chain of decision-making. "The superintendent hires principals," he said.

The committee has been planning to meet August 8 via Zoom, as it has for over three years, and then August 22 for the first time in person.

"I have a very strong feeling about having meetings in person," John Reynolds told the *Reporter* this week. In May, Reynolds was elected to a seat on the committee by two write-in votes; he did not take long to withdraw.

"I have a very strong feeling about having meetings in person, so that the general public can come when they need to," Reynolds said. "And it was quite apparent that the current situation on there is that they are very happy to do it on a computer."

Reynolds, a retired science teacher, said he favored accommodating individual members who need to call in from home, but that "the computer is a filter, no matter how you cut it.... It's fundamental: people gather, and talk, and discuss things in person. And body language and body language counts."

Reached Wednesday evening by email, Licata told the *Reporter* that his situation was the opposite.

"I would not have been able to serve had the meetings not all been virtual," he wrote.

Licata filled in a term by appointment and was elected to begin another, but explained his change of mind: "I'm just no longer able to commit the kind of time and attention the committee, and community, need and deserve," he said.

Any Montague resident interested in filling either vacant seat until next May's town election is encouraged to send a letter of interest to the superintendent's office by August 21. The committee hopes to appoint volunteers to fill the seats on August 22, when they meet at Turners Falls High School for the first time since March 2020.

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FARMS from page A1

Reporters in the rough, though everyone seemed to be having a good time.

The first speaker was state senator Jo Comerford, who represents Hatfield and other towns in the region, including our own, and appeared to be the event's chief organizer. Comerford called farming both the "heart and spine of our valley... the people who care most about food security and equity, and stewards of the land that sequesters carbon..."

She was followed by Senate President Karen Spilka of Ashland, who called the flooding in the region earlier this month "catastrophic." "To say that it's 'once in a generation' may not even be appropriate," she added.

Spilka, standing behind a podium aides had perched on a dirt berm on the field's edge, looked out at the assembled crowd. "We are a commonwealth," she said. "And a commonwealth takes care of *all* of our residents."

Comerford introduced Bernie Smiarowski, on whose farm the press conference took place, and who Comerford said "lit the fire under us initially" earlier this month when the recent rains began turning to floods.

Smiarowski pointed out that many farms carry "large amounts of debt," and that the supplemental bill would provide aid "without additional debt." Though the waters have receded, he stressed potential dangers to crops later in the growing season from pests and disease.

Jay Savage, a fourth-generation farmer from Deerfield, said that even where fields were not ruined, the weather has been creating "quality problems that make us question whether we have a marketable crop."

Several members of the New Family Community Farming Coop, a group of Somali Bantu refugees who live in Springfield and Con-



SINGLETON PHOTO

Journalists, legislative aides, farmers, and politicians gathered on Connecticut River bottomland for the official announcement of the relief package.

necticut but lease land in Northampton and Hadley, also spoke. Speaking through an interpreter, one member described the disruption of recent plantings by the heavy rain, and another spoke about the health benefits of vegetable farming, which he said have also been threatened by the recent weather.

No one at Monday's event mentioned a specific timeline for the supplemental bill's passage, but the tone of all the comments by legislators in attendance implied that it

could be approved quickly. Spilka said the Senate version would pass "later in the week."

If the bill follows the typical legislative process, separate versions could be approved by the Senate and House, followed by a conference committee of the two, and then a reconciled version would be sent to governor Maura Healey's office for consideration.

There was also little discussion at the event of the criteria that would be used to evaluate applica-

tions for the aid.

Spilka said the money would be "administered" by the governor's Office for Administration and Finance, within whose budget the supplemental aid will apparently be located as a reserve fund, and by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR), one of six departments within the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. "This is where the expertise lies," she explained.

A spokesperson for MDAR later

told the Reporter that the current Senate bill "does not include criteria for fund distribution."

Spilka stressed that the aid would be "flexible," and may include assistance to fruit farmers hit by the heavy frosts this spring, as well as for impacts "that we may not even know about" in the coming months.

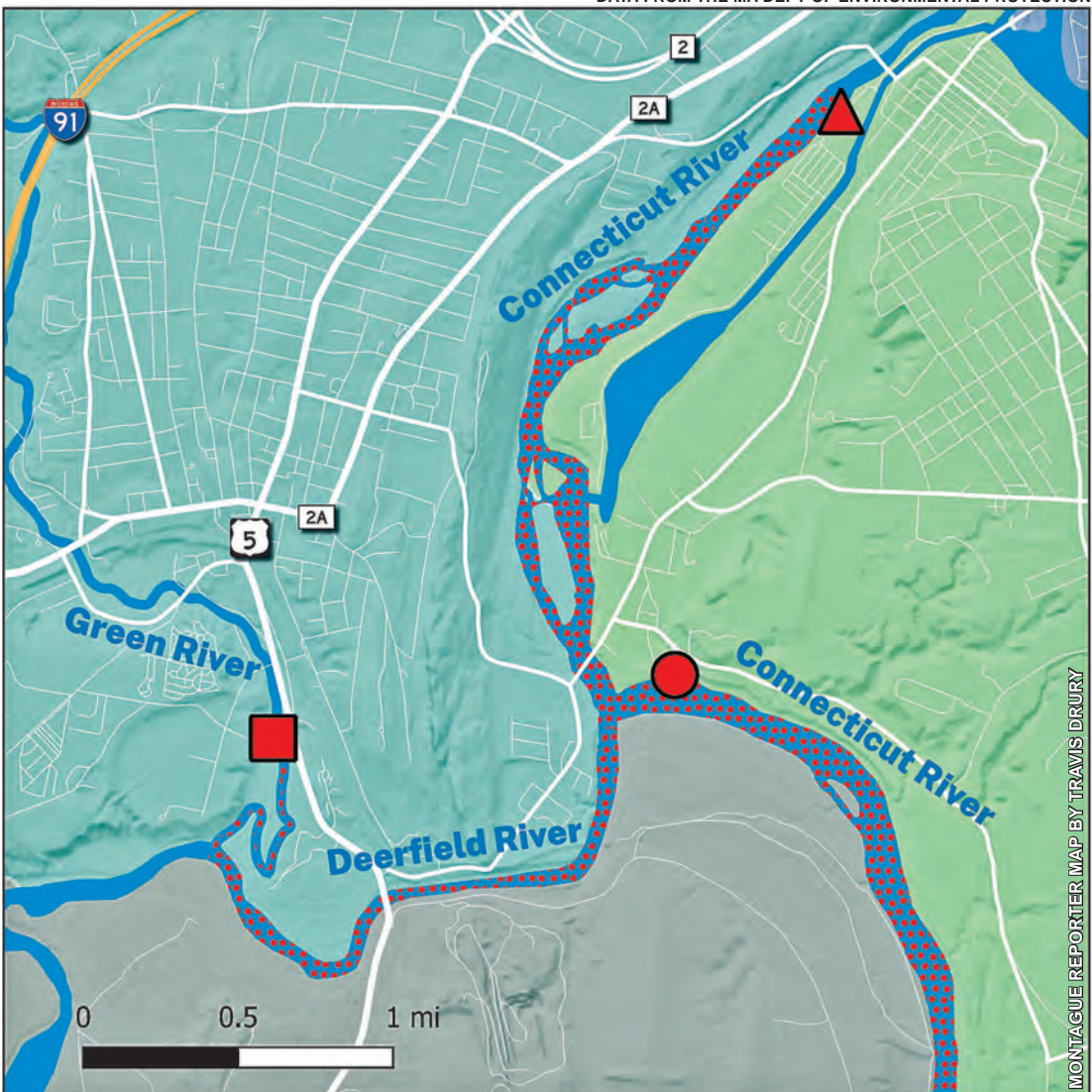
As the meeting ended, and the crowd worked their way to their cars and back up the dirt road known as South Street, a light rain began to fall.



HOW TO SPILL TWO MILLION GALLONS

July 10	July 13	July 16	July 21-22	July 24	Total
24,654	10,854	10,654	21,308	10,654	77,924
30,619	30,619	30,619	153,095	30,619	275,571
55,273	41,273	41,273	174,403	41,273	353,495
142,290		90,000	1,410,000		1,642,290
197,563	41,273	131,273	1,584,403	41,273	1,995,785

DATA FROM THE MA DEPT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



SEWAGE from page A1

its stormwater drainage – work dating back to the late 1970s and early '80s, Warner said. But now the rain is seeping in anyway, a problem compounded with more intense rain events.

As a third factor, new regulations introduced statewide this year require municipalities to report to the press and over social media within two hours of the "discovery" of any sewage spill into waterways, including an estimation of its volume.

In Montague, this is now a semi-frequent occurrence, as moderately strong and long-lasting rainstorms can wash out through the combined sewer overflow (CSO) system and into the Connecticut River at two outfalls. As river levels surged after a major regional storm system on Monday, July 10, Montague watched 30,619 gallons dump out just upstream of the Patch neighborhood, and another 24,654 near the treatment plant in Montague City.

On the same day, however, Greenfield experienced the first breach of its sanitary sewer system since 2016. The city estimated 142,290 gallons overflowed into the Green River from the contact chamber behind a Deerfield Street residence.

"Our main trunk line comes through there – it takes the whole city, or most of the city," Warner said. "If we didn't have that chamber, there would be severe backpressure in the whole system, starting at the plant. We would have the potential of filling homes with sewage, and a chance of shutting the plant down – and if that happens, *everything* would go into the river."

"I don't to see a single gallon go in the

river," he added, "but it's actually a relief to the system."

Warner said his department, which has been working closely with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) since 2018 under a consent order, plans to block off the overflow once the sources of I&I are eliminated.

As the rains continued, two more overflows occurred, and were duly reported to the public. The second, on July 16, an estimated 90,000 gallons were lost. And last Friday afternoon into Saturday morning, a third spill lasted over 19 hours, with an estimated 1.41 million gallons lost.

(By comparison, five separate CSO events at the Patch over the course of Friday afternoon accounted for just under 11% of that volume.)

Warner said Greenfield's drinking water originates in the northern section of the town and in Leyden, so there is no chance of cross-contamination. The Green River enters the Deerfield shortly after the overflow location, though, and the Deerfield joins the Connecticut soon after that. Greenfield is required to notify Montague, Deerfield, and Sunderland residents of each event.

"Avoid contact with these water bodies for 48 hours," Matthew Conway, the city's communications director, warns with each announcement.

"It's nothing new for sewage plants to have this issue," Warner reflected, "but we now have to report it to the media.... I think it's a good thing." Locating and eliminating rainwater infiltration, he said, is the city's top priority for its sewer and wastewater systems.



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MONTAGUE from page A1

which appoints half of the GMTA's four-member oversight board, did not support that action, but has expressed concerns about liability for the aging structure.

This year, after a frustrating search for a new location that lasted a decade, FRTA has finished building a new facility on Sandy Lane in Montague.

The sale price of \$400,000 for the crumbling GMTA building to a small real estate company visibly raised eyebrows among attendees at Monday's Zoom meeting.

Ellis told the selectboard that JimBob Realty would not be the "final redeveloper of the site," but is willing to assume responsibility for removing any underground storage tanks and for the potential cost of a Phase II environmental assessment, which focuses on soil contamination.

Damon Cartelli, who the agreement listed as a manager of Jim-Bob and whose father, Robert Cartelli, is the general manager of the Toyota dealership in Greenfield, was unavailable for comment as of our deadline.

William Martin, listed on the document as JimBob's "broker," deferred to the Cartellis when reached for comment.

"Right now [JimBob] is taking on a building that, quite frankly, has two inches of standing water in portions of the facility," Ellis told the board. He called the \$400,000 price, of which Montague would be entitled to 30%, a "very good price relative to the value of the facility, given its condition – and location, which happens to be right in front of [Greenfield's] treatment plant."

"I'm surprised that we are getting so much," said selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz, "but moreover pleased that we will not now have that hanging over us."

The board did not take a vote on the sale, though Ellis said its members had "indicated the price was reasonable" during a recent non-public executive session.

Dump Runoff

The selectboard discussed the town's arrangement with Kearsarge Montague BD, LLC, the company capping the town's old burn dump on Sandy Lane and building a solar array over it.

The state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has required that the town make improvements in the "retention pond" to the south of the former dump that captures rain runoff. The board approved two modifications to existing agreements with Kearsarge to pay for this "corrective action."

The first, updating the recent lease agreement for the dump, will allow Montague and Kearsarge to split the cost of the mitigation, which Ellis estimated at \$130,000, on a 50/50 basis. The second will allow the town to pay its share by reducing lease payments it receives from Kearsarge for another array built nearby in 2017.

Prior to the votes, assistant town administrator Walter Ramsey told the board that he had received, that very day, new concerns from the "wetlands and water waste" section of the DEP about the retention basin's design in light of recent rain storms.

"I'm optimistic that we will find a solution that keeps us on schedule, but we have some more information-gathering to do," Ramsey said.

Trash Inflation

The board officially endorsed a contract with Casella Waste Management of Massachusetts, a subsidiary of a national company based in Rutland, Vermont, for trash and recycling pickup from July 2024 through June 2027.

Casella was awarded the contract two weeks ago despite the fact that it had submitted a higher bid than Republic Services, the town's current hauler. Ellis said Casella had reduced the "base rate" of trash disposal in the final agreement, and agreed to make "community benefit" payments to RiverCulture of \$5,500 each year.

"We find ourselves in an unusual situation, because town hall staffing is [generally] so stable."

– Steve Ellis, Montague town administrator

Ellis also noted that the contract allowed the cost for the services to increase along with the consumer price index, a measure of inflation, adding some "uncertainty" to the town budget.

Kuklewicz, noting the large increase in trash and recycling costs, suggested meeting with the finance committee to discuss the impact of the contract and consider increasing the price of trash stickers.

"I'm not advocating that we should do it," he said, "but we should look at it."

Gradual Upgrades

Ramsey updated the board on the project to mitigate flooding on Montague City Road. The DEP, he said, has finally issued a water quality certificate, and the project is waiting on a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers. He said the contractor for the project is "eager to get going."

Ramsey gave an update on a long list of other projects being put out to bid. He began with repairs to the slate roof and masonry at the old town hall in Montague Center, which are being bid separately. Window repairs on the building, which the board has agreed to fund with American Rescue Plan Act money, will wait to determine how much the first two projects cost.

Other highlights included a request for bids for solar panels on the roof of the town hall annex in Turners Falls, and for a used generator and pellet boiler at the Clean Water Facility (CWF), which Ramsey said he would discuss at a future sewer commission meeting.

The board endorsed applying for a grant from the state Clean Water Trust Fund to investigate the CWF's capacity to handle increased flows from improvements in the sewer system. Ellis said the study could cost as much as \$250,000, and would require a significant local match. He portrayed the combined sewer overflow problem at the Montague City treatment plant as the missing piece of the town's ongoing sewer upgrade.

Ellis suggested the \$250,000 appropriation, which would need to be approved before the town applied for the state grant, be considered at a town meeting this winter.

False Starts

Ellis reported on a request by Greenhouse Cannabis Group Incorporated, which has abandoned its effort to base a delivery service office in Millers Falls, to refund \$4,315.50 deposited under its host community agreement. Ellis said the town was obligated to return the money, and the board did not take a vote.

Ellis said he was not aware of any other "set-asides" from cannabis firms not yet in operation.

Shayna Reardon, the recently-appointed assistant to administrative assistant Wendy Bogusz, will resign effective August 24 to take another job. Ellis pointed out that between this, a new position created in the town clerk's office, and the recent retirement of the health clerk, "we find ourselves in an unusual situation, because town hall staffing is [generally] so stable."

Other Business

The board approved two agreements with the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District. The first concerned the annual inspection of the transfer station on Sandy Lane, and the second was for a household hazardous waste event, to be held September 3 at Greenfield Community College and the Orange transfer station.

Requests were approved for one-day beer and wine licenses at Rustic Romance in Millers Falls for events on September 22 and November 10, as was a request by Annie Levine, manager of the Great Falls Farmers Market, to place a sandwich-board sign on the Montague Center Common advertising the market, which takes place on Saturdays in Turners Falls.

The board approved a wheelchair ramp in the public right of way for access to a new bookstore at 66 Avenue A, the former Hubie's Tavern building.

Also approved were a \$1,100 payment to Berkshire Design for work on Avenue A streetscape improvements, and the "final quarterly report" for a round of community development block grant funding, which has funded the streetscape among other projects.

The board approved potential "risk assessment" grant applications from the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Agency, which contracts with the town. Members did not select a specific grant topic, but authorized Ellis to proceed with "the first viable" submission.

At the request of town planner Maureen Pollock, the board executed a \$95,000 grant to add an equity component to the town's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program.

The board discussed holding a special town meeting on Wednesday, October 11, but Kuklewicz said he would not be available that day, and the decision about a meeting date was put off until the next board meeting. The board did agree to open the warrant on July 25 and close it August 23, and to meet on August 28 to approve it.

Under "topics not anticipated" at the end of the meeting, Ellis reported on the carpet installation on the first floor of town hall.

"Phase 2" of the project, he said, may require several offices – those of the town clerk, treasurer/collector, and selectboard – to close for "portions" of Thursday, August 3 as well as Monday, August 7, the date of the next scheduled selectboard meeting.



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

Here's the way it was on July 25, 2013: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

FirstLight Relicensing To Finish in 2018

Landowners on both sides of the Connecticut River between Northfield and Turners Falls demand answers as to why fields and riverbanks continue to wash away in the 20-mile section of river between the Turners Falls and Vernon dams, the "lower reservoir" of the Northfield Mountain pumped-storage facility. The Gill selectboard and conservation commission agreed to send a letter to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission requesting further studies to determine the cause.

The letter requests certain scientific studies of the river and its banks, in conjunction with the ongoing federal relicensing of the 1,080-MW Northfield Mountain facility due to be completed in 2018.

Battlefield Grant Rejected

The National Park Service turned down an application by the town of Montague and the Narragansett Indian Tribal Preservation Office for a \$40,000 American Battlefield Protection Service Grant. The grant would have allowed extensive survey of the 1676 Turners Falls/Peskeompskut battle site, at which Captain Turner and Lieutenant Holyoke led an attack on Native Americans encamped at the Great Falls.

The Park Service funded 24 of 46 applicants, and Montague did not make the cut. The town is invited to apply again next year.

20 YEARS AGO

Here's the way it was on July 24, 2003: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

Hallowed Ground

As construction proceeds apace at the Great Falls Discovery Center, heavy equipment operators for Handford Construction removed the bronze eagle and memorial plaque from its plinth on the WWI monument. These will be stored until they can be restored and placed in their new location, part of a unified monument for Montague veterans of all wars at the veterans park next to the Carnegie Library.

Connecting With Others

The Brick House in Montague is restarting the Community Coalition that began in the 1990s but went dormant for a year or more. The Coalition is a forum to connect

residents with each other, and with organizations providing services. Anyone interested in the well-being of families and individuals is invited to the July 30 meeting. Dinner and childcare will be provided.

What the Heck is a 'Charrette'?

According to Merriam-Webster assistant editor Emily Brewster, the noun comes from French – *char* (wheeled vehicle, a "cart" used to transport drawings) + *ette*. It meant "the intense final effort made by architectural students to complete their solutions to a given architectural problem in an allotted time."

"The term *charrette* has been adopted by planners," said Rebecca Loveland, a research manager at the UMass Donahue Institute, "...to refer to a means of gathering community input on a particular design problem or process through a meeting or series of meetings."

150 YEARS AGO

Here's the way it was on July 23, 1873: News from the Turners Falls Reporter's archive.

Local Matters

Beauty sits enthroned these mornings, making her toilet with sunbeams and fog.

A large number of the logs have been run over the fall.

Three men, named Thatcher, Williams and Kelley, spoiled a first-class item on Sunday by catching hold of the boom rope and letting their boat go over the dam without them.

In Millers Falls, Charles Amidon has got his pump a going once more to supply the Erving side with water.

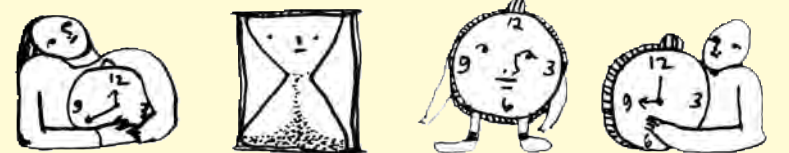
There are at present sixteen buildings in course of construction in Turners Falls, nine of them being of brick. And yet not the sound of a hammer or a saw disturbs the stillness.

R.M. Starbuck will carry the walls of his new block on Avenue A up with those of M.J. Conway's building. Mr. Conway has contracted with Adams & Son for the brick for his block, and with Mr. Patrick Cunningham to do the mason work.

Our fire district have, at last, got the money to begin operations. A check for \$1000 has been forwarded on account of our steamer.

Everybody in town knows "Little Jennie." Well, last Sunday morning she was called at eight o'clock, and by way of an endeavor to incite her to get up earlier, her mamma said: "Why Jennie, Mrs. – has been up for a long time." (Mrs. – is about 80 years of age.) Jennie, turning over in bed, looked almost half awake, and said, "Well, I guess she ought to; she's had more practice at gettin' up than me," and quietly went to sleep again.

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GILL from page A1

"We took 45 minutes to receive authorization to utilize another agency's rescue boat," he said, as it took that long for the request "to go up from the lieutenant to the captain to the colonel and back down."

Fire chief Gene Beaubien added that while that authorization was in limbo, he and others were calling for help from the National Guard and Coast Guard. "I believe they finally accepted a mission after the person was rescued," Beaubien said. "So, it's red tape."

Kimball pointed to two pathways for potentially procuring a river rescue boat for the region. The first is getting a surplus boat from the state Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). The town put its name on a list for a rescue boat five years ago, but has never been selected. "The majority of those go to the Cape towns, as would make sense," said Kimball.

In light of recent flooding and dangerous river conditions, local agencies have checked in again with DCR about their request. "Nothing's available currently," said Kimball, "but they're going to try to get us higher on the list."

The second option, Kimball said, would be to ask the local hydropower company for a donation. "FirstLight owns from the dam to the dam, and on both shores they have camps, houses, power-generation properties," he said.

He noted the company has done something similar before: in 2020, FirstLight donated \$100,000 towards a marine patrol unit on Candlewood Lake in Connecticut, where the company also operates a dam. Kimball says several agencies have "discussed doing a joint letter to them, as a proposal."

Kimball stated that any boat would need to be a regional asset, "mostly because you can't just operate it with one person" – the boats require one driver and two rescuers. "We'd cross-train Greenfield, Turners, Gill, Erving, potentially, as operators," he said.

The selectboard members agreed that it made sense to reach out to FirstLight first, but expressed concerns. "I just have a lot more questions than I have answers at this point," said chair Randy Crochier. "I would do anything to get you guys out of that flat-bottomed aluminum boat," he said, but added that he worried about maintenance and eventual replacement costs for a boat, and noted that having a "regional" asset

also requires sharing "some governance and fiduciary responsibilities" with others.

"I don't think any of us are against it," he concluded, "just making sure we're looking at the long-distance use of it."

Kimball said that some local agencies are looking into procuring rescue jet skis instead of a boat. "I'm not a huge fan of personal watercraft," he added, "especially as you can't use them at night." Another idea, he said, would be to install high lines across the river, where rescuers could tether themselves to secure their way across the river.

Selectboard member Greg Snekeder, who lives by the river, said that dangerous conditions have become more frequent. In addition to increased microbursts leading to flooding and debris, he said, FirstLight has been keeping the water in Barton Cove higher in response to complaints about low levels in previous years.

"I don't think this is a matter of if this ever happens again," Crochier concluded glumly. "It will."

Taxes Without Reps

While Gill's selectboard members double as the town's sewer commissioners, none of the current members live in the Riverside neighborhood, the only area in Gill served by a sewer. Several Riverside residents joined the meeting to request an expansion of the sewer commission to include sewer users.

"Things have gone way too long," said Riverside resident Jeff Suprenant. "The pump station is falling apart." Other attendees complained that the town had yet to install an electromagnetic flow meter, which would more accurately measure sewer influent and ensure users were being billed properly.

"Of all the votes I take for the selectboard," Crochier told them, "the sewer ones are always the worst for me, because I don't pay the sewer bill. Anything else that I vote to raise, I'm voting to raise my taxes. With sewer, I'm voting to raise your prices. And if it was just you, Soupy, I would have no problem," he laughed, gesturing to Suprenant.

The group discussed changing the sewer regulations to allow two Riverside residents to join. Remaining questions include whether the new members should be elected or appointed, whether they would vote or simply make recommendations, and whether it might be simpler to just form a committee

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Digital Death Dive
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4:00p.m. - 6:00p.m.



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Writing a Hit Poem
with Zoe Tuck
12:00p.m. - 2:00 p.m.



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rather than officially expanding the commission.

Town administrator Ray Purington said he would confer with the town's lawyer about the options and put the issue back on the agenda for the August 14 selectboard meeting.

Other Business

Last year, the selectboard approved a temporary provision that allowed the police chief to be paid for police details and other duties outside the normal course of work, provided the funds don't come from the town. On the 17th, the board voted unanimously to make the change permanent.

When asked why it was time-bound to begin with, Crochier answered, "He's only been with us 36 years, we weren't sure if we could trust him."

"32!" corrected police chief Christopher Redmond.

Fire chief Beaubien brought purchase orders for all expenses over \$500 for the fiscal year ahead. He noted the amounts were similar to last year, with the largest being \$7,200 for two sets of firefighter turnout gear, \$4,000 for chassis service on five vehicles, and \$4,000 for failsafe hose and ladder testing.

The board approved a sewer payment of \$51,916.73. "Nothing really out of the ordinary, given that it's the time to fill the swimming pools," said Purington.

They declared several items as surplus equipment to be sold or given away, including a wooden computer hutch, a particle board desk, and two IBM Wheelwriter typewriters.

Finally, the selectboard appointed Steven Budd and Amy Gordon to the cultural council until July 2026.



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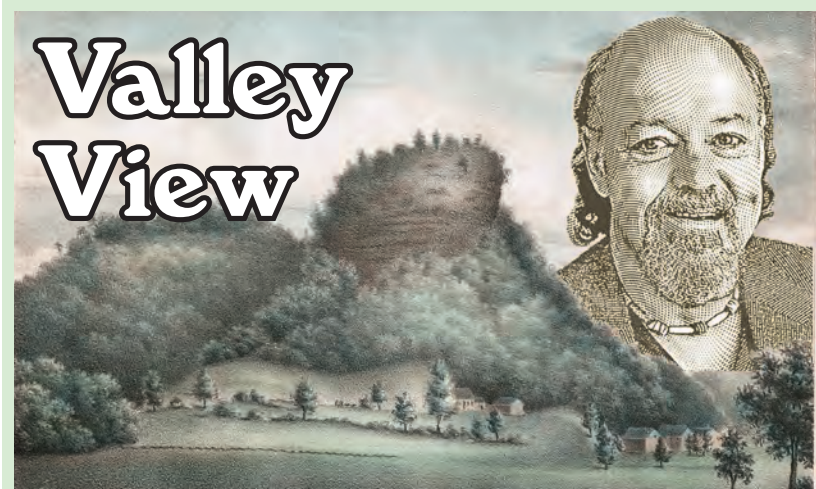


NINA FOSSI PHOTO

FEATURES@MONTAGUEREPORER.ORG

OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER

JULY 27, 2023



ORRA WHITE HITCHCOCK PRINT

By GARY SANDERSON

GREENFIELD – Measuring a property’s perimeter for a new fence can be hazardous to your health.

Potential dangers include but are not limited to stepping in an unseen hole and spraining an ankle, disturbing an underground yellowjacket nest resulting in a pantlegful of angry hornets, and perhaps tripping over an old, rusty, hidden strand of barbed wire and taking a hard, injurious fall.

Then there’s the problem Whately fence contractor Dan LaValley encountered in April – one he wasn’t expecting.

Walking a measuring wheel to determine the length of the back property line for the last house on Juniper Drive in the Pine Nook section of Deerfield, the L&L Fence Company general manager’s tool hit something concealed in six-inch, unmowed spring grass and got stuck. Not an uncommon occurrence; he paid little attention, figuring he had flipped a stick that hit his measuring device.

He soon learned otherwise, discovering it was in fact not a harmless stick. He had disturbed a timber rattlesnake, stretched out near a Goshen-stone wall.

“I looked into the long grass, heard a rattle, and saw a snake curled into a strike position,” he said. “So I, of course, jumped back, then actually finished measuring.”

LaValley went to his truck to retrieve a six-foot level and his cell phone before returning to the scene and finding that the black, four-to five-foot rattler hadn’t moved far. He stood back and snapped off a few photos of it stretched out in the grass. When the snake curled into a defensive pose and rattled, LaValley snapped off a blurry shot of its head, ready to strike out in front of its coiled body, recorded a short video of it rattling, and vacated the scene.

He showed his video and photos around in the days that followed, but had erased them from his phone by the time I got wind of the incident on the Fourth of July and queried him by email soon thereafter. He was, however, able to recover two photos from his computer, and emailed them to me. One showed the beautiful, black rattler stretched out in the grass. The other displayed

it coiled and ready to rumble.

“I’m not a snake guy, lol, and usually run in the other direction,” he wrote in a subsequent email. “I deleted the photos and video from my phone because I got sick of scrolling past them.”

Among the many people he showed his evidence to was an environmental police officer friend who confirmed it was a rattlesnake. It was likely hunting mice, chipmunks, and red squirrels in a feeding lair near the tidy, modern stone wall about 40 feet from the house. In April it would have recently come out of a winter den populated by several other rattlers. Snakes come out of hibernation in the spring hungry and ready to feed through the forest and meadow.

So, take it to the bank that this mature snake was not a solitary traveler – there are undoubtedly others nearby. But you’d have to be very unlucky, or stupid, to get bit. Timber rattlesnakes, which run in color from black to various shades of brown, are endangered species in Massachusetts, and thus protected. They avoid conflict if possible. State law forbids people from harassing, chasing, disturbing, capturing, harming, or killing timber rattlesnakes.

As it turns out, this recent Deerfield Mountain sighting was personal vindication of sorts for me. Many years ago during this millennium, I wrote a series of *Greenfield Recorder* outdoor columns about rattlesnakes. Although my impetus is irrelevant, it was most likely related to a hike I took with a friend and a Mount Holyoke College geologist to the summit of Mount Nonotuck, which overlooks Northampton from the south. We were there to investigate a long-forgotten lithic chert source once mined for stone tool material by ancient Native Americans from our slice of the Connecticut Valley.

Nonotuck is the southernmost ridge of the Mount Tom Range, which curls south toward West Springfield along the western shore of the Connecticut River and is one of the state’s strongholds for venomous rattlers and copperheads. This I knew as we poked around on a high lonesome talus slope.

I was also aware, from historical research, that rattlesnakes were

Above: This washout on Route 2, seen from the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge, caused the highway to close last Friday through Saturday afternoon, and again this week. Traffic was rerouted through downtown Turners as crews scrambled to shore up the roadway.

One Five-String a Month

By DONNA PETERSEN

TURNERS FALLS – So, up the ramp, through the open door and into a large space filled with lumber and power tools, a space that used to have rows of pews in this former church on the corner of Prospect and Seventh streets in Turners Falls. Then, up a step into a small area that was once the church altar.

This space, a work in progress, is the new home of Russell McCumber’s violin-making workshop. In a month, he expects to be in production and the space filled with wood, hand tools, and violins being crafted by this young violin maker.

I had a nice discussion with Russell last week about his work. “I played the violin in childhood and still do today,” the Vermont native told me. “That is the reason I became interested in making violins. I moved to North Carolina in 2013 and trained with violin maker Joe Swift in different capacities for a number of years. I then moved to Turners Falls in 2020, in the middle of the COVID epidemic.”

Russell’s creations are not your usual violins. What makes them unique see **VIOLINS** page B8



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Russell McCumber, at his work bench in a former church in Turners Falls.

THEATER REVIEW

Summer Lovin’: Ja’Duke Pleases Crowds with *Grease*

By MAX HARTSHORNE

TURNERS FALLS – Ja’Duke Center for the Performing Arts was close to full on a recent Sunday for the matinee of the popular musical *Grease*, written in the ’70s about a 1959 high school by Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey. Like the Majestic Theater’s choice to bring back their most popular show ever, *Buddy: the Buddy Holly Story*, a few months back, how can you go wrong with songs like these? The Majestic extended the run in West

Springfield as audiences couldn’t get enough of the singing, dancing, and early ’60s fun.

The audience in Turners Falls was just as happy to watch the singing and dancing of another musical written about the golden era of big cars, greased-back hair, and students who actually feared the principal – Miss Lynch, in this show, well played by Jenn Gagne.

It was a genuine marvel and a joy to watch the group of greasers led by Danny Zuko (William LaPlante) with his main sidekicks Kenickie

(BJ Kulp), Doody (Anthony McNamara), and my favorite, little Sonny (Dylan Vinton), who throw around bravado and bust balls, but cower when Miss Lynch gives an order. Something about having such respect for authority heartened me.

If you try to follow the story by the words said by the male actors, it gets hard, because these leather-jacket-clad jokers mostly just say silly things to crack each other up. We see this group in sharp contrast to the clique of girls at Rydell High, who wear satin “Pink Lady” jackets and actually enunciate. These are indeed the cool kids, and we can more easily decipher what they are saying throughout the play.

One Pink Lady stood out to me, Marty (Ruthie Cogswell), with her fine solo called “Freddy My Love.” The scene that featured this song was striking to anyone in 2023. Here were four girls at a pajama party in their jammies, and the only thing they looked at was a copy of *Teen Magazine* and the mirrors of their compacts. When in the past ten years have we been able to view this many teens without a single cell-phone!? This alone made the scene memorable, and like most of the others, it ended with a sweet song.

see **GREASE** page B4



HARTSHORNE PHOTO

BJ Kulp, Ruthie Cogswell, Dylan Vinton, Samantha Myburgh, and William LaPlante perform in *Grease*, a Ja’Duke Theater production.

Pet of the Week



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is ready to learn!

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Animals at Dakin are currently available only in Springfield. For more information, call (413) 781-4000 or visit www.dakinhumane.org.

AUGUST LIBRARY LISTING

Montague Public Libraries

Turners Falls: Carnegie (413) 863-3214
 Montague Center (413) 367-2852
 Millers Falls (413) 659-3801

Erving Public Library (413) 423-3348
 Gill: Slate Library (413) 863-2591
 Leverett Public Library (413) 548-9220
 Northfield: Dickinson Library (413) 498-2455
 Wendell Free Library (978) 544-3559

MONTAGUE

Multiple days: *Art Exhibit.* “Robot crew” quilts by Marge Barrett-Mills, starting August 18. Montague Center.

Multiple days: *Grab & Go Bags.* Science: Insect habitat. Craft: Straw weaving. Free kits at all branch locations while supplies last.

Every Tuesday: *Game Day.* Board, card, and lawn games. Carnegie tent, 1 to 3 p.m.

Every Wednesday: *Story Time.* Join for stories and songs. Montague Center, 10 a.m.

Every Wednesday: *LEGOs on the Lawn.* Carnegie tent, 1 to 3 p.m.

Every Thursday: *Playgroup,* guided and free play for preschoolers, older siblings welcome. Carnegie tent, 10 a.m.

Every Thursday: *Tine Zine Club.* Snacks provided. At the Brick House, 2:30 p.m.

Friday, August 4: *Puppet Show* by No Strings Marionettes. Peskeompskut Park, 10:30 a.m. to noon.

Every Saturday: *Saturday Story Time.* Jump-start early literacy skills for preschoolers. Carnegie tent, 10 a.m.

Saturday, August 5: *Used Book Sale.* Fiction, paperbacks, kids' books, DVDs, CDs, audiobooks. Hundreds

of recent donations. Carnegie, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Tuesday, August 8: *Interactive Art for Teens.* Brick House, 2:30 p.m.

Thursday, August 10: *Lemonade Social.* Millers Falls, 3 to 4 p.m.

Monday, August 14: *Friends of MPL Meeting.* All welcome. Email vgatvalley@gmail.com for more info. Carnegie, 5:30 p.m.

Saturday, August 19: *Whale Mobile.* Call (413) 863-3214 to sign up for a time. Great Falls Discovery Center, 2 to 4 p.m.

Friday, August 25: *Youth Advisory Committee.* Bring your ideas and suggestions for teen library programming. Snacks provided. Carnegie, 4 p.m.

WENDELL

Every Tuesday: *Art Group.* 5 to 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, August 2: *Playgroup,* 10 a.m.

Every Friday: *LEGO club.* 4 p.m.

Every Saturday: *StoryCraft.* Picture book read-aloud and connected craft. 10:30 a.m.

Saturday, August 5: *Indigo Dyeing.* Community indigo resist dye vat, for all ages. 12 to 3 p.m.

Every Sunday: *Yoga.* All levels, by donation. 10 a.m.

Wednesday, August 9: *All About Bears.* Geared for ages 3 to 8. 10:30 a.m.

Thursdays, August 10 and 24: *Fiber Arts / Mending Circle.* 6:30 p.m.

Friday, August 11: *Home-school Hangout,* 10:30 a.m. *Rep. Aaron Saunders office hours,* 2 to 3 p.m.

Saturdays, August 12 and 26: *Wendell Youth Group.* 1 p.m.

Tuesday, August 22: *Tech Help* by appointment. Email wendell@cwmar.org to register.

Tuesday, August 22: *Author reading:* Richie Davis, *Flights of Fancy, Souls of Grace.* (See review, Page B3.) 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, August 24: *Wendell Historical Society.* Sara Campbell presents on the life of Major William Erving. 6:30 p.m.

Monday, August 28: *End of Summer Lawn Party.* Games, prizes, treats, karaoke. 3 to 5 p.m.

ERVING

Thursday, August 3: *Summer Reading Celebration.* Carrie Ferguson & the Grumpytime Club Band. 5 p.m.

LEVERETT

All Month: *Art Exhibit,* poured paint artwork by Mary Glavin; *Story Walks,* new story on the trail behind the library every Thursday.

Most Tuesdays: *Music on the Patio.* August 1: Beth Logan Raffeld jazz trio; August 8: French Press; August 15: Orlen, Gabriel, and Avery; August 22: On the Lam Trio. 6:30 p.m.

Every Monday and Wednesday: *Online Qigong.* Free, all welcome. See leverettlibrary.org or email CommunityQigong@gmail.com for info. 10:30 a.m.

Every Thursday: *Play Mahjongg.* Beginners welcome. 1:45 to 4 p.m.

Every Saturday: *Tai Chi.* Free classes, all welcome. Intermediate to advanced 10 a.m., beginners 11 a.m.

NORTHFIELD

Every Tuesday: *Drop-in Knitting.* Join fellow knitters and crocheters to chat and share projects. 6 to 8 p.m.

Wednesday, August 2: *Readers' Choice.* Heidi Durrow, *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky.* Pick up a copy at the library. 10 a.m.

Thursday, August 3: *Spice Club pickup starts.* Stop in for a sample and suggested recipes while supplies last; look for a new spice every month.

Thursday, August 3: *Gravestone Girls.* Cemetery art and history from the past 400 years. Community Bible Church, 6 p.m.

Saturday, August 5: *Puzzle Swap.* Dozens of new-to-you puzzles for kids and adults. For more info, email friendsofdml01360@gmail.com. 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Wednesday, August 9: *Readings Group.* Leslie Marmon Silko, *Storyteller.* Pick up a copy at the library. 3 p.m.

Thursday, August 10: *Library Trivia Night.* Four Star Farms Brewery, 6 p.m.

Thursday, August 10: *Environmental Awareness Group.* 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, August 15: *Millie the Dog.* Meet a young therapy dog in training. 3 p.m.

Friday, August 18: *Movie and Chat: Free Spirits.* Community Bible Church, 6 p.m.

Saturday, August 19: *Coffee Hour.* Northfield Hotel & Chateau. 10 a.m.

Friday, August 25: *Puppet Show* by No Strings Marionettes. Northfield Golf Club, 5:30 p.m.

Senior Center Activities JULY 31 TO AUGUST 11

LEVERETT

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

ERVING

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Monday 7/31

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 10:15 a.m. Stretch & Infusion

Tuesday 8/1

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

Wednesday 8/2

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

Thursday 8/3

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

Friday 8/4

9 a.m. Quilting & Open Sew

Monday 8/7

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

Tuesday 8/8

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

Wednesday 8/9

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

Thursday 8/10

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

Friday 8/11

9 a.m. Quilting & Open Sew

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 7/31

10:15 a.m. Aerobics
 10:30 a.m. Oak Tree Chair Yoga
 11 a.m. Chair Exercise

Tuesday 8/1

3 p.m. Tai Chi

Wednesday 8/2

9 a.m. Veterans' Hours
 9:15 a.m. Aerobics

11 a.m. Chair Exercise

12 p.m. Bring Your Lunch Bingo

4:15 p.m. Mat Yoga

Thursday 8/3

9 a.m. Chair Yoga

10:30 a.m. Brown Bag

10:30 a.m. Senior Farm Share
 (by subscription)

1 p.m. Cards & Games

Friday 8/4

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

2 p.m. Chair Dance

Monday 8/7

10:15 a.m. Aerobics
 10:30 a.m. Oak Tree Chair Yoga

11 a.m. Chair Exercise

Tuesday 8/8

3 p.m. Tai Chi

Wednesday 8/9

9 a.m. Foot Clinic by appointment
 4:15 p.m. Mat Yoga

Thursday 8/10

9 a.m. Chair Yoga
 10:30 a.m. Senior Farm Share
 (by subscription)

1 p.m. Cards & Games

Friday 8/11

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

2 p.m. Chair Dance

WENDELL

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

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VALLEY VIEW from page B1 were common “inconveniences” throughout the Connecticut Valley and most of early New England through the 19th century, and that they are associated with talus slopes.

When I wrote about rattlers in Franklin County locations like the Pocumtuck Range in Deerfield, Rocky Mountain in Greenfield, and nearby Rattlesnake Mountain in southern New Hampshire, across the river from Brattleboro, Vermont, many readers a generation older than me chimed in with personal rattlesnake recollections. One respondent, a woman, wrote of a well-known den on undeveloped land around today’s Cherry Rum Place in Greenfield. Another source identified the rocky ridge from Poet’s Seat Tower to the mouth of Fall River as a Greenfield hotspot.

My own cursory research identified the Mount Toby range in Sunderland, Montague and Leverett as a known rattlesnake lair, with North Leverett’s Rattlesnake Gutter still displayed on maps.

Given what I had heard from emailers and knew from my own travels – including a personal encounter during my land-surveying days with a nest of rattlers basking on sunny ledge along the Mass Pike in Russell or Becket – I wrote that someone who knew where to look could likely still kick up a

rattler along the eastern slope of Mount Sugarloaf, or on a secluded shale bed I know in the Conway State Forest.

In response to that prediction came an email from a trail runner or hiker who often toured the Deerfield Mountain ridge trail between the Eaglebrook School ski slope and Stage Road in South Deerfield. There he claimed to have encountered a big rattler crossing the trail in front of him. Intimately familiar with that ridge trail myself, I asked him to pinpoint the sighting. He located it near a threatening “No Trespassing” sign warning violators that survivors would be prosecuted.

That’s all I needed to know. The signs were those of my childhood friend “Fast Eddie” Urkiel, a notorious game bandit widely known and aggressively pursued by game wardens till the day he died. His woodland’s southern boundary, marked by that threatening warning, is less than a mile up the hill to the west from LaValley’s encounter.

So now I rest my case. Due to reforestation and global warming, wasn’t it predictable that timber rattlers would ride the comeback trail back to Franklin County? It’s wise to be cautious, not terrified, where dangerous snakes lurk. And although it’s true we should be wary, we can co-exist just fine, thank you.



BOOK REVIEW

Richie Davis, *Flights of Fancy, Souls of Grace* (Haley’s, 2023)

By **DONNA PETERSEN**

MONTAGUE – He’s baaaack! Yes, Richie Davis’ final book in his trilogy of “collections of true tales” gleaned from his 40-plus years of local community writing for our neighboring newspaper, the *Greenfield Recorder*, is hot off the presses!

The new book, *Flights of Fancy, Souls of Grace*, follows the format of his two previous books, *Inner Landscapes* and *Good Will & Ice Cream*. They are short articles written between 1982 and 2021, with most written from 2006 to 2021.

If you have lived in the area for a while or read Richie’s previous books, you will recognize some of the names and faces. Some will be new and surprising. And some you may still be grieving for, or missing.

I know Richie as a writer and friend, and know how deeply he cares for our local communities. That caring shows in his choice and treatment of subjects.

He visits the Peace Pagoda in Leverett and writes of the harrowing lives the Cambodians who live at or are part of the Pagoda community experienced under the Khmer Rouge, and of their journeys to the Valley. He relates the story of a young African woman who fights for change in the treatment of women in her native Sierra Leone, where young girls are often subjected to genital mutilation and very early marriage and pregnancy.

The longest piece follows Denise DiPaolo’s efforts to create and open Ristorante DiPaolo from September 2004 to April 2006. Damn, I still miss that place; good luck to the

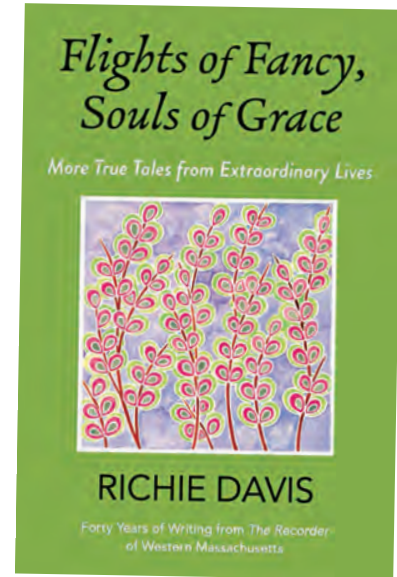
new venture at that location!

Richie dedicates the book to the memory of peace builder Paula Green, and one article is based on a discussion with Green about the divided state of the US and global disputes.

There is a great diversity of subjects, from sheep shearing to artists and craftspeople, to a deaf contra dancer and a now 103-year-old who made her mark in the world. The Montague Common singers are in there, of course, as well as “more true tales from extraordinary lives,” as you will discover upon reading the book.

Richie will read from this book on Sunday, August 27 at 6:30 p.m. at the Wendell Free Library, and on Tuesday, September 19 at 6:30 p.m. at the Sunderland Library.

You can buy Richie’s books at www.RichieDavis.net, or at World Eye Books in Greenfield and other bookstores. He can be reached at Richie@RichieDavis.net.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Going Hands-On; Fox Joins Skunks; Suspicious Hoodie; Paper Carrier; Eviction; Character Actor; Mailbox Toss

Monday, 7/3

1:05 p.m. Caller states he heard gunshots in the area of Greenfield and Old Greenfield roads. Officer checking area. Hatchery often shoots to keep birds out of area.

1:22 p.m. Caller states two men are openly drinking at Peskeompskut Park. Officer advises that when he was on foot patrol recently the men did not have open containers visible. Officer spoke to party, negative alcohol, and warned him of consequences of drinking in public.

9:52 p.m. Caller from H Street states it looks like someone tried to get into her house through the window, and the spare key holder has been moved. Investigated.

Tuesday, 7/4

6:34 a.m. Report of two-car accident at Seventh Street and Avenue A. Received two more calls; one states drivers are yelling at each other. Officer requesting EMS. One operator transported by TFFD. Two tows.

9:44 a.m. 911 call transfer stating a tree is down on South Prospect Street. Officer advises it is blocking one lane and sidewalk. DPW cleared road.

Wednesday, 7/5

7:09 a.m. Officer reports a car was broken into and items taken. Vehicle left on Power Street over the weekend by an employee of a company doing work in the area. Officer checking area for missing property. Some items discarded around the neighborhood. FirstLight has no camera footage of the area.

12:53 p.m. Two people in old Railroad Salvage parking lot near wooded area. Female party walked off quickly and may be hiding in the woods. Officers, with K9 Artie, searching area. Female party with two active warrants located; now in custody. Officer advised his spare cruiser keys were missing. Artie deployed for article search, located keys in area of thick vines near where subject was found. A 32-year-old Turners Falls woman was arrested on two default warrants.

4:05 p.m. Caller reports a male drinking alcohol in Peskeompskut Park. Officer advises the party poured a beer into an iced tea can. He got rid of it and was moved along.

Thursday, 7/6

8:17 a.m. Officer met with

DPW about ways to clean up Peskeompskut Park and limit access to electricity.

Friday, 7/7

2:27 a.m. Caller reports a funky odor in the Bridge Street area, requests that someone check it out. Smell of diesel from trainyard.

7:49 a.m. Walk-in reporting that a Wentworth Avenue resident put a cone in the middle of the road with a sign that reads “Slow,” creating a hazard. Referred to an officer.

3:11 p.m. Caller states male is drinking at Peskeompskut Park and yelled at her when she told him to stop. Officer advises open container, but party not seen drinking. Dumped out.

4:50 p.m. 911 caller states people running out of Family Dollar requested she call 911 because an employee is yelling at people. Officer advises a party trashed the store then punched cashier in the face multiple times. Officers looking for vehicle.

Saturday, 7/8

1:36 p.m. Caller from Fourth Street advises two Chihuahuas are running around the neighborhood. Unable to locate.

5:43 p.m. Passerby reporting dog on roof on N Street. Owner notified; dogs brought inside.

6:29 p.m. Multiple callers from N Street reporting the same dogs are back on the street again, loose. Referred to an officer.

6:50 p.m. Caller in Ripley Road area concerned about noise coming from celebration at the function hall on the street behind her home.

9:49 p.m. Caller states the loud music/noise coming from an event at the Montague Retreat is bothersome; requests it be turned down. Officer advises he could not hear music and that vehicles were leaving.

Wednesday, 7/12

10:46 a.m. Main Street caller would like it on record that she found a syringe on her front steps this morning; unknown how it could have gotten there.

2:36 p.m. Employee would like on record that she is concerned about juveniles who keep jumping onto the roof of Connecticut River Liquors from a neighboring apartment.

Thursday, 7/13

7:21 p.m. TFFD, out on driver training, reports party in the water near the old bridge off Unity Street. Contacted FirstLight regarding the dam flow and to advise. Requesting mutual aid for traffic control. State police and Erving PD responding. Officer advises person is off the buoy and on an environmental police boat. Clear to reopen roads.

Friday, 7/14

5:19 a.m. Caller states his wife struck a deer on the way to work; she drove back home and is shaken up. Advises deer was struck on Route 63 after Gunn Road but before Cranberry Pond, near the sandpits.

9:52 a.m. Caller reports a purse with needles in it on bike path behind Couture Bros. Officer found no needles, but there was paraphernalia. Item disposed of.

10:01 a.m. Another call stating male party just kicked down door on Fourth Street. Caller wants male arrested this time.

24-year-old Turners Falls man arrested, charged with violating an abuse prevention order and resisting arrest. Female from next apartment called to discuss that she watched everything out her window and would like to make a statement about the arrestee, and how none of it was his fault. Officer advised.

7:05 p.m. Alarm company reporting attic motion alarm at Greenfield Cooperative Bank. Unable to reach keyholder. Branch manager canceled response; states there is a squirrel in the attic of the building they’ve been trying to catch.

Monday, 7/10

9:29 a.m. First of several calls reporting flooding and trees and lines down around town. Affected areas include Montague City Road, Taylor Hill Road, and Old Sunderland Road.

11:40 a.m. Caller from Sunset Drive states the family of skunks is back under her deck, and a fox is now there too. Info given to animal control.

12:52 p.m. Caller reports break-in and attempted break-in at Our Lady of Czestochowa Church. Officer observed damage to window casing on the rear of a shed attached to the garage located at the rectory; suspect(s) made entry into shed and a weed whacker is missing. Also observed heavy damage to side door of church, believed to be caused by the likes of a crowbar; suspects unsuccessful in church entry.

Tuesday, 7/11

4:36 p.m. Caller states that there is someone across Avenue A dressed all in black with a hoodie. Caller doesn’t know what they are doing, but it seems suspicious. Officer advised.

Wednesday, 7/12

10:46 a.m. Main Street caller would like it on record that she found a syringe on her front steps this morning; unknown how it could have gotten there.

Thursday, 7/13

2:36 p.m. Employee would like on record that she is concerned about juveniles who keep jumping onto the roof of Connecticut River Liquors from a neighboring apartment.

Friday, 7/14

5:19 a.m. Caller states his wife struck a deer on the way to work; she drove back home and is shaken up. Advises deer was struck on Route 63 after Gunn Road but before Cranberry Pond, near the sandpits.

Saturday, 7/15

12:13 p.m. Party came to station to obtain statement form; states a female is stealing her plants and medications every month.

2:46 p.m. Caller states she is in her car at St. Mary’s Cemetery and heard gunshots at the north end and a noise in the woods, and is too scared to leave. Officer advises no one in cemetery. Search of woods negative.

2:55 p.m. Multiple 911 calls reporting multi-car accident, North Leverett Road. Transferred to Shelburne Control. Owner of one vehicle being transported by AMR to BFMC; owner and passenger from second vehicle being transported

see MPD next page

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MPD from page B3

by TFFD to BFMC. Rau's requested for both vehicles.

6:32 p.m. Caller states that there is a dog on a roof on N Street. Officer advises that the homeowner was aware; same stated that the dog likes it on the roof, and is only ten feet off the ground. Dog now inside.

6:54 p.m. Caller states that an identified party is taking the dirt from around the new utility poles that were put in last year on Greenfield Road; caller finds this concerning due to amount of rain expected tomorrow. Advised to contact electric company.

8:18 p.m. Following a vehicle stop, 37-year-old Deerfield woman arrested on a straight warrant.

Sunday, 7/16

7:27 a.m. First of numerous calls throughout the day reporting flooding, streets washed out, and trees down. Areas include Montague City Road, Millers Falls Road, Main Street, East Mineral Road, Burek Drive, Taylor Hill and North Taylor Hill roads, Court Square, Chestnut Hill Loop, Ripley Road, and South Ferry Road.

10:37 a.m. Notification of stormwater/sewage overflow into Connecticut River below dam.

1:20 p.m. Caller reports a shopping cart on the sewer lines near the Eleventh Street bridge. Officer checked area; nothing resembling what was reported.

Monday, 7/17

12:03 p.m. Caller states that she saw a woman punch her dog at Unity Park. Caller confronted the woman, who said she was "having a bad day." Unable to locate.

7:57 p.m. Walk-in states she was threatened by knife and her vehicle vandalized on Avenue A. Greenfield PD and Control advised to be on lookout.

9:49 p.m. 911 caller from Third Street states there is a bat in her house; looking for guidance on how to get it out. Advised.

Tuesday, 7/18

3:10 a.m. Officer located a wrecked vehicle under the high-tension wires off Green Pond Road. Officers

attempting to make contact with party at owner's residence. Rau's contacted for tow. Summons issued.

5:18 a.m. 911 caller from Park Villa Drive heard several loud banging noises outside of his house and saw a vehicle speeding off when he went to investigate. Nothing appears to have been taken. Would like on record.

12:06 p.m. Business owner would like to speak to an officer about harassment from a customer. Officer spoke with party, told him he is not welcome at the Rendezvous.

2:01 p.m. First of several checks of North Leverett Road area for a missing party.

2:37 p.m. 911 caller from Fourth Street reporting her ex-boyfriend broke into her house and is refusing to leave. She had changed the locks but he got in. Male detained, re-requesting to go to hospital. AMR responding. Party declined medical attention and left on foot; advised not to come back.

3:53 p.m. 911 caller states that she saw a male party on the island below the dam. Dam is currently open. FirstLight contacted; will check camera. TFFD requested; Control copied. Gill PD searching their side; nothing showing. FirstLight advised they could not see anyone on cameras. Greenfield FD responding to check west side of island with a drone; no findings.

4:27 p.m. Caller reports a dog inside a vehicle outside the Rendezvous. Officer requesting TFFD to assist with temperature reader. Voicemail left for ACO. Officer advises owner eating inside the restaurant; was told he needs to make other arrangements.

7:24 p.m. Alarm at the former Riff's on Avenue A. Officer made contact with party working on getting new restaurant opened.

7:43 p.m. Party reporting the doors of a refrigerator on the side of Maple Street are not secured; concerned they could be easily opened by a child.

Wednesday, 7/19

7:50 a.m. Caller from Hillside Road states that for several mornings an

older-model Mercedes has been driving up and down the street very slowly. Officer located vehicle matching description on Millers Falls Road. Operator advises he delivers newspapers and this is a new route.

8:32 a.m. ACO advising he picked up a baby skunk on Davis Street.

12:26 p.m. Control received a call about a disturbance in Gill where a vehicle's window was smashed. Involved male, shirtless, walking across the bridge toward Avenue A. Party located in front of town hall. Contact made with involved female, who stated everything is fine; both report no incident occurred.

1:42 p.m. Caller states a vehicle struck her husband's parked motorcycle on Fifth Street and kept going. Motorcycle heavily leaking gas and oil. PD, FD responding. Witness saw a white SUV clip the front tire of the motorcycle and knock it over, then keep going.

Thursday, 7/20

6:52 a.m. MassDOT advised of deer at side of Federal Street.

9:55 a.m. Assisting sheriff's department with an eviction on Second Street.

11:16 a.m. Caller reports a sedan struck a guardrail a couple times on Turners Falls Road. Greenfield PD stated that the vehicle struck another vehicle at the Walgreens in their town. Officer requesting FD and AMR for female unconscious in the vehicle.

11:48 a.m. Store manager reports a male made threats to beat up an employee, knocked over items in the front of Family Dollar. Parties advised of options.

12:04 p.m. ACO attempted to return ashes to a dog's owner on N Street. No answer.

12:45 p.m. Attempting to serve "immediate threat/suspension" paperwork from RMV to a party on Montague Avenue. Unable to locate.

6:26 p.m. Control requesting K9 assistance for a 22-year-old male who ran into the woods in Whately around 30 minutes ago. Subject located, transported by AMR.

6:30 p.m. Caller from East Chestnut Hill Road states his dog escaped by pushing an AC unit out of a window. Printed for ACO.

8:19 p.m. Caller requesting officer to Unity Park; male party wearing a dinosaur costume is on the playground and screaming. Peace restored.

10:47 p.m. 911 caller from Hillside Avenue states there is a porcupine on her porch; she is nervous that if it leaves a car will hit it. Transferred to Control.

Friday, 7/21

9:47 a.m. Walk-in reports she believes a male party stole her son's medication out of her car last night.

10:05 a.m. 911 caller reporting two-car accident at Turners Falls and Millers Falls roads. No injuries or fluids.

2:24 p.m. First of numerous reports: flooding on Montague City Road, Stevens Street, Avenue A, Walnut Street, Crescent Street, and Meadow Road. Basement flooding and sewage on Park and Walnut streets. Manhole covers off on Avenue A and Park and Unity streets. Portions of Turners Falls Road and Taylor Hill Road washed away. Trees and bushes down on Fairway Avenue and Greenfield Road. Sinkhole three feet in diameter on K Street; road shut down. Units assisting with traffic at Turners Falls-Gill Bridge due to flooding on Route 2.

Saturday, 7/22

1:48 p.m. Walk-in reporting party on the side of Greenfield Road running with a mailbox, throwing it over the guardrail, sitting on the guardrail, then falling over. Control advising 911 caller states party is bleeding from his head and hands, yelling that he does not want to go back to jail. EMS en route. Officer unable to locate the mailbox.

Sunday, 7/23

9:30 a.m. Caller from Main Street states there is a dying opossum in her yard; concerned about rabies. Call left for ACO. Caller called back; animal is gone.

5:51 p.m. Report of threatening/harassment on Fourth Street. Advised of options.

GREASE from page B1

We follow Marty as she turns on her sex appeal with various characters, and the audience gets a kick out of the bawdy references. The plot is in there somewhere, involving Sandy (Jenna Scott), a straight-arrow new girl dressed in a prim and proper dress who wants to be a Pink Lady but is too dang innocent. Rizzo and Frenchy and the other girls are determined to make her into a cool kid, plying her with cigarettes, booze, and then trying to pierce her ears, making a bloody mess. She emerges in the second act a far cry from the shy girl at school, donned in black leather pants, waving a cig and telling Danny "You better shape up!"

You can all sing along, you know the tune!

Kudos is well deserved to choreographer Alyssa Martin and director Nick Wayneovich, who managed a very large cast in intricate dance numbers, weaving in and out and flopping women around and nev-

er missing a beat. The large group moved well and in sync, and nobody flubbed their moves.

Grease is a worldwide phenomenon, between the 1978 movie starring John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John and its multiple revivals and long life in community theaters. It is Broadway's 16th longest-running show, and in one of its revivals, Rosie O'Donnell played Rizzo and Megan Mullally was the sexy Marty.

The script does include some sensitive topics for the time, like whether Rizzo (Sara Paige) is pregnant, and sexual references that get pretty raunchy, though the script was toned down from its more stark and harsh original.

I asked one Ja'Duke staff member why the theater was so full that Sunday. "It's *Grease*," she said. "Everyone loves *Grease*." Though this house often gets packed, it was the largest audience I had seen in my five shows there.

**Artist Profile: Jules Jones**

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

Footsies, a 2023 work on paper by Jules Jones.

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – Artspace is a community art center in Greenfield. I went to a craft show they were having, and found Jules Jones among the artists there. I emailed them about doing a profile, and they got back to me relatively quickly.

Jones went to Greenfield Community College to study art and got an associate's degree in fine arts in 2014. Then they went on to UMass Amherst and got a bachelor of fine arts in studio arts, with a minor in art history, in 2016.

Jones has their own art studio where they make their paintings. Some are on a larger scale, and others are more elaborate-looking.

When I asked them what they paint with and why they paint what they do, I got quite a detailed summary for my answer. They like to use ink, watercolor, and high-flow acrylic paint in both their large and small works. They "often create a shape in water with [the] brush, then pour the liquid into the blob of water, to create amorphous, strange shapes and bodies." After that they paint around more with their brush and add different colors, sometimes going back in after the first layer of paint is dry, and often finishing up with some pen, marker,

or pastel.

I learned that this was the first time Jones was at an Artspace show, though they have in fact done lots of craft events in the last few years. They told me they sell "small, affordable watercolors, collages, and a sampling of different prints like monotypes, linocuts, and hand-carved rubber stamp prints" at these events, because "most folks can't afford a lot of my work locally," and because there are few art collectors around Greenfield.

They did name two places where they have had other shows: the Anchor House of Artists in Northampton, for a solo show last summer and another this summer, and a solo show in the winter at Hope and Feathers Framing and Printing, a frame shop and small art gallery in Amherst.

Much of Jones's art has what I would describe as weird faces – they are on most of their paintings that I have seen, including the ones they gave me to use with this article. I checked it out and in fact, I think they resemble some of Pablo Picasso's work. If you look up some of that yourself you would say the same.

You can see some of Jules Jones's art at www.julesjonesartist.com.

Montague Community Television News**'Spotlight' Still Searching!**

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – There's always something new to watch on MCTV, and we are always up to something.

We are currently looking for businesses to participate in our *Local Business Spotlight*. If you are interested in having your business featured, please reach out to infomontaguestv@gmail.com, and be sure to check our website and Vimeo page for all the newest videos.

This week's new videos include performances from the Antenna Cloud Farm Music Walk, the Montague Center Library Author Series with Karen Latuchie, "Ten Condiments for a Delicious Life" by Waffles The Clown,

videos from last year's Pocumtuck Homeland Festival, and meetings of the Montague selectboard, Montague finance committee, Gill selectboard, Montague board of assessors, and GMRSD school committee.

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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EXHIBIT

De Jasu Celebrates the Ordinary

By RICHARD ANDERSEN

MONTAGUE CENTER – When does a photograph become a work of art? How, through a photographer’s lens, do commonplace objects of not much interest come to enrich our lives with emotions we haven’t previously experienced, and realism becomes aesthetic? Why, after seeing Barry De Jasu’s photographs of city and rural landscapes, will we never look at a tobacco barn, a field of flowers, or a bouquet of skyscrapers the same way again?

In a statement for his exhibit at the Montague Center library, Barry De Jasu tells us, “As a photographer, I’m a wanderer: looking for surprise in city- and land-scapes I find interesting... I try to capture not only what I see through the lens, but, perhaps more importantly, the sense of surprise that drew me to the image in that particular moment.”

The images that inspire De Jasu are often found in the mostly overlooked corners of our busy worlds rather than in any abstract locations of his own imagination. Perhaps not since Eugène Atget roamed the streets of Paris a hundred years ago has a photographer been able to create quite so well pictures that combine a unique individual per-

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



One of Barry De Jasu’s photographs on exhibit at the Montague Center library.

spective with an understated emotional intensity.

De Jasu writes that he is interested in “(t)he juxtaposition of building against building that creates an abstract of shape... of tree against tree that becomes an impenetrable curtain of color... the old structure that reveals bits of its past... the way the sky mirrors or deflects or embraces.”

When was the last time you saw the sky mirror, deflect, or embrace? It is in this sense of wide variation within small ranges of territory that make De Jasu’s photos difficult to

define, categorize, and evaluate. Better to see his photos for yourself and experience the visceral sensation of being transfixed by the uncanny beauty of our ordinary worlds.

Barry De Jasu’s photographs are on view at the Montague Center library through August 17. The library is open Mondays and Wednesdays from 2 to 7 p.m. and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. To have artwork considered for an exhibit, contact librarian Kate Martineau at (413) 367-2852.



By CASEY WAIT

TURNERS FALLS – Happy Disability Pride Month, dear readers!

In a rather un-festive turn of events, I contracted my fourth COVID-19 infection earlier this month. I’m still recovering, so I thought I’d do something light and fun for this month’s column. In honor of my disabled friends and forebearers, here is a list of my top five favorite books, movies, and albums by and/or about disabled people!

5. *The Diary of Frida Kahlo: An Intimate Self-Portrait* (Abrams, 2005). Frida Kahlo will always be my favorite artist. Known primarily for her many self-portraits, when asked why she painted herself again and again, she replied, “I paint self-portraits because I am so often alone, because I am the person I know best.”

Kahlo was disabled by a horrific trolley accident when she was 18 and spent the rest of her life in severe chronic pain, often bed-bound. Her body of work explores the depths of bodily and emotional pain like no other artist I have ever seen, all while bursting with color and passion and beauty.

I heartily recommend exploring all of her work, but I have a special appreciation for her diary. It is here that her grief and anger and boredom, raw and vulnerable, really come through. When I am stuck in

bed, feeling claustrophobic in my own body, I leaf through the facsimile of her diary and feel a strong kinship that makes my own pain more bearable.

The introduction by Carlos Fuentes is the best essay on Kahlo’s work that I’ve read, in large part because he takes her pain seriously in a way few other scholars of her work even come close to.

4. *Freaks* (1932, directed by Tod Browning). Once you’ve seen this film, I swear you will never stop thinking about it. Made right before the infamous Hollywood Censorship Code went into effect, *Freaks* is about a ragtag group of freak show performers who band together to defeat an ableist, fortune-hunting interloper who tries to seduce and murder one of their own.

The film was marketed as horror, with posters exploiting the “shocking” appearance of the actors, many of whom were themselves sideshow performers. Despite this sensationalism, I’d argue that *Freaks* is one of the most radically empowering and subversive films that has ever been made about what it means to live in a non-normative body. Watch it ASAP!

3. *The Ramones, Leave Home* (Sire Records, 1977). I know, I know – the Ramones? Really? Yes! Really!

If you take the time to listen to the lyrics, you might be surprised to find how many of their songs are about

illness, madness, doctors, and hospitalization. The lanky mopheaded frontman, Joey Ramone, had Marfan Syndrome, a condition somewhat similar to my own, and he lived with debilitating OCD as well.

My favorite song on this album, “Pinhead,” actually opens with a reference to *Freaks!* Joey drawls, “Gabbababba / We accept you, we accept you / One of us,” which is from the most iconic scene in the film.

2. *Marge Piercy, Woman on the Edge of Time* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1976). I recently read this book as part of a reading group organized by the Finders Collective. As an avid lover of utopian sci-fi, I’m honestly shocked I hadn’t come across it sooner!

The book, set in the mid-1970s, centers on Connie, a working class Puerto Rican New Yorker and single mother who has had her daughter taken from her by social services. Through a series of injustices, she winds up institutionalized in New York’s infamous Bellevue Psychiatric Hospital where she and her fellow patients are chemically incarcerated through heavy doses of Thorazine and experimented upon by detached white male doctors.

Throughout these traumas, Connie begins to be visited by a mysterious person only she can see, who says they come from the future. Over the course of the book, Connie learns to travel with this visitor to their time, where the eastern part of

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Many Dogs, Power Lines Loose

Thursday, 6/1

12:57 p.m. Three German Shepherds tied outside in the sun with no resources, West Gill Road. ACO notified.

Friday, 6/2

8:23 a.m. Assisted Bernardston PD with traffic for an accident. 8:59 a.m. Caller reports loose cows in a field near Main and North Cross roads.

11:50 a.m. 911 call from Pisgah Mountain Road with notification of a crash. Checked area, located nothing.

2:58 p.m. Loose cows reported, North Cross Road. Unable to locate.

Saturday, 6/3

9:04 p.m. Fireworks on Walnut Street.

Sunday, 6/4

1:50 p.m. Caller from State Road reports a van unable to maintain their lane. Stopped vehicle; no impairment observed.

5:17 p.m. Report of male walking on the French King Highway, looking unwell.

Monday, 6/5

8:41 a.m. Accidental 911 call, French King Highway. Subject operating a jackhammer.

3:35 p.m. Suspicious vehicle reported, Hoe Shop Road. Two young ladies parked, talking.

Wednesday, 6/7

3:57 p.m. Lost dog, West Gill Road. Returned at 6:03 p.m.

Thursday, 6/8

1:56 p.m. Assisted Bernardston PD with disturbance.

7:02 p.m. Party at station needs to fill out report on a hit-and-run.

Friday, 6/9

8:41 p.m. Caller from the French King Highway reported a Honda driving erratically. Stopped just before the Route 91 bypass; no impairment observed.

Monday, 6/12

12:10 p.m. Caller would like to speak with an officer about issues with her roommates.

2:32 p.m. Caller from Horseshoe View Road would like to speak

with an officer about loose dogs.

5:29 p.m. Main Road-caller reporting her boyfriend stole her car.

7:25 p.m. Male and female reported walking up Main Road, yelling at each other.

Tuesday, 6/13

8:27 a.m. 911 call, French King Highway. On callback, party advised emergency was a snapping turtle crossing the road, but a fire guy took care of it.

10 a.m. Wallet turned in at station.

3:31 p.m. Two-car accident on the French King Highway.

Wednesday, 6/14

11:35 a.m. Barney Hale Road caller reports a suspicious vehicle with an older male in it, parked for 30 minutes.

1:12 p.m. Welfare check, West Gill Road. Party not answering for Meals on Wheels.

4:21 p.m. Tree and wires down by Flagg Farm, Main Road.

Thursday, 6/15

1:44 p.m. Assisted Greenfield PD with accident, Route 2 bypass.

6:15 p.m. Assisted Northfield PD with OUI at town line.

Friday, 6/16

8:38 a.m. Loose dog, West Gill Roads.

1:53 a.m. Caller believes he lost his wallet.

Monday, 6/19

4:05 p.m. Barton Cove Road caller reports two people at a campsite have been gone for about four days. No signs of foul play.

Tuesday, 6/20

4:27 a.m. Caller reports a line hanging from a pole, Mountain Road.

2:33 p.m. Stray dog reported on a property, Horseshoe View Road.

4:46 p.m. Tree on wires on River Road for about a week.

Wednesday, 6/21

10:17 a.m. Assisted Northfield PD with accident with injuries.

7:22 p.m. Dogs barking reported, West Gill Road. ACO to address.

Thursday, 6/22

6:49 p.m. Mountain Road caller reports his two dogs took off three to four hours ago.

9:05 p.m. Dogs located.

Friday, 6/23

8:55 a.m. Caller from South Cross Road caught a skunk in her Have-a-Heart trap. Given ACO’s number.

10:15 a.m. Served warrants on Main Road, transported to court.

1:15 p.m. Smoke, South Cross Road. Homeowner burning brush.

2:23 p.m. Caller from French King Highway states someone backed into his 1957 Chevy, causing damage.

Saturday, 6/24

12:48 p.m. Caller reporting a tree on Main Road in rough shape and getting worse.

Sunday, 6/25

12:03 p.m. Missing person, French King Highway. Later located.

Monday, 6/26

12:10 p.m. Caller from Main Road states that a truck pulling into the farm took down lines.

2:21 p.m. Assisted civil process division of FCSO, serving notices on Main Road.

Tuesday, 6/27

10:36 a.m. Tree reported hanging over the roadway, Main Road.

Thursday, 6/29

1:40 p.m. Water rescue, Barton Cove Road.

2:04 p.m. Assisted Bernardston PD with an unwanted person.

Friday, 6/30

1:35 p.m. Caller from West Gill Road reports neighbors’ dogs have been tied out for some time with no shade or water. Wants someone to check on them.

3 p.m. Caller requesting a check on second-floor tenants as no contact has been made regarding a water leak.

3 p.m. Loose female chocolate Lab with no collar, Mountain and Main roads.

4 p.m. Multiple reports of a serious two-car accident on the French King Highway.

the United States has been broken up into utopian autonomous zones. As Connie flits back and forth from her own nightmarish present and the idyllic future in which her new friend lives, she struggles to understand how this future comes to pass, and what role she might play in that transformation.

While *Woman on the Edge of Time* is decidedly science fiction, I was struck by how true-to-life its depictions of Bellevue were. Read this book paired with *Decarcerating Disability* by Liat Ben-Moshe for greater context on the history of psychiatric institutions to see what I mean!

1. Beatrice Adler-Bolton and Artie Vierkant, *Health Communism* (Verso Books, 2022). I owe much of my political education

around disability to the tutelage of my brilliant friends Beatrice and Artie, hosts of the Death Panel podcast and authors of this truly groundbreaking book. I feel like I’ve recommend their work in every *Your Sick Friend* column, and honestly, it’s deserved!

If you’ve had even a passing interest in the fight for Medicare for All, COVID-19 pandemic protections, workers’ rights, or how the fuck we can fight for a livable future, then you will find something of great value in this book. In the words of Beatrice and Artie, “All care for all people!”

Enjoy, sickos!

With love and rage,

Your Sick Friend

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the
poetry
page

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

- William Carlos Williams

edited by Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno
Readers are invited to send poems to the
Montague Reporter at: 177 Avenue A
Turners Falls, MA 01376
or to: poetry@montaguereporter.org

The July Poetry Page

Against Deforestation

On the train to Gloucester
I see some sheep,
glimpse some cattle
and catch a rare clutch of deer.
It's all a fast forward film
of fractured views.

A few houses with barns
dressed up to the nines,
acres of yellow and green,
outbuildings outdoing
their pale hosts
grey & turreted
full of countryside ghosts.

Then fields banked by bluebells
for hundreds of yards
running by the side of the line
with occasional patches
of dark ploughed earth,
brown, then silver,
reflecting the boundaries
of streams in snatches
elbowing their way
through the green
fields which all together
serve as reminder
that, for all I would miss town,
I must find my way back
alongside the rail track,
to savour these freedoms of nature.

Land threatened by cartels of greed,
sure signs of cultural suicide,
I suck up the bluebells, daisies
and buttercups as they race by,
see they hold the key
to not shooting myself
in the foot, tell me -
digging life up at its root
may not be good for the heart

- Julian Nangle
Dorchester, Dorset UK

Forgiveness

You planted the seed
of doubt
from which I grew,
and ripped me from my roots.
Year after year
I looked at you and smiled,
fallow and forlorn,
ravaged by your drought.
Now you are old and withered;
your petty, petulant life
as sere and shallow
as your love for me.
If
I can't forgive you,
then I can never
let you go.
So my heart embraces
your infertile being,
and cries forgiveness
until I am cleansed
in the soft rain
of beatific indifference.

- Kevin Smith
Greenfield

Butterfly

Two cards -
from the same butterfly series.

One, sent before you left -
wings clearly defined,
bright purpose, ready for take off
as you were -
spreading your wings to Nepal,
full of adventure and possibility.

The second, three years on
for Mothers' Day,
throat dropped to my belly
in recognition -
butterfly twice the size,
beautiful colours trapped,
blurry-edged wings
unable to fly.

And now, ten years on,
what card would you send me
if you could?
Trapped in the tangled web of psychosis -
my beautiful
butterfly
Daughter.

- Polly Howell
Gloucestershire, UK

The Gate

Picketed, archway overhead
thick with summer vine,
gap between conveys
lush of lane outside

or secret steps within -
are you visiting, or leaving?
Always welcome,
drawn in by its sign

Painted one day on a whim -
brightly-coloured sun,
tangled rose and leaves invite
to *Sunnyside*, place of heart.

Sometimes the gate may stick -
catches a stone it seems
she must grind down,
but not today -

for now, she knows to lift
just lightly, and close -
the familiar click of latch
signifying home.

- Polly Howell
Gloucestershire, UK

Contributors' Notes

Polly Howell lives in Gloucestershire, UK, and writes that she "has written poetry since childhood. Her inspiration comes from the natural world, her dreams, the places where inner and outer landscapes meet, and whatever touches her in the moment. She is part of the Stroud Poets, and is published in a number of their anthologies, as well as nationally. Her first collection *Golden Shadow* was published in 2014. Polly is a homeopath and passionate gardener, mother to four and grandmother to seven, so her life is full!"

Julian Nangle is a poet and bookseller living in Dorchester, Dorset. He is married to Anna and between them they have four surviving children, each with offspring of their own. Julian and Anna are kept busy by their 14 grandchildren. His recent books include *Eleven Poems* and *Poppy and Other Poems of Grief and Celebration*. He is also the editor of *The Occasional Poetry Mag*. His *Collected Poems* will appear later this year from Alyscamps Press.

Kevin Smith, an ex-Turners resident, now lives in Greenfield, where he continues to play the tuba, walk his dog, and be inspired by his girlfriend Stephanie.

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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, JULY 27

Mystery Train Records, Amherst: *Arkm Foam, Federico Balducci, Zach Rowden*. Free. 5 p.m.

Energy Park, Greenfield: *133 Skeele, Jennie McAvoy, Brookside Project*. Free. 6 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Duke Robillard Band, Sugar Ray*. \$ 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, JULY 28

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Magic Tuber Stringband, Austin Cash, Michael Potter*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Watermelon Slim, Pete Muller and the Kindred Souls*. \$ 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Eleanor Levine, Aaron Noble*. \$ 8 p.m.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Seeds of Sun, Moonshakes*. \$ 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, JULY 29

Antenna Cloud Farm, Gill: *Steph Davis*. \$ 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Next Stage, Putney, Vermont: *Emperor Norton's Stationary Marching Band*. \$ 6 p.m.

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *Tracy & Company*. Christ-

mas in July. Free. 6:30 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Cinemastorm* double feature: *Hackers and Johnny Mnemonic*. Free. 7:30 p.m.

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

SUNDAY, JULY 30

Lunder Center, Williamstown: *Tashi & Milarepa Dorji, Marie Carroll*. Free. 3 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Holy Taker, Excavator, Wiles, Anda Volley*. Pajamas. \$ 7 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Erin McKeown, SPOUSE*. \$ 7 p.m.

MONDAY, JULY 31

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Indigo De Souza, Babehoven*. \$ 8 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 2

Hungry Ghost, Northampton: *Boon, Stoner Will and the Narks, Hoonah*. \$ 5 p.m.

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

THURSDAY, AUGUST 3

Peskeompskut Park, Turners Falls: *Myrtle St. Klezmer*. By donation. 6 p.m.

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

Brewster Court, Northampton: *Sandy Bailey*. Free. 6 p.m.

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

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Mermaid Bachelorette Rave*, fundraiser for Fairy House Day in Peskeompskut Park (save the date: September 2). \$ 8 p.m.

The Drake, Amherst: *US Girls, Kass Richards*. \$ 8 p.m.

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

FRIDAY, AUGUST 4

Pulaski Park, Northampton: *Thus Love, Lord Russ*. Free. 6 p.m.

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

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: '90s cover band night feat. *Feminine Aggression, Nyla Styck, Nemesister, This Could Be It, Man Size*. \$ 7 p.m.

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

SATURDAY, AUGUST 5

Mystery Train Records, Amherst: *Sunburned Hand of the Man, Panda Fort, Jeffrey, Unfortunately, Shane Bray Kerr, J. Burkett*. Free. 5 p.m.

Dream Away Lodge, Becket: *Big Blood, Mal Devisa, Wednesday Knudsen*. \$ 7 p.m.

Race Street Live, Holyoke: *Julia Jacklin, Kara Jackson*. \$ 8 p.m.

SAT-SUN, AUGUST 5 & 6

Unity Park, Turners Falls: Pocumtuck Homelands Festival feat. *Hawk Henries, Mixashawn, Black Hawk Singers*, more. See nolumbekaproject.org for info.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 6

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Padded Waltz, Yes Chef!, Berm*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 9

Nova Arts, Keene NH: *The Huntress & Holder of Hands, Footings, Strawberry Runners*. \$ 7 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Falltown String Band*. Free. 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 10

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *Isle of Klezbos*, five-piece klezmer band performing live film accompaniment. \$ 8 p.m.

Daily Operation, Easthampton: *Landowner, Strange Fate, Open Head*. \$ 8:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 11

Pines Theater, Northampton: *Shakey Graves, Lucius*. \$ 7 p.m.

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

SATURDAY, AUGUST 12

Dream Away Lodge, Becket: *The Huntress and Holder of Hands, Footings*. \$ 8 p.m.

looking forward...

SUNDAY, AUGUST 13

Black Birch Vineyard, Hatfield: *David Wax Museum, Lexi Weege*. \$ 6:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 17

Montague Village Store, Montague Center: *I Ambassa Duo*. Free. 5:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 24

Next Stage, Putney, Vermont: *Bread & Puppet*. \$ 6 p.m.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 25

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

SUNDAY, AUGUST 27

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Jimmy Dale Gilmore, Dave Alvin, Dead Rock West*. \$ 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

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

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

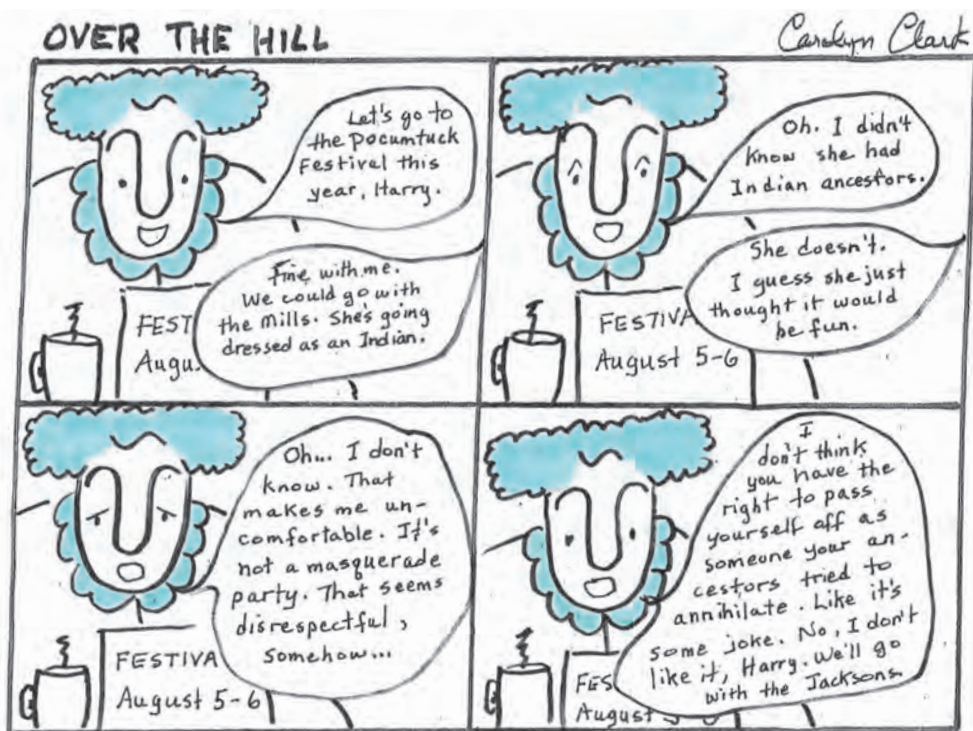
Tree House Brewing Company, South Deerfield: *Dinosaur Jr*. \$ 8 p.m. **(Tickets on sale this Friday morning, July 28.)**

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

Palladium, Worcester: *Cannibal Corpse, Mayhem, Gorguts, Blood Incantation*. \$ 5:30 p.m.



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Violins hand-crafted locally by Russell McCumber.

VIOLINS from page B1

is the five strings they offer, rather than the traditional four-string instruments played for centuries. Russell's design faces what he calls "the challenge to combine the ranges of a violin and a viola: to create an instrument close to violin size, but with the lower range of a viola." "Five-string violins have only been around for about 50 years," Russell told me, "it is a relatively new addition. There is no music written for the five string, so it isn't on the radar – yet!"

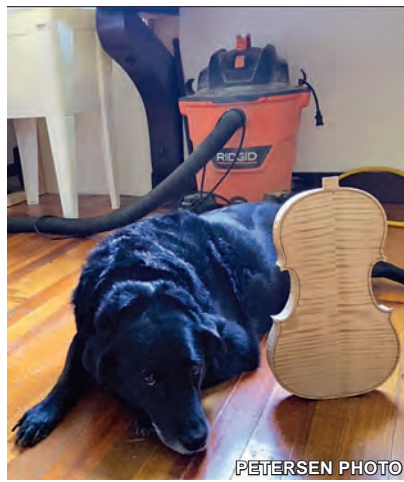
Russell has found a lot of interest in his violins, and said they are "popular with fiddle players who want a bit more versatility in their music, and to be able to play more styles including bluegrass, Celtic, jazz, and old-time music."

I saw a small pile of wood in an alcove, and asked about the wood and the tools he uses for his creations. "I use a lot of specialized hand tools," he said. "The violin front is made from alpine spruce from northern Italy, and the back is maple from that region, as well as eastern Europe, the Balkans, and some red maple from Maine."

He let me handle some parts: a front and back – so light and delicate! And the traditional scroll at the top is very cool. He does make each finished violin look a bit aged – players like that look.

Russell expects to be in full production within a month, when his work space renovation is complete. Full production means about a violin a month. "I am selling everything I make through commissions and orders," he told me. "I have enough to keep me in production through the rest of the year."

I asked if he planned to have assistants or apprentices helping in the workshop. He already has the friendly, furry, four-legged assistant Tucker for company. He has "no helpers," he said, "but I'm hoping to have violin friends come by to help and collaborate. The northeast and New England violin-making community is small but very open, close, and sharing, but there is little opportunity for work."



Tucker, the four-legged violin studio assistant.

Someone who goes to violin-making school often ends up doing repairs for a period of time. On that note, he told me that Shirley White, an experienced restorer and repairer of string instruments, will soon be moving her workshop to Turners Falls.

Where can one find a McCumber violin? Not in any local stores, so far. Russell said many of his sales are from word of mouth, and musicians seeing them played by touring musicians. And he has some social media presence.

We had a short discussion about violins, and how each one seems to have a story. Old violins have histories and journeys as they are handed from player to player over the years.

I told Russell about how 90-year-old Montague Center resident Elaine Cuthbert gave the late and much-missed David Kaynor her mother's fine old violin before she passed away at 92. Undoubtedly, there are other tales of loved violin voices passing into new hands.

Russell's final words were: "I have this new space long-term, and I just want to keep making a lot of instruments!"

Russell, Tucker, and the five-string violins can be found online at russellmccumberviolins.com, and on Facebook and Instagram.



PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Peecycling Set to Spread

BRATTLEBORO – The Rich Earth Institute wants to hear your ideas about establishing peecycling infrastructure in Franklin County. Human urine contains vital nutrients for growing crops. By reclaiming it as an agricultural resource, communities can prevent downstream pollution, access an abundance of local fertilizer, and conserve clean water.

For over a decade, Rich Earth has successfully operated a community-scale urine nutrient reclamation program in Windham County, Vermont. With a network of partners, they are now gearing up to galvanize similar programs with down-

stream neighbors in the Connecticut River watershed. Join them to re-imagine our "waste" as a resource, and to map out a future for a circular nutrient economy in the valley.

At two community conversations, Rich Earth will briefly present about their peecycling program – why and how it works – and then facilitate brainstorming and discussion about implementation in Franklin County.

These community conversations will take place online on Thursday, August 3 at 11 a.m. and Thursday, August 10 at 7 p.m. Register at tinyurl.com/P4FranklinCounty.

EXHIBITS

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Portraits in Red: Missing & Murdered Indigenous People Project.* Portraits by Nayana LaFond. July 29 through August 30.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Crapo Tarot*, tarot cards by Trish Crapo. Through July 31.

Goose Divine Energy, Greenfield: *Joseph McCarthy*, paintings. Through July.

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: *Thomas Ratté*, painting, pencil, watercolor, and photography, through July 31. *Viscera*, mixed-media by Gyuri Képes, from August 1 to 31. Reception on Saturday, August 5 from 12 to 3 p.m. *Black Families of Greenfield*, "(t)he faces, energy and achievements that helped to shape the town's identity and creative pulse," through August 31.

Looky Here, Greenfield: *Live Portraiture* by Julia Shirar, Thursdays in June and July. Email julia@juliashirar.com to be painted. Subjects will be given a reproduction of their portrait. Closing reception this Friday, July 28 from 5 to 8 p.m.

Barnes Gallery, Leverett Crafts & Arts: *Jesse Connor and Lori Lynn Hoffer*, landscape and botanical paintings, through July. *Robert*

Mace Bent, paintings, in August.

Sawmill River Gallery, Montague: *Jen Lambert*, visiting artist showing vibrant monoprints. Through July.

Montague Center Library: *Barry De Jasu*, photographs, through August 17. (See review, Page B5.)

Memorial Hall, Deerfield: *The Allen Sisters*. Two deaf sisters developed the image that has defined Deerfield for the past century through photography. The exhibit focuses on their view of the innocence of childhood. Through October 13.

Shelburne Arts Coop, Shelburne Falls: *Wonders of Nature*, group exhibit by member artists, through July. *A Study in Contrasts*, fiber art by Sandy Tobin and photographs by Thierry Borcy. August 2 through 28.

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. Through August 27.

Fiddleheads Gallery, Northfield: *Northfield Then & Now Exhibit*, a contemporary response by area artists to historic photographs of Northfield. Through August 19.

Gallery A3, Amherst: *Eighth Annual Juried Art Show: undercurrents*. Work that illuminates the rarely seen or overlooked. August 3 through September 2. Reception on Thursday, August 3, from 5 to 8 p.m.

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