

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 21 – NO. 37

also serving Erving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

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EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

SEPTEMBER 7, 2023

CLOSE TO PARADISE



MAGGIE SADOWAY PHOTO

This flower garden was in wild, colorful bloom Saturday morning in Turners Falls' peaceful Patch neighborhood.

Patch Residents' Concerns Linger After Shooting, Hunt for Shooter

By JEFF SINGLETON

TURNERS FALLS – An extensive law enforcement response to a shooting in Montague's "Patch" neighborhood on the afternoon of August 29 is still being discussed this week by residents and town officials. One victim, shot in the leg, is expected to recover.

State and local police closed all entrances to the Patch, which lies between the river and the Turners Falls power canal, for several hours while they conducted a manhunt.

The suspected perpetrator was arrested in Holyoke that same evening, according to a probable cause

statement read by Montague detective sergeant Joshua Hoffman, after wading across the Connecticut River and driving with several colleagues down Route 91. He was arraigned the next day on 11 charges including assault and battery with a firearm, carrying a firearm without a license, and possession of heroin and cocaine.

In the absence of public information about the initial incident, and given the massive police response that featured an armored car, a helicopter, dogs, and officers in SWAT paraphernalia, the term that became widely used was "active shooter."

"That was the language that was

floating around," said G Street resident Ian Tapscott, who received several messages warning of an "active shooter" in the Patch. "And I heard nothing different from anyone in an official capacity."

"All I heard was there was a shooting in the Patch," another G Street resident told a television reporter from *Western Mass News*. "That was it. Not where, not who. I called my child immediately and said, 'Are you okay? I left work. I had to, as a mom – I had to leave work.'"

"I get into the Patch, as we call it, and there's just cops everywhere, and they keep coming," she

see **HUNT** page A6

High School Sports: Back In the Swing



DAVID HOITZ PHOTO

Turners Falls' Joey Mosca teed off at Hole #1 as the Thunder hosted the Athol High School Bears at Thomas Memorial Country Club on Tuesday. Conditions were challenging as temperatures approached the mid-90s. Turners golfers placed first through fourth; Mosca was on top, with a score of 37.

By MATT ROBINSON

TURNERS FALLS – The high school fall season officially kicked off this week. Franklin Tech and Turners Falls are fielding teams this year in boys' golf, volleyball, field hockey, and boys' soccer, and football starts on Friday. Both schools' golf teams are undefeated so far, with some of the younger fellows stepping up.

Tech's field hockey team and the Turners girls' volleyball went far into the postseason last year, and on Wednesday, both teams went head-to-head against their crosstown rivals, splitting the contests 1-1.

In sad news this week, legendary Turners Falls track coach Ron Hebert passed away. Coach Hebert mentored and supported student athletes for more than five decades. He always had a smile on his face, and he was always willing to stop and talk with just about everybody.

Rest in Peace, Coach – you'll be sorely missed.

Boys' Golf
TFHS 166 – Mohawk Trail 191
TFHS 170 – Athol 224
FCTS 165 – Hopkins 176

Turners Falls out-swung the Mohawk Warriors at Thomas Memorial last Thursday, claiming the top three spots on the leader board: Jack Day (37), Joey

see **SPORTS** page A8

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Selectboard Cools Its Jets On Turnpike Road Rezoning

By JEFF SINGLETON

A controversial zoning change on Turnpike Road, which encountered strong neighborhood opposition at an August 22 planning board hearing, may not appear on Montague's special town meeting (STM) warrant this October as initially planned.

The measure, which would change the zoning designation of a parcel next to the public safety complex to allow manufacturing and housing by special permit, was proposed this summer after a Greenfield manufacturer seeking to relocate and expand its operations approached Montague officials.

At the end of the August 22 hearing, the planning board voted 3 to 2 to recommend that the selectboard place the measure on a town meeting warrant. One night earlier, the measure had also appeared on a draft warrant discussed by the selectboard for the STM, which is scheduled for October 11.

But a rather cryptic discussion at the selectboard's next meeting on August 28 suggested that the article, and a companion article giving them the authority to sell the parcel, might not have the board's support – at least for now.

Town administrator Steve Ellis see **MONTAGUE** page A7

Students Uncover Man's Remains on River Island



THEO SARGENT PHOTO

Youngsters at a summer nature program learning about the Rock Dam area happened across the skeletal remains of a Greenfield man missing since 2020.

By JULIA WALKOWICZ

MONTAGUE/GREENFIELD – Authorities are currently investigating the discovery of human remains found on Wednesday, August 23 near Rawson Island by a group of camp children. Earlier this week, the state office of the chief medical examiner identified the remains as those of Greenfield resident Brian Cornwell. Cornwell was 57 years old when he was reported missing in December 2020.

Rawson Island lies on the Connecticut River between Greenfield and Montague. Upriver to the north

is the Turners Falls Dam and downriver is the Cabot Station hydroelectric plant; the island connects with a drop in the river known as the Rock Dam.

The area is not heavily trafficked, nor is it clearly marked or accessible. Persistent fishermen and hikers must trek along a network of overgrown paths which connect to the nearby Conte fish research lab. The island, like both banks of the river, is owned by FirstLight Power Resources.

In reporting the discovery to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on August 24, FirstLight see **REMAINS** page A5

ERVING SELECTBOARD

Date Set for Tax Override Vote

By KEITH WATERS

Erving held a joint meeting of the fin com, capital planning committee, and selectboard in addition to a regular selectboard meeting Wednesday night. The main issue under discussion was the preparations for, and machinations of, the upcoming Proposition 2½ override vote.

The town needs to send out its 2024 tax bills by December 31. To get these done the town needs to have voted on the potential override, a vote that requires 35 calendar days' notice to the public. A special town meeting (STM) must also be held before the override vote to get the wording on the ballot approved.

The plan, as of the end of Wed-

nesday's joint meeting, is to hold the STM on Monday, October 16, and the override vote on Monday, October 23.

This will require a bunch of work, on the part of all three committees, to finalize the town's revised FY'24 budget proposal and figure out how to present the options and information to the townspeople. The committees will meet again jointly next Wednesday, September 13. The school committee will also be invited.

Erving will also need to hold a vote on appropriating the funds for the demolition of the IP Mill. It was agreed upon by all present at Wednesday's meeting that this may be too much for the current season,

see **ERVING** page A7

Rolling Up Our Sleeves, Sharpening Our Pencils...

Illustration: Hot Process.....A3	Brass In the Streets.....B1
Op/Eds: Raising Our Standards.....A3, A4	A Heartfelt Jar-Head.....B1
Leverett Selectboard Notes.....A4	Montague Police Log Highlights.....B3
Gill Selectboard Notes.....A5	Review: Mockumentary Detected.....B4
Wendell Selectboard Notes.....A5	Science Page: Slipping Into Cells.....B6
10, 20, and 150 Years Ago This Week.....A7	Arts & Entertainment Listing.....B7
(Whoa-a-oh) Montague City Lies In Dust.....B1	Three Comics and a Puzzle.....B7
West Along: Summer Litany.....B1	Hard Pews and Sparkling Acoustics.....B8



The Montague Reporter

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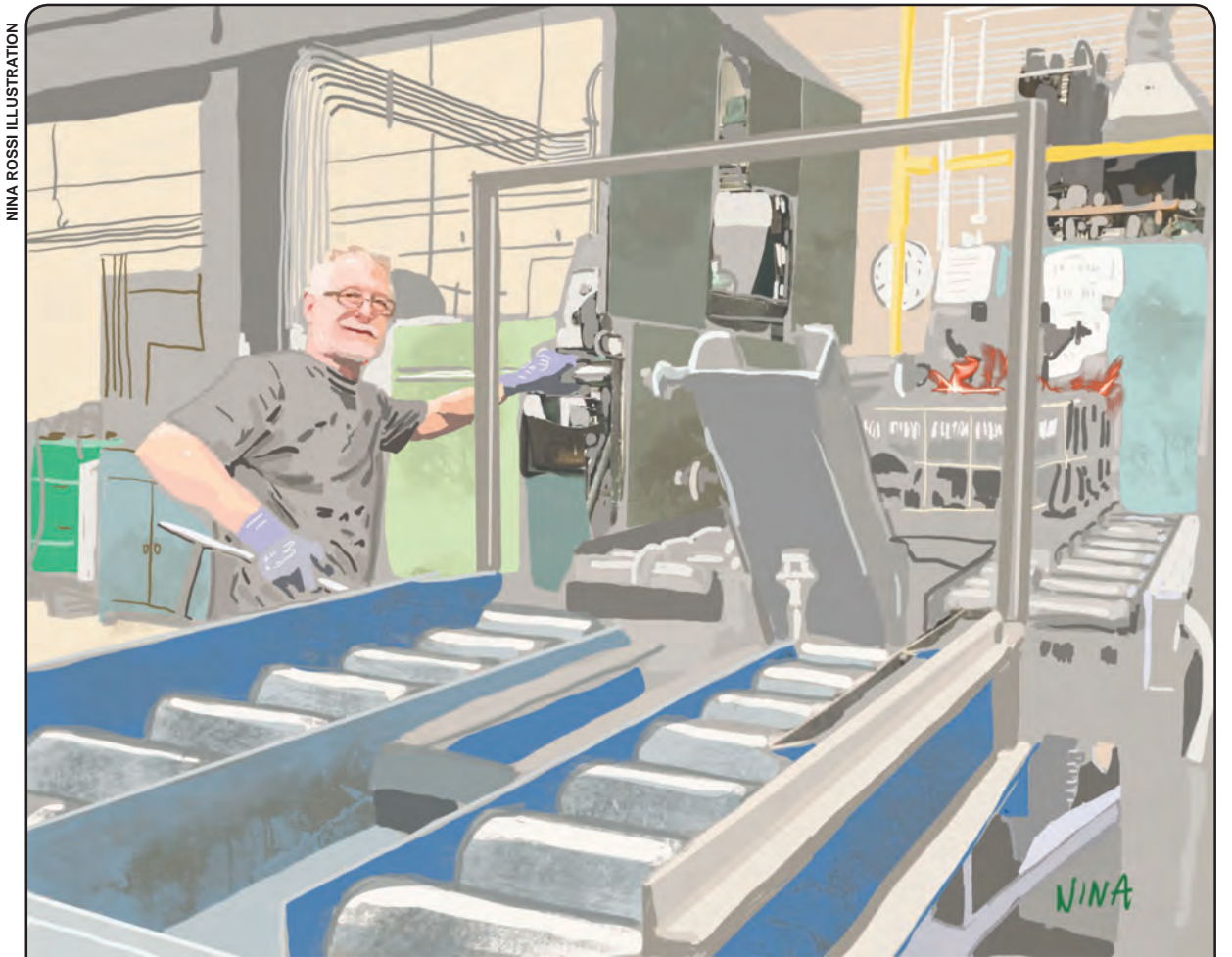
MONTAGUE REPORTER



Readers Sammy and Charlie Choleva took our June 22 edition on a trip to St. John in the US Virgin Islands earlier this summer. "We took a mile and a half hike out to Ram Head and took this photo," Charlie says.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

ON



NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION

Keith Summer rolls a rack of tools into the furnace at the Mayhew Steel heat-treatment plant in Turners Falls. The tools will be hardened at 1,630 degrees Fahrenheit for an hour and a half before being quenched in an oil bath. It's a hot job, and just one of several Summer has performed during his 34-year career with the company. Mayhew has been in business for 160 years and is still a privately-held company, with fourth- and fifth-generation owners at the helm.

Letters to the Editors

Grateful for Help With Mug Races

The Montague Mug and Mini Mug Races were held on a cool, overcast morning. Perfect conditions for running. As the cannon fired and broke the stillness the sound of sneakers pounding the pavement could be heard down Main Street before fading off as the runners headed for the hills.

Over 100 participants would come across the finish line with a dedicated group of volunteers waiting. The Montague Center Fire Department was stationed along the course to ensure safety, always a dependable team.

Our list of sponsors includes Rau's Towing, the Montague Mill, Knowledge is Power, Moretti Landscaping, Falls Farm, the Montague Village Store, Renaissance Builders, Greenfield Savings Bank, McCarthy Funeral Home, Barstow's Bakery, Montague WebWorks, and Marathon Sports.

The Montague highway department stepped up to fill pot holes, cut back brush, and swept the course after a summer of heavy rains. The course was in great shape, thank you.

Great to have our local fiddlers at Tracy's Turn to welcome back our runners. Thanks to everyone who ran, gave time, and donated items to keep this local event "running."

Ann Fisk,
 Race Coordinator
 Montague Center

Feels a Responsibility

Here I am, in my yard, drinking a beer and enjoying a smoke on a beautiful high summer August afternoon. I can't help but wonder, though, why can't everyone be having a nice day? Can't we just stop killing each other?

Now, of course, I understand that most folks, locally, reading this, will say, "What! I've never killed anybody!"

Understood! However! As part of this conceptual group known as the "USA" We, collectively (albeit not as individuals) are responsible for

the mass murders of many, be they African slaves, indigenous Americans, Vietnamese civilians, Iraqi civilians, Central Americans, or our very own birds and bees, and therefore we have a lot to answer for.

So, what do "We" do next? Well, I think it should be obvious, but in case it isn't, here is a start: 1st → do no harm, and 2nd → try to do some good.

Okay? Enough said?

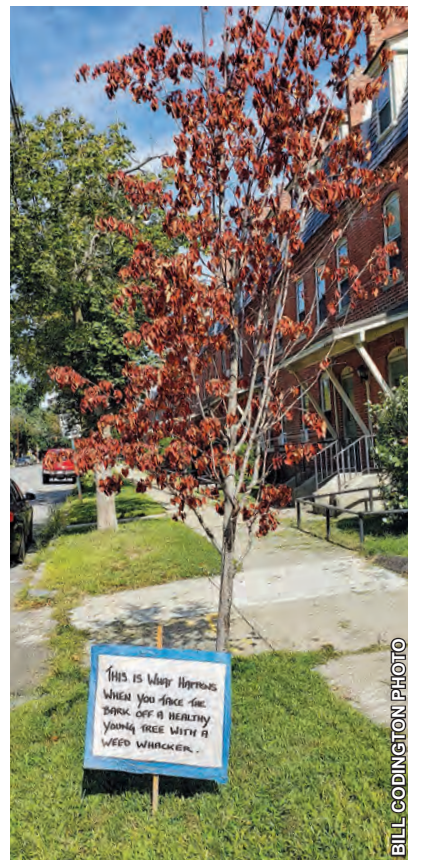
Mike Joyce
 Wendell

Tragically Whacked

Montague tree committee member David Detmold shared this photo taken by chair Bill Codington of a young tree on Third Street the committee believes was weed-whacked to death. A newly-planted crabapple down the street, he said, is also "hanging onto life by a thread" after losing "95% of its bark."

"When you sever the cambium, the tree no longer can receive nourishment from its roots system, and it dies," Detmold explained. "If you girdle the bark off a young tree with a weed-whacker, that is a surefire way of killing an otherwise healthy young tree.... Once the town goes to the expense of planting new trees on public tree belts, adjoining property owners can easily kill them, unintentionally, by weed-whacking the grass around the base of their trunks."

"We hope this can be an educational opportunity," he added, "as well as a small tragedy for the two trees in question."



BILL CODINGTON PHOTO



Jeffrey Stylos of Millers Falls and Greta Jochem of Northampton brought their August 10 Reporter along on their Maritime Canada vacation, which included the city of Montague (... the beautiful!) on Prince Edward Island.

THE

That's our June 29 congratulations page for the Turners Falls softball team, and that's MR sportswriter Matt Robinson, enjoying a sailing trip to Newport, Rhode Island.

Going somewhere? Take us with you! Send your photos to editor@montaguereporter.org.



DAVID HOITT PHOTO

ROAD...

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LOCAL BRIEFS

Compiled by NINA ROSSI

On September 18 the Turners Falls Water Department will begin to shut off water to properties with water usage bills more than 90 days overdue. Bills were mailed May 1 and were due within 30 days.

Payment can be made at the Water Department Office, 226 Millers Falls Road, Mondays through Fridays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. A drop box is located to the left of the front door for payment after hours. For any questions, contact Suzanne Leh, clerk/collector, at 863-4542.

Have you found something beautiful within a disastrous event? If you'd like to share your story, the LAVA Center is hosting a **storytelling open mic**, "Beautiful Disasters," tonight, Thursday, September 7 at 7 p.m.

This show is focusing on medical disasters, so "come on down with your stories of broken bones, and extended labors, and poisonous berries, and arduous hospital paperwork." Trouble Mandeson and Nisse Greenberg are the emcees for the evening. Prepare your narrative to fit a 5-to-7-minute slot. Six names will be picked to tell stories, and the show is pay-what-you-want.

The LAVA Center is located at 324 Main Street in Greenfield.

Greenfield Community College will offer several **technology workshops for adults ages 60 and above** over the course of the next year, thanks to a grant received by Greenfield senior center. These four workshops will cover all of the computer basics you need to know to use your device efficiently and effectively.

The first is tomorrow, Friday, September 8 from noon to 2 p.m. at the main GCC campus, and they continue on each Friday in September. Email raperj@gcc.mass.edu with any questions, and register at tinyurl.com/60upworkshop.

This Friday, September 8 the Unity Skate Park in Turners Falls will be lit up until 10 p.m. for a **Night Skate**.

Montague artist **Jeanne Weintraub** will hold a reception for her first art exhibit this Friday, September 8 at 5 p.m. at the Northampton senior center. The exhibit showcases 12 prints with nocturnal wildlife in New England, along with some of the plants, fungi, and other animals that are part of their habitat.

Weintraub will also be selling a 2024 wall calendar featuring these images on opening night, with proceeds to benefit the senior center.

Jim Eagan and Anand Nayak will perform a mix of folk and folk blues with finger-style guitar at the next **Great Falls Coffee House** this Friday, September 8, from 7 to 9 p.m.

Eagan is a Western Mass singer/songwriter who plays folk and blues. One of his original songs, "Ain't In No Hurry," is the title track on Jorma Kaukonen's latest album. Nayak, a Grammy-nominated record producer, also performs with folk favorites Rani Arbo & daisy mayhem.

The concert will take place in the Great Hall of the Discovery Center in Turners Falls, and refreshments will be available. Sliding-scale donations are suggested, in support of the educational programming at the Discovery Center.

Pamela Means will play in a concert at Peskeompskut Park in Turners Falls this Saturday, September 9 at 1 p.m. This family-friendly free public event, "The Power of The Protest Song: Our Shared History & Present Day," explores the origins and lineages of protest songs, how their meanings and effects continue to transform, and how they continue to inspire movements and cultural shifts within the realms of racial and social justice.

A curated assortment of original songs and recognizable covers will

be integrated into the presentation to demonstrate of how grounding, unifying, and mobilizing protest songs can be, and Means will share her own experiences with becoming an artist and using her voice.

The Jamaican Jewelz food truck will also be on site, offering traditional favorites like jerk chicken and meat patties until 2 p.m. The rain date is this Sunday.

The **Montague Common Hall Open Mic** returns this Saturday, September 9 at 6:30 p.m.

The featured performers are Duo Thomas-Fownes, Cynthia Thomas on fiddle and diatonic accordion and Jim Fownes on accordion, playing French folk dance music – *bourrées, mazurkas, waltzes*, and more.

All types of musicians, poets, singers, dancers, and storytellers are encouraged to participate in the Open Mic. Organizers say the event welcomes and appreciates both emerging and seasoned performers. Come prepared to perform for 10 to 20 minutes, depending on the turnout. Voluntary donations are welcome at the door, but bring your own food and drink.

If you are an anime fan, the next **Cinestorm** at the Shea Theater in Turners Falls is for you! View some "mystery anime" films, compete for trivia prizes, and enjoy free admission this Saturday, September 9 at 7:30 p.m. Beer and wine are for sale in the lobby.

This Sunday, September 10, Historic Northampton and the **Pioneer Valley Symphony** are collaborating to present an evening of music at the museum. Explore the exhibits at Historic Northampton's newly restored barn, and then settle in at 5 p.m. either in the barn or out on the patio for a concert of chamber music from the symphony orchestra.

Seats inside are first-come, first-served; bring a lawn chair or blanket for patio seating. You are welcome to bring a picnic. The event is by donation. Find out more at pvsoc.org.

If you are looking for a new job, **MassHire is holding a job fair** next Wednesday, September 13, from 9 to 11 a.m. at 101 Munson Street in Greenfield. Local employers including Altium Packaging, NE-XT Technologies, Big Y, Be-

havioral Health Network, DIAL/SELF, Nonotuck Resource Associates, and Northfield Mount Hermon School will be represented.

No pre-registration is required. For more information, see masshirefhcareers.org or call (413) 774-436.

The Wendell Free Library is offering **free Wednesday Matinee Movies** in September.

The films, which start at 1 p.m., range from light comedy to intense drama, and include classic and recent films: *The Whale Rider* on September 13, *House of Sand and Fog* on September 20, and *This Beautiful Fantastic* on September 27. All are welcome, and friendly, informal discussions after the movie are encouraged.

The next **Writers' Read** on Wednesday, September 13 at the LAVA Center in Greenfield will feature three writers reading their work: Janet MacFadyen, Jan Freeman, and Candace R. Curran. Coordinated by Lindy Whiton, the series brings in local writers and a couple of outside surprises. The event begins at 7 p.m. and there is a \$5 suggested donation to attend.

On Sunday, September 17, "**Constitution Day**," join state senator Jo Comerford and other local and state reps and activists in the 7th Hampden District at the Shutesbury Athletic Club, 282 Wendell Road in Shutesbury. District towns include Belchertown, Ludlow, New Salem, Pelham, Petersham, Shutesbury, and Wendell.

The 7th Hampden Coalition invites everyone to gather and enjoy music, food, and mingling from 3 to 5 p.m. Speakers include US Representative Jim McGovern; Marisol Pierce Bonifaz of Generation Ratify Amherst, and Tara Jacobs of the Governor's Council.

Mike's Maze has announced that their theme for the corn maze this year is "artificial intelligence." The labyrinth of type encoded in a corn field poses a question: "In the age of artificial intelligence, what makes us human?"

Visitors can explore eight acres of corn, encountering tech trivia and decoding challenges along the way. The maze, at 23 South Main Street in Sunderland, will be open

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Turners Falls

Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays until November 5. Find out more at mikesmaze.com.

Are you caring for a loved one at home? LifePath is starting a new caregiver newsletter. Sign up at tinyurl.com/caregiversnews to get articles, tips, and updates about resources and events especially for caregivers.

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

OP ED

Turnpike Lot: Maybe I'm Missing Something?

By MIKE NAUGHTON

MILLERS FALLS – After reading about the Planning Board's public hearing about the proposed zoning change to a parcel on Turnpike Road, I have several questions.

The first is why this isn't part of a more comprehensive proposal that looks at the whole town. The proponents say that there is limited land available for industrial and commercial growth, which is true, but it's been true for years.

One of the goals of the zoning overhaul that was approved in 2019 was to "enable growth of commercial/industrial base in targeted areas," but the lot being considered now was not included back then. Did the planning board consider it, and decide against changes? If so, what changed? Or did they not consider it, in which case are there other lots that should be looked at now along with it?

The reason for considering this lot now is obvious: a business that is looking to expand has approached the town inquiring about

possible sites. Although it may not be "spot zoning," this proposal is clearly being put forward to accommodate that business.

From what I've read, the proponents have stressed the financial upsides: "good-paying" manufacturing jobs, and additional real estate taxes for the town. (They've also cited "potential for housing development," which – I could be wrong – strikes me as something of an afterthought.)

Good-paying jobs I understand. I worked at Judd Wire for many years, and I think we could use more companies like them in town. The potential for more tax revenue is less clear to me – not because I wouldn't welcome it, but because I don't think one more business in town is going to make much difference.

In the town planner's presentation to the planning board in July, Judd Wire was one of four examples of the types of businesses that the proposed zoning change might attract. I have no inside information, but the public records show that its property is valued at around \$10 million, and Montague's FY'23 industrial tax rate is \$23.78 per thousand dollars.

The treasurer's office told me that Judd Wire's real estate tax in FY'23 was just under \$280,000, roughly 1.3% of the town's total tax levy capacity. (The company pays no personal property tax; manufacturers are apparently exempt.) The other three businesses are valued at around \$3 to \$5 million, so they pay considerably less.

Even assuming that a new business were roughly the size of Judd Wire, and leaving aside the likelihood that it would negotiate a tax agreement that would lower its tax payments for at least several years, I don't see how increasing taxing capacity by around 1% would be a financial game-changer for the town.

I'm perplexed by Bob Obear's quoted comment that, "If we don't move forward to increase the tax base, many of you are going to see your taxes increase beyond your wildest dreams." I'd like to hear what he thinks will cause them to increase so dramatically, and even if they might, why he thinks that rezoning this parcel will make a difference.

Note that I said "taxing capacity," not "tax

revenues." Montague currently has over \$1 million in excess capacity, which is potential tax revenue that we choose not to collect. More taxable property in town would presumably just make that number bigger.

I'm all for bringing new jobs to town, but I'm for doing so in a way that makes sense for the whole town in the long run. A year ago, we added more capacity to the selectboard's office with the goal of enhancing the town's "ability to work in a strategic and proactive fashion." Maybe I'm missing something, but this proposal doesn't seem strategic or proactive to me; it seems tactical and reactive.

I'm also bothered by the fact that the planning board didn't seem interested in seriously discussing the concerns raised at their public hearing. Even if they disagreed, I think the respectful course would have been to take the time to explain why.

Are we really doing our best as a town on this one? I wonder.

Mike Naughton is a Precinct 2 town meeting member.

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OP ED

Public Questions for Greenfield Candidates

By MARIANNA RITCHEY

Greenfield is a beautiful city with a lot of potential. It is also a low-income city. Many residents struggle to afford food and housing; our school budgets face perpetual cuts – and a looming cliff in 2024-25 when pandemic aid ends – and much of our important infrastructure is in dire need of updating.

Just as with cities across the US, Greenfield's budgetary decisions, as well as its approach to public safety, also disproportionately affect people of color and low-income folks. These issues and problems impact all of us, and impede our full flourishing as a community.

The upcoming November 7 election will give Greenfield residents the opportunity to make some big changes in how our town works. Over the past several months, members of Franklin County Continuing the Political Revolution (FC-CPR) and Greenfield People's Budget have been having conversations around the community about what kinds of changes people would like to see in our town. Many of the same issues came up over and over again in these conversations, and we've compiled them into an independent platform we urge our town leadership to adopt.

One of the biggest concerns voiced by Greenfield residents across the board is that we – meaning all of the people who live in this town – ought to be more included in decisions about how our money is spent and what our government does. Accordingly, the community platform we have generated contains a lot of commonsense proposals aimed at increasing

communication between city leadership and residents and incorporating a wider swath of residents' perspectives into city decisions.

We collectively call on city leadership to:

- Fund the schools to keep up with the rising costs of education, so our kids can thrive.
- Reassess police response, since 90% of calls police respond to have nothing to do with even an allegation of crime, and since current police activity disproportionately targets and harms people of color. Pursue non-police alternatives that better promote public safety.
- Make Greenfield affordable, by working with the Franklin County Regional Housing Authority, the Franklin County Community Land Trust, and other local organizations to increase the supply of affordable and accessible housing.
- Clean up the Lunt facility, cooperating with residents and safeguarding the health of the neighborhood.
- Audit tax assessments – especially for commercial properties – and ensure that businesses and high-value property owners pay their fair share of taxes.
- Enforce health codes in rental housing.
- Expand healthy, affordable, and climate-friendly transportation by expanding walking and biking routes and making existing routes safer, including the long-neglected and urgently-needed safe route to walk or bike between Greenfield and Turners Falls.
- Support working people by enacting an ordinance against wage theft and developing a plan to enforce it.
- Protect everyone, including immigrants and

unhoused people, from harassment and harm. Work to end all forms of oppressive, hateful, racist, anti-Semitic, anti-Islamic, homophobic, transphobic, sexist, and ableist behavior, especially by city employees.

Although our group is not affiliated with any candidate – we vote based on policy goals, not personalities or parties! – we have been motivated by a strong sense that something is very wrong with certain aspects of our current city leadership. Cronyism and back-door dealings are rampant, and the public has been left out of many decisions that directly affect our lives. In particular, recent scandals have demonstrated major problems with the mayor, the chief of police, certain members of the school committee, and the chair of the board of assessors.

We believe that no real progress is possible without some basic changes to our city government, and we believe that Greenfield deserves honesty, integrity, and humility from our elected officials.

We also believe that everyone deserves to know where candidates stand on these issues, so we sent them a questionnaire. We will publish their answers by late September on our website. Please check out blueprintforgreenfield.com, sign up for updates, and stay tuned for candidates' answers to our questions. We also encourage you to reach out to the candidates and let them know you want them to answer!

Marianna Ritchey is a concerned resident of Greenfield, and a member of Greenfield People's Budget.

NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Gutter Trust Appeals for Help After Washouts

By GEORGE BRACE

At their August 29 meeting, Leverett's selectboard heard from residents looking for help in developing and funding a plan to restore areas of the town-owned Rattlesnake Gutter Conservation area washed out by this summer's rains. The board also modified orders issued at two recent dog hearings.

Heavy rainfall in July resulted in severe flooding affecting Rattlesnake Gutter Road, an old county dirt road which is closed to vehicle traffic, but serves as a popular hiking trail as part of the Rattlesnake Gutter Conservation Area. The Leverett highway department was widely commended for repairs and maintenance it performed in the wake of the flooding, but residents Stephen Weiss and Eva Gibavic, trustees of the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust (RGT), a local non-profit organization which monitors the road, appeared before the board to seek help in coming up with a long-term solution to the problem.

Weiss said the 145-year-old road had suffered "catastrophic erosion" during the July flooding and that these erosion problems would continue, possibly resulting in the collapse of sections of the road. He attributed the flooding to inadequate, or clogged, drainage culverts, and to the collapse of parts of a historic water-diverting stone wall.

Weiss said he had spoken with Larry LaClaire, the former head of the town highway department, who provided an informal estimate of \$100,000 for the work necessary to protect the road from collapse, but added that the amount may be less due to recent work done by the highway department.

Current highway department superintendent Matthew Boucher said



Video clips taken by Eva Gibavic during the mid-July rains show in vivid detail the damage they caused to the 19th-century road.

he would "love to see the road completely redone," and that while he believes the department has some maintenance responsibility, he wasn't comfortable spending large amounts from the department's budget on items like replacing the culverts. Roads in Leverett with houses on them in need of culverts, he said, are a higher priority.

Boucher said the repairs his department had recently done made use of "leftover" gravel and materials harvested from the work area, which kept costs down, but that culvert replacement would be very expensive due to time and materials.

Weiss said members of the RGT had been working on ideas for raising money, including the pursuit of grants, fund-raising campaigns, and contributions from the town, but he did not know who would be responsible for approving an overall plan.

Seeking guidance on these issues, he asked the board's permission to briefly speak with the town's attorney on legal issues related to grant funding, including the possible use of Community Preservation Act funds. He also asked the board if they would be willing to back a warrant article at town meeting to raise funds.

Selectboard member Melissa Colbert said she liked the idea of a warrant article, but would like to see some "quantifiable data" showing that a proposed plan would work.

Board member Patricia Duffy said that she was "not opposed" to a warrant article, but that she felt "more work was needed between now and then."

Chair Tom Hankinson was also "in favor" of a possible article, and he suggested that RGT members and "whoever wants to be involved" meet with the town's newly-formed highway commission for further work on the issue.

Dog Stories

The board agreed to modify a muzzle order for a dog on Cave Hill Road which it had previously judged to be guilty of excessive barking.

An appeal of the order was recently denied in state district court, but the dog's owner appeared at the August 29 meeting presenting additional information not heard at the original hearing, along with evidence of efforts she had made since that time to address the issue.

The selectboard found the new information persuasive and agreed

to draft a modified order allowing for "alternative methods" of keeping the noise down, to be reviewed 60 days after taking effect.

Duffy volunteered to go on a "ride-along" with a police officer to meet with a resident of Jackson Hill Road who had been ordered to both restrain his dog, and provide the board with an update on his restraint efforts at another recent dog hearing. The resident had twice failed to appear and provide the required update.

Town administrator Marjorie McGinnis said she had not received any new complaints about this dog's behavior, but continued to receive emails from neighbors who said they would like to walk on the road, but were avoiding doing so due to past experiences. She called the issue an "unresolved question."

The selectboard chose to send a representative for the update as a measure "in between" doing nothing and impounding the dog.

Board members then discussed the importance of filling the vacant dog officer position to help manage dog complaint cases.

Other Business

The board set a tentative date of November 14 for a special town meeting. Two possible articles requiring voter approval were briefly discussed, one involving land taking and easements involved in the Millers Bridge project, the other having to do with zoning changes being pursued by the planning board.

The board deliberated over which two of the state's Community Compact technical assistance grant programs for town government best practices to apply for this year, selecting a human resources study and a study of potential fire department regionalization.


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REMAINS from page A1

regulatory manager Alan Douglass noted that the remains were actually found on a “small island just below Rawson Island,” which does not appear on their “project boundary maps due to it being created recently.”

This is a testament to the complexity of the ecosystem’s changing land features – and the impact of the power canal and dam. Kelsey Wentling, a river steward with the Connecticut River Conservancy, explained that this land must not have been visible when FirstLight’s predecessor, Western Mass Electric Co. (WMECo), drafted those maps in the 1970s.

In river systems like the one surrounding Rawson Island, Wentling said, “it is normal for land features (such as islands, oxbows and peninsulas) to change over time through the processes of erosion and sediment deposition.” Wentling emphasized that rivers can lead to continued changes to surrounding land. “It’s helpful to think of rivers as living and dynamic,” she remarked, “to remember that the features we see today are not static, but will continue to change over time through a combination of human and natural processes.”

It was this area’s constantly evolving nature that brought the camp children to make their shocking discovery. Kurt Heidinger, president of the Westhampton-based summer education program Biociti-

zen, said he has used the Rock Dam area as an outdoor classroom since 2009, immersing students in its rich biocultural history.

“We’re very inspired by the work of Dr. Boyd Kynard,” Heidinger explained, “who has spent decades trying to save the fish, especially shortnose sturgeon, from the bad management practices of the Turners Falls dam operators.”

In 2004, Dr. Kynard and Micah Kieffer of the US Geological Survey Conte Lab published findings from over 15 years of research they had conducted at nearby Rock Dam. They concluded that the area is critical to the species, as it is the only documented natural spawning site on the Connecticut River.

With environmental philosophy in mind, Biocitizen’s teachers bring students ages 10 to 16 into the field during the summer months with river conservation biologists to explore the surrounding habitat. At Rock Dam they look for ospreys, bald eagles, and endangered species of mussels.

However, this year Heidinger and his students had been hindered in accessing the area by the high river levels that brought July’s floods. The river level had dropped enough for them to explore the Rock Dam area once again the day that a 7-year-old student discovered the skeletal remains.

Heidinger and his fellow counselors were quick to alert the authorities. According to the *Green-*

field Recorder, they texted photos of the remains to Greenfield police detective Christopher Greene. Students and the other teachers left the island while Heidinger waited two hours for authorities to arrive.

Reflecting on the event this week, Heidinger affirmed the capabilities of his students, saying they are used to experiencing all sides and expressions of nature. “What we experienced was an extreme version of this,” he told the *Reporter*. “We will never forget it; but we were able to place it in the context of all we’ve witnessed and learned together.”

Heidinger said he recognized that if the discovery were not made by the members of Biocitizen, it would have been by another hiker or fisherman.

In terms of helping the young members of the group in the face of a potentially traumatic event, he was optimistic. “Emotional wellbeing came from knowing the police will find the person’s loved ones,” he said. “They will be able to find closure themselves; for it must be very painful for them not to know what happened to this person.”

The cause of Conley’s death remains under investigation by local and state authorities.

The Northwestern District Attorney’s office has asked that anyone with information that might be helpful to the investigation contact their State Police Detective Unit in Greenfield at (413) 774-3186.



NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

Board Decides Dogs Have Been, Will Be Dogs

By KATE SAVAGE

Most of the August 28 Gill selectboard meeting was devoted to a fairly amiable nuisance dog hearing. Regional animal control officer Judie Garceau told the board she had received three complaints that two dogs at 29 West Gill Road belonging to Bonnie and David Powlovich were “excessively and aggressively barking.” The dogs were found to be properly licensed and vaccinated.

Several neighbors attended the hearing to defend the dogs. “I was so taken aback by there being a complaint,” said Heather Johnson, whose backyard abuts the Powloviches’. “We’re literally the closest people to their house,” she said. “I have dogs, so sometimes they talk to each other, but it doesn’t last.”

Johnson said she didn’t know the Powloviches very well, but came because if she were facing a similar situation, she would want her closest neighbors to speak up.

Joseph Williams also said the barking was manageable. “I live up the road from them, but I spend a lot of time down in the woods,” he said. He said dog walkers regularly travel with several dogs from West Gill Road down to Factory Hollow Road. “You hear them – you hear all the dogs up and down the whole road,” he said. “But it’s normal.”

Even those residents who had originally lodged complaints against the dogs spoke up to say the situation had improved. “The dogs did bark excessively,” said Robert Walker. “We’ve called, made a complaint, and it has drastically improved.... A dog’s a dog. I know they bark, but I just don’t want to hear it hour after hour.”

Anne York said that she works from home and wasn’t able to work from her porch or deck because of the barking. “But it has gotten a lot better,” she said.

Bonnie Powlovich, the dogs’ co-owner, said she hadn’t made any major changes to stop the barking, except for moving the dogs to the cellar when a package is being delivered. She said the biggest reason they are quieter now is that fewer bears and other wildlife are traveling through their property.

“We had fox taking our chickens,” Powlovich said. “These dogs let us know. And we have a lot of bear. I don’t have the feeders out all spring till like July, but they come to check, and they’re right in front of my window.... Turkeys come through, they bark at all of that. But they stop.”

After hearing the testimony, the selectboard voted to dismiss the complaint.

“It sounds like progress has been made,” said selectboard member Greg Snedeker, “and it sounds like the parties are listening to each other as they sit in this room.”

Other Business

Board of assessors member Bill Tomb congratulated Diane Sumrall on becoming a Massachusetts accredited assessor. In addition to working as assistant to the assessors, Sumrall has been attending accreditation courses, paid for with town funding.

Tomb said that Sumrall is one of only four people in western Massachusetts with this accreditation. “We’re very proud of her, and I wanted the town to be aware of it,” said Tomb. “The funding for that kind of development is essential, and is a great benefit to the town.”

“Our thanks to Diane,” said Snedeker. “She didn’t have to do those courses.”

“Diane has done a lot for the town,” agreed selectboard chair Randy Crochier.

The selectboard voted to end the official state of emergency that was started on July 21 with the heavy rains.

“This is mainly driven by the sad news Friday that there will be no federal funds available for all the disaster work caused by that rain,” explained town administrator Ray Purington. “Still, we fared better than several other towns in the county.”

The board approved a second contribution of \$2,500 to pay for shared legal services to guide towns in the area in matters relating to FirstLight’s relicensing process.

Crochier announced that a Massachusetts Community Health Equity Survey was currently available, and that a link to it could be found on the town website. “I encourage everybody to take it,” he said. “The state has guaranteed us all we can get our results as long as more than 30 people in each community answer.”

Crochier added that this number was difficult for smaller towns: “In Hawley, that’s 10% of their town, and in Monroe it’s almost 30% of their town. But that’s the number they’re sticking to.”

Finally, the town reviewed the latest update from the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District, which recently found West Nile Virus in mosquitoes in Hampshire and Hampden counties. No traces of the virus have yet been found in Franklin County.

Tip of the week ...

As the fall season approaches, it’s a good idea to perform a home fire safety check. Make sure your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are in proper working order and that the area around your furnace, fireplace, or wood stove is clear of debris. Taking these simple steps can help keep your home and family safe.



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MONTAGUE CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

In accordance with the Mass. Wetlands Protection Act, M.G.L. Ch. 131, Sec. 40, the Montague Conservation Commission will hold a public meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday September 14, 2023 to review the Request for Determination of Applicability RDA #2023-06, filed by FirstLight Power Services LLC, to determine whether the proposed work for the installation of a drainage pipe at the toe of the Power Canal Left Dike with associated site work and preparation, at 15 Cabot Street (Parcels #08-0-1 & 09-0-001) is subject to the Wetlands Protection Act.

Remote meeting login information and the filing is available for review at www.montague-ma.gov/calendar.

**PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE
MONTAGUE CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

In accordance with the Mass. Wetlands Protection Act, M.G.L. Ch. 131, Sec. 40, the Montague Conservation Commission will hold a public meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 14, 2023 to review the Request for Determination of Applicability RDA #2023-05, filed by Lance Kirley, to determine whether the work proposed to demolish the existing building connector and garage and to construct a building addition with an expanded footprint to an existing single-family home at 82 Chestnut Hill Loop (Parcel #53-0-043) is subject to the Wetlands Protection Act.

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The right candidate will work a 10-hour 4-day week schedule and receive excellent benefits. Must have a valid driver's license. Starting pay range of \$17.27 to \$18.96 depending on experience.

Applications and a full job description are available upon request at the DPW.

Applications or resumes can be emailed to hwycpliance@montague-ma.gov or mailed or dropped off at the Montague DPW, 128 Turners Falls Road, Montague, MA 01351. Applications and/or resumes accepted until position is filled.

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The Town of Montague DPW is seeking two reliable full-time Truck Driver/Laborers.

The job requires a Class B CDL License and a Hoister's License or the ability to obtain a Hoister's License.

Experience is a plus in construction, road maintenance, snow removal, sanding and all other duties assigned or in the job description. Willing to train the right person.

The right candidate will work a 10-hour 4-day week schedule and receive excellent benefits. Starting pay range of \$20.84 to \$21.90 depending on experience.

Applications and a full job description are available upon request at the DPW.

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HUNT from page A1

continued. "Then you see an armored vehicle, a tactical vehicle, police in tactical uniforms, SWAT, K-9 cops, the chopper going around and around searching.... I just hope they find the person."

Jessie Groneman of H Street said that she did not buy into the "active shooter" narrative because she spoke with a resident down the street who had heard the gunshots and saw the alleged shooter run toward the woods bordering the neighborhood.

"Information was just flying around, but I got an accurate story from a neighbor," she said. "I knew pretty quick, but not by talking to an official person."

Groneman added that while she did not have the "expertise" to judge the police response, she experienced a "disconnect" with information she was receiving about the severity of the initial incident.

The phrase "active shooter," according to a 2021 *New York Times* article, emerged in policing jargon and media use after the 1999 shooting at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado that left 15 people dead. The term typically refers to mass killing of members of the public by a gunman. "Active shooter drills" in schools have since become a feature of the education landscape.

In an interview with the *Reporter*, Montague police chief Chris Williams was adamant that the term "active shooter" does not apply to the incident in the Patch. "If it had been an active shooter, we would have made an announcement on our CodeRED messaging system, and

urged people in the immediate area to lock down," Williams said.

The chief, who had declined to comment in response to a call from this reporter on the afternoon of the shooting, said he had felt constrained from discussing the incident while the search was still underway.

"We regret that more proactive notification of ongoing events was not possible," town administrator Steve Ellis wrote on the town's official Facebook page the next evening. "In consultation with law enforcement, Town officials deferred public communication to the Northwestern District Attorney's office and Massachusetts State Police throughout the course of the investigation."

"Understanding the concern this caused," he added, "the Town will consult with state officials to review requirements and allowable protocols for town-initiated notices in the unfortunate event that a similar incident occurs in the future."

Though media inquiries during the incident were referred to Laurie Loisel, the press spokesperson of the Northwestern District Attorney's office, neither her office nor state police provided any public statement until later that evening, after the suspect had been arrested and some degree of normalcy had returned to the Patch.

Asked about the protocol for public communication during an emergency response, Loisel told the *Reporter* that providing too much information to the public in real time can potentially compromise an ongoing investigation. "It is also hard to tell the public what

happened when you don't yet know what happened," she added.

Loisel told the *Reporter* that evaluating the response to the shooting was not the job of the District Attorney's office, but of the police chief and town officials. "You should talk to your chief," she said.

According to Williams, the shooting incident will be discussed publicly at the selectboard meeting next Monday, September 11.

The discussion may also include concerns, echoed by several residents we spoke with, about police responsiveness to complaints about drug dealing in the neighborhood.

"The feeling in the Patch is that the police throw up their hands and say, 'We know where the drug dealing is - what can be done about it?'" said Haley Anderson, an Eleventh Street resident. "Something has to be done differently.... We want to collaborate with the police to address the issue." Anderson added that she believed absentee landlords were contributing to the problem.

Tapscott said that for him, the response to the August 29 shooting showed that law enforcement was relatively well-funded, and that the country and region needs to better address the underlying causes of crime and violence. "I am not upset they were here - there was a shooting, and there should have been a strong response," he said. "Police respond, but don't prevent."

Monday's selectboard meeting will be held at 6 p.m. via Zoom and may be a lengthy one; as of press time the agenda had not yet been posted.

NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Deposit Decision Draws Ire; Troubled Culvert Fails Again

By JOSH HEINEMANN

The time allotted for public comment at Wendell selectboard meetings is often unused, but on August 30 two citizens, Shawn Jarrett and Tom Mangan, came to voice concerns about the road commission's decision to stop sorting out deposit bottles and cans at the WRATS.

The deposit effort began decades ago with volunteers, who used the money earned for community organizations they were part of. When volunteers thinned to nothing, WRATS staff took over. The revenue was split between the Good Neighbors food pantry and the employee, who took the bottles and cans to a redemption center on his own time.

When road commission chair Phil Delorey told the board of the commission's decision this spring, he said the WRATS was costing \$40,000 a year more than it took in, that sorting was taking the bulk of the attendant's time, and that the money earned for Good Neighbors was not much compared with the town's labor cost.

Sorting deposit containers took up two-thirds of the shed, and Delorey thought the space could be used more effectively. That space has stayed empty since sorting stopped July 1.

Jarrett said 59 people had responded to a survey on the issue, and many offered potential solutions to restore the deposit program. The town, she said, could start a process similar to what happened when the free store overwhelmed the shed and the road commission wanted it out: volunteers (including Delorey) built a separate free store,

which is now open during WRATS hours only when volunteers staff it.

Jarrett suggested a town meeting to discuss the issue and develop a workable solution.

Selectboard chair Laurie DiDonato said a town meeting was not quite the proper place. At town meeting, articles may be offered, amended, and voted up or down; discussion and comments are not back-and-forth, but are supposed to be directed to the moderator. Road commission meetings, she said, are public, and citizens may go to them and speak.

Jarrett countered that citizens who are not members of the road commission have no input in their decisions.

Mangan's approach was different. He had done some figuring, and concluded that eliminating the deposit benefit to Good Neighbors results in two tons of food not coming to Wendell citizens. Furthermore, sending all the redeemable containers to the recycling facility decreased the value of the recyclables and increased shipping costs, which he calculated to be between \$600 and \$2,000 a year.

Since this talk was part of public comment time and not a separate agenda item, selectboard member Gillian Budine said the board should not discuss the issue at that time; she suggested putting the discussion on the next agenda.

Rushing Waters

Delorey, in his regular report as town project manager, brought up a new issue. A state Department of Transportation (MassDOT) inspection of the Wendell-Erving bridge found gaps in the planking

that show the river underneath. The 2-by-6 pressure-treated planks are screwed into 3-by-5 pressure-treated supporting beams, and the screw holes have rotted enough to make the planks insecure.

There is no simple fix for this, and Erving hired Gill Engineering to develop a plan. Delorey said he expects the bridge to stay open through winter, but close for two months in spring.

Delorey said he regretted bringing up the Mormon Hollow Road culvert once more, but that it had again been compromised by too much rain, too fast, and that its downstream side had dropped six inches. He invited the contractor, Davenport, to provide an estimate for another repair, this time using concrete.

Before starting work they will have to wait for some dry time and then divert the running stream. The state Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) wants road work to have as little wildlife impact as possible, but the town conservation commission approved the work as necessary to keep Mormon Hollow Road passable.

To DiDonato's question, Delorey answered that FEMA money is not available. Wendell's MassDOT money did not increase this year. Budine suggested contacting state senator Jo Comerford's office to find some aid.

Two four-inch rainstorms within 10 days this summer washed out 400 feet of paving on Farley Road, and an unnoticed beaver dam broke and washed out the gutter of Wendell Depot Road.

Planning board chair Molly Doody

outlined the National Floodplain Insurance Program, through which owners of property in a floodplain can get help with insurance costs if their town participates. The state encourages, but does not require, towns to participate.

Doody said the maps show Wendell with only a small floodplain area, next to the Millers River and alongside Whetstone Brook. Not many homes or businesses are in the area: the former Wendell Depot Post Office is not, and Delorey said there has been no new building in that area for 20 years.

There is one house in the zone, and the residents are not interested in the insurance program.

Board members agreed there is no need to sign on immediately. Doody said a new floodplain map is expected in a year or two.

Landfill, Trees, and Solar Panels

Delorey said the capping of Wendell's former landfill is going well. A Farley man sold Wendell truckloads of fill for far less than the normal cost, \$150 for an 18-yard load, and the slope surrounding the dump is close to ready for a road. The town has spent \$30,000 of a \$75,000 earmark for the project so far.

The capped landfill, Delorey said, can be a site for a solar array. Doody said the area is already part of Wendell's solar overlay district. A large array there, however, would need an extension of three-phase wires from where they run now, along Wendell Depot and Locke Village road, a job for National Grid.

At the highway garage, the developer is working on the connection for solar panels to the three-

phase wires.

DiDonato, also an energy committee member, offered her help, and added that the garage's roof will need a snow guard to prevent snow from falling and blocking the highway and fire station doors. Even before this work, the metal roof dropped snow and ice in front of those doors.

Delorey said he hoped the tree warden's budget could be used to take down the sick ash at the library. He said some town roads now have limbs so low they damage trucks.

Other Business

Town coordinator Glenn Johnson-Mussad said MassDEP is finding Wendell in non-compliance with testing and reporting requirements for the public water supply. Citizen Al MacIntyre had begun training to take over the monitoring and reporting, but that stopped with the COVID shutdown, and Wendell hired Housatonic Basin Sampling and Testing.


Housatonic recently told Wendell they are no longer interested in the work, and this summer, Wendell sent no reports to the state.

Johnson-Mussad said he would contact Housatonic and ask if they could cover Wendell's needs temporarily. He said he would also contact Whitewater Water and Wastewater Services, who test Swift River School's water.

There were few time-sensitive agenda items for the next regularly scheduled meeting, September 6, and board members decided to skip it. They also decided that in months with five Wednesdays, those third monthly meetings could be skipped unless some issue calls for immediate attention.

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MONTAGUE from page A1

opened the discussion of the STM by saying the board should finalize the warrant in a “two-stage process” at its September 11 and September 18 meetings.

“I think there are some things we may not want to have on the [STM] agenda that could be long discussions, and there’s already a pretty long docket,” selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz interjected. “That’s something we should talk about.”

“There is a major non-financial article on the warrant which is getting lots of discussion around town right now,” said member Matt Lord. “Just to let people know what’s going on – I’m not planning to move that forward for this warrant. That may affect who shows up, and what they’re showing up for.”

“That’s my thought as well, Matt,” Kuklewicz replied.

No one at the meeting explicitly mentioned the actual content of the controversial warrant article. Ellis later confirmed to the *Reporter* that the unnamed topic was indeed the zoning change, but that the board was hesitant to delve into the specifics because a discussion of the topic, not having been posted on the agenda, might violate the state open meeting law.

The zoning change could still be placed on a future town meeting agenda; a second STM is typically held in the winter.

The current brouhaha began when NE-XT Technologies, formerly Valley Steel Stamp, approached Montague in April, after the Greenfield city council had declined to approve a similar zoning change for a set of parcels on Route 2, where the company had its eye. In June, however, the Greenfield council reversed itself and approved the change, creating new land in the city zoned for manufacturing.

At the August 22 hearing, the Montague planning board heard from an *ad hoc* neighborhood organization called “Rest in Peace,” a reference to the two cemeteries that border the property in question. Opponents complained that the process was an example of potentially unlawful “contract zoning” or “spot zoning” designed to benefit a particular developer.

No member of the public spoke in favor of the zoning change proposal at the hearing, but the planning board narrowly voted to recommend to move the measure forward. Changes to the zoning by-laws require a 2/3 majority vote at town meeting.

Insecure Complex

Ellis told the selectboard he and other town officials had met earlier that day with the Turners Falls fire chief at the Strathmore Mill complex to address “increased attempts” to enter the town-owned abandoned buildings. He recommended the town take “immediate action” to “secure windows that

might be adjacent to roofways...”

He said he had also contacted the FirstLight Power company to secure its footbridge over the canal, an access point to the mill.

The board approved spending up to \$10,174.88 from the town’s “community development discretionary unsafe/unhealthy buildings” account to secure the building. Ellis told the *Reporter* that the money will not be used for surveillance equipment.

What Lurks Beneath

The board also heard an update on the status of the former Farren Care Center on Montague City Road, which has been almost completely demolished. Ellis said the current owner, Trinity Health of New England Senior Communities, will implement a Phase II environmental assessment of the immediate ground on which the hospital complex sat, but has not yet committed to a similar evaluation of the rest of the parcel, which it plans to gift to the town.

Ellis said he was “letting the company know” that it would be difficult for the selectboard and town meeting to accept the whole Farren property without a complete Phase II assessment.

Ellis said he was “letting the company know” that it would be difficult for the selectboard and town meeting to accept the whole property without a complete Phase II assessment, and has suggested that Trinity could use some of the money it has committed to the town for “pre-development work” for that purpose.

When he asked the board members if they approved of “the general direction I am trying to take with this,” three heads nodded.

Elementary Merger

Officials of the Gill-Montague regional school district came before the board to review the status of their application to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) for aid in building a new elementary school to replace Hillcrest School.

The district’s current plan is to attach a building housing the lower grades, now at Hillcrest, as an addition to Sheffield Elementary, which houses grades 3 through 5.

Superintendent Brian Beck said the district’s application has made it to the “senior study” phase. If this step is approved, the state would partially reimburse Montague for a feasibility study, though the town would need to appropriate the whole amount in advance.

Ellis suggested that some of the money could come from a pot called “receipts reserved for appropriation,” but added that the town would need to consider the project in the context of other construction proposals, particularly the Carnegie Library.

The board voted to endorse the MSBA application.

Cherry COLA

The selectboard reviewed a request by the town retirement board to increase the “base” pension used to calculate cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) for retired town employees from \$18,000 to \$30,000.

Town accountant Carolyn Olsen, who also serves as chair of the retirement board, said this increased benefit would make the town more competitive in the job market.

“The downside, of course, is that everything costs money,” warned Olsen, noting that the change would probably delay the achievement of “full funding” of pensions, which the town has been setting aside money for, from 2030 to 2032. This would delay redirecting the set-aside from pensions to retiree healthcare benefits, known as “Other Post-Employment Benefits” (OPEB).

The board voted to endorse the proposal, and place it on the October STM warrant.

Excessive License

The board held a hearing on a request by the owners of El Nopalito restaurant on Turners Falls Road to be granted a new all-liquor license, which would be beyond the town’s state-mandated quota. The request was made by manager and co-owner Jahmes Campos Peters.

The only neighborhood participant at the hearing was Vladimir Romashka, an abutter who asked whether the business, which has been a restaurant, will now also become a bar.

Peters said the focus of the business would continue to be food service, and that “we’re only going to allow our customers to drink within the restaurant.”

Kuklewicz told Romashka that the town has rarely had problems with all-liquor licenses at restaurants, but that “if things start to arise, we would encourage you to talk to the proprietors first, and if you still have concerns, come down to town hall and chat with us.”

The board approved the license, which will now go to the state for special legislation to add another license for the business above the town’s quota.

Other Business

Wearing their “personnel board” hats, the selectboard approved a request by library director Caitlin Kelley to appoint Grae McLaughlin as a part-time children’s program assistant.

They also voted to name selectboard member Chris Boutwell a “special municipal employee,” a designation under state conflict of interest law, as the Montague representative to the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District (FCSWMD).

“I do not have a direct financial interest in the FCSWMD,” Boutwell clarified on his disclosure statement. “My ‘financial interest’ is due to my role on the District’s Board.”

The board also approved a request by town treasurer Eileen Seymour to participate in a federal program, administered by Community Action Pioneer Valley, to assist low-income homeowners with water and sewer bills that are in arrears.

Ellis announced that Montague had been awarded a new federal community development block grant (CDBG) totaling \$1,325,682. The grant will pay for social service programs, housing rehabilitation programs, and construction projects. Ellis added that he had been talking to state officials about creating a “micro-entitlement” program to provide more reliable CDBG funding to smaller communities.

The next selectboard meeting, on September 11, will be a virtual meeting, .

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

Here’s the way it was on September 5, 2013: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Nurses Seek Arbitration

Nurses at Baystate Franklin Medical Center voted overwhelmingly to submit proposals to an arbitrator for resolution of contract negotiations which have been ongoing for nearly two years.

Arbitration is a well-tested procedure used to resolve union negotiations. An arbitrator considers industry standards, comparability within the profession, and the employer’s financial standing, along with both parties’ arguments supporting their positions.

A ruling would bring bargaining to a conclusion after 38 negotiation sessions. The negotiations have been marked by rallies, pickets, a

strike, and resolutions of support by the Massachusetts Democratic Convention, elected officials, and residents across Franklin County.

Dog Woes in Wendell

Dog officer Maggie Houghton met the Wendell selectboard along with police chief Ed Chase, and town clerk Gretchen Smith to discuss 30 dogs that have not been licensed. Chase said some owners planned to license their dogs but just did not get to it: “A lot of good intentions.” On being reminded, several said they would do it soon.

Others do not want to give their dogs the rabies vaccination that is required for a license. Court is an option the selectboard wants to avoid, but members agreed a letter should go out to non-complying owners mentioning that possibility.

20 YEARS AGO

Here’s the way it was on September 4, 2003: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Second Street Alley Project

Demolition was in full swing last week as the Bourgeois Demolition Co. excavator knocked down two condemned residential buildings on Second Street and filled in their cellar holes, clearing the way for a new parking lot behind the Cutlery Block.

The plan for the brick structure left standing at 68½ is to renovate it for commercial use. Last fall Denise DiPaolo of Turners Falls and Richard Becker of Boston sub-

mitted proposals, but they failed to meet either the town’s timeline or criteria. A second RFP will be issued this fall.

Erving Mill’s Fate Debated

The second in a series of community meetings intended to determine the fate of the Usher Mill property saw very little turnout on Wednesday. The meeting was organized by the UMass Donahue Institute. Estimates of costs to refurbish the buildings range from \$1.1 to \$1.4 million. The buildings contain a large number of valuable old growth timbers that are salvageable for reuse on site or for sale.

150 YEARS AGO

Here’s the way it was on September 3, 1873: News from the Turners Falls Reporter’s archive.

Local Matters

Dog days end on Friday.

The new steam fire engine house is nearly finished. The hose-tower is being closed in.

The skeleton of Stephen McCarthy’s new house has put in an appearance on Third street.

What about that petition to have the road from Seventh street to Millers Falls straightened?

Few papers can boast that they have received four subscribers in one week, from persons all above 80 years of age. Two are 84, one 82 and one 81.

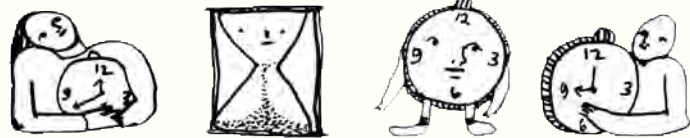
Mr. Manchester’s men will have the Montague Mill’s aqueduct pipes laid this week, and the water will be let into the enormous new tank the first of the week.

Postmaster Canning of Gill has in his office a letter addressed to “Albert Dombroski, Gill, Kanada, Norde America” which has travelled all over Canada looking for an owner, and has been sent by the Foreign Department of the General Post Office at Washington to

seek an owner in this country. It is likely that the person to whom it is addressed lives either in Turners Falls or Riverside.

Of all the hells imaginable, Fourth and L Streets were entitled to fair consideration on Saturday night and Sunday last. We desire to avoid calling attention to such scenes as disgraced our town on these occasions, but the thing has become insufferable. All night, till about three in the morning, the disputing and growling and loud talk went on, on Fourth St, when for variety’s sake the cry of “murder” accompanied by some of the most infernal screams startled everybody in the vicinity. One lady, who has been ill for a few weeks, being nearly thrown into convulsions [*sic*] by the terrible cries. After these subsided, the same series was gone through with on L street. Then on Sunday afternoon again, we were regaled with another set to on L street. We give these parties fair notice that we shall use our best endeavors to indite [*sic*] them each and all if this thing is repeated. It has become unendurable, and we will submit to it no longer.

Few of the shade trees planted last spring have withered.



ERVING from page A1

and that there is a good chance the vote on the mill demolition will be put off until 2024.

During the regular selectboard portion of the meeting, the board voted to establish and appoint a five-member patrol officer screening committee for police department hires. A similar screening committee for the highway department is to follow in the near future.



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SPORTS from page A1

Mosca (38), and Grady Deery (43) led the field, with Reese Ewell (48) finishing sixth.

You may remember Mosca. He's been playing varsity golf since middle school, and believe it or not, he's now a senior. Day, Deery, and Ewell are all currently in middle school, so it looks like Turners' links aspirations will continue to rise for the next five or six years.

On Tuesday, Blue Thunder defeated the Athol Red Bears 170 to 224, and in this match Turners took all four top spots. Mosca (37) led the pack, followed by Ewell (43), junior Darian Burnett (44), and Day (46).

The same day, the Franklin Tech team defeated Hopkins Academy down at Holyoke Country Club. Brady Booska (35) and Gabe Mota (38) led the Eagles' showing.

Field Hockey

Northampton 2 – TFHS 0
FCTS 6 – TFHS 1

Turners' field hockey schedule seems fraught with city schools, early in the season; Northampton, Westfield, and East Longmeadow are three of their first four opponents.

On Tuesday the team traveled to Northampton and were shut out by the Blue Devils, 2-0. I didn't attend the game, but it sounds like it was a pretty defensive match; the Devils only managed four shots on goal, with Conner Herzig making two saves.

It didn't get any easier for the Thunder on Wednesday, when the Franklin Tech Eagles visited and defeated them 6-1.

In the first quarter, Tech put on mounting pressure, with most of the action in front of the Thunder's net. Turners ran a few attacks, but Tech managed to put three in the goal to make it 3-nil.

The second quarter was more competitive, with multiple corner shots called on both teams. Tech still held the 3-0 lead at the half, which is when I headed to the volleyball game up in the gym.

The Franklin Tech Field Hockey Eagles seem to be on a mission. Last year they were forced to forfeit a playoff win against Nantucket, ending their season. In this matchup they left nothing on the table, scoring three additional goals in the second half while

holding Turners to one.

For Tech, Kenzie Sourdiffé-Massee had the hot stick, shooting in three goals and giving an assist. Hannah Gilbert scored twice and had an assist, Kate Trudeau scored once with two assists, and Lilli Inman scored once. In goal, Maddison Markwell kicked away five shots.

Jazzy Gonzalez scored Turners' single goal, assisted by Avery Tela. Herzig and fellow goalkeeper Ele Bartolon combined for 13 saves.

Girls' Volleyball
TFHS 3 – FCTS 0

The Turners Falls volleyball team finished last year with an 18-4 record, 12-0 in the Northern Conference. They made it pretty far into the postseason, falling to Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter in the Round of Eight.

On Wednesday they showed no mercy to their crosstown rivals. I got to the gym during the second game of the match, Turners having defeated Tech 25-7 in the first. I watched as Turners shot out to another large lead, almost doubling up Tech 21-11.

But the Eagles refused to go down without a fight. After some very long volleys and a few well-placed hits, Tech had pulled within five points, 23-18, and they had the serve.

That's when the gym got loud. However, the Tech serve faulted, and Turners took it back, needing just one more point to win the second game. Franklin scored the next point to make it 24-19, but Turners scored the winning point to give them a two-game edge.

In the third game, Tech held their own, scoring 18 points in the loss.

For Turners Falls, Taylor Greene served five aces, made four kills and gave 16 assists; Madi Liimatainen had nine kills, five aces and three digs; Jill Reynolds served five aces; and Maddie Dietz scored three aces and dove for six digs.

On Tech's side of the net, Lillian Poirier made two kills, four digs, seven assists, and scored an ace; Faith Smith had two kills, three digs, and an ace; Lea Chapman four kills and four digs; Cordelia Guerin and Skylei LePan six digs each, and Shelby O'Leary had five digs and an ace.

Football

The Franklin Tech Football Eagles travel to North Adams this Friday to take on McCann Tech. So many records were broken last year – it will be interesting to see if they can continue their attack on the books.

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October 26: Faith Shearin, *Lost River, 1918*
A magical YA novel where the dead return from the afterlife.

November 16: Michael Miller, *High Bridge*
Imagine a young Grover Cleveland and women's rights activist Matilda Joslyn Gage team up to solve a mystery.

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DAVID HOITT PHOTO

Turners Falls' Reese Ewell chipped onto the Hole #2 green as the Thunder hosted the Bears on Tuesday. The Thunder earned their second consecutive win, 170-224, and Ewell carded the second-best score with 43 strokes.

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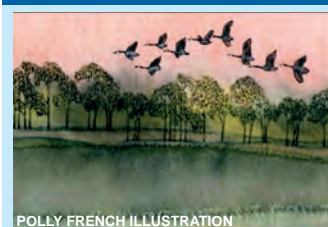


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OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER

SEPTEMBER 7, 2023



WEST ALONG THE RIVER

SUMMER'S END, TAKING STOCK

By DAVID BRULE

ERVINGSIDE – The twin Silly Sisters dive-bomb each other, defending the sugar-water hummingbird feeder that hangs among the banks of jewelweed at the edge of the deck, four feet away. These siblings came into the garden in early August, likely having arrived in this world in the nest hidden away in the nearby hemlock or maybe in the cherry tree.

In between the relentless rain-showers that have lasted all summer, they fight over the feeder, once in a while actually pausing to set on the tiny perches and sip through straw-like bills like kids on soda fountain stools. They focus with deep concentration on their sugary drinks, pulling in the sweetness and high-sugar stimulant before buzzing off like they had just slammed three cups of espresso!

Sometimes they sit quietly on the bare branch of the dry stick perch we put there just for them. From there they quiz me about what I think I'm doing, scratching on the white notebook page. They don't suspect I'm writing about them as they watch me, wondering. In fact, they are watching me writing about them watching me. We are like endless reflections of a mirror in a mirror in a mirror. Only they wonder, but I write it down.

They tire of this, and the perching and watching doesn't last long before one or the other dive-bombs either a bumble bee or her sister and they are off across the yard again, going one hundred miles an hour.

And now, after one of the wettest summers on record, we have entered a few days of *real* summer, although the calendar proclaims September. Everyone you meet, in the grocery store, the gas station, or on a dog walk, all comment on this chance to finally dry out.

So this rare morning of early sunshine finds me again out of doors on the back deck, while under the impertinent eye of Miss Ma'mzelle

rubythroat I count up summer impressions and collectable images before those images run off fleeting into the brightening air to be mostly forgotten.

Indeed, this summer that wasn't really summer has reached its high tide and has begun to ebb. This is not to say that the season so full of promise in June was not worth it, just that it didn't live up to that promise.

On the other hand, being out and about in the natural world, things keep happening – even in the tropical downpours every two days, and on the rare days the sun was shining. I offer you here my list, in no particular order, of my mental summer image album of paintings *en plein air*; a catalog of things to be thankful for, no matter what:

the banks of orange bee balm with dozens upon dozens of bumble bees tolling nectar and saving the planet;

the nighthawks now knifing through the September skies, and we on the ground wishing they had one more day to stay; the pinwheeling legs of sanderlings and plovers chasing the waves and running back upshore as those waves crash on the beach at Plum Island;

finding a piece of sea glass the color of deep cobalt, just there on the edge of the wrack, smoothed by the polishing churning of the tides.

How about:

paddling upriver in August in the dugout mishoon, in spite of the fierce current of the Connecticut that had roared and flooded for weeks, then subsiding a day before the launch;

the Irish music sessions at the Element on Friday nights in Millers Falls, raucous and wild reels, slow haunting songs of immigration, whiskey glasses clinking in a *sláinte* toast, then the weaving homeward after the session, accompanied by all kinds of ghosts and spirits who dwell in this village.

There's the catbird clan, at least see **WEST ALONG** page B3



MONIQUE BRULE PHOTO

Ruby-throated hummingbird, *Archilochus colubris*.

Above: By August 24, the Farren demolition project was down to the cleanup stage.

AN EVER-EXPANDING HONK

By DONNA PETERSEN

MONTAGUE – *Honk!* if you love your local activist street band! Maybe you have seen and heard them at a parade, an event, or even a protest: a group of about 20 people wearing yellow and black and playing lively music. The players comprise the Expandable Brass

Band (EBB), a loose group of Valley musicians following the traditions of the international street band movement.

I spoke with Sandy Ward, a longtime member of the band, who plays drums and more, and she explained that this movement is composed of bands who are “usually playing in the street for causes they

believe in. Our local band (EBB) marches in support of, or in opposition to, causes all over the place. EBB's activist role is pretty mild compared to some other bands.”

Ward told me the band started when the newly-opened River Valley Coop in Northampton wanted a presence at the 2009 Pride Parade in that town. Recruited for a cause, the small, unnamed band enjoyed participating, and over the summer the EBB came into being.

Ward and her trumpet-playing partner Ken Karsten were approached at the Holyoke Farmers Market by a founding member and they signed on to play with the band. Ward enthuses, “It was so much fun! For me it felt like running away and joining the circus!”

By September of that year, the band set its sights on playing the HONK! Festival in Somerville (see sidebar, Page B4).

The current version of the band has about 20 members; that number expands or contracts depending on the availability of members for any event. The players come from all over the Valley, from Holyoke to more local. My Montague

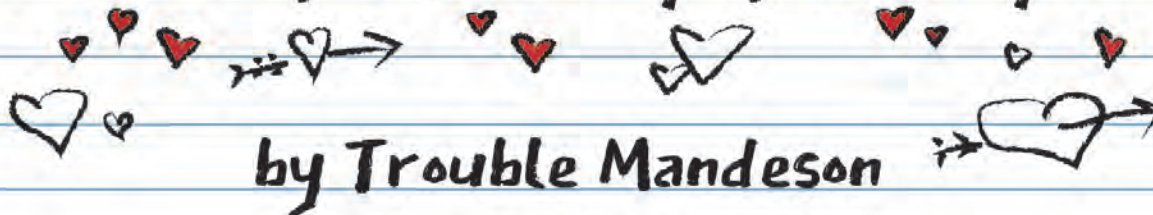
see **EXPANDABLE** page B4



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Expandable Brass Band, seen here playing at a private function.

NOTES FROM THE HEARTFELT CAFE



GREENFIELD – I am far from an expert in canning food, but I do have experience doing it, albeit in my own sloppy way, and since I haven't received any reports of poisonings – yet! – I think it's safe to say I know enough about it to write a column. Whenever I post my cooking projects on social media I proudly use the hashtag *#thesloppycook*, along with *#cookingwithtrouble*.

I'm glad that canning is a choice and not a necessity. Although I love seeing my cellar shelves lined with jars of chutney, ketchup, applesauce, and dilly beans, I would likely not be able to save my family from extinction in cases of natural or manmade disaster with my paltry collection of hobbyist canned goods. But I can put on one heck of a picnic, or make a dynamite charcuterie board.

Sometimes I open canned goods and then keep them in my refrigerator for many months, even years. The autumn olive berries I forage and make into ketchup taste even better when allowed to mature for a year

or two or three. As with fermented foods like sauerkraut and kimchi, they definitely taste better with age.

Canned goods are great for pot-lucks, as housewarming or host offerings, and as holiday gifts. I used to give out baskets filled with homemade chutneys, sauces, biscotti,

and more during the holidays, but our large tribe of friends has grown smaller over the years, so I usually share what I make with friends or neighbors if I don't eat it myself.

Barter fairs are a great place to trade canned goods. There used to see **HEARTFELT** page B5



MANDESON PHOTO

Tomato purée, bound for the canning pot. It's a great ingredient to keep on hand, and can be used as a base for spaghetti or pizza sauce with the addition of tomato paste, fresh herbs, salt, and pepper.

Pet of the Week



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Senior Center Activities SEPTEMBER 11 THROUGH 15

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.

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 9/11

10:15 a.m. Aerobics
10:30 a.m. Oak Tree Chair Yoga
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
12 p.m. Pot Luck

Tuesday 9/12

9 a.m. Zumba Lite
10 a.m. Senior Health Fair & Lunch
3 p.m. Tai Chi

Wednesday 9/13

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

Thursday 9/14

9 a.m. Chair Yoga
10:30 a.m. Senior Farm Share
(by subscription)
1 p.m. Cards & Games

Friday 9/15

10:15 a.m. Aerobics

11 a.m. Chair Exercise
2 p.m. Chair Dance

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Monday 9/11

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

Tuesday 9/12

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

Wednesday 9/13

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

Thursday 9/14

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

Friday 9/15

9 a.m. Quilting & Open Sew

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.

SEPTEMBER 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: *Grab & Go Bags.* Science: Egg drop lander. Craft: Paper pumpkin. Free kits at all branch locations while supplies last.

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

Every Wednesday: *LEGOs at the Library.* Carnegie, 1 to 3 p.m.

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

Saturday, September 9: *Back to School Bash.* Live music, crafts, activities, free book. Carnegie, 11 a.m.

Monday, September 11: *Friends of MPL Meeting.* All welcome. Email vgatvalley@gmail.com for more info. Carnegie, 5:30 p.m.

Thursday, September 14: *Lemonade Social.* Millers Falls, 3 to 4 p.m.

Wednesday, September 20: *Author Series,* David James. Refreshments provided. Montague Center, 6 p.m.

Thursday, September 21: *Book Club.* Jessica Blau, *Mary Jane.* Montague Center, 7 p.m.

Friday, September 22: *Youth Advisory Committee.* Bring your ideas and suggestions for teen library programming. Snacks provided. Carnegie, 4 p.m.

Saturday, September 23: *Great Stories Club Kickoff.* Designed for teens. Pick up free copies of all four sci-fi books. Lunch. Carnegie, 12 noon.

WENDELL

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

Every Wednesday: *Matinee Movie.* 1 p.m.

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

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

Every Sunday: *Yoga.* All levels, sliding-scale donation. 10 a.m.

Saturday, September 9: *Saturday Storycraft: mushrooms & Mushroom Rain.* 10:30 a.m.

Tuesday, September 12: *Energy Committee meeting,* in the Herrick Room. 6 p.m.

Monday, September 18: *Beginners' Conversational Spanish.* Six-week series.

LEVERETT

All Month: *Art Exhibit,* watercolor paintings by Nancy Emond; *Story Walks,* new story on the trail behind the library every Thursday.

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

Every Wednesday: *Playgroup,* for children ages 0 to 5 and their caregivers. See leverettlibrary.org or email budine@erving.org to register. 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.

ERVING

All Month: *Art Exhibit,* landscape photography by Joelle Fabrizio.

Sunday, September 10: *Puzzle Swap.* All ages, no puzzle required. 1 to 3 p.m.

Sunday, September 10: *Ge-*

nealogy Drop-in Help. 1 to 3 p.m.

Thursday, September 14: *PJ Storytime.* RSVP suggested. 6 p.m.

Sunday, September 17: *Craft Day.* Materials provided, RSVP required, 1 p.m.

Thursday, September 21: *Tablescape!* Napkin folding with Teresa Foster. RSVP required. 5:30 p.m.

Sunday, September 24: *Yoga* with Allisyn McCarthy, for teens and adults. Bring a mat if you have one. 2 p.m.

Thursday, September 28: *Book Club:* "A book by an author with your first or last name." Light refreshments. 5:30 p.m.

NORTHFIELD

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

Thursday, September 7: *Spice Club pickup starts.* Stop in for a sample and suggested recipes while supplies last; look for a new spice every month.

Wednesday, September 13: *Readings Group.* Bring a poem or two (by anyone) to share. 3 p.m.

Thursday, September 14: *Library Trivia Night.* Four Star Farms Brewery, 6 p.m.

Thursday, September 14: *Environmental Awareness Group.* Oliver Milman, *The Insect Crisis.* Pick up a copy at the library. 6:30 p.m.

Friday, September 15: *Concert,* Pamela Means: Power of the Protest Song. Northfield Golf Club, rain or shine, under the Beech House tent. 5:30 p.m.

Saturday, September 16: *Coffee Hour,* West Northfield. 10 a.m.

Local Band Profile: Big Destiny

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – For the opening of the Greenfield library in a new building in July, they decided to have some live entertainment for the grand opening weekend. They actually had quite a few people doing that.

Big Destiny was one band they had play. The band features guitarists, a drummer on a drum set, a keyboard player, and a singer. Iggy Passiglia, one of the guitarists and a saxophone player, said they had started the band a "little over a year ago, in 2022."

"We all met at a music camp called Matt Rock" – Matt Kim's Academy of Rock – "in Greenfield, six years ago," Iggy said in connection with how the band got started. Iggy also came up with the name of the band – it comes from the TV show *Adventure Time*, which has a character on it named Big Destiny. Iggy told me that they decided to play at the library opening because "We love the library. We're happy to do it."

They also played another community event that

happened in Greenfield recently – the opening of the new skate park at 71 Chapman Street. Iggy told me they believed people enjoyed Big Destiny's playing at the skate park. In July the band was also part of a performance at 10 Forward, which might be called the only nightclub in Greenfield.

As for the performance at the library, a large crowd showed up to hear them. I believe people must have been enjoying hearing the live entertainment at the grand opening, so they decided to check these guys out too.

The band as a whole sounded great to me. One of the other guitarists sounded really nice on his guitar. It got more interesting when the singer began to join in. The singing, by a young lady, worked well with the instruments being played. It all sounded harmonious to me. Iggy on the keyboard was especially nice.

Big Destiny is kind of a unique-sounding band. I have been to several concerts in the area. I would call this one decent, based on the crowd that showed up and what I heard from the band.

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WEST ALONG from page B1

two nestfuls of young who now spend their late-summer days sunbathing and flouncing under the bee balm;

walks along the Patch canal with snowdog Nicky, wistfully watching the last individuals of the barn swallow colony in the abandoned factory buildings, dwindling and fewer in numbers year after year;

porch-sitting during the tropical downpours every other day, hard rain drumming on the canopy of maples just across the way.

On the next page there's:

the four-foot water snake that sought refuge from the high water of the Millers – it clearly came up over the riverbank to settle in a neighbor's woodpile until we caught it and saved it from a sure beheading by those who kill snakes on sight – a 15-year-old snake now somewhere safe along our west-flowing river;

purple martins in their imitation gourds on Plum Island;

the loud calling and wailing of the coyote clan, out hunting at dusk with their new litter of coyote pups, as they course through the oxbow of the Beaver Hole marsh just across the river from us;

the resonant drums of the Abenaki and Schaghticoke at the Pocumtuck Festival on the banks of the mighty Connecticut in August;

the Once-in-a-Blue Moon two full moons of August.

There, I've written some of it down, maybe to be read and remembered at some moment in the depths of winter, or years hence.

This early morning at 7, the little hummer girl joins me in our early rituals. She sits on her perch a few feet away. We both sip our chosen nectars: she at her bright red reservoir of night-cooled sugar water, and me at my cup of deep black steaming coffee. We eye one another, exchanging glances, and then ask each other: what will we do next on this promising late-summer day?



Northern watersnake, *Nerodia sipedon*.

EXHIBITS

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Intervals*, mixed-media prints about time on handmade paper, by Karen Axtell. Reception on Sunday, September 17, from 2 to 4 p.m.

Barnes Gallery, Leverett Crafts and Arts: *A. D. Tinkham Retrospective*, paintings. Through September 30. Reception Saturday, September 23 at 3 p.m.

Artspace, Greenfield: *Shifting*, oil paintings reflecting on the pandemic with themes of isolation, rest, healing, and community, by Annaleah Moon Gregoire. Reception this Friday, September 8, from 5 to 7 p.m.

Greenfield Gallery, Greenfield: *We'll Show U*, group exhibit showing works by Rachel Cyrene Blackman, Bil Gardner, Youme Nguyen Ly, M. Rudder, Emikan Sudan, and John Vo. Through October 6.

South Gallery, Greenfield Community College: *Faculty Art Exhibit*, works by Chenda Cope, Nick Meyer, Noah Paessel, Kelly Popoff, Joan O'Beirne, and Jen Simms. Through September 29. Gallery talk Wednesday, September 20 at noon.

Looky Here, Greenfield: *The Tuesday-verse: Sorcerer Central*, paintings by Olivia Hamilton. Through September 29.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *The Poetry of Puddles*, photography by Dave Madeloni. Through September. Reception this Saturday, September 9, from noon to 3 p.m.

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.

Fiddleheads Gallery, Northfield: *Jean Kozlowski Retrospective Exhibit*, a look back through the local artist's painting career. Through September 17.

Shelburne Arts Coop, Shelburne Falls: *Silver Anniversary Show*. Members' exhibit celebrating the Coop's 25th anniversary. Through September. Opening reception this Sunday, September 10, from 1 to 4 p.m.

Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne Falls: *New Nocturnal Paintings*, by Chris Hill, and *Artful Harvest*, photography by Laurie Miles. Through October. Reception this Saturday, September 9, from 2 to 4 p.m.

Gallery A3, Amherst: *Piecing, Connecting, Re-calling*, work by Rochelle Schicoff and Marianne Connolly. Through September 30. Reception tonight, September 7, at 5 p.m.

Club George, Northampton: *Resurfacing: A Graphic Designer Explores Textiles*, work by Linda Florio. Through September 30. Opening reception this Saturday, September 9, from 4 to 7 p.m.

Northampton Senior Center: *Jeanne Weintraub*, Montague artist showing her wildlife and plant prints. Through September. Reception this Friday, September 8 at 5 p.m.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Microwaves; Leftover Asphalt; Secret Service, Dirt Bikes; Manhunt & Aftermath; Upset About Past Events; Turtle

Monday, 8/21

11:13 a.m. Montague Housing Authority called stating that a female party has set up a tent in the field next to a building on Canal Street; however, that isn't their property, and they keep getting complaints from other tenants about it. Responding officer states tenant wants to keep tent there; advised her she needs to get permission from property owner. Female believes there are microwaves going through her apartment and doesn't always feel comfortable staying there.

11:51 a.m. Caller states that two individuals shoplifted from Food City; he went over to Walgreens, where both parties are now, and advised Walgreens staff. He also has them on video. Officer advises frosting and other candies were stolen. They have since been returned, and the parents of the juveniles have been contacted and made aware.

2:45 p.m. 911 caller from the Gun Rack states that there is a woman in a white VW sedan slumped over with the door open and she isn't responding. Unsure if she is sleeping or has overdosed. Officer spoke to involved parties; advised of options.

3:21 p.m. Caller reporting a large amount of scrap metal stolen from Hillside Plastics over the weekend. Referred to an officer.

5:14 p.m. Caller from Montague Village Store states that a male is screaming profanity and she would like him moved along. Officer out with male party; providing courtesy transportation.

Tuesday, 8/22

9:55 a.m. Caller from Turnpike Road reports that two men came by her home and asked if she would like to have her driveway paved with leftover asphalt from a job they are doing nearby. Seemed suspicious. Advised of options.

12:58 p.m. Caller from G Street would like on record that he came out of his house earlier today and found a window to his car smashed out. No items missing.

2:11 p.m. Report from Chestnut Hill Loop of suspicious car/activity overnight in neighborhood.

2:57 p.m. 911 caller from Bridge Street states that a third-floor neighbor is being loud and behaving erratically. Referred to an officer.

Wednesday, 8/23

2:06 a.m. Caller reports that when she was getting ready to bring a friend to Greenfield, two juveniles stopped and asked the caller if her name was what it is. Caller states she

did not give them info but inquired what they were up to. Juveniles advised caller they were going to break into cars. Caller states one of the juveniles then pulled out a knife. Caller states that she and her friend started to drive away, and the juveniles began to hang onto the car. Avenue A area checked; unable to locate.

9:16 a.m. Caller believes her boyfriend stole and destroyed one of her phones. Advised of options.

11:51 a.m. Officers in foot pursuit of a female with an active warrant. 24-year-old Turners Falls woman arrested on a default warrant.

6:01 p.m. Caller from South Ferry Road reports that a porcupine was hit and has been lying next to the road for a couple days, alive but not moving. Unable to locate.

6:10 p.m. Caller from Turners Falls Road states there is a porcupine walking around in her driveway. Advised of options.

6:29 p.m. Officer checking downtown areas after a report of suspicious activity involving a BB gun. Unable to locate.

Thursday, 8/24

9:01 a.m. Officers assisting other agencies at Rock Dam/Rawson Island. FirstLight notified. Officer advising clear at this time; will remain in Migratory Way area.

12:52 p.m. Officer requesting that DPW be notified that a stop sign at Oak and Oakman streets is covered by vegetation. DPW notified.

1:15 p.m. Ongoing concern with off-leash dog coming into neighbor's yard on G Street. Advised of options.

5:56 p.m. Caller from Park Street states that a loose dog in the area could potentially cause a traffic hazard due to roadkill. Officer checked area; negative for dog or any roadkill.

8:38 p.m. Loud music complaint, Oakman Street area. Quiet on arrival.

Friday, 8/25

7:18 a.m. Caller states that something bad has happened in her home. Services rendered.

7:22 a.m. Caller states that his wife is keeping his medication from him, and he would like an officer to assist in getting it back from her. Situation mediated.

1:09 p.m. Officer assisting another agency on Second Street. Male party detained; Secret Service will be transporting.

Saturday, 8/26

1:11 a.m. 911 caller reports two males actively fighting each other at intersection of East Main and Franklin streets. Caller then stated they were getting into a vehicle together and did not appear "healthy." Unable to locate.

11:59 a.m. Caller states that two parties are under the pavilion at Peskeompskut Park, and she believes they are doing drugs. Officer advises no alcohol or drugs. Parties moved along.

4:06 p.m. Officer advises that he was attempting to pull over a motorcycle that was speeding and it took off over the bridge into Gill. Shelburne Control advised.

5:29 p.m. Caller from Turners Falls Road states that there were a few loud noises that sounded like gunshots, and a few customers left out of concern for their safety. Officers advised. Caller called back and stated she reported this to the Environmental Police but they were tied up; she can hear dirt bikes and there are dirt bike tracks. Officers advised. Officer advises nothing showing on property; will check area.

5:38 p.m. Caller states that a chainsaw is being used near Central Street and Chestnut Lane; music is being played over the chainsaw, and it is really loud. Officer advises that he found the source of the music; they were having a birthday party. Very cooperative.

6:03 p.m. Caller from Federal Street states that she went out to her car earlier and there was a glowstick on the handle. Also, while she was out, she got a camera notification that there was a male on her porch for 15 minutes. She does not know who he was. Advised of options.

9:29 p.m. Caller states that two girls on the General Pierce Bridge appear to be flashing people. Unfounded.

10:29 p.m. Caller states that people are playing basketball at Unity Park, using vehicle headlights to see. Officer spoke to involved parties; they were finishing up a game and are heading out.

10:54 p.m. Caller states that a loud band is playing at Pioneer Valley Brewery and she is trying to go to bed. Officer advises band stopped playing at 11 p.m.; all quiet now.

Sunday, 8/27

2:37 a.m. Caller states that people are arguing by the basketball courts at Unity Park. Just a few people hanging out; no arguing. Moved along.

11:30 a.m. 911 caller from Bridge Street states neighbor has been crashing around last night and this morning; he has dismantled the front door and is using it as a barricade. Officer responded last week for similar issue. Advised male party of complaint. No hazard; he has a screen door laid down with crates in front of it to keep a dog from

running away.

11:52 a.m. Same caller called in again stating that after police left, he went to confront his neighbor and his neighbor threatened him. Wants officers at location. Upon callback, caller states he left and is busy. Officer advises he spoke to the third-floor tenant again and advised him of the complaint. Was instructed not to open the door if the second-floor tenant knocks, and to let the landlord know of the ongoing issue.

11:57 a.m. Caller from East Chestnut Hill Road states she has been hearing persistent gunshots in the woods for 30 minutes; is nervous because she walks her dogs out there. Officer checked area and remained for some time; did not hear anything.

2:17 p.m. Caller states someone broke into her basement and stole the ceiling tiles. Officer advises no signs of forced entry or breaking/entering. He will reach out to family.

3:58 p.m. Caller states a bunch of kids are racing dirt bikes on Old Greenfield Road. Moved along.

10:16 p.m. Caller reports that windows of multiple businesses on Avenue A have been tagged. Officers checking area; several instances located. Unsure whether these tags are new. Will follow up with businesses.

Monday, 8/28

3:37 a.m. Caller states a female in the middle of the road yelling and screaming woke him up. Female party located; was talking on the phone to a friend and was upset; is fine and heading home now.

2:31 p.m. Caller from Wentworth Avenue states he backed into a boat parked in the street and broke his tail light, but did not see any damage to the boat. Stopped at his neighbors house, but no one was home.

5:34 p.m. Caller on Davis Street is concerned about her neighbor's cat. Neighbor is never home, and she doesn't feel like the cat is well cared for. Second-story window is open all the time and she is afraid the cat will jump out. Message left for ACO.

5:55 p.m. Package with a new iPhone reported stolen on Fourth Street.

6:10 p.m. Caller reports motorcycles and vehicles speeding on Federal Street, and that the nearby speed board isn't doing anything.

Tuesday, 8/29

12:48 p.m. Multiple calls reporting someone came out and shot a firearm on Eleventh Street. Male party fled into woods. Ambulance responding. K9 tracking, state police air wing

see MPD next page

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MPD from page B3

responding. Suspect under custody and booked; bail set at \$50,000.

2:06 p.m. Report of a fight in progress near the Turners Falls post office.

5:44 p.m. Unwanted female on Federal Street. Courtesy transport to Greenfield provided. 6:02 p.m. Caller wanting to speak to an officer about a person who broke into his apartment three times and did not return one of three items they took.

Wednesday, 8/30

8:40 a.m. Caller from the United Arc on Avenue A states that a homeless person sleeping in the loading dock refuses to leave.

8:46 a.m. Caller wants to speak with an officer about an issue with a former employee. Advised of options for harassment order.

9:35 a.m. Two-car accident reported on Turners Falls Road near Randall Road. Person lying in the road. Rau's Towing en route.

11:56 a.m. Caller from Ja'Duke states there is a suspicious person parked in the back, talking to children and then walking into the woods. Found to be with "Skeleton Crew," who were hired to do a performance, and he was scouting the area.

3:49 p.m. Tree down on Avenue A blocking the road near Bob's Auto Body. DPW advised.

5:39 p.m. Walk-in reports credit card fraud. Referred to Greenfield PD.

7:09 p.m. Vehicle check on Route 63, Millers Falls. Owner ran out of gas; will be on his way.

7:22 p.m. Multiple calls about people driving through the barricades on Montague City Road. Area coned off again; discussing options with DPW.

Thursday, 8/31

5:02 a.m. Loud noise disturbance behind the Shady Glen; car horn sounding. Stopped just as an officer arrived on the scene.

9:16 a.m. Caller on G Street believes a male is taking a female to get drugs every day. Plate number not on file, call printed for detective.

9:52 a.m. Caller from G Street trying to find out what is going on in his area, as there is a large police presence again, and nobody is telling residents why. Advised they are on a follow-up from the incident earlier this week.

3:18 p.m. Erratic motor vehicle operation down Unity Street; officer stopped at Rendezvous parking lot. Multiple lane violations, improper braking.

3:47 p.m. Caller reports male party in an Avenue A apartment is screaming "Die!" Officers contacted male party, who declined services and stated he was upset about past events.

4:51 p.m. Report of a skunk stuck in a shed on Dell Street. ACO coming to get the animal out.

6:23 p.m. Report of a brown and white beagle loose on Morris Avenue. No tags. Taken to shelter. Owner called, states he just moved to town and hadn't gotten tags yet. Returned to owner.

Friday, 9/1

1:14 a.m. Male party seen in middle of Millers Falls Road, possibly under the influence. Officer checked, no one on road.

5:12 a.m. Wires down, Sunderland Road. Officer managing traffic, Ever-source coming.

10:15 a.m. Lost dog by Scotty's. Owner retrieved.

3:15 p.m. Caller reports a large snapping turtle in the parking lot at Brick and Feather Brewery. ACO off duty; referred to EPO.

8:13 p.m. Unwanted female party in Central Street garage. Courtesy transport provided to her brother's house.

8:18 p.m. Report of motorcycles in the area of the Millers Pub making noise and disturbing the neighborhood. Caller requests an officer be in the area more frequently over the holiday weekend.

8:37 p.m. Caller near Millers Falls Rod and Gun club states that the music from the festival is too loud, and wants complaint on record.

9:27 p.m. Caller from Fourth Street thinks a house is on fire. Upon further investigation it appears to be a light in the window. Officer advised.

Saturday, 9/2

2:39 p.m. Anonymous caller states his girlfriend was treated poorly at Nouria gas station on Third Street, and the clerk seemed suspicious.

4:40 p.m. Alarm activated at Greenfield Cooperative Bank; roofing company may have triggered it by screwing into the roof.

9:17 p.m. Loud music reported from Park Street location, ongoing since 5 p.m. Officer found birthday party, advised of complaint. Party called back to say it wasn't any quieter. Officer advised they were shutting off music.

Sunday, 9/3

1:08 a.m. Caller states there is a drug deal happening outside her house on H Street; they are being loud and woke her and her daughter up. Called back in 10 minutes stating the people were still outside, with no officer on the scene.

9:39 a.m. Report of a broken window in the door of the rectory at Our Lady of Czestochowa.

3:44 p.m. Caller on H Street states a neighbor just made a drug deal in a car in front of the house. Could not locate vehicle.

MOVIE REVIEW

Theater Camp (2023)

By **REBECCA TIPPENS**

COLRAIN – *Theater Camp*, a comedic mockumentary about a summer theater camp in upstate New York called AdirondACTS (*ho-ho*), first showed at Sundance to a standing ovation and won its Best Ensemble award. It also received the US Dramatic Special Jury Award, and rightly so. The cast has a hoot working together. In real life some of them, including the writer and actors, are long-time comrades with a grand chemistry.

There are two primary plot strands. One follows the work – in and out of class – of the remarkably talented campers from diverse backgrounds as they rehearse a play still in process of being scripted. This gives us tension and suspense – will they, or won't they, have a play to present as the camp's grand-finale performance?

The scriptors are two of the counselors. The primary acting teacher, Amos Klobuchar, is played by Ben Platt, also one of the film's writers along with Molly Gordon, who plays the music coach Rebecca-Diane. Amos and Rebecca were once students at the camp and have maintained a close friendship, and this is not their first year back as camp counselors. The natural dynamics of their close friendship and work relationship is inspiring.

And you come to love two other counselors: the gay costume director, Clive DeWitt, played by Nathan Lee Graham, and Noah Galvin who

brings us surprise upon surprise playing the tech/production manager, Glenn Winthrop.

The musical Amos and Rebecca are working on is a biopic about the life of one of the camp's beloved founders, Joan (Amy Sedaris), who suffers a strobe-light-induced coma at the outset of the film and spends most of it unconscious and hospitalized. The counselors and campers have hope that she will return to their plane of existence – perhaps their intention and love will bring her back.

The second tension-evoking plot thread concerns the fate of the camp. Joan's delusional and self-important son Troy has assumed temporary management of the camp. He is not only uncommitted to the performance arts but, despite his pretensions of having stellar financial management credentials, continually fails in his efforts. Though it is not fully his fault, he learns that the camp is precariously close to being foreclosed upon. Troy's bungling attempts to deal with this eventuality are both funny and worrisome, as you have come to love the kids, and appreciate that a place exists for them to thrive in all their creativity.

This arts camp is effectively countered by the culture of a neighboring rich kids' camp where the attendees wear polo-style uniforms and reveal no spontaneity, much less any personality. Whether AdirondACTS succeeds in its struggle with the bank and can resist a

see **MOVIE** next page

EXPANDABLE from page B1

neighborhood boasts two members, Bob Dvorak on baritone sax and Richie Davis on drums.

Dvorak has been playing with the band for three years. "Yeah, it's fun," he tells me, "and there is a nice social aspect to it."

Davis was told about the band by local war tax resister Randy Kehler. He joined and first played with the band at the funeral of Juanita Nelson, well-known activist and war tax resister, in 2015. He tells me he was very honored to play for her funeral and also at the service for Frances Crowe, activist and founder of the local American Friends Service Committee.

"My favorite thing in high school was the marching band," Davis says. "I loved it, but the EBB music is better."

Recent gigs have included Florence's Music on the Porch series, the Deerfield 350th Anniversary Parade, the Franklin County Pride Parade, the Greenfield Bee Fest, and at the Lathrop Community in Northampton.

I ask Ward about the level of musicianship among members of the band – does it vary? She laughs: "Oh yeah! It's an open band that welcomes newcomers. There are no auditions, and some members play by ear or written score. We welcome enthusiasm and energy!" She tells me that former musicians who have moved on to the professional level come back sometimes to play with the band.

The players range in age from high school to their early 80s. One teen plays saxophone and clarinet, and joined hoping to learn trumpet



The Expandable Brass Band, in full regalia and ready to play.

as well. One high-school trombonist's mother drove her to practices, became intrigued herself, and asked if the band could use her new accordion playing skills – but of course!

Trumpet, sax, tuba, sousaphone, and drums are pretty standard at any event with trombones, flutes, piccolos, and whatever and whoever else shows up to join the party. Their website states the band's music is "loud, raucous, and full of fun."

When I ask Davis and Dvorak to describe the music EBB plays, Dvorak *hmms* for a moment and says, "Well, a little Balkan, second-line – think New Orleans, Mardi Gras – Bollywood, and some '60s and '70s rock. It's a *mélange*!"

But the general consensus from those I spoke with seems to be that the music is just fun.

Expandable Brass Band has a clearly-stated mission and aims to be leaderless and democratic. Everyone has a role, which can vary depending on the gig.

I ask Ward about the leaderless idea; it sounds like a challenging proposition. Her response is that all the guidelines "were aspirational when written, and with a volunteer effort, there is a certain messiness to it. For instance, with a gig invitation, someone needs to set up and coordinate things."

Dvorak tells me the music is pretty leaderless as well. The drummer will often signal players

to correct the tempo, or someone may give a hand signal for some direction. (Perhaps a drum major-ette is in order!)

What does the future hold for the EBB? "We'll just keep playing, doing it as long as we're having fun and people continue to play!" says Sandy Ward.

The band has a few upcoming gigs. They are playing the 14th annual Kayak-a-thon in Hatfield on September 10, the DoozyDo Parade in Northampton on September 23, and the HONK! Festival in October. The band is also available for private gigs. Find out more at expandablebrassband.com or by emailing info@expandablebrassband.com.

What's This HONK! Fest?

By **DONNA PETERSEN**

The big event coming up for the Expandable Brass Band, and for street bands from all over the world, is the HONK! Festival in Somerville on October 6, 7, and 8. It is a major event, and has been the inspiration for many street bands and HONK! Festivals in other cities and countries: Seattle, Austin, Detroit, Providence, all have HONK! events now, and it has spread to Brazil and Australia as well.

At the HONK! festival you might see the Banda Rim Bam Bum band, Rome's Pink Puffer's Brass band, or Hartford's Hot Several.

When the festival was not held during COVID, a virtual festival had 76 submissions for inclusion from all over the world including Germany, France, Russia, Rio De Janeiro, London, Canada, and Brazil. There are many bands from the Boston-Somerville area and Burlington, Portland, and Providence are represented as well.

Whatever bands show up, it is bound to be a fun time. The HONK! website, honkfest.org, boasts that it's a "revolutionary street spectacle of never-seen-before proportions." The Expandable Brass Band will be there this year, and maybe some of our dear readers will make the trip!

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MOVIE from previous page
potential takeover by the neighboring camp, which is aware of their financial vulnerability and lusts for a land grab, is a riveting plot line. Aspects of the struggle are occasionally summarized in brief one-sentence plot descriptions displayed on screen.

My quibbles: I would have gladly watched a longer film that gave us more about the relationships among the various student performers, along with those of the counselors.

I am also not sure that the film had to take the form of a mockumentary. Believing through its first part that I was watching an actual documentary, I worried how students would feel watching scenes of auditions and counselors making their casting decisions, effectively dising those not chosen in the process. But rest assured that it is a mockumentary.

I also wondered about the very neatly tied-up ending. Upon reflection, I believe this was also played for its humor as part of the mockumentary format.

Those who have worked in theater will especially love how the story shows the camaraderie that happens in rehearsal and production, and all will enjoy the display of talent, perseverance, goofy antics, and glad endings.

Locally, *Theater Camp* is still playing at Amherst Cinema, at Images Theater in Williamstown, and at Real Art Ways in Hartford, Connecticut. It will also be available for streaming on Hulu beginning September 14. On that date the film will also become available for digital purchase via Apple TV, Amazon Prime Video, and more.



Wendell Honors the von Ransons

EVENT ANNOUNCEMENT

WENDELL – A new series of events at the Wendell Meetinghouse, Honoring Local Elders, launches next Thursday, September 14 at 7 p.m. The first honorees will be Susan and Jonathan von Ranson.

The von Ransons are exemplars of community spirit. Both have been long-time activists, advocating for the right to live sustainably off the grid, fighting the proposed construction of Route 2 through the Wendell State Forest, and in Susan's case, working with the Pioneer Valley War Tax Resisters and participating in anti-nuke 'die-ins' in Orange. They have also been generous in their support of community members and activities, including helping with Good Neighbors' food distribution and providing other support to people in need.

Susan was a guiding force behind the creation of the Friends of Wendell, and served on the board of Good Neighbors. Known to many as an excellent seamstress and cook, many citizens turn to her for advice on canning and food preservation.

Jonathan has been a stone mason (he built the new stone steps at the Wendell Meetinghouse), a journalist with the *Montague Reporter*, a writing group leader, and a past president of the Northeast Organic Farmers Association. Together, they have mentored and supported many Wendell citizens in their creative and survival needs.

The Honoring Local Elders series is organized by Gail Mason, a Wendell resident and a healer and herbalist. "My inspiration for this series came to me at a celebration of

life," Mason says. "The person who had passed was beautifully memorialized, but I realized I wanted our treasured elders to hear these appreciations while they are still here. This idea was reinforced by ancestor teachers in my dreams. In Native communities, elders are revered. I want to bring that same spirit of reverence to our elders in Wendell and the surrounding communities."

Honoring Local Elders is scheduled to take place the second Thursday of each month through the end of the year. For more information or to suggest elders for celebration, contact Mason at rushingwaters01@gmail.com. The events are free and open to the public; all donations go to support ongoing renovations and programming at the Meetinghouse.

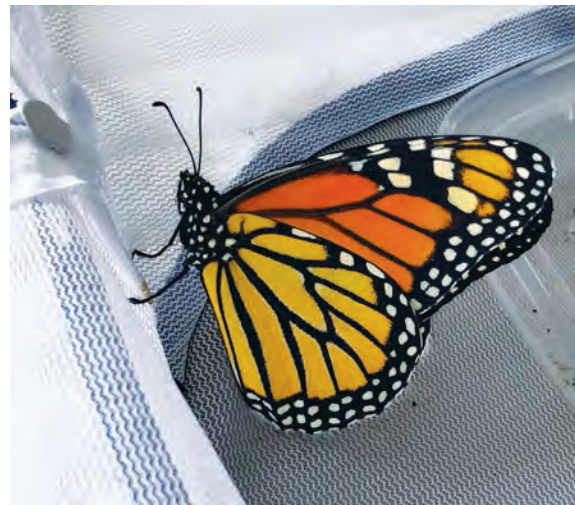
EXTREME MAKEOVER: MONTAGUE CENTER EDITION

"Over the last four summers or so, I've been raising monarchs in a netted cube that protects them from predators," Montague Center reader Sally Pick explains. "Sometimes I find their tiny eggs on



SALLY PICK PHOTOS

the milkweed in my garden, and recently I brought two large caterpillars to safely finish their metamorphosis processes in the cube. This is the first of the summer to approach becoming a butterfly. Once they break out of the cocoon and expand and dry their wings, I release them and wish them luck on their long journey to their winter home in Mexico. It's a miraculous process to witness!"



This photo, with the monarch nearly ready to leave the enclosure, was taken the very next day. "I had to assist it by letting it crawl onto my finger," Sally tells us.

HEARTFELT from page B1

be one during the Greenfield winter market, but that was pre-COVID. I guess we may just have to revive that tradition. It's a great way to end up with new and unusually prepared foods – things you might not make yourself, but once you know they exist, you have to try them. Think hemlock bitters or elderberry jam, both of which I discovered at barter fairs.

It took me many years to try canning because I would start reading a book on it and get all flustered at the pH stuff and the temperature stuff and just give up on the idea, thinking I'd probably do it all wrong and unwittingly kill someone.

Then, I visited a chef friend in California and during a casual conversation I watched her put filled, lidded jars in boiling water in an uncovered pot and simmer them until the lids popped. No temperature-taking, no looking for a column

of steam, no timers. She just boiled until they sealed, and that was that.

I felt so much better realizing it didn't have to be a science experiment, and I've been vigorously canning ever since without a mishap. Occasionally a lid doesn't seal, and that's the jar that's consumed first. You can put it back into the water bath to try to get it to seal, but I'm generally too lazy to do it all again so I don't bother. Depending on what's in it, you may not want to subject it to heat for yet another 15 or 20 minutes.

There are few things more satisfying than the symphony of pops that occurs when jar lids seal. It may happen in the water bath, or it may happen later when they are sitting on the counter cooling. If the lid isn't sealed after the bath, you can sometimes just push down on the raised center and it will pop and seal.

You might think humans have put flame to water and boil jars to

heat and seal food for ages, but it actually didn't happen until the early 19th century. Prior to that, food was dried, salted, or fermented to preserve it, until one Nicholas Appert came up with a method for heat processing in glass jars sealed with wax and wire. Appert published the book *The Art of Preserving All Kinds of Animal and Vegetable Substances for Several Years* in 1811 and went on to start the first commercial canner, the House of Appert, that ran from 1812 until 1933.

The Ball Mason jar came into being in the late 1800s when the Ball brothers, five in all, used John Landis Mason's invention of the first hermetically re-sealable glass jar making canning easier in the home. Later, the lids were updated, and the modern canning lid came into being. Today, the legacy of Mason jars lives on, and they can be used as drinking glasses, flower vases, or to store a marble collection.

The process of canning can be time consuming, but it's oh-so-satisfying when you gaze upon a finished stack of glistening, colorful jars full of good-to-eat things. If you're thinking of canning, I've found some very simple instructions from the book *Putting Food By* by Janet Greene, Ruth Hertzberg, and Beatrice Vaughan. Here's their excellent and easy recipe for Indian chutney.

Trouble lives in Greenfield with her wife and their newly adopted cat Peeps. She volunteers for local nonprofits to cook and feed those in the community, and loves to write, copyedit, and create art.



INDIAN CHUTNEY



Chutney is an Indian-style relish that pairs well with poultry and pork. Just before lidding this pear chutney, the author says she adds a whole cinnamon stick and a star anise to "infuse the sweet tangy mix with their spicy flavors as it ages."

- one lemon
- 2 cups apple cider vinegar
- 2 packed cups (1 lb.) dark brown sugar
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 pinch cayenne pepper powder
- 1 pinch chili powder
- 1 1/2 tsp. canning or kosher salt
- about 3 lb. apples, pears, or peaches or mango
- 3/4 cup crystallized ginger, small pieces (not minced)
- 1 1/2 cup (1/2 lb.) golden raisins

Mince the garlic. Finely chop the juice, pulp, and peel of the lemon and put it in an open, heavy enameled or stainless steel pot with the sugar, vinegar, garlic, salt, and cayenne and chili powders.

Boil over medium heat for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Peel, core, and coarsely chop

the apples, pears, peaches, or mango – it should come to 5 1/2 cups. Add the fruit, ginger, and raisins to the pot and boil for about 30 to 45 minutes, until the fruit is tender but not mushy and the syrup has thickened.

Ladle into hot one-pint or half-pint jars, leaving a quarter-inch of headroom. Remove any trapped air, wipe off the jar rim, put on the disc lid, and screw the band on firmly.

Process the jars in a boiling water bath: 10 minutes for half pints, 15 minutes for pints. Remove, and cool them standing upright.

Believe it or not, you can even substitute canned pears or peaches, adding them in only at the last 10 minutes. I've also added quince along with pears with good results.



MANDESON PHOTOS

Flower jelly, with its beautiful jewel tones, made from peonies and roses in the author's garden.

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MEDICINE

The Robot Doctor Will See You Now: Artificial Intelligence Spreads in Healthcare

By CATHERINE DODDS, MD

TURNERS FALLS – Imagine this: you arrive at the clinic for your routine annual physical. You check in on a tablet device in the reception area, receive a text alert when your appointment is ready, and in the exam room, a robot delivers all of your medical care. The only human beings you encounter are the other patients in the waiting room. How would you feel about this?

Lately, everywhere we turn, we're hearing about artificial intelligence (AI). This science page recently featured a conversation between science editor Spencer Shorkey and ChatGPT, an example of a large language model that draws from enormous data sets to produce interactions with a bot that have a quasi-authentic feel. During the annual American College of Physicians internal medicine meeting this past April I attended a session about AI in medicine that was standing room only, one of the best-attended sessions of the meeting.

Many of us are questioning what's happening with AI these days. Has our society reached a turning point in the use of artificial intelligence, in medicine and beyond?

Many healthcare providers already use non-AI algorithms such as scores, calculators, and prediction models. However, this is limited by the provider's time and familiarity, even when many algorithms are collected in a single website such as MedCalc (www.mdcalc.com). Right now, healthcare providers are doing the hard work that AI could instead be doing.

That said, our current medical system already uses AI in some areas, even when doctors and patients are not aware of it. AI is used for computer-guided procedures and to enhance interpretation of medical images, improving the accuracy of human radiologists. AI makes extraction of data from medical records more efficient, and is used within electronic medical record systems to support diagnosis and clinical decisions.

So what might the near future of AI in medicine look like?

Perhaps chatbots will provide around-the-clock support to patients, eliminating the need for healthcare

providers to be on call, and reducing after-hours urgent care or emergency room visits. AI could be used as scribes, to write visit notes based on audio recordings of appointments, which in turn could reduce healthcare provider workload and burnout. This would allow more patients to be seen by reducing the amount of time providers spend documenting in the medical chart.

AI can use extensive past data in the moment, unlike human healthcare providers who use gestalt or expert intuition for many clinical decisions. AI could improve both the efficiency and accuracy of clinical care overall.

Chatbots are already being utilized for counseling and therapy, due to a severe shortage of providers in behavioral health. Some examples include Woebot (woebothealth.com), described as an AI-based "mental health ally," and Wysa (wysa.com), a hybrid therapy model with AI up front and human back-up.

For the moment, there are still many open questions about the use of AI in medicine. Because AI operates based on algorithms, there are automatic limitations. Deep learning is a subset of machine learning, which is itself a subset of artificial intelligence. Deep learning is by example/data, not top-down programming, which means the AI will only learn from the data we give it. And our data sets, by default, contain our human biases – particularly around race and ethnicity.

How much should we try to prevent AI from learning our human biases? How would the AI's predictive ability be affected if we feed it only the ideal data set we want the world to have? It is important to question whether the data missing from our current data sets is non-random – for instance, if only patients who keep follow-up appointments have their outcomes recorded, the AI will become biased against patients with socioeconomic or other factors that prevent regular follow-up, but nonetheless have significant healthcare needs.

There are also ethical considerations around transparency and accountability. Would you as a patient want to know if you were interacting with a chatbot instead of a human being when you contacted

FRONTIERS

Nanoparticle-Mediated Medicine

By SPENCER SHORKEY

MILLERS FALLS – When I was finishing up my undergraduate studies in chemistry and pharmacology in 2016, engineered nanoparticle biomolecular delivery tools were in the early stages of clinical development, but not yet in drug markets. Anyone paying attention was aware how such biomolecular delivery tools, when proven successful, would change the landscape of what is possible in medicine, and lead to new discoveries.

I was inspired by the possibilities in nano-molecular-engineering space, and sought out a research program where such research projects were ongoing, which landed me here in Western Mass seven years ago. I immediately got involved in nanoparticle research, and got to see with my own eyes the interesting behaviors of these nanoparticles.

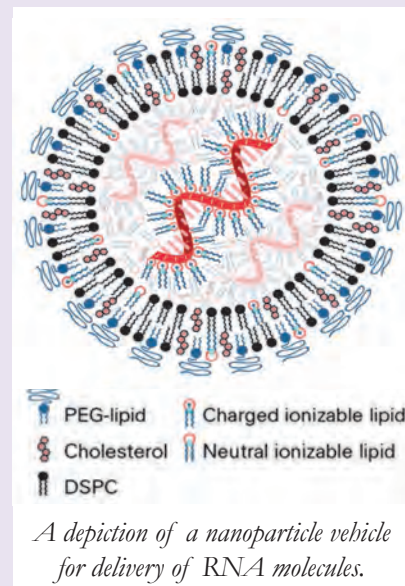
I soon wisened up to the fact that the area of research that I had been interested in was already the focus of several pharmaceutical companies. Even so, there are still plenty of interesting nanoparticle behaviors to study, and I did a little bit of that before moving on to other nano research things.

The first FDA-approved therapy using a nanoparticle-mediated biomolecule delivery tool came in 2018: Onpattro, by Alnylam. Soon after that in 2020, we saw the ascension of the RNA nanoparticle vaccines. These days a multitude of gene therapy approaches that use engineered nanoparticles are being tested.

So what is it about the use of nanoparticles for biomolecular delivery that enables new medicines, and how do they work?

Drug molecules discovered over

the years have typically been pretty small, less than a hundred atoms in size, and have worked by sticking to and jamming up much larger protein molecular machines composed of thousands of atoms. By jamming up specific machinery inside of the cells that make us up, we can change the overall activity of the



cells, and thus get some medically useful outcomes.

But imagine if we could just delete specific protein molecules, instead of temporarily jamming them? Or even introduce new protein molecules into the cell?

There is a new world of possibilities available with these approaches. However, it is not so simple. Our cells, after all, have barriers that prevent any large biomolecules from getting in. Slipping through those barriers is what certain nanoparticles have been able to do, thus rendering them capable of delivering large biomolecules that they are engineered to carry.

Scientists are still exploring, and optimizing, the myriad possible forms and applications of bio-

molecular delivery with nanoparticles. The approach that has seen the most success so far is the delivery of ribonucleic acid (RNA) to cells. RNA is a multifunctional information carrier molecule, and often works as a set of instructions which are physically "read" in order to produce protein molecules.

In the case of Onpattro, the RNA is used as a "silencer," and called siRNA. These siRNA molecules are made to stick to a target RNA molecule in the cell, which blocks that RNA molecule from being read, and can trigger its destruction. Whatever molecules would have been made while reading the target RNA will not be made, effectively "deleting" those protein molecules.

In the case of the coronavirus RNA vaccine, the RNA molecules delivered into the cell are functioning as instructions which are read to produce coronavirus "spike" proteins in the cell. The spike proteins that are thus produced become targets for training the body's immune system, which from that point forward will hopefully be able to recognize any incoming coronaviruses coated with spike proteins.

Gene therapies are more complex than the two prior examples. Gene editing is the alteration of the cell's master set of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) instructions, deleting, adding, or changing them. The short of it is that, following delivery of RNA to the cell, the RNA is read and used to produce a protein molecular machine, which is then capable of gene editing.

This approach may ultimately be used to fix some genetic diseases, or to change cellular behaviors in many possible therapeutically relevant ways, which I will discuss in more detail in a future article.

CC IMAGE BY MICHAEL D. BUSCHMANN ET AL

your clinic? Who is responsible for the information given when a chatbot is responding but the patient thinks they're communicating directly with their doctor? Chatbots that provide medical advice, even if given all the relevant data, still need human oversight and surveillance to make sure they are not saying false, irrelevant, or harmful things.

How do we keep AI relevant? AI requires time and population-specific updates and repeated validation, with the need to test models for quality and keep up with new data, ICD codes, treatments, and so on.

And how do we keep private health information protected when using AI tools that rely on data from

medical records? What surveillance and limitations on privacy are we willing to accept to provide the necessary data to AI? Already, AI can predict if a woman is pregnant or if an individual will develop Parkinson's disease based on algorithms that detect patterns in the huge amounts of data currently collected on humans around the world.

We also need to continuously ask why we are using AI to solve particular problems in our healthcare system. Does the AI clinical support tool improve workflow and reduce clinician burnout? How quick, easy, and useful is it? And for certain proposed uses of AI – such as AI or robot companions meant to address widespread loneliness and social isolation – wouldn't it be better for human society as a whole to meet these needs in other ways? By

reconnecting humans rather than relying on AI to provide a "quasi-human" experience?

Wherever AI is used in healthcare, at a minimum it should be safe, ethical, useful, relevant, and lead to actionable changes, with both clinical and financial impacts. But we also have to remain aware of its potential pitfalls.

One downside that has become apparent as AI becomes more a part of our daily lives is that large-language model outputs, such as ChatGPT, lie. They can be very convincing even while being factually incorrect. As of now, ChatGPT can be considered an efficiency tool for first drafts, but it still needs human oversight, review, surveillance, and monitoring.

Humans have ethical and moral standards. Current AI does not.

Want to experiment with AI for yourself?

ChatGPT (requires a login/account): chat.openai.com/chat

Google's Bard chatbot (requires accepting security terms): bard.google.com

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Dutch Experts, Roost.World, Public Circuit, Orange Peel Mystic*. \$ 8 p.m.

FKA Comics, Northampton: *Container, Sediment Club, Locolus*. \$ 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

Great Falls Coffeehouse, Turners Falls: *Jim Eagan, Anand Nayak*. No cover. 7 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Asher White, Silvie's Okay, DJs*. \$ 7 p.m.

CitySpace, Easthampton: *The frost heaves & haies*. \$ 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Milk St., Waver Wire, Won Word Trend, Amulette*. No cover. 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

Millside Park, Easthampton: *River Roads Festival* feat. *Dar Williams, Lisa Loeb, Shawn Colvin, Sweet Honey In the Rock*, more. \$ Noon.

Peskeompskut Park, Turners Falls: *Pamela Means*. Free. 1 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls:

Cinmastorm feat. a mystery anime feature. Free. 7:30 p.m.

1794 Meetinghouse, New Salem: *Joe Jencks*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Damien Jurado, Lilly Miller*. \$ 8 p.m.

Daily Operation, Easthampton: *billy woods & Kenny Segall, Malik Abdul-Rahmaan*. \$ 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

Mystery Train, Amherst: *Noise Nomads, Angela Sawyer & Arkm Foam, Shea Mowatt, Jonathan Hanson*. Free. 5 p.m.

Bombyx Center for Arts & Equity, Florence: *Fiesta Rumbera, John Sheldon, Masala Jazz*. Maui wildfires benefit. \$ 7 p.m.

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

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Corook, Mary Lambert*. \$ 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

Forbes Library lawn, Northampton: *Flywheel* presents *Treefort, Daeves*. Free. 6 p.m.

Brattleboro Museum & Art Center, Brattleboro: *Ayano Kataoka*, percussion. \$ 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

Camp Keewanee, Greenfield: *Bella's Bartok, Leon Trout, Neal Francis, Bearly Dead*, many

more. See *wormtownmusicfestival*. \$ 1 p.m.

Millside Park, Easthampton: *Ethiocolor, San Salvador, Orchestre Tout Puissant Marcel Duchamp*. Free. 6 p.m.

Belltower Records, North Adams: *Dippers, Sky Furrows, Luxor Rentals*. \$ 7 p.m.

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

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

Camp Keewanee, Greenfield: *Creamery Station, Outer Stylee, Hayley Jane, The Motet*, many more. See *wormtownmusicfestival*. \$ 10 a.m.

Mount Toby Friends Meetinghouse, Leverett: *Emma's Revolution*. \$ 4 p.m.

Millside Park, Easthampton: *Louis Cato, Jon Cleary, Young@Heart Chorus*. Free. 6 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Dialog Talk, Hazu, Birthright*. \$ 7 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Senegal-America Project* feat. *Tony Vacca, Tantra Zawadi, Abdou Sarr, Mamadou Ndiaye, and Derrik Jordan*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

Parlor Room, Northampton: *Richard Lloyd Group* (ex-Television). \$ 7:30 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Modern English*. \$ 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

Arcadia, Easthampton: *Valerie June, James McMurry, The Suitcase Junket*, more. See *arcadiafolkfest.com*. \$ 10 a.m.

Camp Keewanee, Greenfield: *Max Creek, The Alchemystics, Rev Tor Band, The Edd*, many more. See *wormtownmusicfestival*. \$ 10 a.m.

Lunder Center, Williamstown: *Senseless Optimism, Wendy Eisenberg*. Free. 5 p.m.

Millside Park, Easthampton: *John Doyle, Mick McCauley, Lily Henley & Duncan Wickel, Liz Knowles & Kieran O'Hare*. Free. 6 p.m.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *GracieHorse, Stella Kola, bobbie!*. \$ 8 p.m.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

Tree House Brewing Company, South Deerfield: *Dinosaur Jr., Luluc*. \$ 8 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Landowner, Bunnies, Phroeggs*. \$ 7 p.m.

Tree House Brewing, South Deerfield: *Kurt Vile & the Violators, Joanna Sternberg*. \$ 7 p.m.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

Montague Village Store, Montague Center: *Vimana*. Free. 6 p.m.

looking forward...

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *Daniel Higgs, Chris Weisman*. \$ 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

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

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: *Sandy Bailey CD* release show, with *Cloudbelly, Luna Dawn*. \$ 7 p.m.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Major Stars, Jeffrey Alexander & the Heavy Lidders, Bhanjan Bhoy*. \$ 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12

Dream Away Lodge, Becket: *Diane Cluck*. No cover. 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15

The Drake, Amherst: *Bob Mould*. \$ 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26

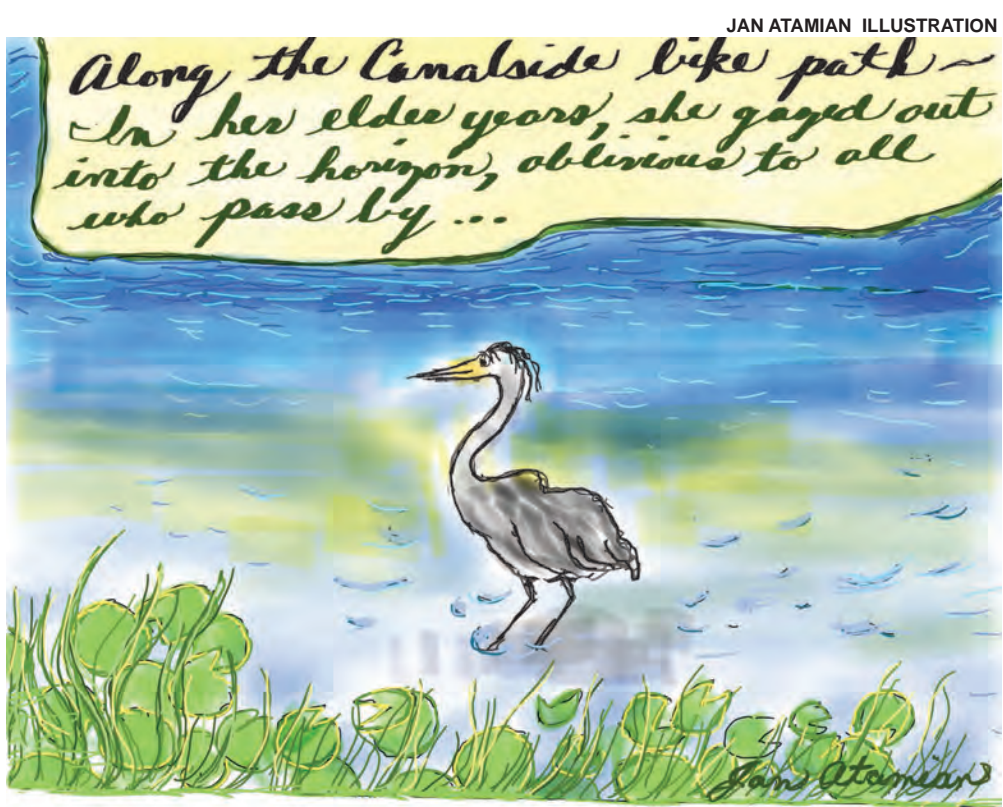
Nova Arts, Keene: *Xiu Xiu, Thus Love*. \$ 7 p.m.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Rubblebucket, Dante Elephant*. \$ 8 p.m.

COMICS and PUZZLE

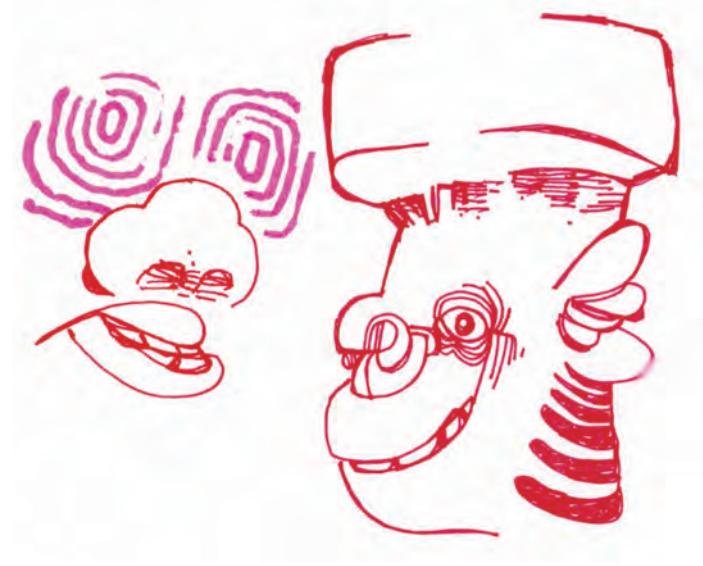
OVER THE HILL Carolyn Clark



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In New Salem, a Historic Hub for Music New and Old

By GRANGER SMITH-MASSA

NEW SALEM – At over 200 years old, the 1794 Meetinghouse is a historical mainstay of New Salem. For 27 years it has also been a hub of culture in the North Quabbin area and Franklin County, hosting musical acts and plays. Run largely by volunteers, including a board of directors, the Meetinghouse has had a storied history. Brad Foster, the current executive director, has been an integral part of the Meetinghouse's enduring function, and continues to facilitate its ability to host and organize events.

The Meetinghouse was originally built in 1794 to replace a smaller meetinghouse which acted as the town's community hall and church. It stood as it was until 1837, when changing architectural styles prompted the Meetinghouse to get updated to match the tastes of the times. This included lifting and rotating the building a quarter turn to the east to make room for a new entrance. After these additions, it wouldn't be until 1984 that significant renovations and revitalization of the Meetinghouse would start again.

Over the years, while it was still owned by a Congregational society, use of the Meetinghouse as a place of worship declined and it fell into disrepair. Many locals considered the building an important part of the town, and after the building was accepted into the National Registry of Historic Places in 1978, a committee formed to plan repairs and renovations. The Congregational society transferred ownership to the town, and during the ongoing repairs, the committee started considering new uses for the Meetinghouse.

Committee member Erin Williams, who had experience running a

cultural center in her previous home of Philadelphia, envisioned a similar use for the building and the community. After receiving numerous grants and with ambitious planning, the committee began organizing shows in the surrounding area, and it soon became the organization's board of directors.

Eventually the repairs were completed and the Meetinghouse could host performances within its own walls, becoming the cultural touchstone that it is today.

While the board is composed of volunteers, they have created a paid executive director position, currently held by Foster. Doing a bit of everything, he works on the programs for the shows, organizes volunteers, introduces concerts, and much more. While Foster's day job is as an accountant for non-profits, he has extensive experience helping head music and dance events and other organizations.

Foster wanted to be able to work closer to his home in New Salem after many years of working for organizations outside of Franklin County, leading him to take the position in 2014. He says he is very dedicated to the Meetinghouse, and hopes to help it expand the programming in the future. "A dream of mine," he says, "is just to get more activities going on to cover the year."

While organizing events is important to him, as he puts it, "we have a twofold purpose, and one of them is running the program... but our second purpose is the building." The Meetinghouse board is particularly concerned with the state of the building, and is currently working towards receiving grants for needed renovations.

Due to its particular construction, the Meetinghouse's acoustics differ significantly from many



SMITH-MASSA PHOTO

The 1794 Meetinghouse in New Salem draws audiences in with a wide variety of performances.

modern venues. "We don't always need sound reinforcement," explains Foster. "If it's a quiet classical group, we do those without amplification, because the acoustics work well."

It's some of the best acoustics in the Valley, I think, for a performance space," says Greenfield resident Rachel Roy, an enthusiastic and frequent audience member.

Locals also appreciate its historic place in New Salem, and the draw it has from its history of hosting a variety of performances. In fact, a number of local artists and musicians have been integral to the development of the Meetinghouse as

it is today. These include the late Dorothy Johnson, who held many local community plays there from the beginning of the modern era of the organization; the classical pianist Steven Schoenberg, who was involved in the board's efforts to recreate the Meetinghouse as a cultural center and has played there frequently since; and Quabbin Valley Pro Musica, the Meetinghouse's own resident chorus.

The board plays an integral role in how performers are selected. Members, who have a diversity of musical and cultural interests, have brought in acts playing folk, jazz, classical, rock, and more. Such variety isn't always popular, but that hasn't stopped the board's desire to present new and unique performances.

Not everything is limited to the Meetinghouse itself, however. Because the building is not heated, performances can only be hosted there during the warmer months, so during the winter the Meetinghouse organizes events in other local venues.

Given the history of the building, the interesting lineup of performers, and the acoustics, it's not hard to see why the 1794 Meetinghouse is an integral part of New Salem. Townspeople take pride in the building, volunteering their time to help the Meetinghouse organization. There's clearly a lot of love for the venue from locals, and the building wouldn't be the place it is without their support.

The lineup for the rest of this year's season includes traditional folk music and singer/songwriters such as Joe Jencks, The Green Sisters, and Keith Murphy and Becky Tracy. Classical pianist Elan Sicroff will also perform. See the Meetinghouse website at 1794meetinghouse.org for more information.

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