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YEAR 22 - NO. 33

also serving Erving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

# Heavy Rains Appear to Worsen Farm Erosion

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG



Montague con com chair Mark. Fairbrother said a video he filmed last Wednesday (above) showed muddy runoff from Falls Farm flooding 800 feet of Meadow Road.

#### **By WILL QUALE**

**MONTAGUE** – "It's been quite a week in Lake Wobegon!" Mark Fairbrother announced, kicking off the Montague conservation commission's meeting last Thursday, July 18. Possible wetlands violations at Falls Farm were again on the agenda, and in the days prior to the meeting, severe thunderstorms had overcome the farm's latest erosion control barriers, sending an outpouring of silt into the Connecticut River and leading Montague's highway department to declare a public safety emergency on Meadow Road.

With these developments fresh in their minds, the commissioners - working before an in-person and online audience of dozens of area residents - discussed issuing a sweeping enforcement order that would require the farm to temporarily cease all agricultural activity in the town of Montague.

In our previous coverage of the farm's erosion challenges, the Reporter explained that the "authority

of local conservation commissions is strictly limited to land within a certain distance of a wetland."

This is almost always true. However, under specific circumstances, a con com's jurisdiction can be expanded, and at last Thursday's meeting the commissioners agreed that based on what they had seen during two site visits, the extent of the farm's landscape alterations and tree removal outside of the wetland zones have created one of those circumstances. Fairbrother described it to the *Reporter* as one of the most complex situations he has confronted in over two decades on the commission.

Consultant Amanda Smith, a wetlands scientist from BSC Group who had joined the con com on its second site visit on June 26, presented a report of its findings and determinations.

"At this point, all activity on the sites is now subject and within jurisdiction of the Wetlands Protection Act [WPA] and the conservation see RAINS page A7

GILL SELECTBOARD Half of Gill's **Police Force** Will Retire Next Month

#### **By KATE SAVAGE**

Sergeant Jason Bassett is retiring from the police department at the end of August, Chief Christopher Redmond announced at Gill's July 15 selectboard meeting. Though Redmond is willing to continue working part-time for the department, town officials are worrying over how they will replace him.

"Jason was like an employee and a half," said Redmond. "To just fill his position, even with someone comparable, would still leave a void." He said he worried this would exacerbate staffing issues.

"Our staffing is the lowest it's ever been since I started in 1992," Redmond told the board. "Basically we have three part-time officers, all with full-time jobs in public safety." He said there were up to nine parttime officers in the past.

As Bassett and Redmond are the only full-time members of the town's police department, selectboard chair Randy Crochier noted this was "the retirement of half of our force."

"I think we're playing a game if we continue to stay with two officers," Crochier added. "I think we need to look at the budget, and see if we can squeeze a third officer in." see GILL page A4

LEVERETT SELECTBOARD Leverett Gets A Hypothetical **Million Bucks** 

## SCENE REPORT **Counting the Wins Out Loud**



US senator Ed Markey was in town last week to tout federal and state pledges of funds to help Montague safely dismantle its most iconic ruins.

#### **By JEFF SINGLETON**

TURNERS FALLS - Last Thursday's event to celebrate a \$4.9 million grant from the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to help fund the demolition of the decaying remnants of the Strathmore Mill complex felt at times like a religious revival. At one point David Cash, the regional EPA administrator who emceed the event, urged the attending crowd to participate in a call-and-response chant.

One after the other, Cash shouted out seven positive aspects of the project, ranging from removing safety hazards to creating local jobs to "turning a bad into a good." After each positive impact was named, the audience - several dozen people gathered in the parking lot near the Discovery Center, mostly government officials and employees who had helped make the funding a reality – chanted "Win!"

The Strathmore, originally the Keith Paper Company, produced high-quality paper for generations

under-capitalized owners - one of whom used the complex to store recyclable paper and stripped it of copper wiring - the building fell into the town's lap for back taxes.

Several reuse studies and hazardous material cleanups later, Montague officials, fearing that the structure might fall into the Connecticut River or become a death trap for those prone to explore old factories, decided to opt for a nearly total demolition of the complex.

As town administrator Walter Ramsey told the attendees at the June 18 rally, the cleared land on which the factory sits will one day be part of a re-branded "Canal District" featuring "recreation... renewable energy, light manufacturing.... as well as housing developments."

But demolition is not cheap - as officials in the neighboring town of Erving, who are saddled with another decaying paper mill, are finding out. The total price tag for the Strathmore demolition is estimated at \$10 million. The \$4.92 million EPA grant was awarded May 20, and two weeks later, the state announced the release of a \$5.1 million earmark based on an appropriation in a bond bill that had lain dormant for nearly six years.

# **Questions Owners' Budget**

**Orange Rent Control Board** 



Leisure Woods Estates resident Debbie Higgins said she had heard a rumor that the mobile home park was being sold. Owner Glenn Gidley said this was not the case.

#### **By SARAH ROBERTSON**

ORANGE - Last week the Orange Mobile Home Park Rent Control Board continued a hearing on a proposed 43% rental increase for lots at Leisure Woods Estates, a mobile home park near the municipal airport.

Rent control board chair Jane Peirce and members Julie Davis

and Andrew Smith probed cost estimates provided by park owner Glenn Gidley, his son, his lawyer, and a real estate consultant to justify the requested increase from \$410 per month to \$588. The board took issue with a number of line items in the budget projection submitted by Leisure Woods, which estimated \$727,150 in expenses in the coming see **RENT** page A4

# For Housing

#### **By GEORGE BRACE**

Discussions at Leverett's most recent selectboard meeting on July 16 were brief, but covered a variety of topics. The board announced an earmark in a housing bill before the state legislature that could benefit Leverett, reviewed a complaint about a volunteer at the transfer station, and appointed two new part-time town employees, among other business.

Responding to a question from finance committee chair Phil Carter, selectboard chair Tom Hankinson reported that state senator Jo Comerford had added a \$1 million earmark specifically benefitting Leverett to a housing bond bill, S.2834. Hankinson said the earmark came about as a result of a conversation between Comerford and Greg Tuzzolo, Leverett's newlyelected planning board chair.

Town administrator Marjorie McGinnis noted that while "they made it fairly clear that it was highly unlikely that the bond bill would actually be approved in the long see LEVERETT page A5

and played a central role in the village's history for 150 years. But International Paper, which owned the complex after World War II, stopped manufacturing there in the 1990s, and after 15 years of

see **SCENE** page A6

## MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD Officials Plot Mill Teardown, Scratch Heads at Sewer Math

#### **By JEFF SINGLETON**

The Montague selectboard, which meets every two weeks during the summer, tackled a number of complex issues on Monday, ranging from plans for the soon-to-be-demolished Strathmore mill to a potential study of traffic calming in Montague Center to the status of the process of hiring a new town accountant.

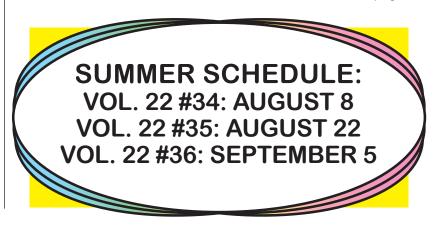
Perhaps due to the crowded agenda, a previously promised discussion of the crisis of cannabis odor in the town's industrial park was not included.

The topic which took the most

time, and may affect the most residents, was a proposal by Clean Water Facility (CWF) superintendent Chelsey Little to change the way sewer bills are assessed. The discussion was so technical – and at times confusing – that a final decision was put off for two weeks, even though bills would be mailed out in August under the proposed plan.

Currently, the town calculates sewer bills by multiplying an estimate of users' sewer usage - based on their water usage measured during the winter a year earlier by rates set by the selectboard for

see MONTAGUE page A8





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<sup>\$1.50</sup> JULY 25, 2024

**ILLUSTRATION** 

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## **REFLECTION Behind the Scenes**

Twenty-two years, 999 issues. Hundreds of volunteers, staff, board members, writers, photographers, proofreaders, cartoonists, compilers, layout gurus.

Bleary-eyed 3 a.m. Thursday phone consultations about a meeting that ended mere hours before deadline. Empty pizza boxes. Coffee gone cold. Fact-checking. Crafting apologetic corrections and dizzying headlines. "Moon Dims Sun." "Forecast Fells Fall Fest." "Before Walter Becomes Steve, Town Needs New Walter."

Also: fundraisers, farmers markets, podcasts, budgets, subscriptions, newcomers to recruit and mentor. One volunteer slices brown paper for mailing wrappers; anonymous sprites water plants and return redeemable cans; I tidy chaotic paperclips.

Our Avenue A office, hot in summer, cold in winter, has an oddball faucet that drips but only when the toilet flushes. Foliage outside tangles us in spiders' webs, sometimes drenches us, and pelts us with seasonal berries. Leaf blowers, street sweepers, ambulances, and vociferous birds test our concentration at 6 a.m.

Thursday afternoon, the distribution crew hastily puts Bananagrams aside when our indefatigable driver messages that she's at the bridge, fresh from the Springfield printer with her car full of papers. A dozen carriers, at the ready with car, bicycle or feet,

whisk the papers to homes, businesses, and post offices in rain/ snow/sleet/heat.

My first submission after moving here eight years ago was a letter to the editor (May 31, 2018) questioning why the police log sometimes identified people as Black, but rarely as white. The editor's thoughtful response bolstered my admiration for this paper. As "Editorial Assistant" for two years now, one of my roles is to snuff out any "ism" that might creep into our pages - sexism, ageism, racism, and more.

But mostly I proofread, roughly 4 to 10 a.m. Thursdays – a job I love, one that connects me to this community and keeps me useful in retirement. Our sleep-deprived editor, having been up all night, still calls it Wednesday and probably thinks the breakfast I set on his desk is a midnight snack. He and I cringe at our missed typos but have been known to claim they're a spiritual practice – because we know only a higher being is perfect.

The number of local, independently-owned newspapers continues to plummet. With every issue, I breathe a silent thank you to all the people, including our steadfast readers, who have somehow managed, against tough odds, to keep this one afloat.

Let's keep it going another thousand issues – it's a good one.

> **Maggie Sadoway Turners Falls**



Kathern Pierce, or "Beanie" as everyone calls her, took over the town clerk position last year after longtime clerk Deb Bourbeau retired. Pierce is an avid runner when she's not managing vital records or handling election stuff at town hall, averaging three to five miles a day.



# **Deforestation 'Disaster' Deserves More Scrutiny**

Thanks very much for your recent coverage of Falls Farm. I hope it continues and frankly I think the farm deserves even more scrutiny.

Speaking as someone who lives within a mile or two of the farm, and travels past it almost every day, it's difficult to view it as anything other than an ecological disaster. The first year or two of the farm seemed like little more than a large-scale timber operation. Hundreds of trees were cut down and processed. The farm had one of the largest piles of wood chips I've ever seen in my life. For many years the pages of the Reporter have been full of debates about the pros and cons of cutting down trees to put up solar panels or for other projects. And yet somehow we let it happen here without - to my knowledge - any real discussion about the merits. I'm not a scientist, but it seems pretty likely that the work done at Falls Farm represents a huge release of carbon back into the atmosphere. If the plan had been to erect solar panels on that land, there would've been extensive debate on the matter, and yet solar energy would likely be a much better use of

produce for cafeterias?

Finally, it's ridiculous to me that Dr. Arcoleo thinks his experience as a surgeon grants him some sort of deeper understanding of how to deal with erosion. I doubt he would let an erosion expert work on his heart! Whatever mitigation he claims to have done, it's not helping at all.

Perhaps it's this sort of unwarranted self-confidence that has led to almost constant piles of silt and rocks at the intersection of Meadow and Old Sunderland Roads. It's just a matter of time before a vehicle skids through

# Thanks for Delving

I'm writing to thank you for delving into the Falls Farm Conservation Commission concerns of both Montague and Sunderland. It's rare to find an in-depth article in this day and age of shrinking newspapers and shrinking attention spans. Kudos to you and to Will Quale for the piece.

I'm also writing because it seems that there is room for more coverage on the issues at Falls Farm. It's my understanding that the sand piles are not under the Con Com's jurisdiction but fall under building codes. That's handy, because there is also a gigantic structure being erected on the property which is purported to be a barn, but also has claims to be a new wedding/event venue. That's a massive change to what was originally an organic farm plan, and will have negative effects on not only neighbors in Montague, Sunderland and Deerfield, but also folks recreating on the Connecticut River below and on the Franklin County bike trail. Additional topics could include the deforestation on the property, the potential effect of extensive irrigation systems and a new well on neighbors, and the effects of unbridled runoff on Old Sunderland Road, Meadow Road, nearby streams and the Connecticut River.



Cassidy, an Upinngil Farm cat, takes a special interest in our front page.

# **Appreciated Coverage**

It is past due for sure to acknowledge you and your team for the great journalism in the Montague Reporter but I was very appreciative of the article about Falls Farm. I have been watching and wondering about what is going on at that property for a few years. Often the scale

of the construction activity up there has had me concerned.

More broadly, I find that the Montague Reporter is the best newspaper that I read. Thank you!

> Leigh Rae Montague Center

that land than a new farm. I'm also very concerned about the economic impact this is going to have on other farms in the valley. Does the valley have a shortage of fresh vegetables and fruit? What's going to happen to the farmers that have lost contracts with local schools and hospitals to provide that intersection and plows into a bicyclist or pedestrian.

#### **Colin Mitchell Montague Center**

# Cover Habitat Loss, Too

I appreciated Will Quale's indepth article about the farm and its environmental violations. I look forward to continued coverage, and hope it will include the impact on habitat loss for mammals, birds, and insects from the removal of large stands of mature trees.

> Julie Kumble **Montague Center**

Thank you again for the coverage. I look forward to reading more.

> **Christy Grecsek** Sunderland

#### Published weekly on Thursdays.

Every other week in July and August. No paper the fourth week of November, or the final week of December.

#### PHONE: (413) 863-8666 **EMAIL:**

editor@montaguereporter.org features@montaguereporter.org ads@montaguereporter.org bills@montaguereporter.org circulation@montaguereporter.org events@montaguereporter.org poetry@montaguereporter.org subscriptions@montaguereporter.org

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#### Compiled by NINA ROSSI

LifePath will be distributing 650 free farmers market coupon booklets, worth \$50 per person, which can be used to buy fruits, vegetables, fresh-cut herbs, and honey.

They will be available at the Greenfield senior center this Friday, July 26 from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.; at the Gill-Montague senior center next Thursday, August 1 from 10:30 a.m. to noon; and at the Erving senior center the same day from noon to 3 p.m.

To be eligible you must be at least 60 years old, reside in Franklin County or the North Quabbin area, and have an income under a certain monthly limit: \$2,322 for individual, plus \$830 for each additional household member - \$3,152 for a couple, for example. Contact Life-Path nutritionist Jane Severance at (413) 829-9226 with any questions.

The Farmers Market at Peskeompskut Park in Turners Falls - this Saturday, July 27 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. - will offer books and activities about growing food, courtesy of the Montague Public Libraries. Check it out and pick up some local produce, get an iced coffee, and chat with your neighbors in the park.

The next Nice & Easy Walk in downtown Turners Falls will focus on restaurants. Join the hourlong stroll in front of the Great Falls Discovery Center's entrance this Saturday, July 27 at 10 a.m. The guided tour will highlight local eateries and explore their connections to local food. Dress for the weather, with sturdy footwear, and bring water. Inclement weather will cancel the walk.

Bring your broken stuff to the Northfield Fix-It Fair and learn how to repair it with the assistance of volunteers – for free! – this Sun-

small appliances, tools, and jewelry for fixing, or dull knives for sharpening, or just come with questions about gardening and technology.

Bring your footwear to get it sprayed against ticks. There will be information about recycling, and how to make cleaning products that aren't harmful to the environment. There will be a food truck, live music, and a bar, and even a table for kids to take stuff apart.

It's all happening under the Beech House tent at the Northfield Golf Club, rain or shine.

Massachusetts is updating its Age and Dementia Action Plan and LifePath, the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, and the Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative are hosting a listening session to collect local feedback on how to make the Commonwealth more age- and dementia-friendly.

The session is on Monday, July 29 from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the JW Olver Transit Center in Greenfield; RSVP at (413) 774-3167 x10. You may also give input online at mass. gov/age-friendly.

The next performance in the Montague Congregational Church's free summer outdoor concert series will be by the Just Fine Thank You Band next Wednesday, July 31. Enjoy this ukulele-driven trio from 6 to 7 p.m., rain or shine, outside at the Montague Center church. Bring a chair or blanket to sit on.

The LAVA Center announces three programs to accompany the indiVISIBLE gallery exhibit documenting and celebrating Western Mass agricultural workers.

Next Friday, August 2 there will be a community read-around of work by agricultural and environmental activists.

The following Friday, August 9, is a presentation and discussion day, July 28 from 1 to 3 p.m. You of the Farm Bill, which affects all

Learn how individuals may have input in shaping this legislation.

The third and final event on Friday, August 16 is a screening of the documentary Food, Inc. 2. Co-producer Michael Pollan says the film reveals "how corporate consolidation has gone unchecked by our government, leaving us with a highly efficient yet shockingly vulnerable food system dedicated only towards increasing profits."

All three programs start at 6 p.m. For more information, contact info@indivisiblegreenfield.org.

Apex Orchards in Shelburne is holding a Kite Day next Saturday, August 3, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Bring your own kite to fly, or purchase one at the farm store from professional kite flier Glenn Davison, who will be demonstrating his skills that day.

The view of distant hills from the farm on Peckville Road is superb - you can see Mount Monadnock -- and there will be food from Steve's Weiner Wagon and a mini-cider donut trailer in addition to fresh fruit and other products at the farm store. In case of rain, the event will be held on August 4.

The fourth event in the "Honoring Elders" series at the Wendell Meetinghouse on Tuesday, August 6 at 6:30 p.m. will honor Kathy and Myron Becker.

The Beckers came to Wendell in 1971 to homestead and live off the land communally. They have worked to support the Free Library and were involved in the beginnings of the Wendell Full Moon Coffeehouse, Old Home Day, and the community kitchen. They have also helped the town by serving on the zoning board, Council on Aging, and Cultural Council, as well as serving as a firefighter, town crier, moderator, and EMT.

Community members are invited to come and share stories, memories, and appreciation of the Beckers' contributions to local communities and the region. For more information, contact Gail Mason at rushingwaters01@gmail.com.

Do you or someone you know have lung disease? Baystate Franklin now hosts a monthly Better Breathers support group. Members learn better ways to cope with lung conditions such as chronic

pulmonary fibrosis, and asthma, while getting the support of others in similar situations.

The meetings, which offer a combination of guest speakers, problem-solving discussions, and social activities led by trained facilitators, are held on the third Thursday of every month from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. in a conference room at the Baystate Franklin Medical Center in Greenfield. Contact Bonnie Robert at bonnie.robert@baystatehealth.org for more information.

It's time for puppets in the park again! At 10:30 a.m. on Friday, August 9, the No Strings Marionette Company will present "Quill and Foyle's Hasty Composure," a free, all-ages marionette show sponsored by the Friends of the Montague Public Libraries.

"These Vermont artisans lovingly hand craft the marionettes, props and scenery, whether for an original tale or an adaptation of a classic," the announcement states. "Once the mind believes there are no strings... this realm becomes real... and the Adventure begins!"

The puppeteers remain in full view, so the audience can see how the marionettes are manipulated. Afterwards everyone can come up to look at the marionettes and ask puppeteers Barb Paulson and Dan Baginski questions. Bring a blanket or something to sit on.

The next Great Falls Coffeehouse at the Discovery Center in Turners Falls, on Friday, August 9, will feature Gloria Matlock and Michael Nix reaching deep into the centuries-old tradition of African American song. Matlock sings gospel songs, spirituals, present-day freedom songs, jazz, and modern songs, while Nix explores the roots of guitar and banjo, playing from early gourd instruments as well as arrangements and compositions for the Banjar, a modern seven-string instrument of his own design.

The Twice As Smart children's choir, under the direction of Matlock, will perform songs with the duo during the first half of the concert, and Nix will go solo for the second half. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the concert starts at 7 p.m. There is a suggested donation of \$6 to \$15, and refreshments will be available.

Send your local briefs to



A3

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## NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD **Town Considers Allowing Historians to Cause Delays**

#### **By KEITH WATERS**

The Erving selectboard met on Monday, and as part of that meeting held one joint session with the finance committee and the capital planning committee, and another with the historical commission.

The meeting began with a brief discussion with representatives of Rural Development Incorporated (RDI), the development arm of the county housing authority, which is working with the town on a proposed senior housing project on Care Drive.

RDI needs access to the site to do work related to getting the project costs established. To that end RDI, and the town need to make a legal agreement allowing site ac-

cess, and to agree on who should own which legal documents.

Ryan Betters, a longtime member of the fire department, was promoted to deputy fire chief.

The joint meeting with the historical commission was a review of a proposed demolition delay bylaw. Four members of the commission were present, including David Brule, who writes the West Along the River series in this paper.

The bylaw would allow the historical commission to delay demolition of a structure it deems historically important. The wording is yet to be drafted, and discussed at the meeting were possible ways to go about it, and how old should be considered historical.

According to the state, any

building older than 50 years is historical, but given that this would include many if not most of thstructures in town, all present agreed a higher number of years is likely more appropriate.

The joint meeting with the fin com and capital planning committee took up the bulk of the overall four-hour meeting time.

In regards to the demolition of the International Paper Mill, it was agreed to ask Tighe & Bond to resubmit plans with the directive to only spend the \$600,000 the town has available for demolition, and not to rebuild anything which will eventually be demolished. The engineering firm's most recent estimate had included some rebuilding, in order to make it possible to insure

the structures which would remain after proposed partial demolition.

The joint meeting approved working with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments to pursue the project to link Farley and Erving Center by foot and bicycle paths, largely on the Wendell side of the river. Erving has been awarded a MassTrails grant to design the project.

The three boards also agreed the town should repave North Street rather than try to patch it. While this will cost more in the short term, it is expected to result in a much better and more economical paving of the street.

The joint meeting also approved a warrant for a special town meeting on Wednesday, August 28.



EABLE

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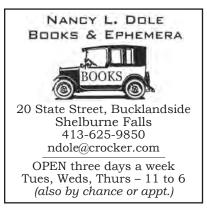


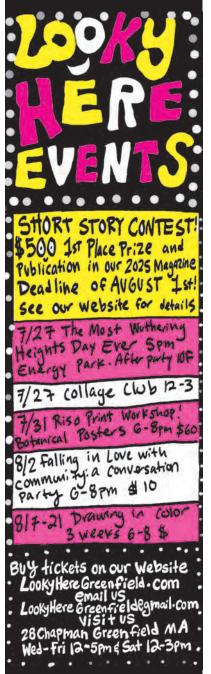




- Loam
- Gravel
- Sand
- Natural Stone







### **RENT** from page A1

fiscal year, and requested more information before it makes a decision.

"In this world there are lumpers, and there are splitters," Peirce said at the July 16 hearing at the Orange town hall. "This budget is a 'lumped' budget, so we're just trying to pick apart what are the categories in here."

Leisure Woods is required, under the 1985 town bylaw that established the rent control board, to submit a proposed budget as part of any petition to increase rent. The public hearing is another required step. Within the last two years the board approved an increase of about 14%, the first sought by the owners in over a decade.

When the hearing began last month, several residents said they felt the requested increase was too high, and feared they would be priced out of the park. Tracy Gaudet, director of the Orange Council on Aging, said at the June 11 hearing that if the full increase is approved, it would result in "a lot of homeless people with no housing to go to."

Fewer residents attended last Tuesday's continuation, which came amid a heat wave, and the board used more time to ask questions of the owners. Oscillating fans pushed hot air around the auditorium.

Arguing that a \$40,000 annual expense for "depreciation" was not justifiable. Peirce said the board would subtract the number from consideration. Gidley argued that the line was standard accounting practice, and said it reflected the cost of infrastructure that needs replacement, citing water lines, sewer lines, and roadways as examples.

When asked what specific expenses were included under the \$105,650 line for "maintenance and materials," Gidley said the estimate was based on past years' expenses for costs such as removing trees, paving roads, replacing oil tanks, and repairing the park's sewer pump station.

Davis pointed out that the budget included a separate \$130,000 line item for "water and sewer

expenses," and \$35,000 for "tree removal."

"The line item is an aggregate of all of the maintenance and repairs that we proposed," Gidley said, and agreed to provide the board with more details.

"While I appreciate you all trying to streamline things, I don't think any of us are afraid of numbers," Davis told him. "If you want to give us a breakdown that's a bit more line-by-line, I'd welcome that."

Asked about the \$50,000 "miscellaneous" line item, Gidley mentioned water main breaks and emergency sewer repairs.

"We get government mandates coming down from Massachusetts - especially [the Department of Environmental Protection]," Gidley said. "We have no clue this stuff is coming, we have no notice, and we're given a very small amount of time to comply."

Leisure Woods's management has also been meeting with the Orange board of health, which has asked the company to produce up-to-date septic system inspection reports.

Gidley's lawyer John Kuzinevich had said at the June 11 hearing that inspecting all the septic systems at the park would cost around \$40,000, and that this cost was factored into the \$105,650 "maintenance" projection.

However, Peirce, who also serves on the board of health, said the company was mischaracterizing the request as a mandate to inspect every septic system. "It was not our intent to make you do a bunch of expensive work," she said at that hearing. "When we were responding to a public information request - that you guys filed - we found that our files were incomplete."

Last Tuesday, Peirce asked whether a \$30,000 line for "professional fees" included payments to Kuzinevich.

Kuzinevich said that it did, and agreed that the figure could be reduced by \$10,000, but he pointed out the company's extensive communication with the board of health on the septic matter.

"Oh, I remember," Peirce said. "You called

us bad names."

Kuzinevich grinned. "I was hoping you'd forget," he said.

The board asked for specifics about Leisure Woods's four employees. They learned that Adam Gidley, Glenn's son, receives \$50,000 annually to work for 20 to 30 hours each week as the park's operations manager. Glenn Gidley declined to say whether his son was also being paid by any of the other six mobile home parks listed on the website for Salem Manufactured Homes, a Salem, New Hampshire-based company he also owns.

"I'm not here to discuss what anybody's compensation is, other than specifically what involves Leisure Woods Estates," he said. "I also want you to realize that these positions are being covered by family because we really can't afford staff, at the numbers we're getting to do these jobs."

Gidley emphasized that the manufactured-home business, which describes itself as a "thriving, vertically integrated family business" on its website, has no stake in the Orange park. "Salem Manufactured Homes, or any other Gidley-related entity, has no interest in the ownership of Leisure Woods Estates," he told the rent control board.

Salem's website includes Leisure Woods in a listing titled "Our Communities." "When living in one of the Salem Manufactured Homes communities," its description of the Orange park reads, "you can be assured of excellent management, maintenance and care of the property."

Leisure Woods resident Debbie Higgins asked about a "rumor going around" that Gidley had sold the park. Gidley replied that he had not, and that it was not listed for sale.

"You're better off dealing with us than some big out-of-state corporation," he added.

After over an hour of discussion in the sweltering auditorium, the public hearing was closed and the meeting was adjourned as a severe thunderstorm swept through town. The

board's next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 14 at 6 p.m.

#### GILL from page A1

Regardless of the positions available, Redmond warned that "recruiting will be pretty tough." He said Greenfield is currently hiring cops with a starting pay of \$60,000 to \$70,000, and an additional \$10,000 starting bonus. Redmond also blamed new state regulations for making it harder to find new recruits.

Redmond and town administrator Ray Purington will interview applicants for the sergeant position, with the hope of the town adding another full-time officer afterwards.

The selectboard also increased the pay rate for detail officers from \$55 to \$60 an hour, to keep it in

in 1878 when it was built, and the first to use steel-spun cables. To top it off, the anchorage stones contain fossilized armored mudballs, a rare geological formation beloved by local naturalists.

Historical commission member Bob Perry said the group is looking for a stone mason who knows how to repoint the structure to keep it intact, but that the vegetation covering it is exacerbating the problem. "It's getting to the point where if we don't do something, what we're trying to protect is deteriorating," he said. "And once it's gone, it's gone."

ical commission to put together a list of maintenance needs with estimated costs so they could determine next steps. They also made plans to temporarily place Jersey barriers in front of the sign so cars cannot park there, while the town considers a long-term solution.

can be scheduled with Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA). She said FRTA has hired a new "transit ambassador" to teach people how to access those services.

Members of the group Gill Neighbors attended the meeting, explaining they offer free rides for the elderly, but have had very few requests for help. The volunteers can also pick up medicines, groceries, and library books as needed.

Crochier suggested they find ways to advertise their services not only to the elderly, but also to their family members.

Incidentally, those seeking sup-The selectboard asked the histor- port from Gill Neighbors should

for the town in exchange for reduced property tax bills.

Ryan also recommended formalizing a plan to protect the most vulnerable during emergencies. She said that the officials of small towns often know where vulnerable residents live, but that putting together a formal action plan will help ensure no one is left behind in times of crisis.

#### **Other Business**

The selectboard approved a food truck license for Ryan Grandmont, operating at the Leaf Joy property at 1 Main Road. The license is contingent upon there being no successful appeals of a special zoning permit approved earlier in the month. The board approved shortening the early voting hours for the September primary and November presidential elections. "What they want is for me to have early voting on all the hours that I'm here," said town clerk Doreen Stevens. "That's just not practical." During the last election, Stevens said, around 13 people came to town hall for early voting. The board declared many nozzles and hoses from the fire department as "surplus equipment," allowing the department to sell or dispose of them. They also signed a sewer commitment just shy of \$55,000, to be collected from the Riverside neighborhood's sewer users. Crochier announced that every town in the region will be receiving Narcan boxes to install at key places. Narcan is an over-the-counter treatment that can save lives during an opioid overdose.



line with other area departments, with future increases tied to the town's regular cost-of-living increases. Detail officers work temporarily for public events or road worksites.

#### A Bridge to the Past

The Gill historical commission is pleading for the protection of the old suspension bridge abutment on Riverview Drive. "Currently, a lack of regular maintenance for these bridge parts has allowed unwanted foliage and overgrown trees to threaten their safety," the commissioners wrote in a letter to the selectboard.

The commission also asked for clearer signage about parking at the spot, as cars often block the bridge's explanatory kiosk.

The abutment and anchorage structures are the last remnants of a red suspension bridge crossing the river, engineered by the same company that built the Brooklyn Bridge. It was the sixth-longest suspension bridge on the continent

#### **Growing Old in Gill**

What shall we do in the face of time's irrevocable onward march, as daily tasks become more difficult for our aging bodies? Meg Ryan, a public health nurse with Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG), has an action plan. Ryan gave the selectboard a few recommendations that came out of a regional needs assessment for creating "age-friendly" communities.

One big challenge cited in the report is transportation in rural communities. "Transportation is a major problem all over the region, and a major barrier to accessing almost everything," Ryan said. While there are currently no bus stops in Gill, Ryan noted that on-demand rides call (413) 863-9446.

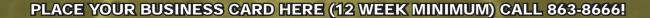
Another big obstacle reported to be faced by the elderly is finding accessible and affordable housing. Ryan commended Gill's zoning laws, which allow for accessory dwelling units (ADUs) attached to houses, allowing residents to create more housing at lower costs. She recommended legalizing detached ADUs as well, to open up more housing possibilities.

Crochier expressed interest in investigating short-term rental laws, which regulate dwellings listed on Airbnb and similar sites. He pointed to places like Boston, where only houses occupied by their owners may offer short-term rentals, with the aim of improving the housing market for long-term residents.

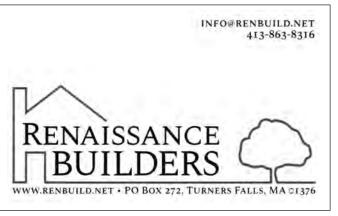
To help elders stay in their homes, Ryan recommended that Gill consider a senior tax work-off program, saying it could "provide meaningful employment and help with housing affordability and social interaction." The program would allow those over 60 to work

The selectboard's next meeting will be held Monday, July 29 at 5:30 p.m.











#### LEVERETT from page A1

run," the earmark showed "the investment interest that the state would have in a project here in Leverett."

Hankinson said he believed both Comerford and the state were interested in affordable housing, and that this could be how the money would be used if the bill were to pass, but that the possibility is "far down the road."

Selectboard member Patricia Duffy estimated it might be a "twoyear legislative journey" before the bill comes up for a final vote.

Resident Carol Heim asked about the process the town would use to request the money, expressing concern with the potential for decisions to be made, or "a direction to be established," before residents get an opportunity to weigh in.

Hankinson replied that "right now, we don't really have much of anything on the table," so it was hard to explain a future process, but that having a pending \$1 million earmark might be useful in moving projects "in one direction or another."

"At some point," he added, "I assure you, the residents of the town of Leverett will be made aware of what is being discussed, and the residents of the town of Leverett will be able to weigh in."

"It's a long way off," said Duffy. "And it's not guaranteed," added town clerk Lisa Stratford.

Richard Nathhorst suggested that Heim attend a planning board meeting, where she could "grill Greg all you like."

#### Hiring

The selectboard appointed Elena Pepe-Salutric to the part-time position of programming librarian. Library director Hannah Paessel said Pepe-Salutric currently also works part-time at the Montague public libraries, has worked in the public programs office of the American Libraries Association, and has experience in museum programming for a wide range of age groups.

The board also appointed Kari Ridge as a part-time assistant to the town clerk, for five to ten hours per week. Stratford said Ridge was on the 250th anniversary committee as well as the board of directors at the Leverett Co-op, and had experience as a journalist and editor.

Stratford said Ridge would be paid out of an unused election reimbursement account mandated by the state.

School committee chair Jya Plavin reported that Siby Adina had verbally accepted an offer of the position of Leverett Elementary School (LES) principal, and is expected to start August 1.

#### Dredging

The board discussed preparing for a possible grant application for dredging work in Leverett Pond next year to combat invasive milfoil.

Hankinson suggested that the Friends of Leverett Pond, a nonprofit group whose website lists him as president, could help. He said he was encouraged by the results of the recent use of an "eco-harvester" in reducing milfoil by mechanical, rather than chemical, means.

Duffy said the board should think about what it wants the end result to be. She said she wanted to keep the pond "the way Leverett has grown to love," and wanted to make sure any future project did not encourage more and larger boats.

#### Complaining

The board discussed a resident's allegation that a transfer station worker "intercepts items residents drop off... to sell for profit." The complaint asserted that it would be a violation of ethics laws if he was an employee, and questioned whether the practice was "in alignment with the values and principles of our community transfer station" if he was a volunteer.

Residents often drop off unwanted items at the transfer station's free shed for reuse.

Transfer station coordinator Annette Herda said she had reached out to the complainant to discuss the matter, but received no reply. She clarified that the man in question was a volunteer, and said she had no suspicion he was profiting from his involvement. She described his work as "exceedingly helpful" and "extremely valuable," and said that taking items home was "kind of a gray area," and part of being a volunteer.

Duffy, who is a paid employee of the transfer station, said the volunteer in question "might take a board" at times, but agreed that he was helpful, and added that if he didn't volunteer his services, the town would have to hire someone to do what he does.

A question arose regarding the man being a resident of Hadley, and whether there were rules governing non-residents' activities at the transfer station. Herda said there was no policy on that subject.

Hankinson said he had seen the volunteer taking items from the transfer station, but "didn't want to throw him out on his ear," and said that if he was getting a social benefit from helping, "that's wonderful." He suggested that Herda speak with the volunteer, and that the board revisit the issue in a month.

Herda replied that she had already brought the concerns up with the volunteer, and that she believed he "gets it."

#### **Other Business**

The selectboard signed agreements for transfer station recycling services, as well as state-required biannual landfill monitoring.

The board responded to a recent discussion among the town's emergency team about the potential need for emergency cooling centers. No requests have been made for such facilities, but Hankinson said he was concerned with the town's ability to provide one should the need suddenly arise. Members agreed that the safety complex should be the first option for a cooling center, and the first floor of the town hall the second.

The board discussed a recent malfunction of the sprinkler system at LES which caused a leak. While the leak was relatively minor and already repaired, Duffy said she wanted to put the status of the sprinkler system on a future agenda so the board could do something about it "proactively."

Plavin said she was concerned about water damage causing mold. Duffy reported that fire chief Brian Cook was working on installing NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING MONTAGUE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The Montague Historical Commission will meet remotely via Zoom on **Thursday**, **August 15**, **2024 at 5 p.m.** 

At this Meeting, the Montague Historical Commission will conduct a PUBLIC HEARING, in accordance with the provisions Article 35 of Montague's General Bylaws, Montague Demolition Delay Bylaw, to consider the following demolition application request:

**73 Fifth Street (Parcel #04-0-0205), Sedley Henry –** Request to demolish a portion of a circa 1890 three-family home.

Meeting login instruction is available at www.montague-ma.gov/calendar.

For more information about this item(s), please contact Maureen Pollock, Planner, at *planner@montague-ma.gov*.

## Affordable HOME OWNERSHIP Housing Opportunity

## 42 Cleveland St. Greenfield

A single family home	Household Size	Maximum Income
3 bedroom	2	\$70,100
	3	\$78,850
\$200,000 This home is deed restricted. Applicants must be income eligible. Other restrictions apply.	4	\$87,600
	5	\$94,650
	6	\$101,650

Your total household income must be at or below the listed amounts. Total household income includes earned and unearned income received by all members of your household who are 18 \*. The application process and criteria will includes 3rd party income verification, preapproval letter from mortgage lender, proof of assets and other verifications.

#### Application Deadline: October 21, 2024 4:00 PM

#### Lottery to be held November 4, 2024



For an application or questions, contact Rural Development, Inc.: 413-863-9781 or TTY/TDD 800-439-2370 Email: RuralHomes413@gmail.com

chains with "Authorized Personnel Only" signs across the doors of the garage at the station so it can leave them open and show off the fire engines to passersby. Duffy said one of the goals was to promote community awareness of the fire department, and that she thought this was a good idea. "People like to see what they got," she said.

Hankinson commented that he had seen a town in Canada that "shuts down their main drag every night" and puts out a fire engine with its lights on. "Peo-

ple have fun," he said. "It boosts conviviality."



## **GREAT FALLS** FARMERS MARKET

Every Saturday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. May to October

#### A5

# Call for Artists: Our Fourth Wrapping Paper Edition!

#### **By REPORTER STAFF**

**TURNERS FALLS** – People have been wrapping up presents in newspaper for many years. In 2020, the *Montague Reporter*, a weekly non-profit community newspaper, invited seven local artists to design pages to be used exclusively as unique and recyclable wrapping paper. During that Thanksgiving week, when we normally skip publication, we printed the our first Wrapping Paper Edition.

The project became an important fundraiser for our little independent paper, and subsequent Special Wrapping Paper Editions came out in 2022 and 2023.

The *Montague Reporter* announces a call for artists for the 2024 Wrapping Paper Edition. All artists from western Mass and southern Vermont are invited to submit designs and proposals for wrapping paper pages from now until the September 1 deadline.

Each artist will have the space of two full adjacent pages for their design, making a double page measuring approximately 20 inches by 22 inches. Artists may design in full color or in black and white, in any style. The designs do not have to reference holidays.

All are encouraged to send us ideas! Submis-



sions may be portfolio samples, rough sketches, or finished work.

The paper offers a \$200 stipend to each of seven chosen artists, thanks to several anonymous donors. The selected artists will also receive five copies of the Wrapping Paper Edition for their personal use.

The Special Wrapping Paper Edition will be sold between Thanksgiving and the end of December in local stores and online, at the special price of \$5 each or five for \$20. All proceeds go to support the paper. Artists and designers may submit up to three designs before the September 1 deadline. Our submission form is available online this year at *tinyurl.com/more-wrap*.

For those who can't use the online form, send your name, address, phone number, and up to three images for a unique wrapping paper page to *features@montaguereporter.org* with "Wrap" in the subject line.

We have a separate Youth category for artists who are 15 years old or younger, and we will select at least one finalist from this group.

Proposals and submissions are due **Sunday**, **September 1**. Selected artists will be contacted on Monday, September 16. You will then have the rest of September and October to finish your design.

More information, including examples of previous winning entries and digital file preparation guidelines, is available at *montaguereporter.org*.

If you have further questions, please contact Nina Rossi at (413) 834-8800 or *features*@ *montaguereporter.org*.

And if you are a shop or business owner who would like to support local journalism by selling copies of the Wrapping Paper Edition, please get in touch with Garth Shaneyfelt at *garth@montaguereporter.org*.





Eat In or Take Out! BURRITOS, BOWLS, SOFT TACOS, QUESADILLAS Now Serving BBC Steel Rail

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#### SCENE from page A1

The town plans to begin by using an additional \$132,000 grant from the state agency MassDevelopment for project design, which the selectboard discussed this week.

The rather abrupt double windfall no doubt accounted for the enthusiasm at last week's celebration. Numerous state and local officials took turns thanking each other for several years of hard work.

Cash introduced Bonnie Heiple. the commissioner of the state Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), who cited by name numerous members of her staff as "the people who made this happen." Heiple also praised the Biden-Harris administration for spearheading the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act in 2021, the source of the Brownfields grant funds.

Cash then introduced Montague's state representative, Natalie Blais, calling her "a leader in providing the kinds of votes that bring environmental protection, and economic development, to this part of Massachusetts." Blais thanked the EPA, Massachusetts's senator Ed Markey, governor Maura Healey, and local officials in Montague.

"I would be remiss if I did not mention my predecessor Steve Kulik, who did secure these \$5 million at the state level for the Strathmore," Blais said, referring to the 2018 bond bill which was the source of the state's pledge.

Changing gears, Cash introduced David Brule, a leader of the Greenfield-based Nolumbeka Project which is, according to its mission statement, a "non-tribal organization committed to honoring the Northeastern tribes." Brule serves on the Montague historical commission and chairs a committee overseeing federally-funded research into the 1676 massacre and battle during King Philip's War at what is now called Turners Falls.

Brule recounted his own experience as a Montague resident who

moved away and then returned, and spoke of the local history of indigenous people. "What we have here is a 10,000-year history of Native people, living right here," he said, thanking two former town administrators - the late Frank Abbondanzio and the recently retired Steve Ellis - for their support for greater recognition of Native ties to the land.

The highlight of the event was the appearance of US senator Ed Markey, who described a close relationship between his career in Washington and the Brownfields grant program. In 1994, he said, he was a member of the committee in the House of Representatives that created the program.

"It was [for] communities like this," he said, "and Lawrence, where my father grew up with the mills along the Merrimack River, or Malden, where I grew up - which was using the Malden River to dump all of these dangerous chemicals into the water."

Then in 2021, Markey said, as a member of the United States Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, he "worked to make sure we had a massive amount of new funding for an expanded Brownfields program."

"It was Montague that I was thinking about, because they know what the problem is... and have a plan to do something about it," he continued. "But, as we all know... a vision without funding is a hallucination."

Inviting questions from the audience, Markey was asked if he was concerned that the funding could be "pulled back" if Biden were not to be re-elected this fall. He answered in the negative, because the funds had already been appropriated in a bipartisan law.

Markey was also asked about the concern that the mills' demolition would "erase" the industrial history of Turners Falls.

"That's a very, very good question," he responded. "And of



Top: After the speeches from the podium, US senator Ed Markey held a press gaggle. Above: Montague town administrator Walter Ramsey said the town hopes to find a way to honor the site's industrial history.

course, for the children to know what had been here, they have to be able to have some ability to walk where that past had existed." Ramsey said that the town

would attempt to preserve some of the foundation of the factory complex, and would need to coordinate with the state historical commission in designing the project in

propriate way to have interpretive elements - to make sure we honor the industrial history that was here."

order to "figure out what's an ap-



#### NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

# Town Will Accommodate Sensitivity, Examine Dragon's Underside

#### **By JOSH HEINEMANN**

The beginning and the end of the Wendell selectboard's regular meeting on July 17 were capped with other meetings. In the hour be-

again in 2007. He said he had already talked with town coordinator Glenn Johnson-Mussad, and knows he has to have a public meeting inviting neighbors within 300 feet concerning the sale and license application. He asked

commodating people with disabilities. She said other towns she has contacted through a moderators' listserv have offered an overflow room with an audio-video connection and an assistant moderator.

#### Home Visits

Budine said she had met with Springfield-based tech support company Entre Technologies to discuss ongoing issues Wendell has had with their responses to comput-

fore the meeting of the full board, chair Laurie DiDonato and member Gillian Budine met in their first working session to develop policies for use of the meeting room and other town facilities, especially the town hall, by community groups.

And after an hour of open meeting, the board went into executive session, "to discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body..." Members of the citizens' group No Assault & Batteries (NAB) and "sprawlbuster" Al Norman attended the executive session.

Bill Landry and Scott McPhearson, owners of Scott's Garage in west Wendell, came to the public part of the meeting to tell the selectboard - and let townspeople know about their intention to sell the business to Carev and Jake Johnson.

The Johnsons have been running the vehicle repair and Class III parts salvage business for ten years, with no complaints from neighbors. They also want to apply for a Class II license which would allow them to sell used cars. (A Class I license allows selling new cars.)

Landry said he and McPhearson bought the yard and the Class III license from Joe Diemand, gave it up in 2005, and then bought it

about using the meeting room for that purpose.

Johnson-Mussad said the selectboard grants the license, and asked if the new owners would keep the name "Scott's." They did not answer.

Landry said that when he and McPhearson bought the business, former town coordinator Nancy Aldrich had provided the names and addresses of neighbors to be notified, and Johnson-Mussad said he would do the same. After the public meeting, the owners may set a date and close the sale.

#### **Meeting Accessibility**

Town clerk Anna Wetherby and moderator Katie Nolan came to discuss a request that came to the selectboard for accommodating chemical sensitivity at a town meeting. Setting up a remote connection would make participation possible, but Wetherby said Massachusetts does not allow remote voting.

A remote participant may watch, listen, and be recognized by the moderator to speak, she explained, but there is no way to check the voter into the meeting, confirm that they are an actual person, or keep their ballot votes secret.

Nolan said the Massachusetts Office on Disability says each town should have an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) coordinator whose job is to deal with ac-

Asked who Wendell's ADA coordinator was, Johnson-Mussad said, "Probably me."

Nolan said she thought the best place to start would be a conversation with the chemically-sensitive person. DiDonato said she would invite the person.

#### **Country Store Water**

Johnson-Mussad said he had not yet gotten a chance to ask the Small Town Administrators forum about how to charge a private business for use of a public water supply that is not made available to all residents.

Patty Scutari, proprietor of the Wendell Country Store, which has requested a hookup to the municipal well, said she will need that information by the end of August in order to begin to price materials.

Budine said the town still needs to know how much water the store and the occasionally-open Deja Brew Pub use, information which Scutari's water operator should be able to provide. That has to be added to expected use by the Wendell Meetinghouse, another private facility which has already been allowed a connection to the municipal system.

DiDonato said that while "we want to help Patty" and the store, her concern was how the town would get paid for the water use.

ing and information-sharing problems. She learned that in the past year Wendell used only 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> hours of the 20 allowed under the contract for scheduled on-site visits.

The Entre representative offered to visit once a month. Budine was told Entre will look at help tickets electronically, and promised a response within 90 minutes of a question by telephone or email.

Johnson-Mussad said librarian Miriam Warner had more confidence in service offered by the Athol-based firm Tech 1. He and selectboard member Paul Doud suggested that Tech 1 could subcontract under Entre.

DiDonato added that on-site tech support visits should include the library.

#### **Other Business**

Resident and assistant town engineer Alistair McMartin asked if the town could easily accept a donation of the model dragon that starred in the recent Misfit Prom parade. He said it might hang from the rafters in the office building hallway.

Board members agreed that someone would have to look at the dragon and see what its underside looks like. They thought it might stay in the office building for a while, but not forever.

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#### **RAINS** from page A1

commission," Smith read. "Once sediment has impacted and reached a water body, the whole project" – in other words, the 53 acres of the farm which lie in Montague, but not the 60 acres across the town line in Sunderland – "is now under jurisdiction."

#### **Jurisdiction Justification**

The WPA itself – Massachusetts General Laws Ch. 131, S. 40 – is only a few dozen pages long, but the procedures local commissions and the state Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) must follow to carry out their responsibilities are laid out in great detail in an accompanying 245-page code of regulations, 310 CMR 10.00.

These regulations state that under certain circumstances – when an activity outside a resource area or buffer zone already "has in fact altered an Area Subject to Protection" – a local conservation commission "shall impose such conditions on the activity... as it deems necessary" to prevent further harm.

Further guidance is provided by MassDEP in a handbook for conservation commissions. "[S]erious violations with continuing damage to resource areas should be addressed immediately," it advises, "even if you do not know all the details. For example, you may know that a wetland has been altered, but you may not know precisely where the boundary was before the alteration."

With the con com's expanded jurisdiction established, commissioner Sean Werle made a motion to "issue an enforcement order which includes a cease-and-desist on work happening on that property that isn't 100% related to mitigating this erosion problem," covering all Falls Farm land in Montague.

"I don't think that they should be continuing to farm until this is completely fixed," he added.

The commission discussed the motion at some length, deciding that the proposed enforcement order should also require the farm to hire a Certified Professional of Erosion and Sediment Control (CPESC) to "assess the subject properties and provide a report with recommendations for fixing the issues."

With Fairbrother's permission Dr. James Arcoleo and Mike Pietras, the farm's owner and engineer, joined the discussion. They asked for permission to continue farming in arwould be proposed and voted upon. On Tuesday afternoon, the meeting was postponed due to a scheduling error; a new date is expected to be posted soon.

#### Mud, Mud, Glorious Mud

Town officials are concerned that erosion on Falls Farm is creating two distinct problems downstream: water pollution by silt, known as "siltation," and infrastructure damage, which is not within the con com's scope. When mud- and silt-saturated water overflows a culvert basin and flows out onto and across Meadow Road – as has happened several times in recent months, including twice on July 17 alone – it may cause both problems.

Falls Farm has deployed a variety of erosion control barriers, and Arcoleo and Pietras have reported to the Montague and Sunderland con coms that they continue to improve them. On July 2, Arcoleo told Sunderland's commission he was planting cover crops on some of the bare land, and that "once the roots are established, it would take a 40-year flood to wash that out."

"We get one every other month," chair Jennifer Unkles replied. "That's why the trees were there."

At last Thursday's meeting in Montague, which followed two evenings of intense rainfall, Falls Farm engineer Mike Pietras said that during "the last two storms, the site has performed pretty well."

Fairbrother read aloud from an email Pietras had sent that morning, which reported that "the erosion control barriers... performed well in that no siltation was observed to have passed through towards the resource areas."

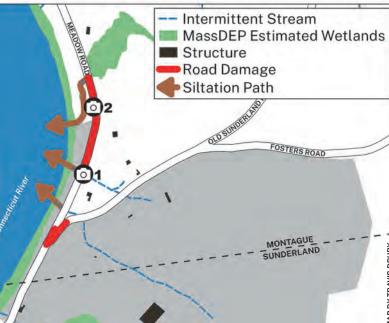


DPW laborer-in-training Cameron Velez had to wade into the floodwaters twice last Wednesday to unclog this culvert basin.

clogged with mud, but with "sticks and non-silt debris."

"Well, you know, you're right," town planner Maureen Pollock told him. "DPW said that they saw, actually, multiple vegetables."

One public works department employee confirmed this to the *Reporter*, adding that cucumbers were frequent offenders, and that once a beautiful red beet was found. On the evening of July 17, an onion was visible among the foot-thick layer of mud and debris shoveled off of the grate by laborer-in-training Cameron Velez to allow a pond of muddy water several feet deep to drain through the culvert. It was Velez's second time in the same culvert basin, "waist deep in the big muddy,"



"Your siltation control isn't working, and if your guy said they were, I don't know where he was when he was looking," Fairbrother told Arcoleo. "They weren't working – I've got plenty of pictures and video to prove it. So, *please*, work with us."

Multiple attempts to reach Dr. Arcoleo for comment this week were not answered as of press time.

#### **Power Town Town Powers**

Beyond helping prevent storm damage, control flooding, and reduce pollution – among the original stated purposes of the 1972 Wetlands Protection Act – forest adjacent to wetlands may hold another advantage over manmade erosion control barriers. In 1986, "wildlife habitat" was added to the list of legally protected interests.

To any of these ends, the WPA empowers local conservation commissions to issue orders demanding violators act to control siltation or erosion they have caused, mitigate its damage, and restore affected wetlands.

But the strength of an enforcement order is not the same everywhere: in and of itself, the WPA does not grant con coms the power to levy fines. Instead, the state allows any town to enact its own stricter wetlands bylaw, which may allow its con com to fine violators. A wetlands bylaw must be passed by town meeting and approved by the Secretary of State applicability of the regulations," and that "[i]f it is a situation that a municipal conservation commission has been working on, the Department will consider that local information."

Accounts of similar cases in other towns may shed more light. Mass-DEP can investigate quietly on its own terms, and sometimes announces its investigation only through issuance of an administrative order demanding compliance.

One key difference from a town enforcement order is that Mass-DEP can declare that if the recipient "fails to comply with this Order, Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 131, Section 40 provides for civil penalties of up to \$25,000 per violation per day, for violations of the statute, its implementing regulations and this Order."

Such an order was issued by MassDEP in April in the Berkshire County town of Sandisfield, where the local con com had issued an enforcement order in December after a culvert installed by a town-hired contractor failed catastrophically. MassDEP's order revealed it had conducted an "unannounced site inspection" in February, which went unmentioned both at subsequent town con com meetings and in a *Berkshire Eagle* investigative article in March.

In addition to in-person inspections, MassDEP brags that it has pioneered the use of aerial reconnaissance to identify illegally altered wetlands by comparing time series of images. At the Montague con com's June meeting, Pollock demonstrated some of the surveillance capabilities at MassDEP's disposal when she used state mapping tools to show the extent of land clearing and alteration on Falls Farm between 2019 and 2023. In a 2008 article describing seven situations across the state in which it used aerial surveillance, MassDEP wrote: "Our first-in-thenation aerial wetlands enforcement program continues to pinpoint numerous areas across the state where wetlands have been lost to alterations that were not approved by state or local authorities." When asked whether MassDEP officials have made a site inspection to Falls Farm and its surroundings, Pollock said she had "no further comments at this time."

eas that are, in Pietras's words, "removed from the erosion conditions."

"We have vegetables that we have to harvest for the CSA," Arcoleo added. "We have stuff we have to spray and take care of."

After further questioning, he clarified that "almost all the vegetables are in Sunderland, but the trees – we have to take care of them," referring to apple trees planted in a field along Old Sunderland Road.

Commissioner Margaux Reckard warned that it might be difficult to designate certain areas of the farm as separate from the problem. "If we can't establish causation, it's a little tricky to say 'Oh, this is outside the resource area, or outside the impact area'.... They would be arbitrary boundaries, at this point."

"I'd rather take a week and get it right," said Fairbrother.

The commission did not vote on the motion, but decided instead to hold a special meeting on Tuesday, July 23 at which a written enforcement order, which may or may not exempt certain areas of the property, 0 250 500 ft

Falls Farm, in gray, with the locations of the photos above (1) and on Page A1 (2).

"When I got this email earlier in just 12 hours.

today, and when I read that, I was speechless that that statement could possibly be made," Fairbrother exclaimed. "Now, let me ask: Who observed? When and where?"

Pietras said he had been told this by Bob Liebler, the farm's site supervisor.

"Well," Fairbrother replied, "you need to talk to your guy in the field." Pulling out his phone, he showed Arcoleo and Pietras a video he had taken a day earlier of an 800-foot river of mud flowing rapidly down Meadow Road from the clogged culvert and into Cranberry Pond Brook just before the brook joins the Connecticut River.

Arcoleo said Liebler had told him the culvert grate itself wasn't While for now the DPW's time in the neighborhood is largely being spent unclogging the culvert and removing debris from the road, both Meadow Road and Old Sunderland Road are apparently deteriorating. The ground beneath the river side of the 800-foot stretch of Meadow Road is being washed away, leaving the edge of the asphalt unsupported.

Meanwhile, gravel and wood chips can be seen washing down the hill from a recently-laid Falls Farm driveway and down a section of Old Sunderland Road that descends steeply to Meadow Road. The road's surface has become riddled with fresh potholes, and gravel, mud, and organic debris accumulate in a wide fan where the two roads meet. ····· / ·····/ / ·····/

So far, 220 of Massachusetts's 351 municipalities have enacted wetlands bylaws, mostly in the eastern half of the state; typical penalties range from \$100 to \$300 per day. Only five of Franklin County's 26 municipalities have their own wetlands bylaws. Montague does not, while Sunderland – which is now dealing with different potential wetlands violations on its half of Falls Farm – has had one since 1990.

While Montague's con com cannot issue its own fines in the event that its proposed enforcement order is not followed, the specter of Mass-DEP assuming regulatory authority from the commission may encourage local compliance.

#### **Dept. of Elusive Procedures**

When asked about the method by which MassDEP decides whether to take responsibility for a municipal wetlands investigation, acting deputy regional director Sean Gonsalves provided a brief statement explaining that the department "conducts an initial assessment to determine the

Asked the same question, Gonsalves replied: "MassDEP cannot comment on any issues

that may be investigatory or enforcement sensitive."



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#### JULY 25, 2024

#### MONTAGUE from page A1

different categories of user. These rates, in turn, are set by comparing the user revenue needed in the department's budget with the total recorded water usage.

Little said that if this "old method" was used, the rates would need to increase by 33% for all categories of users. She then showed a new method, recommended by a consulting firm, that she said more closely tied users' bills with their actual usage. It appeared to produce lower rates for nearly all categories.

Little also proposed that the first biannual bills be sent out in August, rather than October, and that water use measurements from the most recent winter be used for the calculations, rather than the previous winter, as is the current practice.

The presentation created confusion, and brought numerous questions from the board. Member Matt Lord said he thought it was "a good idea to have a new system," but said he "could not wrap [his] head around it, based on the materials."

Selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz questioned the projection that using the current method, the rates would need to increase by 33%. More discussion revealed errors in projecting the hypothetical rates using the current method.

The board decided the proposal needed further discussion, which will take place at its August 5 meeting, even though if it is adopted, bills would be sent out in the middle of that month.

In other sewer news, the board awarded Flowpoint Environmental Systems, Inc. a contract to build a new septage receiving station at the CWF. The \$221,380 contract will be funded by the town's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

Little said the current receiving station is "just a pit with a hole in it," while the new unit will "measure flow," collect samples for testing, and calculate users' bills.

Town administrator Walter Ramsey noted that the contract amount was below the level of ARPA funds originally set aside for the project. Little said the difference would help pay for additional site work.

#### Lucky Turbine

Meeting in the afterglow of the Strathmore demolition funding celebration the previous week (see ar*ticle, Page A1*), the board discussed the first step in the process, which will be a demolition design, funded by a separate \$132,000 grant from the state agency MassDevelopment. Ramsey focused the discussion on options for preserving the one building in the factory complex not owned by the town, which houses a small hydroelectric turbine. A complete demolition of the adjoining structures would destabilize the hydro plant.

ing building with new retaining walls, or demolishing the existing structure and building new exterior walls. The owner of the plant, Eagle Creek Renewable Energy - a Canadian firm which according to its website owns 85 hydroelectric facilities in the United States - has supported the town looking into both options, Ramsey said.

The board did not take any votes on the issue. He said he would bring a contract with the engineering firm Tighe & Bond, which has previously drawn up similar plans for the Strathmore's demolition, to the August 5 meeting.

#### **Can't Get There**

Assistant town administrator Chris Nolan-Zeller updated the selectboard on the project to replace a culvert on South Ferry Road in Montague Center. He showed the board the road closure plan, saying it would be a "very straightforward culvert replacement" in an area that is "sparsely traveled," so "nobody is going to be blocked by this," since it is possible to get around the area by alternative routes.

Nolan-Zeller said the project is expected to start in early August, with much of the work done by the public works department, though an outside firm has been hired to remove an asbestos pipe. He predicted the work would take between six and eight weeks.

Nolan-Zeller also reported on the ongoing project to mitigate flooding on Montague City Road. The project, he said, had been waiting on a certificate of completion from the town conservation commission, which was approved last week and is now awaiting signatures.

> Complete demolition of the adjoining structures would destabilize the privately-owned hydro plant. Ramsey suggested either strengthening the building with new retaining walls, or demolishing the existing structure and building new exterior walls.

When it is signed, he said, the state grant that funded the project will be fully closed out, but he added that the town still needed to approve a contract amendment with the engineering firm Wright-Pierce to cover "unanticipated permitting" required by the Army Corps of Engineers. The \$9,169 would be paid for by previous town appropriations for the work.

project will not be completed until next June.

#### **Other Business**

Airport manager Bryan Camden received approval to purchase a new mower, funded by \$16,059 in ARPA funds, as did a request by town planner Maureen Pollock to apply for a Complete Streets grant from MassDOT. Pollock proposed focusing on a study of traffic-calming measures in Montague Center, which received a good deal of support from the selectboard, though Ramsey recommended combining it with another grant to look at similar needs throughout the town.

The board did not take a vote on the grant application, but agreed to revisit the topic.

The selectboard donned its "personnel board" hats to discuss the process for hiring a new town accountant to replace Carolyn Olsen, who will retire in September. Ramsey told the board that the committee charged with screening applicants for the job had unanimously voted the previous week to recommend Angelica Desroches, who currently serves as the Greenfield city accountant.

Ramsey said that Desroches "comes highly qualified" for the job, having served in Greenfield since 2020. She also works as part-time accountant in Leyden, and has experience in several other small towns. "She has the skills and a really good attitude," Ramsey said. "She's local, and committed to being local."

Ramsey noted that a hiring committee would typically present the board with several finalists, but that in this search, "virtually all" of the other ten applicants had no municipal experience.

Desroches attended Monday's meeting, but selectboard members had no questions for her. "I won't subject you to any," said Lord.

"I don't mind any questions at all," Desroches replied.

The board voted to accept the search committee's recommendation, and authorized Kuklewicz and Ramsey to negotiate a contract with Desroches for approval at the August 5 meeting.

The board appointed Zaharia Nichita as an alternate member of the zoning board of appeals for one year, and authorized a credit card to administrative assistant Angela Amidon for town-related purchases. The board also voted to endorse state "stewardship" legislation, which would tax paint sold by commercial establishments. The revenue from the tax would go to a private non-profit called PaintCare, which collects and reprocesses used paint. Stores would not have to agree to accept used paint, but those who do tend to be smaller dealers who benefit from the increased traffic, according to Tom Irwin, an advocate for the program who attended Monday's meeting.





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> Pam Porter Volunteer Ombudsman

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# I Pof the week ...

Homes located on streets with trees are susceptible to sewer and water pipe damage caused by tree roots. You can usually

Ramsey suggested investigating two options to address the problem: strengthening the exist-

The board approved the amendment

Nolan-Zeller reported that the South Street bridge in Montague Center, which is being replaced by the state Department of Transportation (MassDOT), had been closed for traffic that very day. He said the

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Amanda Gorman, The Hill We Climb



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#### YEAR 22 – NO. 33



FEATURES@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

#### **OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER**

JULY 25, 2024



## **By DAVID BRULE**

It is the privilege of the naturalist to concern himself with a world whose greater manifestations remain above and beyond the violences of men.

- Henry Beston

THE FLAT, ERVINGSIDE -It's been a quietly busy month along the river in this small domain called the Flat, on the edge of the village.

We've had a whole summer rolled into one long month: blistering heat, tropical downpours every few days, humidity that fogs over early-morning eyeballs in spite of strong coffee. And now this day at 7 a.m. we have a bright coolness of dew on the new-mown lawn.

The report from the edge of summer is filled with ephemeral scenes: the morning chorus comes on, a dozen young birds clamor and call. They chase their harried parents with flailing juvenile wings, wanting to be fed, just like when they were all greedy gaping ly's nest sometime in winter after a fresh fall of snow builds up a little pyramid shape, revealing the secret summer site.

HOUSE...

The time I spent last November cutting brush and leggy maple saplings has paid off for me and the wood thrush. He and his mate like the occasional margins among the trees where a pool of sunlight encourages low-growing maple leaf viburnum. I leave deep and shady spots over most of our river lowlands, but I do open up clearings here and there to make islands of light and sunshine. They help me see into the past too, back to the contours of great-grandfather's pasture lands.

The thrushes and their summer warbler neighbors, the redstarts, like the random open spaces, the sunshot circles bordered by the familiar towering oak and maple canopy that keeps all below shady and cool. I'm pleased to know my tinkering with the trees' growth presents some variety down there for the diverse woodland folk.

## Above: From Wendell Road in Montague, looking toward Poplar Mountain in Erving and beyond it to Gill.

# **Historical Society Spotlights Hydro Disaster at Wendell Depot**

#### **By SARAH ROBERTSON**

WENDELL - Prior to 1938, Wendell Depot was a bustling, industrious village, fueled by the Millers River and the abundant natural resources surrounding it. A sawmill, gristmill, tannery, blacksmith, silk mill, pail-making shop, and many other industries crowded the banks of the swift, shallow river. Workers populated the village, building homes, a general store, a barbershop, and a schoolhouse. A canal, originally dug in 1788, helped power the mills.

"Things were rockin', back in the day," Wendell Historical Society president Edward Hines told attendees at Tuesday night's presentation titled Troubled Waters: Wendell's Doomed Power Plant 1909-1938. "It was a compact little community with lots and lots of houses and businesses, but today you'd have no clue they ever existed."

Historical Society directors Pa-



The Athol-Orange Power Plant contributed 70% of the town of Wendell's tax base – until a single hurricane destroyed it.

joined Hines to share their extensive research on the hydropower plant built at Wendell Depot in 1910, and on the Hurricane of 1938, which devastated the village and nearly bankrupted the town. The event was co-sponsored by the Wendell Free Library and original-

was moved to the town hall to accommodate the nearly 60 people in attendance.

"The Athol-Orange power plant took the local production of electricity generated by waterpower to the next level," Hines said. "This was a big deal."

mouths back in the nest.

Some of the older, slightly mature youngsters already know where the morning goodies can be found on the seed tray. They wing in awkwardly, all angles and feathers in catlicks like certain human early adolescents, and they help themselves.

The scarlet tanager in the high maple wings through the brightening air. With no hint of treetop wind, his wingbeats scarcely cause a leaf to ripple. I look up, admiring for a split second, and then he's gone like a rainforest dream.

This slow-motion summer, barely moving, makes its way through the calendar. May it last as long as it wants. I silently speak to the spirit maiden of summer, suggesting she keep the pace slow. For who knows what is in store for us after this?

The afternoon heat bears down, the humidity lying on the landscape like a heavy wet blanket. Cicadas have begun their electric penetrating buzz, reminding us that the thermometer is at 90, just the way they like it.

The first summer woodcock has come down from its nesting territory up on Mineral Mountain, which towers over the neighborhood. The woodcock family will spend the rest of the summer in our woodlands along the river before disappearing for points south in November ahead of the frost.

The wood thrush sings at 7 a.m. in the cleansed air after an evening of rain. He's just down the path, not far. I'll probably find the fami-

Just the other day, restless and wondering what I would do for reading material, something sent me to the bookshelves in the upstairs north bedroom, the place where family relics, old clothes, photos, and ancient letters wind up in drawers and a jam-packed closet.

Some impulse had me take down my yellowed copy of The Outermost House by Henry Beston.

Beston had written about his year spent in a 16-by-20-foot beach shack atop a dune facing the Atlantic on the headlands of Nauset, back in 1928.

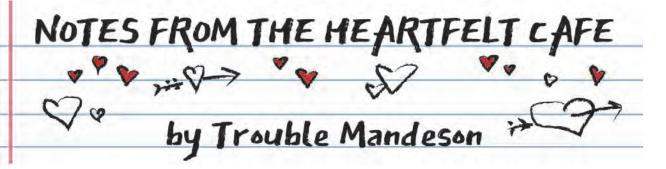
Maybe that impulse was the tidal pull of late July, winging me back in time to the Cape of my younger days. The Cape always embodied a mystical destination for many of us who found ourselves spending summers in this green Connecticut River Valley, far from the fabled Atlantic.

I know another summer will pass again when I won't make it to Cape Cod. But I have a plan.

When I was growing up, all my friends had their two weeks at the Cape, their fathers getting their yearly summer vacation away from the Esleeck or Keith paper mills, or time away from the GTD. Our family never went.

Not that I am a stranger to the Cape. For several summers in the 1960s, I finally got to go to the place I had imagined all those years. I got out of the tobacco fields of Hatfield and Whately and headed to Provincetown, where I took see WEST ALONG page B5 mela Richardson and Joseph Coll ly supposed to take place there, but

see **DISASTER** page B10



ilar to chimpanzees and bonobos,

our closest living relatives. The

discovery of coprolite, fossilized

feces, have given clues to humans'

era, about 2.8 million years ago, of-

ten considered a crucial point in our

evolution. With multiple human an-

It occurred during the Paleolithic

early diet.

**GREENFIELD** – This month I stumbled upon an article about how humans went from fruit and vegetable eaters to meat eaters, so I thought it would be interesting to learn more. Much of it is theoretical, as evidence of early human diet is difficult to find, but it's likely our earliest ancestors were herbivorous, eating foliage, fruits, and nuts, sim-

cestors concurrently evolving, each

MANDESON PHOTO A well-rounded diet that includes meat protein and plenty

of vegetables will supply enough of the much-needed vitamins and minerals our bodies need to remain healthy and vigorous.

with their own evolutionary adaptations and living in widely-varied environments, it was during this era that humans became omnivorous, eating raw meat and fish as new tools and technologies were developed.

In hot climates, plants would do fine for fueling the body, but in cold temperatures where plants may not survive year-round, meat would be a necessary food. As humans evolved and their brains grew larger, their diet changed to give those bigger brains a greater caloric intake. And, as rainforests transitioned into grassland, there were fewer plants to eat so calories had to be found from other food sources.

The diversity of our teeth - the incisors and canines of carnivores, good for biting, tearing, and ripping, and the chewing molars of herbivores - makes us omnivores, able to eat anything for the most part. Our very powerful livers, along with our very strong ability to smell death, decay and rot, suggests humans evolved as scavengers, see HEARTFELT page B7

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**B2** 

# 'PENELOPE'

pickle. Her family lost their housing and she was left behind. Fortunately, this kitty had smarts. She figured once you place yourself in a prominent place, someone was bound to find you, and lo and behold, there was a nice patio! It was a perfect place to plant herself during a heatwave.

She really hit the jackpot, because her finder not only had a nice patio, but fed her and eventually invited her inside to be a temporary guest. It was like Airbnb for kitties.

Her finder just raved about this little cutie. She said Penelope just

Penelope found herself in a loves attention and is very friendly. She's a docile, lovable kitty who is affectionate and playful as well. Now she's looking for a new place to park her paws.

How about your place?

If you'd like to learn more about, meet, or adopt Penelope, call Dakin Humane Society at (413) 781-4000 or visit www.dakinhumane.org.

Want your pet featured in The Montague Reporter? We accept reader submissions! Just email a high-resolution photo to jae@ montaguereporter.org along with a paragraph or two about why your pet is simply the best.

#### TURNERS FALLS - Hello again dear sickos!

**By CASEY WAIT** 

We're nearing the end of another Disability Pride Month. But with the rise of mask bans around the country, a very alarming summer surge well under way, and the looming threat of an H5N1 pandemic - bird flu - it feels difficult to celebrate much of anything right now. I've even seen a lot of disabled and immunocompromised people call this "Disability Rage Month" instead, which feels more fitting.

For me and many of my sick friends, 2024 has been the loneliest year of the pandemic thus far. The ubiquity of COVID denialism is staggering.

In early June, I enrolled in a Long

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Monday 7/29

9 a.m. Interval

10 a.m. Chair Aerobics 11:30 a.m. Bingo Thursday 8/8 9 a.m. Barre Fusion 10 a.m. Pilates Flow Friday 8/9 9 a.m. Quilting & Open Sew

### Monday 8/5

10:15 a.m. Aerobics 11 a.m. Chair Exercise 1 p.m. Kitchen Club **Tuesday 8/6** 9 a.m. Chair Yoga 12:30 p.m. Tech Tuesday 3 p.m. Tai Chi

Covid drug trial, praying for some relief from the crushing symptoms that have dogged me since my very first infection in 2020 and have gotten worse – and weirder – with every reinfection. I was completely shocked and appalled when I arrived at the clinic for my two-hour intake appointment and not a single medical professional was wearing a mask – for a *Long Covid drug trial*!

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I don't think I can fully express how dehumanizing it was to sit in a conference room full of doctors and nurses, answering invasive questions about the most difficult aspects of my health, relating the incredible severity of my pain, and watching their naked faces nod along, oblivious to my fear of getting sicker at this very appointment. I cried all the way home, from the trauma of risking my health while doing the only thing available to me that might save what little is left of it. (Assuming, of course, I wasn't given the placebo.)

The following week, North Carolina passed a mask ban. New York, LA, and my hometown, Chicago, all announced their intentions to pass similar bans barring masking in public space. Some of these proposed bills include "health exemptions," but we can anticipate that already overcriminalized populations such as BIPOC, the houseless, trans people, and leftists will not be

I could become entirely bedbound, or even die, given the near guarantee of constant reinfection.

I understand why a lot of people have checked out from any awareness of the still raging pandemic. It's demoralizing and scary, and people just want to move on. Believe me - if I could move on and never think about COVID-19 again, I would. In a heartbeat. But I look in the mirror and see how these last four years have aged me, and I simply can't forget the cause of it all. And I refuse to turn away from all those others who continue to languish with Long Covid.

A recent study from Washington University School of Medicine estimates that for vaccinated individuals, the risk of developing Long Covid is 3.5%. At the rate that COVID is currently circulating in the United States, that comes out to roughly 27,000 new cases of Long Covid each day, 135,000 each week. The vast majority of Americans haven't gotten an updated vaccine since 2022, which means these numbers are likely quite a bit higher. There are still no proven treatments for Long Covid, and certainly no cure.

The very best thing you can do, both to fight mask bans and to avoid developing or worsening Long Covid, is to wear a well-fitting N95 or KN95 mask in public spaces. This

10 a.m. Chair Dance 12 p.m. Pitch 1 p.m. Matter of Balance Tuesday 7/30 9 a.m. Good for U 10 a.m. Line Dancing 11 a.m. Social Stringer Wednesday 7/31 9 a.m. Strength & Conditioning 10 a.m. Chair Aerobics 11:30 a.m. Bingo Thursday 8/1 9 a.m. Barre Fusion 10 a.m. Pilates Flow 12 p.m. Brown Bag Friday 8/2 9 a.m. Quilting & Open Sew Monday 8/5 9 a.m. Interval 10 a.m. Chair Aerobics 12 p.m. Pitch **Tuesday 8/6** 8:30 a.m. Nurse 9 a.m. Good for U 10 a.m. Line Dancing 11 a.m. Social Stringer 1 p.m. Friends' Meeting Wednesday 8/7 9 a.m. Strength & Conditioning

## **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. Lunch available Tuesdays through Thursdays. For more information please call 863-9357.

#### Monday 7/29

10:15 a.m. Aerobics 11 a.m. Chair Exercise Tuesday 7/30 9 a.m. Chair Yoga 12:30 p.m. Tech Tuesday 3 p.m. Tai Chi Wednesday 7/31 10:15 a.m. Aerobics 10:45 a.m. Outdoor Yoga 11 a.m. Chair Exercise 12 p.m. Bring Your Lunch Bingo 4 p.m. Mat Yoga Thursday 8/1 10:30 a.m. Senior Farm Share 1 p.m. Pitch Friday 8/2 10:15 a.m. Aerobics 11 a.m. Chair Exercise 2 p.m. Chair Dance

#### Wednesday 8/7

10:15 a.m. Aerobics 10:45 a.m. Outdoor Yoga 11 a.m. Chair Exercise 12 p.m. Bring Your Lunch Bingo 4 p.m. Mat Yoga Thursday 8/8 10:30 a.m. Senior Farm Share 1 p.m. Pitch Friday 8/9 10:15 a.m. Aerobics 11 a.m. Chair Exercise 2 p.m. Chair Dance

#### WENDELL

Foot care clinic is the first Wednesday of each month. Call Katie Nolan at (978) 544-2306 for information or appointments. For Senior Health Rides, contact Nancy Spittle at (978) 544-6760.

#### **LEVERETT**

Chair Yoga classes are held on Wednesdays at 10 a.m., hybrid, at the town hall and on Zoom. Foot care clinic is held monthly. Contact (413) 548-1022 x2 or coa@leverett.ma.us

spared mistreatment regardless of their health status.

No one should have to prove to a cop that they deserve the safety a mask can provide. We are all at risk of developing lasting illness and disability as a result of airborne illnesses, and we all deserve the unequivocal right to protect ourselves from them.

I haven't been back to Chicago since before the pandemic began. and if a mask ban passes, I won't be safe to go back for the foreseeable future. The lack of widespread masking has already made it very difficult for immunocompromised people to safely exist in public. As I've already mentioned, I can't even go to my essential medical appointments with any expectation that my medical team will keep me safe from reinfection, let alone safely go to the grocery store or spend time with friends.

One-way masking hasn't stopped me from getting COVID - eight times. If I am not allowed to mask at all... I shudder to think how quickly

is the cheapest, most effective thing you can do to avoid infection and avoid transmitting COVID to others, and it is a simple, clear way to show solidarity with those of us for whom mask bans mean complete exile from public life.

The Finders Collective in Great Falls, Comics 'N' More in Easthampton, and Bookends in Florence all have masks available for free! Please make use of this generosity and donate to them if you're able.

If you want to celebrate Disability Rage Month with me in person and learn more about mask bans, the criminalization of disabled people's presence in public life, and more, please join me at the Finders Collective space, 104 Fourth Street in Great Falls, this Sunday, July 28 at 7 p.m. We will be watching the 1932 film Freaks, directed by Tod Browning, and discussing all of the above. Masks will be provided. I'd be delighted to see you there!

With love and disabled rage, Your Sick Friend

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### LOOKING BACK: 499 ISSUES AGO

In anticipation of our 1,000th edition this August 8 – Year 22 #34 – we decided to look at our 500th, Year 11 #40, which came out August 8, 2013. (The math got funny when we started squeezing in a fifth summer week off.) This article, written by then-Editor-In-Chief Chris Sawyer-Lauçanno, was the lead story on Page 1. Given this week's cover story about plans to demolish the Strathmore complex, we felt it was a good time to remember why the mills' last announced developers decided to back out. – Eds.

## Flight Patterns Flees: Strathmore Back to the Selectboard



What now?

#### **By CHRISTOPHER** SAWYER-LAUÇANNO

TURNERS FALLS - Flight Patterns LLC, the group out of New Jersey and Brighton, Massachusetts that had won approval from the town for a one-year feasibility study of the Strathmore, has decided to bail. In a letter sent on July 24 to Montague town planner Walter Ramsey, Flight Patterns said: "We have unfortunately come to the conclusion that we are not able to enter into the MOA (Memorandum of Agreement), nor are we able to continue pursuing feasibility research, due to our findings thus far."

They cited the site's accessibility challenges, the cost of mothballing the northern structures, and legal issues as their reasons for pulling out of their original proposal to perform a full analysis, over a one-year period, of the sprawling, 227,000-square-foot mill complex situated between the Power Canal and the Connecticut River. The letter was signed by the group's three core members, BJ Warshaw and Marie Rossettie of New Jersey and Joel Roston of Brighton.

Ramsey said he was "extremely disappointed" by their decision: "We hoped they would be good development partners. We were committed to working with them through each of these issues. We just needed to get a commitment from them." At a meeting with the selectboard on March 25, the group thought that the price tag for a hazardous materials survey, a structural survey, civil engineering, and market reviews would come to \$40,000 to \$80,000, depending on whether any "surprises" emerged along the way. Surprises clearly emerged. In explaining their decision not to pursue further studies, Flight Patterns wrote: "With the assistance of Tocci Builders and Domack Restoration, via a site walkthrough on May 22, 2013, we have determined that a bare-bones mothballing of the property will cost a minimum of \$58,000.... Clearly, this is a much larger expense than has been indicated via the Memorandum of Agreement. Given that the buildings are not owned by Flight Patterns, we feel that the financial burden of mothballing the Strathmore Mill should not fall on our shoulders."

As for the access issues, dis-

cussed at length at the time of the proposal process, they were enthusiastic about working with the town to leverage funding for rehabbing the condemned (and disputed) pedestrian bridge. By July, however, Flight Patterns had apparently discovered that access to the site would be a major factor in redeveloping the complex.

"Mothballing aside, we have become increasingly concerned with issues of the general public and tenants accessing a rehabilitated Strathmore site," the group wrote. "During our meetings with Southworth Paper and FirstLight on June 18, 2013, Flight Patterns proposed some preliminary and alternate routes of access to the site. One such plan included portioning off a pedestrian walkway along Canal Road, potentially raised above street level to ensure the safety of pedestrians while trucks are loading and unloading into the Southworth facility. This suggestion, however, was met with resistance from both Southworth (due to safety concerns) and FirstLight (on whose property the pedestrian walkway would fall)."

Legal issues with Southworth Paper and FirstLight also gave concern to Flight Patterns, who noted that they had grown increasingly concerned with the fear of litigation from these neighboring businesses.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG Yelling With Bats; Blatantly Swimming In Lake Pleasant;

# Stealing; Sleeping While Homeless; Scolding Dispatcher

Monday, 7/8

into a house he just bought record. on J Street and stole a 58- 3:47 p.m. 911 caller reinch TV.

a SUV always parked in Street building. advised party that she will patrol the area more, and ask other officers as well. 5:38 p.m. Caller report- that a little boy, about 5 ing unattended motorized scooter on Turners ball at a black Nissan, and Falls-Gill Bridge. Area it appears the window is checked; nothing else seen. cracked. Officer clear; no PD transporting scooter to station. Male called in windows observed. stating he just bought the scooter and someone took they were off on Fifth it off his lawn and was using it. When the PD was on was damaged due to a kid the bridge, the person was throwing asphalt at it; ard. Referred to an officer. underneath the bridge and called the owner to let him hood are smashed. They know that the PD took it. are heading to Fourth told the PD had stopped from. Reporting party a party on the scooter and called in and advised he that PD were on scene for asphalt in his hand, and over 40 minutes, and saw when he yelled at him he no one around. Returned ran home. Investigated. to owner.

6:05 p.m. 911 caller re- 10:42 a.m. Walk-in report streets. Control will noti- House. Summons issued. fy Eversource.

#### Tuesday, 7/9

report or the other vehi- 5:58 p.m. Multiple 911 from the Patch reporting Today he has put out a cle's information, and needs calls reporting a tree a power outage and blown dismantled bicycle, golf that to rent a car. Advised down across road at transformer at G and Elev- clubs, and a chair. Officer him he can complete a re- Greenfield and Greenfield enth streets. Shelburne observes clubs and discord request, but the report Cross roads; no wires in- Control advised; TFFD mantled bike are up with a needs to be completed first, volved. Officer advises and Eversource en route. and he will need to wait for chainsaw and utility truck Friday, 7/12 a call to come pick it up. should be sufficient. DPW 11:29 a.m. Nouria employ- 5:51 p.m. Report of people Male was not happy about advised. Tree cleared and ee reporting unwanted trespassing in Lake Pleashaving to wait. 12:01 p.m. 911 caller from 8:58 p.m. Report of three moved along. an Avenue A parking lot re- teenagers setting off fireports he was on his bicycle works in a field off Mill- tral Street reports several to a few people walking and a vehicle ran him over; ers Falls Road. Referred teenagers and some adults, on a trail and saw people declining medical atten- to an officer. tion. Referred to an officer. 2:44 p.m. 911 caller reports works on Fourth Street, bats. All clear upon arrival. another area. low-hanging wires be- no longer in progress. Re- Description given of blue 8:01 p.m. 911 report tween Cumberland Farms ferred to an officer. and the Farren lot. Officer Thursday, 7/11 from nearby residence. 2:55 p.m. Walk-in report- ficer advises a male party ing she witnessed three is sitting and eating food. cars run a red light at the 2:49 p.m. 911 caller from intersection of Avenue A Avenue A reports he was and Third Street; inquir- assaulted by another male ing if the timing of the and there were witnesses. lights could be adjusted. 3:03 p.m. Caller from Ave- an officer. Does not want rested and charged with

nue A states that a known anything done, just wants operating under the influ-2:03 p.m. Caller would like male ripped down one of it on record. Medical at- ence of liquor. on record that sometime their signs and threw it in tention declined. last week, someone went the woods. Just wants it on 3:56 p.m. Caller reporting neighbor dispute on Sec-

porting unwanted female Officers spoke to swim- vised of options. 4:21 p.m. Caller reporting in basement of a Fourth mers, who are exiting the 10:17 a.m. Shelburne Con-Callfront of a Turners Falls er states the female was Road address is causing a evicted; she is afraid sometraffic hazard. Officer re- one is going to break into ports owner states vehicle her apartment while she is is parked there purpose- at work; states her bicycle ly to prevent cars from has already been stolen No signs state the vehicle one there. Advised buildcan't park there. Officer ing manager of trespass options.

> 7:19 p.m. Caller from Fourth Street reports years old, is throwing a kids around and no broken

windshield and possibly

Wednesday, 7/10

porting sparks from of a suspicious person and transformer at the inter- vandalism caught on vidsection of Park and Unity eo at Turners Falls Pizza 3:34 p.m. Caller from Ran-

dall Wood Drive states 10:02 a.m. Two-car acci- a dirtbike with no plates dent at Bridge and West rides up and down the Main streets, unknown in- road a couple of times a juries. Officer requesting day very fast. Ongoing tow for two SUVs. One issue. She does not know operator called in stating where the operator lives his written copy of the ac- but would like something provided. Officer advis- is taking items from his cident report was inaccu- done. Officer advised oper- es male party is with his storage unit and putting rate; called again stating he ator of the complaint. Ve- grandmother. didn't receive an accident hicle is legally registered. 10:09 p.m. Multiple calls lawns with "Free" signs.

water, and advised them of being dragged by a vehicle. at this time.

responded as soon as available. Nothing showing. 6:15 p.m. Walk-in advising a small sedan regular- may swim. ly parks on Turners Falls Road in a manner that lim- explosion sound in the G 7:55 p.m. Officers advise its visibility for larger vehi- Street area. Officer on decles; the owner has recently Street with a truck that added an orange flag to the reporting same; believes vehicle, but it is still a haz- it came from the area of 8 p.m. Caller from Second Street reporting that three youths threw her plants Caller then stated he was Street, where the kid came and ran off. Plants were thrown on the ground, on a neighbor's vehicle, taken it. Informed caller saw the boy walking with and in the road. Description of suspects provided. ty, and created a receipt to vises cat placed on tarp off submit when she drops off the restitution at the PD. 9:50 p.m. 911 hangup call mapping to Turners Falls Road. Found vehicle with hazards on, and an initial

report of an intoxicated hospital. male who jumped five peo- 3:30 p.m. Caller from Elevple. Courtesy transport enth Street states a male

8:06 a.m. Both sides of a lots of people swimming ond Street contacted the in Lake Pleasant reservoir. PD with complaints. Ad-

trol advising of a party other areas they may swim. without clothes on under 4:07 p.m. Report of a group a bridge in Millers Falls. of people screaming/ar- Male party located on Erguing at a Fifth Street ad- ving side of the bridge.

dress. Caller advises this 4:47 p.m. Received comis a regular occurrence, plaint of a parked vehicle speeding, as there is a from the apartment. Offi- and past incidents have creating a traffic hazard on child in the neighborhood. cer advises units clear; no involved people punching Turners Falls Road. Offieach other, threats of vi- cer spoke with owner, who olence, and once someone will move it but is unhappy

> Parties dispersed, but re- 6:22 p.m. Officer spoke to turned and began arguing five individuals who were again. Units tied up but swimming in Lake Pleasant reservoir; advised them they were trespassing; informed of other areas they

> > 7:49 p.m. 911 report of an tail advises people on scene Montague Machine. Nothing found.

9:29 p.m. 911 caller from Randall Road reports he heard continuous gunfire from multiple directions. Unable to locate.

#### Sunday, 7/14

2:32 a.m. Caller reports he Officer off with parties at struck a cat while driving, Spinner Park. One party and the cat is deceased. De-Mirandized. Victim is only scribes cat as orange with seeking a small amount in stripes on it, white paws, restitution. Officer spoke and a white patch under with mother of one par- its chin, with no collar. Adthe side of the road near Kostanski Funeral Home. Message left for DPW.

> 12:33 p.m. 911 report of a disturbance on Central Street. Party removed to

them on other people's

In their letter, they noted that "while our informal meetings with Southworth and FirstLight have gone well, complicated easements and site obstacles are causes for considerable concern.... While we do not believe that either adjacent business is interested in thwarting redevelopment efforts, we feel it would be wise to seek legal reassurances from both parties prior to investing additional funds in site assessments and rehabilitation efforts."

Ramsey noted that the town had expressed their willingness from the beginning to work with Flight Patterns on resolving these known issues. "We had hoped," said Ramsey, "to use Flight Patterns' involvement to apply for a MassWorks grant to fix the bridge. And we were clear about helping them with legal issues as well."

"It's back to square one," said Ramsey. He said that he, along with building inspector David Jensen and town administrator Frank Abbondanzio, would be discussing the next moves with the selectboard.

road opened.

Food City Plaza area. Of-

9:03 p.m. Report of fire- some holding baseball he cannot reach. Checking in it that left.

tenant.

#### Saturday, 7/13

2:40 a.m. A 56-year-old 9:53 a.m. Nouria employee Would like to discuss with Northfield man was ar- reports they are trying to

sign, but nothing is in people's yards.

male outside store. Party ant reservoir; caller asked them to leave but they are 6:04 p.m. Caller from Cen- refusing. Officer spoke all screaming in the street, swimming out to an area

Hyundai with three teens of motorcycle crash on Walnut Street. Operator requesting FD respond. 11:04 a.m. Report of a 9:27 p.m. Complaints re- left scene. Unable to locate Control advised. Cable homeless man sleeping in ceived regarding loud mu- operator; requesting Ersic being played all day on ving PD do welfare check Second Street. No noise on male party and find out observed upon officer's ar- his plans for moving morival. Officer spoke with a torcycle. Negative contact at owner's residence.

#### Monday, 7/15

see **MPD** next page



#### MPD from previous pg

have work done at the store and a male party is lying in the parking lot, refusing to move. Party moved along. 10:35 a.m. Caller reports the motorcycle from the Walnut Street accident was just picked up on a trailer, and another one left in its place. Officer reports motorcycle was picked up but none was dropped off. 3:43 p.m. Caller from Carlisle Avenue reports that a Food City shopping cart was left on their front lawn overnight; requesting extra patrols at night. Food City employee will pick up the cart.

4:36 p.m. Call from 911only phone mapping to Fourth Street. Small child called dispatcher "a dummy." Several more calls in which child told dispatcher to "shut up." Officer spoke to a mother and child in an apartment. Mother took phone from child.

#### Tuesday, 7/16

7:29 a.m. Caller from Central Street reports a vehicle has been parked in front of her building since last night, and her landlord will want it moved. Call from landlord reporting vehicle is blocking driveway. Officer advises no vehicle is blocking a driveway. Landlord called back in stating the officer drove by but didn't stop; car is blocking the driveway and needs to be moved. Officers in area; contact made with owner, who will move the vehicle. Driveway is unmarked and not immediately obvious; advised caller to mark it clearly.

9:35 a.m. Report of graffiti on building at Unity Park. 2:06 p.m. Caller states that on May 28 he bought a car from a male party, and on May 30 it was stolen. He does not have proof the car was his as the seller told him a new title would be coming in the mail. Officer advised caller of options as he was likely scammed.

5:29 p.m. Officer checking Lake Pleasant for people

al directions. Officer will make announcement over PA. Gathering dispersed. 5:40 p.m. Caller from El Nopalito requesting removal of a former employee who is yelling and refusing to leave. All parties advised of options. 6:06 p.m. Received call from passing motorist reporting vehicle off road on Wendell Road. Operator's husband called 911 reporting accident; states he is transporting his wife to the hospital.

6:53 p.m. First of numerous reports of trees, branches, and wires down, as well as lightning strikes and flooding around town. Affected areas included Avenue A, Hillside Avenue, and Riverside Drive; Federal, Fifth, L, Montague, New, Prospect, Seventh, South Prospect, and Walnut streets; Canal, Ferry, Hatchery, Old Greenfield, Old Northfield, Randall, Ripley, Swamp, Turnpike, and West Chestnut Hill roads; and several out-oftown locations.

## Wednesday, 7/17

6:38 a.m. Caller from Second Street states she was advised to call whenever her neighbor puts his music on full blast and leaves the building, and he has done so.

8:46 a.m. Food City manager reports a male party stole a large bag of dogfood and left on an electric bike. Suspect located and trespassed from store; only allowed to come in to pay for the stolen item. Summons issued.

10:11 a.m. Walk-in from K Street reporting someone broke into her home. Report taken.

2:14 p.m. Officers assisting FD and board of health at a Millers Falls Road location.

5:34 p.m. First of several reports of weather-related hazards. Affected areas included Federal, New, and L streets and Sunderland, Swamp, and Taylor Hill roads.

Wentworth Avenue noticed his window has damage from a rock or cement; wonders if it was caused by DPW work. Advised of options.

8:41 a.m. Officer checking on a van in the woods off Power Street. Parties moved along. Officer also advising of another campsite along the riverbank; requesting FirstLight be notified.

10:26 a.m. Caller reports that his food truck in a Second Street lot was broken into overnight. Damage to trailer. Report taken.

6:17 p.m. Caller states a van they are in just struck a person on a bike on Poplar Street; male is on the side of the road. FD and EMS en route. Cyclist left scene; officer located cyclist on Depot Street. Report taken.

7:04 p.m. Caller states people are selling stuff near his apartment on Fifth Street and he doesn't want them there. Referred to an officer.

8:18 p.m. Report of suspicious/threatening activity on Emond Avenue. Officers advised parties on scene of precautions to take.

#### Friday, 7/19

11:50 a.m. Walk-in reporting fraud/scam on Facebook. Officer advising there are definite signs of fraud. Caller would like it noted that the scammers were threatening to attach "child pornography" to her account if she did not follow instructions. Advised of options.

12:36 p.m. Caller reports their Federal Street mailbox has been vandalized several times.

6:36 p.m. Assistant manager at Aubuchon Hardware reporting a party walked out with two chlorine tablets he did not pay for; one was \$120 and the other was \$130. Investigated.

7:57 p.m. 911 caller from Grand Avenue reports a female has been going through her house all day while she was at her fa-

female removed from her side of the residence. Officer spoke to both parties and advised them to stay within their own areas of the house, and call if other issues arise that require PD assistance.

8:30 p.m. Possible breaking and entering into vehicle on Montague City Road called in by off-duty officer from another town. Officer out with juvenile suspect. Mother on scene; officer attempting to locate car. No contact made with owners. Property returned to vehicles. Officer spoke with sister of car owner; a report will be completed. Saturday, 7/20

1:08 p.m. 911 caller from Turnpike Road reporting smoke in the house from a possible stove explosion. Transferred to Control. MPD officer requesting ambulance to check on caller due to smoke inhalation.

3:49 p.m. Caller advising their bicycle was stolen from a friend's house last night. They will come into the station to file a report. Sunday, 7/21

1:06 p.m. Two-car accident at intersection in front of PD. TFFD on scene. Vehicle towed.

1:22 p.m. Caller from Avenue A states a man in the parking lot outside her window may be drinking alcohol and she doesn't like it. Called back very upset that no one has come to talk to the man outside as it is disrupting her. Explained officers will respond when available; suggested she move to a spot in her apartment where she cannot see the man. Caller got upset and hung up. Responding officer ad-

vises no one drinking. 2:03 p.m. 911 caller reports that next to a camper in Peskeompskut Park there is an electric bike that three or four people have tried to steal. Also reporting sleeping bags, pillows, and coats next to camper and pillows next to the pavilion.

## FROM A TEEN'S POINT OF VIEW

# The Roman Empire

#### **By FINTAN ANDREW JONES**

MONTAGUE - The semester changed at my school and we got new classes. One of my new classes was World History 1. In this class we cover everything in history from 500 BCE to 1800 CE. During the Roman Empire things got too hard to manage so the empire split around 376 CE, but more on that later. The two sides fought battles of their own and carved out their own unique cultures.

Without further ado, the Roman Empire.

I will start off with some of the iconic things that they did. Aqueducts were one of the defining characteristics of a traditional Roman city. They were used to help irrigate crops, provide healthy drinking water, and provide water for fountains and other decorative things.

Concrete was popularized, which led to lots of roads being constructed to transport things faster. Roman numerals, plumbing systems, heaters, and surgery were all things that they either invented or popularized.

Before the Roman Empire there was an empire called the Etruscans. During their reign a group went off to start their own empire, which was the beginning of the Roman Empire. Eventually the two groups got into a war and the Romans won. They appointed someone to be emperor, and the rest is history.

The Romans continued to expand their territory, and eventually the Roman Senate passed the Pax Romana. This set the empire up for greatness, and led them into what we call the "Roman Golden Age."

Based on their greatest achievements and common belief, it might seem like all Roman citizens lived great lives. This, however, is false. Most Roman citizens were very poor, and lived in bad conditions - tiny houses that were very dangerous, very cramped, and very smelly. The top 1% of Romans, on the contrary, lived in the fantastic architectural wonders the Romans are now known for.

Roman soldiers were not in battle too much, so they spent the rest of their time training, socializing,

soldier was that after you were done serving, you and your family got a bunch of rewards. After a while, these rewards began to lose their value, since most young men started to serve in the military.

Rome's military history is very impressive - they only lost a few battles, mostly during their downfall.

The Roman Empire battled the Empire of Carthage in the Second Punic War, around 200 BCE. This big war contained a battle called the Battle of Cannae. The Romans went into this battle with much less power than their counterparts, but against all odds, the Romans defeated the soldiers of Carthage.

At its peak in 117 CE, the Empire controlled parts of the Middle East, all of Northern Africa, and a large portion of Europe. Towards the end they started to lose a lot more battles, which was one of the major factors that ended them - but more on that later.

I could write about the Roman Empire for pages, but before I get too in-depth, I would like to talk about how it fell.

Three major elements contributed to the Roman Empire falling. These were political divisions, a failing economy, and a high battle loss rate. Most of their political issues came when there was no clear line of succession, or when some groups wanted to break apart from the Roman Empire. The Empire was very large and it would take a while for things to get across, which led to things getting very confusing and contradictions occurring. There was a lot of inflation that took place in the end, too. These economic issues led to the military weakening heavily. The Empire started to rely on missionaries to do a lot of their battling for them. The Roman Empire fell in 476 CE, after the Siege of Constantinople.

Lately I have mostly been writing about things I have learned but, since it is summer, I will now write about some non-educational things. I have a lot of ideas such as origami, fun summer activities, and maybe even my experience with going to watch a rock-climbing competition.

For my next column I will write about origami - specifically dol-

trespassing. Kayaker in Thursday, 7/18 water; people in sever- 6:45 a.m. Caller from on camera and needs the itor the area.

ther's funeral. She has it Officer will mon-



praying, and even playing games. One of the best parts about being a

lar-bill origami, since that is something I have been doing a lot recently.

### PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

# United Way Affinity Group Launches Annual Drive for Backpacks, School Supplies

FRANKLIN COUNTY – The annual Blooming Backpacks drive has begun and will continue to gather new backpacks filled with school supplies from the community through Thursday, August 8. The drive is organized by Women's Way, an affinity group of the United Way of the Franklin & Hampshire Region (UWFH) and has provided hundreds of backpacks to students across Franklin County each year since 2005.

Trusted community nonprofit partners including Big Brothers Big Sisters of Western MA, Community Action Family Center and Youth Programs, the Mary Lyon Foundation, and Montague Catholic Social Ministries will distribute the supplies to students in our region before the school year begins.

Backpack and supply donations for elementary through high school students may be brought

to a free celebration event with refreshments at the John Zon Community Center in Greenfield, on Thursday, August 8 from 5 to 6:30 p.m.

Donations may also be dropped off through that date at UWFH's Greenfield office, at 51 Davis Street. (Please contact UWFH for best office hours.) Monetary donations are welcomed at uw-fh.org/womensway or via check, with 100% of donations going toward the purchase of supplies.

Families that are struggling may need to make a choice between providing their children with food or school supplies. By providing free backpacks filled with essential supplies, Blooming Backpacks aims to reduce some of that burden so children can focus on a great start to the school year.

Feeling unprepared for the classroom can profoundly affect a student's success. Research shows that when students enter school fully equipped with materials for learning, self-esteem, academic achievement, attendance, and classroom participation all improve.

To RSVP for the August 8 event or learn more about the drive, email program@uw-fh. org, call (413) 584-3962 x 102, or visit uw-fh. org/womensway. A list of suggested school supplies may be found at that website.

Formed in 2005 by a group of local women who wanted a hands-on way to drive change in Franklin County, Women's Way is an integral part of the local United Way. Women's Way fights for the health, education, and financial stability of every person in Franklin County.

Each year the group hosts two signature events: Supper for Six, which helps cover the food gap many families face during the February school break, and Blooming Backpacks.



This goose is watching you.

#### PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE (12 WEEK MINIMUM) CALL 863-8666! **Serving Home Grown** SHANAHAN CONSTRUCTION **Farm-inspired Food & Drink** SUPPLY Co. INC. "Rock solid service with level advice" **Complete Masonry Supply** Offering a complete line of pavers, wall stone, retaining wall block & more. 298 Avenue A, Turners Falls. 413-863-4322 BOOKMILL I MONTAGUE CENTER I 367.0309 44 Hope Street, Greenfield, MA 01301 www.shanahansupply.com Ph 413 774 3150 | hopeandolive.com



A monarch on milkweed, photographed during the 2019 festival.

**TURNERS FALLS** – The Pocumtuck Homelands Festival: A Celebration of Native American Art, Music, & Cultures and Marketplace appeals to people of all ages and backgrounds, blending traditional powwow features with contemporary Indigenous offerings. The annual event takes place along the Connecticut River in a region culturally, historically, and spiritually significant to the Northeastern tribes.

This year's festival, which takes place at Unity Park next Saturday, August 3 and Sunday, August 4, features performances by tribal singers and dancers, Eastern woodlands skills demonstrations, storytellers, drummers, children's activities, historians, authors, and more.

The intertribal festival brings together an expansive, colorful, unique, once-a-year marketplace of more than 40 outstanding Indigenous artists stretched along both sides of the riverfront bike path. They display artworks such as quillwork, wampum, beadwork, carving, jewelry, weaving, flutes, gourds, paintings, handmade drums, drumsticks, dream catchers, clothing, pottery, leather works, wall art, silver, turquoise, plus contemporary music and art – and more. All items are handmade, one at a time, with natural materials.

Some segments will be livestreamed at *www.facebook.com/ nolumbekaproject*. Native American food will be available during the day, in addition to other delicious fare.

The Pocumtuck Homelands Festival is a welcoming celebration of the true history and continued presence and resilience of the Northeastern tribes in the Valley and beyond. Presenters tell their own stories in their own words and people are eager to learn.

The festival is free, accessible, and appealing to people of all ages and backgrounds. Donations are greatly appreciated. Information, including listings of the presenters and artists and the full schedule for the two-day event, is available at *www.nolumbekaproject.org/events*.



The Town of Erving would like to announce one (1) vacancy on the School Committee, one (1) vacancy on the Board of Health, and one (1) vacancy on the Recreation Commission. These vacancies are for elected positions. In accordance with MGL Chapter 41, Section 11, the Select Board is seeking interested residents to serve in these positions until the Annual Town Election in 2025. To be considered, an interested person must be a registered voter of the Town of Erving.



## School Committee

The School Committee is a five (5) member elected Board that establishes educational goals and policies for Erving School District consistent with the requirements of the law. Each member is expected to attend all meetings and participate in subcommittees. Members are also encouraged to attend the Union 28 District quarterly meetings.



### **Recreation Commission**

The Recreation Commission is a five (5) member elected Board that provides youth sports, recreational programs, and special events for Erving residents. The Commission does so while overseeing the use and development of the Town's five (5) parks and playgrounds.



### Board of Health

The Board of Health is a three (3) member elected Board made up of people from every walk of life who care about the well-being of their community. The Board of Health has been given the legal authority to set policies and make regulations to protect the public and environmental health.

If you are interested, please send a written letter of interest that identifies the position that you are interested in ; including your name, address, and contact information. It may be helpful to include an explanation of your education, training, experience, and other interests that would lend itself to the position sought.

Letters of interest are due by Wednesday, August 14, 2024.

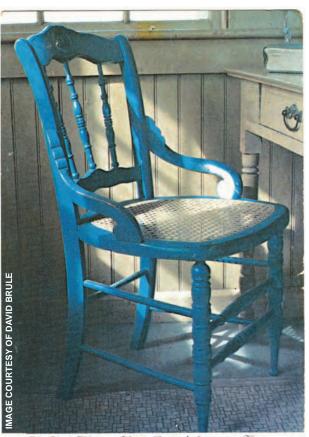
Letters can be sent by mail to: Erving Select Board 12 East Main Street Erving, Massachusetts 01344 Or by email to: <u>volunteer@erving-ma.gov</u>.

#### WEST ALONG from page B1

a job washing dishes for a Millers Falls family, Wes and Mildred Felton. They had moved to Provincetown to open a family-style restaurant called the Cottage. They occasionally hired local Millers Falls kids like myself to work there.

I washed dishes most mornings, and had the afternoons and evenings off. After the lunchtime dishes, I usually hiked out of town and crossed the dunes to the beach in between Truro and Race Point. You can't do that anymore.

Trekking through a half mile of sand dunes on a beach buggy track, I made my way through beach rose, beach plum, and poison ivy to arrive on the edge of the Atlantic, completely alone, with no one up or down the beach for miles. There were occasional abandoned beach shacks here and there.



# **EXHIBITS**

**Rendezvous, Turners Falls:** *Allen Fowler,* small mixed-media collage work from several recent series, through mid-September.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Remnants*, photographs by Joe Wallace from 2010 showing Turners Falls' abandoned Strathmore and Griswold mills. *Mark Majeski*, local birds in colored pencil. August 1 to September 2.

Sawmill River Arts, Montague:

Granger, through July 31.

**Fiddleheads Gallery, Northfield:** *Summer Members' Exhibit,* through July 28.

**Gallery A3, Amherst:** Artists on Being an Artist, portraits and interviews of Gallery A3 artists by Eric Broudy, through July 27. *Impermanence,* juried group show of over 36 regional artists, August 1 to 31; reception next Thursday, August 1 at 5 p.m.

Shelburne Arts Coop, Shelburne Falls: *Lazy Days of Summer,* exhibit by member artists, through July.

I had a book bag of required reading for my freshman year at college, and a transistor radio. I went swimming, stayed out there until sunset, and then headed back to what passed for civilization in Provincetown.

Maybe the flood of such summer memories is why I took my copy of Beston's classic down from the shelf.

Falling out of the dog-eared pages came a forgotten postcard that I had used as a bookmark. It pictured Beston's blue writing chair. He had found it on the beach, fixed it up, painted it blue, and kept it in his beach house. The chair washed away, along with his house, during the Blizzard of 1978 but was later recovered on the same beach.

That little paperback I purchased years before the turn of the last century, published cheaply enough by Ballantine Books, cost a total of 95 cents. Just the other day I noticed a 75th anniversary paperback edition of *The Outermost House* in a local bookstore priced at \$18.95.

*Ah*! Just the thought of the earlier price gives me sense of satisfaction.

Given my penchant for time-travel, I find myself appreciating the works of long-dead writers who describe a world that vanished long before I was born. Part of that penchant may be a periodic urge to escape from the mayhem and the drumbeat reports of violence that is going on in the world outside, relentless and constantly repeated.

This book will be something of a summer project.

The Little Chair in Henry Beston's Cutermost House

Our columnist's postcard of Beston's famed "Little Chair."

For some it would be a good beach read, but as I said, this will once again be a summer when I won't make it back to the Atlantic shore.

Instead, I'll travel there in my mind for an hour or so each morning. I'll be able to go there and come back in the same day. I'll be content enough to sit in the deep shade with my thrushes and hummingbirds in our green Connecticut River Valley.

I'll spend some time with Henry Beston in his book, in his season of seclusion, his solitary year spent on the Cape Cod beach.

I'm savoring every page as if it were brand new writing. Making it last, I'm only on the second chapter.

I'll let you know how it turns out.

*Studio Feeler,* ceramics by guest artist Akilah Scharff-Teoh in July and August.

Montague Center Library: Landscapes: Endangered and Preserved, paintings by Meg Ricks. Through August.

**Leverett Library:** *Quilts of Leverett,* four quilts by LES sixth-graders plus a Leverett bicentennial quilt from 1974. Through August.

Leverett Crafts & Arts, Leverett: LCA Artists Group Show, work by artists at the LCA including board members and Mudpie Potters. Through August.

**Greenfield Library:** *The Day After Yesterday,* portraits of dementia by Joe Wallace. Through September 28, with a reception Monday, September 16 at 6:30 p.m.

**LAVA Center, Greenfield:** Portraits and Parades: A Touch of Joy, photographs by Lindy Whiton. Through July.

Looky Here, Greenfield: On Our Way, paintings by Chelsea

Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne: Watercolor Whimsey, paintings by children's book illustrator Astrid Sheckels. Colorful Countenance, masks and sculptures that create unusual characters by Dana Schildkraut. Both on view through August.

**Club George, Northampton:** *Whimsical Narratives*, reflective works in pottery and printmaking by Rosie Dinsmore and Sophie Foulkes, through August 3.

D'Amour Museum, Springfield:

*Frida Kahlo, Her Photos*, images from Kahlo's personal collection which were locked up in a bathroom at the artist's residence for more than 50 years, through September. *Look Again: Portraits of Daring Women,* woodcut and collage prints by Leverett artist Julie Lapping Rivera celebrating the achievements of women who defied the status quo, through February.

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JULY 25, 2024

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

Here's the way it was on July 17, 2014: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

#### **Gill Welcomes New Owner**

At the Gill selectboard meeting on July 14, Steve Schechterle, Jr. introduced himself to the board as the new owner of Jan's Package Store. Schechterle said he had been the lucky bidder at the auction on July 9 for the long-defunct package store behind the Mobil Station on Main Road, just off Route 2.

The board welcomed Schechterle. Chair Randy Crochier thanked him for "investing in the town."

#### **Tight Housing Market**

The three-story building on the southwest comer of Avenue A changed hands last month for the

first time in thirty years, and the new owners need everyone out to do long-overdue renovations. The original eviction orders for the tenants required them to be out by August 1; they may now stay until September 1, rent free.

The new owners are also putting effort into directly supporting the building's residents in finding new homes. As of press time, two of the four sets of tenants have already found housing, and credit their success to that help, which included providing a deposit to hold the new apartment for one of the tenants.

Two-bedroom apartments in Turners Falls currently on Craigslist are \$675, \$725, \$765, and \$900. "The sense of not knowing where you're going to go next is so unsettling," said one tenant, who has not yet found a place for herself and three young daughters.

Wendell veterans (left to right) Myron Becker, Doug Smith, Josh Heinemann, and John Craddock. pose with the World War II memorial recently discovered in another state, restored, and returned to town.

'Jim Gillio, a retired police officer in California, saw this memorial in poor condition on Facebook Marketplace,"

Heinemann, a reporter for this newspaper, explains. 'He learned there are five Wendells in the US, and with the help of Dean Eastman

of North Carolina Wendell, narrowed the memorial's names to those on the millstone memorial that is also in Wendell. The owner did not charge him for the memorial. He restored it with help, and shipped it to Wendell at his own expense....



"July 17 was its lightly-publicized unveiling, attended by Wendell residents and Stacey Geneczko, deputy director of the Upper Pioneer Valley Veterans' Services. I remembered some of the people on the memorial from my early days in town: Rupert Goddard, then police chief; Ray Avery, a neighbor in Wendell Depot. Other residents came up and found names of family members. The town paid nothing, just gratitude. The selectboard is trying to think of the most appropriate place to display it."

**FOLLOW-UP** 

(and Elderly People)

# 20 YEARS AGO

Here's the way it was on July 22, 2004: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

#### The Woman Who **Owned a Packard**

Ever since Dick French hauled his Aunt Margarette Clapp's Packard sedan out of the barn and put a "For Sale" on it, he has had a stream of visitors flocking to see it.

Margarette Clapp drove her forest green 1931 Nash sedan for years, helping her father run his extensive farming operations by driving around town to recruit workers to pick strawberries. Margarette and her Nash were a welcome sight during the Depression when jobs were scarce. Her Packard came much later, when she went to work for Tammy Moore, whose family owned an apple orchard in Belchertown. It was a pleasure to drive a Packard; owning one gave the owner pride and prestige.

#### Lake Pleasant Graphoanalyst

Camp Week 2004 at The National Spiritual Alliance is winding down. Two workshops today, two programs Friday, and the organization's annual meeting, election of officers, and banquet Saturday are all that remain. Bonnie Lee Nugent will present a workshop, "Understanding Relationships through Handwriting." Nugent is a Certified Graphoanalyst, founder of the Zoar Handwriting Institute, and a signature authenticator for American icon artist Norman Rockwell.

# 150 YEARS AGO

Here's the way it was on July 22, 1874: News from the Turners Falls Reporter's archive.

> "Keith" and "Hotel" nines. That confounded Comet didn't

MONTAGUE - The really nice man who is painting my house reminded my writer person that nobody has heard from me for a while, so I wrote this to let everyone know that Montague is a great place for elderly people and dogs, and there's plenty of both.

By ZIGGY WICKS-ROSENBLATT

Lee, who calls herself *mommy*, has been busy doing things for a new organization called Montague Villages. It will help people stay in their homes as they age

by linking them with volunteers willing to do small tasks.

I like that idea a lot, because I want to stay right here in this house, even when my people get old. Well, they are old, but they will get older, and someday they might need help. I never want to be one of those sad dogs needing a new home just because their people have to move somewhere dogs are not allowed. In my world, dogs are family.

I have heard writer/mom say that it's important for older people to live near good medical care. That's probably smart, since humans are so fragile. If they knew the joy of rolling in mud and dead

me for the whole town to read. She likes to write about her family and friends, and I think she reveals too many personal details. Now she's writing a new memoir called A Five Dog Marriage. I am Dog Five. The marriage is 36 years old, and when I was a puppy I almost broke it, but everyone didn't need to know.

I am grateful to Elise, my first trainer. She said I'd become a great dog when I grew up. She was right.

In my first year, Elise visited often for training, and another trainer named Finn took me for adventure

walks when it was slippery and icy. My people needed a break, and tried a couple of daycares, but I got kicked out of two.

My behavior improved some when I got fixed at two years old, but I don't understand anything about that. I was not broken, but I went to the vet and woke up with parts missing.

Even before the fixing, I started going to Pet Behavior Consulting one day a week. They gave me the chance I needed, and that's where I met Sam. I love him and wish my people would spend more time doing the homework he assigns. It distracts me from staring out the



**B6** 

Montague: A Good Place for Dogs

Local Matters

They are lathing the Oakman school house.

Bartlett Brothers are putting the finishing touches on Kelly block, Fourth street.

Family picnics up the river are all the go. Some pleasant parties have been enjoyed.

A movement is under way to establish a brass band. Millers Falls has organized one of twenty pieces, with Mr. Day as leader.

Mr. John Fennell has purchased a lot on Central street, Pleasant Plain, and will immediately commence the erection of a residence.

Mr. Griswold has lost nearly fifty thousand brick by the heavy rains, yet he is still as hopeful as ever that he will have a couple of millions before he closes up operations.

strike yesterday, per agreement, and so spoiled a half column local we had all ready to present to our readers. It was a sad disappointment to our "local".

Another game of base ball will

be played on Pleasant Plain on

Saturday afternoon between the

#### **Postal Subsidy Shrinks**

The following paragraph from recent rulings of the Post Office Department at Washington, will be of interest to many of our subscribers:

From and after July 1st, 1874, newspapers, one copy to each actual subscriber, residing within the county where the same are printed, in whole or in part, and published, shall go free through the mails; but the same shall not be delivered at letter carrier offices or be distributed by carriers, unless postage is paid theron as by law provided.



things they might be happier, and they'd certainly be more sturdy. I love to roll my body in anything stinky and I am healthy as can be.

She also says older people need friends, and a team of helpers. She calls this community. Dogs need all that, too, and I'm pleased to report that Montague is that kind of place. There are plenty of dogs here, two fine veterinarians, and groomers and trainers who have taught my people a lot. That's why I'm a good boy now.

It is the people who need the most training, you know. They say silly things like "sit down" without realizing they are asking for two commands at once. Untrained humans grip a leash so tightly that it makes a dog tense, like something very bad is happening. It implies danger, and any good dog will react to danger.

I may weigh more than a hundred pounds, but I'm perfectly capable of walking nicely with a trained person... most of the time. Since the bridge at the end of my street was closed, there's almost no traffic, and the rabbits have taken over. They waddle and jump, and every once in a while, I lose control and lunge at one.

If you haven't already guessed, this is Ziggy. You've heard from me before. I had to speak out a couple of years ago after the writer said some awful things about



LEE WICKS PHOTO

window waiting for trouble.

If someone wants to pet me, I no longer jump -I now stand still or sit. In fact, once this Montague Villages organization gets started, I might volunteer myself. Some elderly people miss having dogs, and might enjoy a visit. I also hope there will be volunteer dog walkers in case an elderly person with a dog gets hurt or sick.

If you've been reading about Montague Villages and you are a person who wants to help and knows how to handle dogs, think about signing up. It's a fine way for a dog lover to help, and it might keep both the dog and their person comfortably at home. Go to www.montaguevillages.org to find a volunteer application form if you are interested. On the website you can also read about events, board members, and more.

Sadly, there are no pictures of me, yet. I'm working on it. There ought to be a link to the dogs of Montague since we are such an important part of the town. I'd run for mayor, if we had one.

Ziggy Wicks-Rosenblatt lives in Montague Center. This article was written with assistance from Lee Wicks, who lives in Montague Center.

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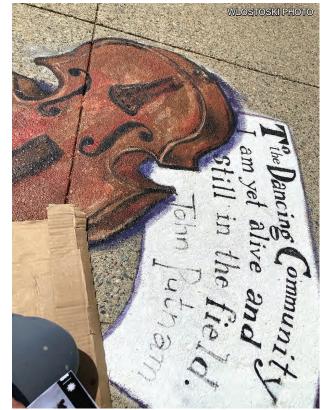


# Artist Profile: Youme Nguyen Ly

### By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

**GREENFIELD** – I stumbled on a very nice artist to profile when I spotted Melissa Stratton Pandina's mural starting to be made for Greenfield's new Abolitionist and Underground Railroad Downtown Art Walk. These sidewalk murals were made for the city's third annual Juneteeth Celebration, which happened on June 19 and is connected to 12 historic sites that are around Greenfield The artists were chosen by a committee of historians.

It turns out some of these historic sites are quite fascinating. They have a mural of Frederick Douglass, because he spoke at the former Washington Hall audito-



One of Nguyen Ly's Main Street murals honors John Putnam, a musician and barber.

rium, now Veterans Mall, on January 3, 1866. The second artist I have discovered who is part of this project is named Youme Nguyen Ly. She is covering three of the sites, like Stratton Pandina is. Her murals at 500 Main Street, 63 Federal Street, and 400 Main Street will be connected to George Grennell, George T. Davis, and John Putman.

I was told John Putman was a black barber and musician, who, according to family stories, actively helped fugitives on the Underground Railroad traveling through Franklin County. This came from a press release about the project I got from Christian LaPlante, an economic and community development assistant for the city.

I liked the looks of Youme's artwork as much as I did Melissa's. Like all of the artists connected to this project, she came across a call in December 2023 to create a mural for the walk.

"I have been painting in public for about thirty years, mostly collaborative community murals," she told me. Some have been in diverse locations that include Cuba, Vietnam, Laos, and Haiti. She has also made murals in New York City and San Francisco.

"I trained with and led mural tours for the incomparable Precita Eyes Mural Artists in the '90s," her website says. The group started in San Francisco in 1977 and is a 'community-based, inner-city mural arts organization devoted to enriching and beautifying urban environments through community mural collaborations."

Youme is also an illustrator and writer of picture books, and teaches art and poetry in public schools. One book she has illustrated is called *Peace, Bugs, and Understanding: An Adventure in Sibling Harmony*, written by Gail Silver. A book she both wrote and illustrated is called *Mali Under the Night Sky: A Lao Story of Home.* 

Youme told me that being an artist runs in her family – her mom is one – and that she has no formal art education. "I have learned and continue to learn from everyone and every artwork I encounter," she said.

You can check out more of Youme's art at her website, *youmeland.org*!





### **HEARTFELT** from page B1

eating dead (but not too rotted) carcasses killed by animals.

Since the time of *Homo erectus*, between 1.89 million and 110,000 years ago, the human body has depended on a diet of energy-dense food, especially meat. Not only did we become long-distance runners and hunters who ran prey down until it tired, but this access to more protein enabled the human brain to evolve even more than if we had stuck to a plant-based diet.

Our diet took another turn during the Neolithic era, about 15,000 to 10,000 years ago, with the advent of domesticated agriculture giving us a predictable source of food. Continuous sources of protein allowed farm wives to bear many babies in quick succession, and farmers soon

outnumbered foragers.

Today, vegetarianism and veganism are now more popular than ever, in reaction to our over-consumption of red meat, the higher cost of groceries, and environmental concerns. As long as enough vitamin B12 and the right amino acids are consumed, this can be a healthy diet. Conversely, meat eaters can also have a healthy diet by consuming not just muscle and fat, but organ meat too.

One big difference between a meat- and a plant-based diet is the levels of fat, calories, and sodium one takes in, obviously much higher in animal protein. Cutting meat out of your diet can help to lower cholesterol, lowering your risk of heart disease, stroke, and diabetes.

Vegetarians also vary in what

muscle wasting, skin rashes, and hypothyroidism. Vitamin B12 only occurs naturally in animal products, and a lack of it in the human body can cause memory problems, fatigue, weakness, and numbness.

Other reasons people forgo meat in their diets include health, religious, economic, and political reasons. Vegans tend to have strong ethical and environmental beliefs about diet in general, with some who think we should be protecting animals like we do humans, or who decry the use of antibiotics and hormones or the practice of caging animals.

As a lover of meat myself, living with pre-diabetes, I do have to come up with alternatives. I like tofu, and sometimes I will sauté it with

A block of extra-firm tofu drizzled with sesame oil and scallions is a simple and delicious meal.

Whether you decide to follow a vegan diet, a vegetarian diet, or an anything-goes omnivorous diet, just make sure you're getting enough of the important vitamins and minerals for your body. You can live a healthy life with almost any type of diet as long as you supplement what's missing and focus on eating clean foods that lack pesticides, hormones, and other additives and processing.

If you're a meat eater and want to try something new, this dish is savory, flavorful, and filling. It can be served over rice or vegetables.

Trouble Mandeson lives in



One of the author's favorite dishes to make is Greek spanakopita, or spinach pie, sometimes with beets or other root vegetables layered into the pie, and of course, lots of tart, salty feta cheese to complement the veggies.



Sliced, oiled, and roasted delicata squash and apples with salt, pepper, and a drizzle of maple syrup is a good gluten-free, fiber-rich main or side dish for vegetarians and vegans. Try combining other vegetables and fruits, like a lentil salad with peaches, or a cucumber salad sprinkled with pomegranate seeds. they consume. Lacto-ovo vegetarians do not eat meat, fish, or poultry, but will eat dairy products and eggs. Pescatarians exclude meat, poultry, dairy, and eggs, but will eat fish. Vegans don't eat any meat or fish protein, eggs, dairy products, or any foods that contain these products. Most vegans also avoid honey, as they feel it is a product that exploits the animal, and some refuse to wear or buy leather products.

There are many excellent sources of protein for vegetarians and vegans, such as tofu and tempeh made from soybeans. Both have chewy, meaty textures and mild flavors that improve with marinating or seasoning. Seitan, similar to lean meat in terms of protein, is made from wheat gluten. Mushrooms, eggplants, beans, chickpeas, jackfruit, and lentils are also used as meat substitutes.

But don't think that avoiding animals products doesn't have a downside. Vegetarian and vegan diets can lead to nutritional deficiencies that may cause hair loss, weak bones, veggies and top it with a peanut or sweet chili sauce. In fact, I actually love to eat tofu raw, right from the package. I love the chewy, crumbly, wet consistency it offers, and its lack of flavor is weirdly satisfying. Greenfield with her wifey and their cat Peeps. She volunteers for local nonprofits, cooking for and feeding

those in the community, and loves to write, copyedit, and create art.



## **GARLIC SESAME TOFU**

one block of extra-firm tofu 1 Tbsp. soy sauce or tamari 1 Tbsp. cornstarch 3 Tbsp. breadcrumbs

#### Sauce:

<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> cup soy sauce or tamari
2 tsp. toasted sesame oil
1 Tbsp. rice vinegar
2 Tbsp. maple syrup
1 Tbsp. cornstarch
4 Tbsp. water, divided
five cloves of garlic
1 Tbsp. olive oil

Preheat oven to 400° F. Drain the liquid from the tofu and dry it off with a towel. Cut it into oneinch cubes and toss with soy sauce, then cornstarch, and then breadcrumbs. (You may use gluten-free breadcrumbs if you need to.)

Place the cubes on a baking sheet and bake them for 30 to 35 minutes until browned. Meanwhile, make the sauce.

Mince the garlic and sauté it with olive oil until browned. Add soy, maple syrup, vinegar, 2 Tbsp. of the water, and sesame oil. Whisk the remaining water with the cornstarch and add it to the pan, heating over low for 3 to 5 minutes until bubbling and thick.

Toss the tofu with the sauce and serve.

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

- William Carlos Williams

edited by Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno Readers are invited to send poems to the Montague Reporter by email at: poetry@montaguereporter.org (Please note we are no longer accepting mailed submissions.)

# Our July Poetry Page

## Importance

"You're not that Important," I'm known to chide. Regret then pours over, then I'm known to hide.

"I'm not that Important," Is a slippery slope. Like the rocks giving way to my feet fully soaked.

"We're not that Important," Perhaps apropos... More clearly reflects the sentiment told.

But we *are* Important. Let's tell ourselves this. And remind each other "You Matter".... in drips.

So, what is Important? (Or should I say) What is Importance at the end of the day?

In the final analysis: Importance is truth; In the depth of my heart, Important is you.

> - Dave Chandler Chicopee

## Birthing

Thrown full force onto The deck of the speeding Ship on its way to another Desert on the other side Of the spinning world, Thousands of deeply Rooted trees are tossed Like pawns into the dark Space and millions of lost Grains of sand are flying Off to less distant regions To offer sparkling rings To fresher worlds, smaller Than all circling seconds.

> - Ann Marie McGillicuddy Amherst

## Seeing Old Not-so-new Friends

Greeting old and not-so-new friends Flinching at fresh memories of outdoor play: field relays, capture the flag. In our youth we were a team. Now we stretch our talk (to try and play again) in these short minutes. Old friendship is rewound: new resolutions, achievements, offspring delight and drama. The first flag dropped is Vegan! "Such a surprise!" Can I catch up? Next, the red white and blue outpace me! We agree "it's been too long." The black the white the red the green the rainbow, the blue and white overwhelm. So many flags we cannot have a team. This relay of friendship and drama spreads fires Settles into tribes (for good reason) We hug and drift into smoke. What has loss done to us?

> – Edna French Montague

## Clouds

I woke in a cloud cirrus or stratus it makes no difference but I can tell you clouds are dark on the inside

and hard to live in. There's nowhere to sit nowhere to hang a coat and though they look fluffy and cottony they're soaking wet

and cold and clingy a flooded basement in the sky full of sodden memories. I think clouds must be made of tears.

> – G. Greene Greenfield

## Demanding cats

Whistling broom sticks March through caves Of stone and ice and Swirling angel cats Call for food scraps In marble pantries Without stopping.

> - Ann Marie McGillicuddy Amherst

## No need to worry because

The rip tearing dream

being chased by a ghostly Gang of well meaning ministers From a friendly ghetto made A quick left turn at the large Grey rock that looks like a bear.

This recalcitrant dream Slithers back into this neck Of the woods on the fourteenth Night of the month and all Necessary traps are set to Snare this wayward fantasy Completely within iron tight Claws so it cannot return.

> - Ann Marie McGillicuddy Amherst



release you on command but still...

deliciously frightened you

that I controlled its ardor

Hug Me

alive

be so livable

Life will never again

so fully and happily

as when it held you

as when I held you

warm and laughing

wrapped in a hug that delighted and

like a friendly boa

that would always

knowing

always

- G. Greene Greenfield

## Contributors' Notes

Ann Marie McGillicuddy has been to Cleveland, Ohio 2,897 times. 2,897 is a prime number with a special property involving cubes of digits that leads to another smaller prime number squared. Can you guess this property? She has been baking cakes for all occasions for twenty-three years.

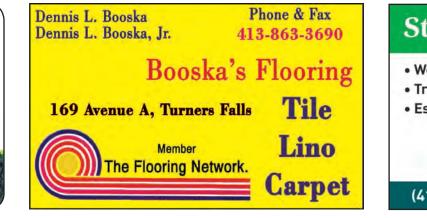
Dave Chandler writes that "Importance" is "Dedicated to my partner, a Millers Falls resident and loyal subscriber and prescriber of the *Montague Reporter*." He describes himself like this: "I am a musician, poet, songwriter and Music Therapy Graduate student at Lesley University. I moved from Kentucky to Western Mass in 2022, and currently work for the Department of Veterans Affairs. I have been writing poetry and songs for nearly thirty years. In 2023, I pseudo-anonymously published a memoir about my 2020 thru-hike of the Appalachian Trail during the pandemic, called *MUSICMAN: Extraordinary Journey*, which can be found on Amazon Books."

Edna French has lived in New England, and in the town of Montague, for years. Also a photographer, a recent focus included urban structures imprinted by human nature: "Town Without Pity" and "Town Without Pity (next door)". Professional success includes proposal-writing and research for education, arts, and community health fundraising.

Gary Greene is a Greenfield native and author of *Poems In A Time of Grief*. His work has appeared in the *Montague Reporter*, where he was the featured poet in January 2021, in Oprelle Publications' poetry anthology, *Matter*, online at *wittypartition.org*, and in *Nine Mile Books & Literary Magazine*.

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#### **THURSDAY, JULY 25**

Millers Falls Rod & Gun Club, Montague: TroutStock feat. Bella's Bartok, Dog 8 Dog, more. \$. 4:15 p.m.

Energy Park, Greenfield: R&D; Orlen, Gabriel, & Avery, the frost heaves and hales. Free. 6 p.m.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: The Big Dixie Swingers, Natty and the Woes, Slow Pony, A Dusk on the Land. \$.7 p.m.

Bookends, Florence: Norma Dream, Leaf Glitter, Beetsblog, Eamon Fogarty. \$. 7 p.m.

Cold Spring Hollow, Belchertown: Pum, Alex Wagner, Swamp God, Babygrinder, more. \$. 7 p.m.

#### FRIDAY, JULY 26

Millers Falls Rod & Gun Club, Montague: TroutStock feat. Leon Trout, Consider the Source, Hannah's Field, more. \$. 10 a.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: Madison McFerrin, Daisy Skelton, Kimaya Diggs, Kendra McKinley, DJ Badcatch. Free. 5:30 p.m.

Athletic Shutesbury Club, Shutesbury: Little House Blues. No cover. 7 p.m.

Belltower Records, North Adams: Tyvek, Stefan Christensen, *Time Thief.* \$. 7 p.m.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: Mike Gangloff, Liam Grant. \$. 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: The Hilltown Ham Hocks. No cover. 9:30 p.m.

#### SATURDAY, JULY 27

Millers Falls Rod & Gun Club, Montague: TroutStock feat. Leon Trout, Hayley Jane Band, Kung Fu, Jelly, more. \$. 10 a.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: Pioneer Valley Ska Fest with Pilfers, Hub City Stompers, Skamogotchi, 14 more. \$. 1 p.m.

Brick House, Turners Falls: Dracula Fest feat. Gingerbee, Sesame, Geronimostilton, Commuted, Fib, Mormon Toasterhead, Glasss. \$. 4 p.m.

Energy Park, Greenfield: The Most Wuthering Heights Day Ever. Free. 5 p.m.

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: Christmas In July feat. Groove Prophet. No cover. 5:30 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: TMWH-DE Afterparty with Kate Bush cover bands. Free. 7 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: Katy Kirby, Mei Semones, Derek Sensale. \$. 7 p.m.

1794 Meetinghouse, New Salem: Tracy Grammer, Jim Henry. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Ben Hersey, Noah Britton. Trance Macabre, Jeff Unfortu*nately.* \$. 8 p.m.

Dream Away Lodge, Becket: Ruth Garbus Trio. \$. 8 p.m.

#### **SUNDAY, JULY 28**

Millers Falls Rod & Gun Club, Montague: TroutStock feat. Creamery Station, Cosmic Blos-

som, Rice, more. \$. 10 a.m.

Lunder Center at the Clark, Williamstown: Glenn Jones, Emily *Robb.* \$. 5 p.m.

Ulculvert, Conway: Big Destiny, Moth's Frog, Ski Club, Magick Lantern. \$. 7 p.m.

Rat Trap, Holyoke: Rabid Few, Demented FX, Gay Mayor, *Sickfit.* \$. 7:30 p.m.

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

#### **MONDAY, JULY 29**

Iron Horse, Northampton: M. *Ward*. \$. 7 p.m.

#### WEDNESDAY, JULY 31

Montague Common, Montague Center: Just Fine, Thank You. Free, 6 p.m.

Tree House Brewing, Deerfield: Rhiannon Giddens. \$. 7 p.m.

Rendezvous. Turners Falls: Wes Brown with Scott Sasanecki. No cover. 8 p.m.

Hutghi's, Westfield: Ian St. George, Valley Gals, Matt Krefting, Chris St. George. \$. 8 p.m.

### **THURSDAY, AUGUST 1**

Energy Park, Greenfield: Oen Kennedy, The Klines Band, Small Change. Free. 6 p.m.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: Los Gaiteros de San Jacinto, DJ Bongohead, Slow Pony. \$. 7 p.m.

The Drake, Amherst: Jonathan Barber, Vision Ahead. \$. 8 p.m.

### FRIDAY, AUGUST 2

Stone Church, Brattleboro: Deadgrass. \$. 7 p.m.

Buoyant Heart, Brattleboro: Slobdrop, Slow Pony, more. \$. 7 p.m. **SATURDAY, AUGUST 3** 

Belltower Records, North Adams: Bunnybrains, Nod, Michael Slyne. \$. 6:30 p.m.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: The Music of Moondog. \$. 8 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: Banned from Utopia, The Paul Green Rock Academy. \$. 8 p.m.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: Black Pyramid, Coma Hole, *Moon Tomb*. \$. 8 p.m.

Dream Away Lodge, Becket: Footings. \$. 8 p.m.

#### SUNDAY, AUGUST 4

The Drake, Amherst: Mannequin Pussy, Ovlov. \$. 8 p.m.

#### **MONDAY, AUGUST 5**

Nova Arts, Keene: Sun Ra Arkestra. \$. 7 p.m.

#### **TUESDAY, AUGUST 6**

Belltower Records, North Adams: Rare Geese, Joseph Allred, Mal Devisa & God's Wisdom, Wednesday Knudsen. \$. 6 p.m.

#### WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7

Hutghi's, Westfield: Winged Wheel, Creative Writing, The Ethics Committee. \$. 7 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: Jarv, Deca, Felix Fast4ward, Coyote Reveries, Dillon, Vast Verbal. \$. 8 p.m.

Rat Trap, Holyoke: Bad Trips, Tempestade x Jen Gelineau, Useless Little, Gay Cum Daddies. \$. 8 p.m.

#### looking forward...

#### SATURDAY, AUGUST 10

Peskeompskut Park, Turners Falls: Home Body, Mal Devisa, Sax Machine. Free. 6:30 p.m.

The O's, Sunderland: DJ Lucas, Papo2oo4, Subjxct 5, Blaksmif, 22BB, Ice Rasta, Lady J. Slipperv When Wet. \$. 7 p.m.

#### WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: Wet Tuna, Family Underground. \$. 7:30 p.m.

#### SUNDAY, AUGUST 18

The Drake, Amherst: Gyedu-Blay Ambolley. \$. 7 p.m.

#### **SATURDAY, AUGUST 24**

Dream Away Lodge, Becket: Home Body. \$. 8 p.m.

#### SATURDAY, AUGUST 31

Millers Falls Rod & Gun Club, Montague: RPM Fest feat. Prong, Bongzilla, Castle Rat, Leather Lung, more. \$. 12 p.m.

#### SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

Millside Park, Easthampton: River Road Festival feat. Dar Williams, Haley Heynderickx, Paula Cole, Jill Sobule, more. \$. 12 p.m.

#### SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

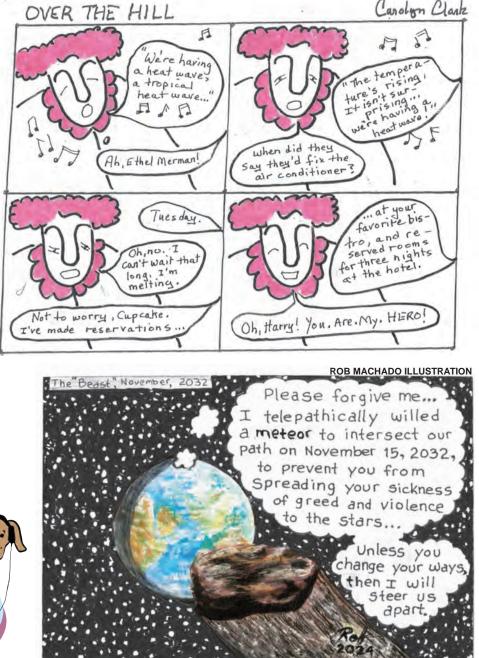
Hutghi's, Westfield: Longings, Red Herrings, Phroeggs, Feminine Aggression. \$. 8 p.m.

#### SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

Bombyx Arts, Florence: Yacouba Sissoko. \$. 7 p.m.







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#### THE MONTAGUE REPORTER

### **Montague Community Television News**

# **Casting Call!**

### By HANNAH BROOKMAN

**TURNERS FALLS** – Casting call! An independent, locally-produced show for public access television seeks actors of all ages. *Customers From Hell* is a queer, community-based comedy series dedicated to creating absurdist catharsis for customer service workers. Imagine another day at work, only this time customers emerge from a flaming portal, intent on torturing you. Each episode reenacts true interactions between customers and workers, following submissions from friends and community members.

No acting experience is necessary, but actors and writers must have experience in customer service. Contact Alexis at *alexiskhott* @gmail.com for details.

Do you also have an idea for a show? MCTV is always available to assist in local video production as well. Cameras, tripods, and lighting equipment are available for checkout, and filming and editing assistance can be provided at no cost to you. It's an incredible resource!

All MCTV videos are aired on Channel 9, as well as featured on the MCTV Vimeo page.

This week, our Vimeo has new uploads from the Montague Community Band and Family Fishing Day, as well as meetings of the Montague selectboard, the Montague conservation commission, and the Gill selectboard.

And if you're looking for more ways to get involved, consider joining the MCTV Board! If you would like to stop in for a meeting, email *infomontaguetv@gmail.com* for a link to the Zoom.

Contact us at (413) 863-9200 or infomontaguetv@gmail.com, follow us on Facebook, or find us on Instagram @montaguecommunitytv. Find videos and more on our website, montaguetv.org.

#### **DISASTER** from page B1

Richardson, author of the history book *Wendell, Massachusetts: Its Settlers and Citizenry, 1752-1900*, described the Wendell Depot village prior to the storm as "bucolic." Sawmills in the area were so productive that virtually all of Wendell's forests were cleared in the first half of the 19th century, Richardson said.

The first postmaster of Wendell Depot was William Putnam, who also owned the general store, the sawmill, gristmill, pail factory and a hog farm. Richardson's book was based on records kept by Thomas E. Sawin, a contemporary of Putnam, who called him a "drunkard," "whoremonger," "great rum seller," and a "Freemason."

Railroad companies built lines that reached the area in 1848, as well as the Wendell Depot station, unlocking further opportunities for commerce and growth and giving the village a name. Fires were frequent and destructive, as were floods, but structures were often rebuilt and businesses replaced.

"It seemed like it was a very beautiful and sweet place," Richmany mills and quite a few houses at the turn of the century, Wendell Depot was still a vital, thriving community."

In 1909, a Boston businessman named W. G. Webber bought the Orange Electric Light Company and Athol Gas Company and merged them to form the Athol Gas and Electric Company. At the time there was a rapidly growing need for electricity to power the expanding system of trolley lines between Orange and Fitchburg. To meet the demand Webber built the Athol-Orange Power Plant in 1910, along with a new bridge across the Millers River.

It took 15 months and \$200,000 to build the hydropower plant, Hines said, the equivalent of \$6 million today. Made of solid concrete, the 200-foot-long, 20-foothigh dam had three times the storage capacity of the original dam and canal.

"This was a different level of power generation," Hines said of the project. "By this time there were turbines."

The Historical Society's presentation included projected images of Caring for a loved one at home?

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struction, and of the devastating impact of major storms three decades later. Coll described how the plant had miraculously survived the torrential rains and flooding of March 1936, but it was the Great New England Hurricane, which made landfall on September 21, 1938, that brought an abrupt end to the project – and ultimately to the community.

Behind the dam, the Millers River backed up and temporarily rerouted itself through the village, dragging the bridge, homes, and businesses into the floodwaters. Residents of Athol and Orange, dam for excessive flooding in their communities in both 1936 and 1938. It was determined that the powerhouse was damaged so badly it would not be cost-effective to repair, so the facility was closed, and in February 1939 the dam was demolished by dynamite.

"When you're down there today it's so amazing to see how big this concrete structure was, and how little of it remains," Coll said.

Losing the power plant was a huge financial loss for the town of Wendell. The facility had contributed 70% of its tax base, and without it residents were faced with a potenState representative Ralph Mahar proposed a bill at the time that would have brought \$20,000 in disaster relief to Wendell, but it failed to pass on Beacon Hill.

Wendell Depot never recovered from the floods of 1936 and 1938, Hines said, though the town did find a way to keep the tax rate to \$40 in 1939, then \$25 in 1940, saving residents from complete financial ruin.

"At least we didn't become a ward of the state," Hines said. "The town did not have the money to rebuild the Depot, and frankly, it did not have the need or the desire....

That's pretty much why it

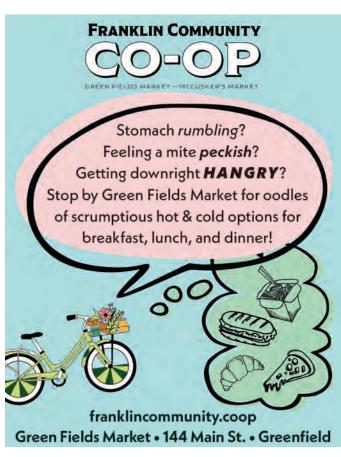


ardson said. "Despite the loss of so the hydropower plant under con- upstream, blamed the Wendell tial tax rate of \$100 per thousand. is the way it is today."

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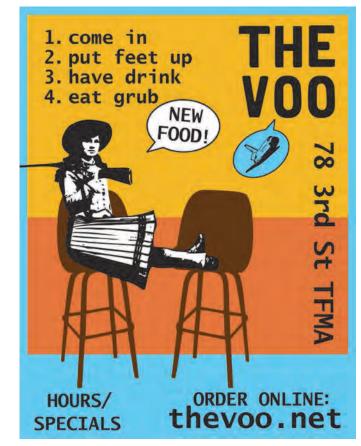






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