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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

AUGUST 22, 2024

GILL-MONTAGUE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

State Cuts After-School Program; District Not Informed for Months

By MIKE JACKSON

GILL-MONTAGUE – A popular after-school program at Sheffield Elementary School may not run this year, families of students in the Gill-Montague district learned Tuesday morning, after its state funding was unexpectedly canceled.

The program, which served 77 children last year according to the school district's website, runs five days a week from 3:15 to 5:30 p.m. It is a 21st Century Community

Learning Center (CCLC) site, a federal model for supporting academic enrichment outside the regular school day intended as a support for low-income schools. The grants are competitive, with funding decisions made at the state level.

The CCLC program at Sheffield was started in-house by director of teaching and learning Marty Espinola, and continued after Espinola left the district through a partnership with the Collaborative for

see **GMRSD** page A5

MassDEP Lists Violations, Orders Farm to Fix Them



QUALE PHOTO

The Department of Environmental Protection required Falls Farm to put up signs indicating the agency's enforcement orders were in effect.

By WILL QUALE

MONTAGUE – Every cloud has a silver lining: when news breaks thirteen days before the next summer issue of the *Montague Reporter*, there's time to let the story develop before reporting it.

On Friday, August 9, the state Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) issued a unilateral administrative order to Falls Farm – a 110-acre vegetable farm on the Montague-Sunderland line owned by cardiologist James Arcoleo – documenting numerous violations of state laws inspectors observed during a site visit to the farm

on July 19. The order prescribes a series of actions the farm must take over the next months to stabilize eroding soil, which both impacts wetlands and damages town infrastructure, and to restore the disturbed wetlands.

In all, Falls Farm was declared to be in violation of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (WPA) and seven different WPA regulations; and additionally in violation of the state Clean Water Act and one of its regulations. According to the order, several regulations were violated in multiple locations on the property.

Some of the observed violations see **ORDERS** page A8

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Officials Fear No End in Sight As Critics of Drug-Farm Fumes Push Town Hall to Crack Down

By JEFF SINGLETON

"I am skeptical that the mitigation measures are ever going to meet the requests and standards of the abutters," Montague selectboard member Matt Lord said Monday evening about odors emanating from a cannabis grow facility in the airport industrial park. "I do believe that Flower Power is doing everything it can in order to mitigate that, [but] I'm not sure the twain shall ever meet."

Lord's comments came near the end of a long discussion of the Flower Power Growers facility, a topic the board has addressed at multiple meetings. Monday's

agenda included several other weighty items – the redevelopment of the former Farren Hospital lot, a proposal to end the traditional Saturday town meeting, the closure of the Second Street alley while a mural is painted on the Shea Theater – but it was the intractable debate over pot smell that caused the meeting room to be nearly full, and the meeting to extend almost a half hour beyond its allotted time.

Public health director Ryan Paxton opened the discussion with a presentation. Under the special permit the planning board awarded Flower Power in November 2020, Paxton's department is tasked with

see **MONTAGUE** page A9

LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Town Pursuing Cooperation, But Preparing For Conflict, at Juggler Meadow

By GEORGE BRACE

Leverett's selectboard meeting on August 13 was short, with the board providing an update on preliminary negotiations between town officials and representatives of the Kittredge estate over a potential housing development on 60 acres of land on Juggler Meadow Road, and adjoining to executive session to discuss the matter further.

Board member Jed Proujansky gave an overview of the project, saying that the town had not yet received a "formal proposal" but that a representative of the Kittredge estate, Josh Wallack, was discussing building 150 residential units in Leverett and another 250 on adjacent land in Amherst.

In this scenario, the Leverett units would be for owners 55 years and older, with 25% designated as low- or moderate-income housing. Under Chapter 40B of state law, a developer of affordable housing may bypass local zoning regulations in towns, such as Leverett, that do not meet a quota of affordable units.

Proujansky said Wallack had suggested that rather than applying to the state to bypass town zoning through a normal 40B application, the developer could enter the 40B Local Initiative Program (LIP), in which they would work together with the town to negotiate "what the project would look like."

see **LEVERETT** page A10

Mobile Home Park Landlords Threaten Legal Action Over Rent Hearings

By SARAH ROBERTSON

ORANGE – Representatives of Leisure Woods Estates are threatening legal action against members of the Orange Mobile Home Park Rent Control Board as the hearing process for a proposed rent increase at the mobile home park is scheduled to continue next month.

"Although we anticipate a number of residents would be unhappy at an increase, as would most people, the status quo of depressed rents and penalizing the owners cannot stand," John Kuzinevich, an attorney representing the park's owners, wrote to the board in an August 8 letter. "We trust that you will follow the law and future dispute may be avoided."

Last October the owners of Leisure Woods proposed a 43% rental increase, from \$410 to \$588, for

see **LANDLORDS** page A5

Milestone Retirements To Hit Montague Center



Left to right: In the next two years captain Mark Fisk, assistant chief Gary Dion, and chief Dave Hansen will all age out of the Montague Center fire department.

By JEFF SINGLETON

"It has been a good run, but everything ends at some point," said Montague Center Volunteer Fire Department assistant chief Gary Dion, who will be retiring this month after 42 years as a member of the village's fire department. "But we've got some young people coming on to keep this stuff up."

Dion's retirement at 72 is mandated by special state legislation which applies to the Montague Center department. The statutory retirement age for paid firefighters – those in Montague Center

receive small stipends – is 65.

Dion is one of several members of the village's department hitting the age limit in the near future. Fire chief Dave Hansen will need to retire by next June 30, and captain Mark Fisk plans to leave in two years. All three expressed optimism about the future of the small department due to recent interest by younger residents.

"I see a number of people joining the department who look like Mark 30 years ago," said Fisk.

The *Reporter* asked Dion about the most memorable fires during

see **RETIREMENTS** page A4

Toddlers Promised 'Chaos' On Millers Falls Corner



Caitlin Hart (right) and Brandon Thomas have kept the interests and needs of a wide range of kids in mind while designing their new "indoor playground."

By BELLA LEVAVI

MILLERS FALLS – This October, playing house takes a new dimension with the opening of Toddler Indoor Playground Chaos Corner at 26 East Main Street.

"I noticed a significant need for family support in our area, especially for young children," said Caitlin Hart, the playground's co-owner with her husband Brandon Thomas. "There's a lack of options dedicated to imaginative play."

Designed for children ages 0 to 7, the playground features a space mod-

eled after a miniature village inspired by Millers Falls itself. The open floor plan is segmented into themed rooms for pretend play, including a café, a doctor's office, and a laundry room. Many of these rooms are named after real local businesses, such as the Whistle Stop and South Deerfield Veterinary Emergency Hospital.

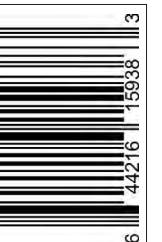
The walls are painted a soothing baby blue to mimic the sky, enhancing the mini-town ambiance.

"It's about replicating everyday life for children in a playful environment," Hart explained.

see **CORNER** page A7

Maybe Partying Will Help

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The Montague Reporter

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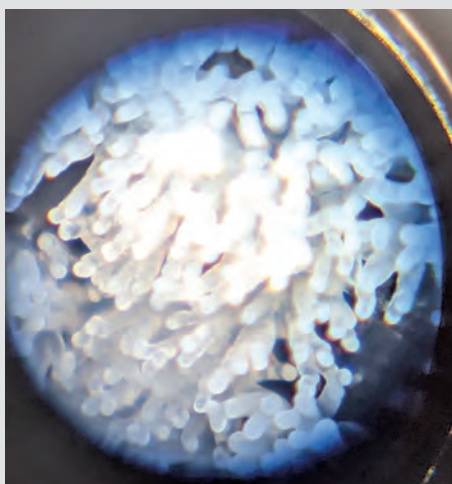
Stump Speech

With apologies to the people who've sent in cool shots of things like eagles swooping that have been sitting in our email local folders for most of the summer, we invite you to check out this mold on a stump, captured by our Greenfield reader Jon Magee through an old 30x Micronta pocket microscope.

"Costs \$10 used on eBay," he explains. "There are a million of them, from the '60s to the '80s. Don't drop it on the floor or let your toddler play with it, it will fall apart.... Makes tick larvae look like Mothra."

"It's been good weather for looking at decaying things," he adds.

Sometimes the thing to do when there isn't a new big thing to look at is just to start looking



at the same things more closely. Our world is complicated at every scale. It boggles comprehension, which can be relaxing.

Thanks to all the well-wishes sent our way on the occasion of our 1,000th issue. We hope you enjoy our 1,001st just as much!



Stumps sometimes have a lot going on.



NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION

Marcy Gregoire fixes a shaved ice at the Nice Snack Parlor, a park-side snack bar located in the front lobby of Nova Motorcycles in Turners Falls. The teacher-owned business specializes in organic and local shaved ice and sodas. Gregoire says she strives to "bring fun and whimsy to the visitors of the beautiful waterfront of Unity Park." Hours are varied, mostly on weekends and during events.

Letters to the Editors

Open It Up

I'm grateful for the long overdue discussion of lack of representation and attendance at Town Meeting.

Montague is the smallest town in the state with representative town meeting. Times have changed since 1964, when representative town meeting was adopted. The thinking that the Town would grow, and representation would best suit us moving forward, has come and gone.

True democracy and participation can only increase with bringing back Open Town Meeting. Let's do it!

Deborah Radway
Montague Center

Planting Trees: Choose Local!

I just read an article concerning a grant received by the City of Greenfield for the sole purpose of planting shade trees. Welcomed news. However, I caution the committee to plant trees that are native to this area.

I was employed at 48 Sander-son Street for 12 years. There were two beautiful ornamental pear trees planted on the north side of the building when I first started. Over the years I watched those trees slowly dwindle to a few branches and finally have to be removed. The main cause was that the trees

did not shed their leaves until late fall, and early snow load caused many branches to break.

The same thing happened to several of the same species of tree here in Montague Center. One tree near the post office had two branches left – it looked like a person pointing east.

Please choose your trees carefully so they may provide much-needed shade for generations, not years.

Ann Fisk
Montague Center

OP ED

Western Mass Educators Issue Joint Statement on Gaza

We, the below-signed group of educators, write to express our support for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in the Gaza Strip.

First and foremost, we mourn the loss of every Palestinian and Israeli who has been killed.

We believe in the notion of a human family. Peace, freedom, and dignified lives for all are the reason we are in education. The ongoing assault on Gaza is antithetical to everything we stand for.

In our unique position as teachers, we operate daily under one essential truth: that all children are our children. Each one of our

students is ours, and all of the children of Israel and Palestine are our children. We feel an unbearable sadness for every child who lives with the trauma of fear and violence. We mourn for the children in Gaza who are starving, for each child orphaned - some without even one remaining family member - and each child who is permanently disabled.

As educators, we recognize the importance of schools in society. They provide children with comfort, education and community, along with consistent food, shelter, and water. In Gaza, however, more than 80%

of schools have been damaged or destroyed, including *all twelve* of the universities. A spokesperson for the UN Children's Fund stated recently that "Not one child in Gaza is able to go to school at the moment...children have lost the dream and the right to education in the Gaza strip today."

The irony is not lost on us that while our schools are facing a budget crisis, our government continues to increase the billions of dollars they spend on weapons of war. We cannot pretend that our own woes are simply locally created and can be locally solved. We

must connect our struggles and understand our own problems in the global context in which they exist.

Finally, we write with the understanding that words matter. We know that statements alone do not elicit change. However, we feel when an atrocity of this level is being sponsored by our own government, staying silent is a statement in and of itself. We hope that in publishing this statement, it makes it easier for others to say that Palestinian lives matter.

The fight for Palestinian lives is truly inextricable from the fight for a better world for all.

Signed by the following Western Massachusetts educators:

Elizabeth Byl
Kelly Junno
Raymond Paquette

Kevin Schmith
Karen Kent
Joanne Morgan
John Zyskowski
Karen Shapleigh
Nora Dejesu
Olivia Brighenti

Dory Graham
Isabella Uttley-Rosado
Jake Gallant
Nicole Harper
Huimin Wan
Jylian Tereso
Justin Gianesin

Jen Lucine
Joshua Katz
Miguel Aquino
Brian Rodrigues
Iraida Pastor
Michele Bernhard
Veronica Douglas

Susan Sullivan
Casey Chandler-Alexander
Shawn Donnelly
Nicole Lombardini
Elizabeth Monopoli
Jenna K. Daniels
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Rebekah Jaffe
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Compiled by NINA ROSSI

The Village of **Lake Pleasant Tea and Crumpet Society**, also known as Montague Word Workers Local 01347, invites writers and songsters and listeners to gather tonight, Thursday, August 22 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at Thompson Temple of The National Spiritual Alliance, across from the Lake Pleasant post office.

Gatherers will read their own writings or those of their favorites. Readers should bring two offerings, one of up to six minutes and one of up to 12 should time permit. David James will continue reading from *Spirit and Spa* as part of the 150th anniversary of Spiritualism's organized arrival at Lake Pleasant and the resulting birth of the community.

This Friday, August 23 from 1 to 3 p.m., the Greenfield Public Library is hosting a **Back-to-School Prep Party** for teens ages 13 to 20. Teens can clean out their backpacks and get ready for the school year. Basic school supplies will be on hand, as well as demonstrations on bullet journaling, vision boards, non-stressful after-school schedules, after-school snacks, and more.

Celebrity guest Miss Winn from Greenfield Middle School will be there, and each attendee will receive a free ice cream cone from Ice Cream Alley. For more information contact teen librarian Francesca Passiglia at francesca.passiglia@greenfield-ma.gov.

Do turtles, toads, and snakes give you or someone you know the creeps? Meet these fascinating animals at a **free live animal presentation**, "Turtles to Toads: Herps of the North," at the Discovery Center in Turners Falls this Saturday, August 24 at 3 p.m. and maybe start to conquer some of those old fears.

Staff from the Vermont Natural History Museum will present an interactive slide show of the reptiles and amphibians of Massachusetts, and introduce folks to live animals

and touchable artifacts.

The New Salem Library will host "The Light Eaters," a Zoom presentation by author Zoe Schlanger, on Monday, August 26 at 4 p.m. Attend the session at tinyurl.com/lighteat.

Schlanger is a staff writer covering climate change at *The Atlantic* and a frequent contributor to the *New York Times*, *Newsweek*, *The Nation*, and more. She describes how **the invisible world of plant intelligence offers** new understandings of the complexities of life on Earth, according to the announcement, challenging "our very understanding of agency, consciousness, and intelligence."

UMass Amherst is looking for subjects for a research study who will **earn \$35 for an hour drawing on an iPad** with a pencil. If you are age 50 and above and healthy or mildly cognitively impaired, you are eligible. Email microtask@groups.umass.edu to sign up.

Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS), a nonprofit **weight-loss support group** with chapters across the US and Canada, will hold an open house next Wednesday, August 28 at 9:30 a.m. at the Moose Lodge, 22 School Street in Greenfield. TOPS is open to men, women, and children aged seven and older, and the first session is free of charge. Find out details at the open house or visit tops.org.

The Traprock Center for Peace and Justice will present the new documentary *Where the Olive Trees Weep* in the Greenfield Library Community Room next Wednesday, August 28 at 5 p.m.

The film explores themes of loss, trauma, and the quest for justice that forms the struggle of the Palestinian peoples under Israeli occupation. Palestinian journalist and therapist Ashira Darwish, grassroots activist Ahed Tamimi, Israeli journalist Amira Hass and Canadian-Hungar-

ian trauma expert Dr. Gabor Maté provide context.

Palestinian snacks will be provided by Mohawk Falafel and Shawarma, and a post-screening discussion will be moderated by Adrienne Craig Williams. The showing is free.

Northfield's Fiddleheads Gallery is hosting **local author Karma Kitaj** reading from her two-novel series, *Beguiled* and *Becoming a Woman of Substance*, on Thursday, August 29 between 5:15 and 6 p.m. Enjoy snacks and live music from Patter Field and Ted Thornton, followed by the readings and signings.

Public health nurse Sarah Fiske and Leverett fire chief Brian Cook are offering a **safety education session** on how climate change impacts health, accident prevention, emergency preparedness, and more. The session takes place next Thursday, August 29, at 6 p.m. at the Leverett public safety complex. Sign up at leverettfire.com/summer to attend.

The Montague Center Common Hall hosts a **traditional fiddle concert** next Thursday, August 29 at 7 p.m. with Montague's own Rose Jackson and many friends. In this double-bill concert, Jackson and Helen Kuhar (fiddle, guitar, harmonium) and Elias Cardoso and friends (fiddle, guitar, button accordion) will bring traditional tunes from across the Celtic world, old songs with contemporary relevance, and contemporary songs with traditional sensibilities.

Tickets are \$15 to \$30. For more info or to reserve a seat, contact helenkuharmusic@gmail.com.

The next **Cinmastorm at the Shea Theater** in Turners Falls next Friday, August 30 will be about time. The free double feature presents the now-classic movies *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure* (1989) and *Time Bandits* (1981). The fun starts before the movies with beer and trivia at 7:30 p.m. Stay for one or both movies.

If you notice purple lights shining from houses and businesses on Saturday evening, August 31 at 8 p.m., it's part of the annual **Overdose Awareness Day**, designed to reduce the stigma of drug-related deaths, raise awareness, and acknowledge the grief of those who have lost loved ones.

The color purple is associated with courage and bravery, and the lights are meant to represent a beacon of hope. If you participate, you can post photos and videos to [#WMALightsItPurpleOverdoseAwareness2024](https://www.facebook.com/WMALightsItPurpleOverdoseAwareness2024). Purple bulbs can be purchased online or at local-adjacent enormous retail stores.

Mohawk Trail Concerts honors the late Alice Parker with a special free concert on Sunday, September 1, at 3 p.m. at the Federated Church on Route 2 in Charlemont.

Parker, who died in December 2023 at the age of 98 at her home in Hawley, was a composer, conductor, and teacher who wrote more than 500 pieces and a friend, relative, and inspiration to many hill-town residents. The concert includes pieces by Parker, plus pieces she enjoyed, performed by musicians who knew and loved her. There will be choral and classical music, American standards, contemporary folk, and a sing-along. Anecdotes will be shared and refreshments enjoyed.

My brother thought that the old-time movies featuring comedic actor W.C. Fields were hilarious, but my mother found the egotistic alcoholic characters he played unbearable – too much like my grandfather, in a bad way! So be forewarned that the next installment in **Greenfield Garden Cinemas' silent film series**, *Running Wild* (1927), might be what we now call a trauma trigger even though in the silent era there were fewer insults and more juggling and other antics from Fields.

Running Wild plays on Monday, September 2 at 6:30 p.m. Admission is \$10.50 adults and \$8.50 for children, seniors, and students.

This silent film series is really fun to go to, as there is live improvised music by Jeff Rapsis, who also presents a little backstory for each feature before the show. The theater is usually full, so get there early.

The **Unnameable x Audible Bite festival**, this year's installment of the multidisciplinary and belly-filling Audible Bite series hosted by Stella Silbert, is coming to Unnameable Books in Turners Falls on Saturday, September 7 from 3 to 10 p.m.

The event will feature sound, words, movement, and more, by Angela Sawyer and Shea Mowat, SKN (Suadela Love, Katarina Mazur and NAGO), Matt Wellins and Parsa Ferdowsi, Alan Sondheim, Loculus Collective with Rebecca Schradler, Elle Longpre, Ben Hersey, Mo Schweiger, Bella Levavi and Esther Solomon, Anselm Berrigan, and a community ensemble performance of Pauline Oliveros' *Rock Piece*.

Food and drink will be served throughout the day, starting at 3 p.m. in the courtyard at 66 Avenue A. The event will be a potluck, so all are welcome to bring food and drink to share; there will also be snacks made by Silbert as well as vegan and non-vegan frozen desserts courtesy of Sorbetto by Smudge.

A donation of \$10 to \$20 to support the artists is suggested, but no one will be turned away for lack of funds. Follow Unnameable Books on Instagram at [@unnameable-booksunnameablefalls](https://www.instagram.com/unnameable-booksunnameablefalls) and check for the full schedule and more information on the artists.

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HARRY SMITH
MIRROR ANIMATIONS
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66 AVENUE A • TURNERS FALLS

FACES & PLACES



DAVID HOITT PHOTO

Earlier this month the Turners Falls High School softball team celebrated their record-setting 11th state championship title with a banquet at the Schuetzen Verein. Each player was presented with a "2024 State Champions" jacket.

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RETIREMENTS from page A1

his tenure. He mentioned a fire at an apartment building on Dry Hill Road and another at a home on Taylor Hill, but said the largest conflagration he was called to help put out was the burning of the Sheffield Elementary School in Turners Falls in 1987. That school had been moved into the old Turners Falls High School building on Crocker Avenue. The Montague Center department was called in to assist Turners under the concept of "mutual aid" – another state-regulated policy which benefits both fire departments in town.

The other memorable fire mentioned by Dion destroyed a section of the Strathmore paper mill complex known as Building 10, set ablaze by a disgruntled employee of then-owner Jerry Jones who testified at his trial that he had been electrocuted removing copper wire at Jones's direction. Dion said this was the "longest fire" in his recollection, as the structure continued to reignite for nearly a day.

Asked what the biggest challenges were for a member of the small volunteer fire department, Dion stressed the uncertainties of family life associated with being nearly always on call.

"You may be getting ready for a short vacation and have the car packed up," he said, "and then suddenly have to unpack and get to a fire." Dion also pointed to the significant amount of training time required to master a dangerous job which requires teamwork. "You have to train so you can go home at night," he said.

Dion and Fisk both also serve as commissioners of the Montague Center Water District. Many residents find the structure and governance of the town's independent water and fire departments confusing. These are not connected to the town government, but rather exist within "prudential districts" with



WILL QUALE PHOTO

Fisk, Dion, and Hansen all told the Reporter they are optimistic that recent interest will help sustain the volunteer department. Fisk and Dion (at left) also serve as commissioners of the Montague Center water district, an entity distinct from the fire district.

their own oversight boards and annual meetings, similar to town meetings.

To make matters more confusing, while the Turners Falls water and fire departments are both part of the Turners Falls Fire District, and their combined budgets are voted at a single annual meeting in the spring, in Montague Center the two departments are "completely separate," according to Hansen, with two districts and two separate annual meetings.

The village of Lake Pleasant, meanwhile, is covered by the Montague Center Fire Department and pays taxes to it, but receives water from the Turners Falls Water Department.

The origins of these separate departments are not well-documented.

One source who asked not to be identified told us that he had heard that the Montague Center Fire Department was established in 1942 after the Turners Falls department refused to put out a fire in a barn in that village. Several residents then drove to Boston and initiated legislation on Beacon Hill to create an independent fire district.

Local historian and historical commission member Ed Gregory sent us an account from a 1954 history of Montague celebrating the town's 200th anniversary. It recounted that in the early 1920s, a group of "interested persons got together and purchased a Model T Ford truck and equipped it as a fire engine." Soon after, a Packard was converted into another engine. These vehicles were apparently

housed at the center's old town hall and at residents' houses, but were soon retired.

The village, according to this account, had no guaranteed protection until 1941, when a group of citizens "made an exhaustive study of the needs of a fire district in this village," and after "considerable effort" got legislation passed establishing a volunteer department.

Hansen told us that the two fire departments in Montague now "work great together; we always come to fires in each other's villages."

As far as working at a small volunteer department for 35 years goes, he focused on the social experience. "For those of us who love it," he told us, "it's camaraderie you don't get anywhere else."

AT LARGE

A Magician and a Trickster

By CHIPAINSWORTH

NORTHFIELD – Finding a good podcast is not an easy chore. Ambient noises like dogs barking, babies crying, and doors slamming create an impression of amateurism. Desperately trying to avoid politics, I stumbled on *Dedicated*, hosted by Doug Brunt, who's written *Ghosts of Manhattan*, *Trophy Son*, and *The Mysterious Case of Rudolf Diesel*.

Brunt is intrigued by how authors go about their work – if they do outlines, write in long-hand, work in morning or night – and has interviewed such bestselling authors as Amor Towles, Anna Quindlen, and Scott Turow. Ever wonder how Lee Child hit upon calling his protagonist "Jack Reacher?" In England, where Child lives, Brits use a contraption called a *reacher* to lift an item off the top shelf.

Brunt begins each interview by mixing a drink for both to enjoy during the hour-long conversations – tequila for Patricia Cornwell, Manhattan for Mike Rowe, dry martini for Richard Haass, and so on.

Penn Jillette's favorite libation is "the air we breathe, no alcohol, no caffeine." The multi-talented 69-year-old Jillette is best known for the "Penn and Teller" magic act he performs with Amherst College grad Raymond Teller, but at the time of the interview in December 2022 he had written eleven books including two novels.

Most folks in these parts can tell you Jillette was born in Greenfield and attended Greenfield High School. They also know his father Sam

was a coin collector and jail guard when Chet Martin was sheriff. They remember he entered a pink Cadillac in the demo derby at the Franklin County Fair, and that he studied at the Ringling Bros. Barnum & Bailey Clown College, presumably at the flagship campus in Sarasota.

Jillette didn't finish high school, "but I always enjoyed writing. My mom was a typing teacher and taught me to type when I was very young, eight or nine. I was a big fan of science, a very good science student – I mean for Greenfield, Massachusetts."

"I wanted to start with your early life, you were born in Massachusetts," says Brunt.

"Born in western Massachusetts," says Jillette. "You have to say that because people think Massachusetts is Boston, and they think that it's hip and intellectual... or it's Dorchester [and] it's tough."

"But there's this whole section of western Massachusetts, before you get further west where all the rich people from New York live, where it gets like Kerouac country. It's this little section of dead factory towns that's just fentanyl. It's Massachusetts, but it feels maybe a little more like West Virginia."

Ouch that hurts, but Jillette's more about honesty than kindness.

Richard Nixon resigned 50 years ago this month for trying to cover up his knowledge of the Watergate break-in. On June 17, 1972, five political operatives were arrested for burglarizing the Democratic National Committee headquarters in the Watergate Office Building in Washington. It

was an election year and they were digging for dirt. It was typical *Spy vs. Spy* stuff.

The left-wing media loved to portray Nixon as a threat to democracy, similar to how it treats Donald Trump today. Nixon signed the National Environmental Policy Act and established the Environmental Protection Agency. He signed the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act, and helped stop crime, and re-introduced heroin addicts back into society by letting them use methadone.

All things considered, maybe it's time to take Nixon's photo off the dartboard.

ETC., ETC.: Wordle will run out of five-letter words in 2027, then what? "We'll throw everything back into the pot," Wordle editor Tracy Bennett told the *Huffington Post*. Shop where you want, but during the first week of August it cost \$20.99 in "Everyday savings" for a 32-count box of Keurig Cups at Big Y in Greenfield, and \$12.99 for the same product at Market Basket in Swanzey. An unscientific study by yours truly concluded that on average, \$100 of groceries at Big Y costs \$80 at Market Basket. According to a reliable source, the state's contract with the former Super 8 on the Greenfield rotary will not be renewed at the end of the year. Big Y shoppers could hear Soulfest music blaring from the Franklin County Fairgrounds on August 17, a rainy weekend when the Christian version of Woodstock came to town.

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

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GMRS from page A1

Educational Services (CES), a Northampton-based agency that operates roughly 15 after-school sites in member districts, according to executive director Todd Gazda. CES handles the paperwork for renewing the grant funding from year to year, and program staff are on CES's payroll rather than the school district's.

"While this decision appears to have been made in the spring," Gill-Montague superintendent Brian Beck wrote in an email to families Tuesday, "we were not informed by CES until just a few days ago.... This very late notification leaves our students and families served by the Sheffield Afterschool Program in a very challenging situation."

Beck wrote that he shared the news "with great disappointment and frustration," adding that "CES is attempting to find other possible grant funding."

The decision not to renew the grant, he explained, was made by the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) based on a standardized rubric. Up until this year it was not used as a hard line, but this year DESE had decided it would cut any site scoring under 70. The Sheffield site received a 68.5.

"That's also the frustrating part of it," Beck told the school committee Tuesday night. "[CES] write the grant, fund it, hire the people who work in the program, oversee the program. But if they had communicated to either [Sheffield principal] Kerry [Heathwaite] or I, the district could have had an impact on those scores for sure."

"It's really a blow for the families," said committee chair Jane Oakes. "It's been a great program for years."

The program was scheduled to begin in mid-September, and Beck said the administration is now studying how the program operated and attempting to quickly locate replacement funding for a program.

Business manager Joanne Blier said it cost roughly \$107,000 last school year to run the program, plus about \$30,000 for the summer. Beck said Montague town administrator Walter Ramsey was "brainstorming" ways the community might pull that much money together.

Committee member Carol Jacobs suggested that the program could be run through an agency such as the YMCA or the Girls Club of Greenfield (now the Learn-

ing Knoll). "I feel like we have some obligation to put something quality together," she said, "and not say, 'Well, we might do it in January.' We've got two weeks — parents are going to be needing this care for their kids."

Beck said he agreed. "Hopefully we'll be able to overcome this loss of funding, and perhaps seek to apply for these grants ourselves in the future rather than having it run by an outside organization."

Gazda told the *Reporter* that CES is "trying to move heaven and earth to secure funding to keep something going up there," and that he felt "cautiously optimistic" it could be accomplished.

"We have to find something so we can keep it going this year, and then help establish a longer-term plan," he said. "We recognize the importance of this program to the community, and want to do everything possible on our end to secure funding so it can continue."

Gazda said CES's development staff was "looking at multiple funding streams," including private foundation grants. On the state level, DESE has been working to make a new pot of funding available through the non-profit Massachusetts Afterschool Partnership, but those grants will not be available in time for this fall.

"One of the things about these federal grants through 21st Century," Gazda added, "is after a certain number of years, the amount of funding begins to go down... The expectation is that districts will find alternate sources of funding to help build it up and keep it going."

Gazda confirmed that CES had learned that the state's evaluation rubric would disqualify Sheffield in "late spring, early summer." Asked whether CES agreed with DESE's assessment, he paused to choose his words.

"There's always a give and take in these type of things," he said. There are areas we feel we should have scored higher on, but at the end of the day, it's their assessment that makes the determination."

Christine Bates, director of the afterschool program, told the *Reporter* she was "disappointed, and hopeful."

"It's not about me," she said when asked about her potential loss of a job. "It's about the families who need us to take care of their children."

Bates said she had "great faith" in the community's ability to solve the problem.

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LANDLORDS from page A1

about 150 mobile home park lots located on a bend of the Millers River in Orange. As part of its application the company was required to submit its current operating budget, as well as a summary of prior years' expenses.

The rent control board held public hearings in June and July and is continuing to review the materials as it deliberates. At a meeting in the town hall auditorium on August 14, the board continued to review and question Leisure Woods' budget documents and requested more information, including vendor invoices, prior to its next meeting on September 11.

Rent control board chair Jane Peirce pointed out multiple inconsistencies between the company's proposed operating budget and the more detailed itemization submitted with Kuzinevich's letter on August 8. Among other examples, she said that the supplemental materials itemizing a \$75,000 line item for "maintenance and materials" in the original budget appeared to only add up to \$11,000.

"I can't yet reconcile what items are in your budget in which category so we know what to ask for," Peirce said. "It's not correlating to the detail you provided."

In his letter, Kuzinevich suggested that due to the depressed economic conditions of Orange, "a higher rate of return is warranted as such conditions pose more of a risk." Leisure Woods is seeking a retroactive rent increase to the date of its initial request.

"We are troubled that the Board suggested that there be equitable considerations of the impact of an increase on residents," the attorney's letter continued. "The prior advocacy of Town Counsel also suggested that because Orange is economically depressed there should be a lower rate of return. Both positions are mistaken. There is no language in the Ordinance suggesting that equitable considerations should be made."

"If that is done," the letter argued, "it is illegally forcing the owners to subsidize the housing and in so doing constitutes a taking."

Kuzinevich did not respond to a request from the *Reporter* this week seeking clarification on this point, and asking what kind of suit his firm was suggesting it would file.

The town bylaw establishing the Rent

Control Board in 1985 states that the board may raise or lower the ground rental rate in order to "remove hardships or correct inequities for both the owner and the tenant, and to yield to the owner a fair net operating income for mobile home park accommodation."

"In today's economy any increase under 10% is extraordinarily modest," Kuzinevich wrote.

Leisure Woods Estates owner Glenn Gidley and his son Adam, the park's operations manager, attended the August 14 meeting and answered a number of the board's questions before leaving early, seemingly in frustration.

"You may have noticed Mr. Gidley has left," Kuzinevich said. "He feels the process has gone totally off the rails — it has not been reined in. I'm going to have a discussion with him tomorrow about the scope of responses, or whether we will seek alternate relief in court."

The rent control board had asked if the company could show invoices and receipts

from prior years, prompting Glenn Gidley to complain that this would require "a tremendous amount of work."

"You're looking at us copying hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of documents," he said. "We've had this application in for a long time."

Control board member Julie Davis said most contemporary businesses use accounting software that allows them to produce reports of prior invoices and payments. After some deliberation, the board members clarified that they were only seeking to review "some" prior transactions.

The board had also requested more information regarding a recent substantial increase in the company's projected payroll in the last two years, probing the job descriptions and compensation for Adam Gidley's part-time position, and those for the property manager, Tracy Mills. Peirce said many aspects of the two jobs seemed duplicative.



Glenn Gidley, whose family owns or holds interest in a number of mobile home parks in the region as well as a New Hampshire-based manufactured home company, left last week's rent control board meeting early, visibly frustrated. Leisure Woods Estates is now seeking rent increases retroactive to last fall, and Gidley's attorney says the company is now considering legal action against the town of Orange over the prolonged process, and the board's focus on the company's expenses rather than how much profit it should earn.

"It sounds like we're paying two managers," Leisure Woods resident Jackie Hicks agreed.

"The salaries that are paid to John and Tracy have gone up," Glenn Gidley said. "The amount of compensation for Adam — he was doing this job at times and not getting paid, quite frankly, because the corporation didn't have the money... That's why we're here, asking you for these increases."

He also confirmed, in response to questions from another tenant, that Mills shows and sells trailers at Leisure Woods for his other business, Salem Manufactured Homes, and receives a commission on sales. Adam Gidley said that Mills does not sell homes during her working hours, one of several comments that elicited murmurs from the park tenants in the audience.

"I saw, with my own eyes, Tracy showing some individuals a home on regular business hours," Jennifer Desreuisseau reported. "I've seen it maybe a handful of times. Most recently, I think the home was parked down by the dumpster area — that's kind of the norm where they would sit."

At a prior meeting, Glenn Gidley stated that the family's manufactured-home company and Leisure Woods Estates, one of the seven mobile home parks listed on its website, are completely unrelated businesses.

Following the August 14 meeting, Kuzinevich told the *Reporter* that the rent control board has so far focused only on Leisure Woods's expenses, and not on what the company believes would be a "fair rate of return" on its investment. The Leisure Woods Estates property is assessed at about \$3 million, he said, and last year the company only generated about \$25,000 in profit after covering its expenses.

"No prudent investor would accept less than a half a percent rate of return on \$3 million," he argued.

In his August 8 letter, Kuzinevich implied that the town's failure to allow the firm to generate a higher rate of profit was legally actionable.

"Finally getting a fair rate of return is important to my clients and is urgently needed," Kuzinevich wrote. "We hope the Board recognizes this and that we can avoid Court clarification of these concepts."

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CORNER from page A1

Hart has equipped the playground with Melissa & Doug toys and is constructing additional wooden structures, ensuring that the facility is predominantly wood-based.

The playground will also feature a nursing room for parents; a low-sensory room for children sensitive to light and sound, which will include a sensory swing; and a small area for infants who are newly crawling. A central climbing structure and ball pit will help kids burn off energy.

In addition to the pretend café, there will be a small real café, offering snacks for both grown-ups and children.

Hart, who moved to Millers Falls three years ago from the eastern part of the state, has five children of her own – three biological and two foster. Last year, she opened a home daycare with a similar focus on imaginative play. Her background in the medical field has fueled her passion for working with children, she explained, and her experience with the daycare helped her connect

with the local community and inspired the new venture.

The goal of Chaos Corner is to foster community connections and provide a place for children to socialize, Hart said. The facility operates on a “pay-to-play” basis, with one adult admission included per child. Fees will be waived for family visits with supervised Department of Children and Families workers, and the facility will be more affordable than similar options in the area, according to Hart. She also noted that she accepts vouchers at her daycare to support affordability.

The community has already shown strong support, with many contributing to Chaos Corner’s Amazon wishlist.

“It’s clear that parents are excited about having this new space for their children this winter,” Hart said.

The new storefront will occupy the building previously used by Rustic Romance, an antique store that closed earlier this year.

Cindy Bayer, owner of Rustic Romance, expressed her enthusi-

asm: “I wish the new owners much success, and always love to see a new business coming to the village of Millers Falls.”

Hart spoke about the major shortage of child care in the area. She explained when she first opened her home child care facility she had to turn people away from an open house event, getting almost 200 interested families. While the playground won’t solve the underlying issue of the lack of daycare, she said, it will help provide much-needed indoor activities for families in the area.

“There is a huge need in this area for affordable and comfortable space to send children,” Hart said.

Hart remains hopeful that Chaos Corner will provide a fun, safe environment for young children to enjoy, and a valuable resource for families in need.

A website for the playground is still under development, but updates can be found on the “Chaos Corner, Toddler Indoor Playground” page on Facebook.



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NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Special Town Meeting Will Vote on New Town Meeting Voting Protocol

By **KATIE NOLAN**

On August 12, the Erving selectboard approved the warrant for a special town meeting next Wednesday, August 28 at 7 p.m. at Erving Elementary School. The articles include a citizens’ petition requiring the moderator to act on requests for secret ballot votes at town meeting, \$12,000 for an electronic voting system for town meeting, easements along Church Street for reconstruction of the Church Street bridge, a relocation of Care Drive, a reorganization of the town bylaws, and payment of a prior year’s bill.

In a memo, town counsel Donna MacNicol recommended adding three articles to the start of the town meeting formalizing procedures, such as eliminating the need to read articles aloud, authorizing specific non-residents to speak, and asserting the moderator’s authority to call the result of a voice vote when a two-thirds majority is required.

The board agreed to include the elimination of the reading of articles as a proposed procedural vote on August 28, and to work on rules for conducting town meeting to be presented at the next annual town meeting in the spring.

Police Department

The town has paid for repairs to one of its police cruisers in January, April, and June, and the cruiser now needs an estimated \$7,450 worth of transmission and air conditioning repairs.

Selectboard member James Loynd asked whether the town was throwing good money after bad.

Selectboard member Scott Bastarache asked where the money for a replacement vehicle could come from, or whether the department could stretch out the lifespan of the current vehicle, a 2017 Ford Taurus hybrid.

Asked about the cost of a new

cruiser by finance committee member Daniel Hammock, police chief Robert Holst estimated \$70,000 to \$75,000.

“We don’t have \$70,000 right now,” Hammock commented, and moved to pay for the repairs to the current cruiser. The fin com voted unanimously to approve this, and the selectboard concurred.

The board reviewed a policy and job description provided by Holst for the department’s community services cadet program. Bastarache asked for the policy to state that the purpose of the cadet program is to prepare candidates for police academy training, and for eventual work as full-time officers. He also recommended that the policy require cadets to meet objective department criteria before attending the academy.

Holst agreed to revise the policy and job description for a later meeting.

Former IP Mill

Engineering consultants Tighe & Bond provided a conceptual plan and opinion of cost of abatement, demolition, and structural repair for portions of four buildings at the former International Paper Mill, with the goal of minimizing repair costs. The estimate totaled slightly less than the \$600,000 available from a MassDevelopment grant.

The board voted to submit the plan to MassDevelopment and, if approved, have Tighe & Bond prepare bid documents for the work.

Getting Around

After hearing concerns about vehicle speed and pedestrian safety on North and Church Streets, the selectboard solicited proposals from several contractors. Green International Affiliates, Inc., which has been studying Route 2 with MassDOT and is currently preparing plans to reconstruct the section of the highway from Farley through

Erving Center, provided a \$49,896 proposal for studying traffic calming and meeting the state’s Complete Streets criteria.

The board asked town administrator Bryan Smith to check with MassDOT to see if a planning grant is available, and to prepare information for the capital planning committee to consider the project for FY’26.

On a separate topic, the board voted to engage Green International Affiliates for just under \$34,000 in professional engineering services to study the feasibility of the proposed Blue Heron Greenway project, which would develop a shared-use path from Farley to Erving Center on the Wendell side of the Millers River.

The board voted to extend the deadline for completion of work at Bridge Street and Maple Avenue from August 13 until August 30.

The contractor, A. Martin & Sons, had asked the town for a three-week extension due to a delay in obtaining the sheeting needed to stabilize the roadway during excavation.

Other Business

The board approved two proposals from Tighe & Bond for work related to the former Maple Avenue landfill: \$25,900 to monitor private wells within a 500-foot radius of the landfill for PFAS, and another \$25,600 for groundwater monitoring.

The board approved a job description for a financial clerk position, supporting both the tax collector and principal assessor at a total of 19 hours per week. Principal assessor Jacquelyn Boyden and tax collector Michele Turner, according to Boyden, agreed to combine the hours previously approved for an assessors’ clerk with the vacant position of tax collector’s assistant.

“Our offices do collaborate a lot,” Boyden commented.

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ORDERS from page A1

pertained to developments on the farm which had not previously been discussed in town conservation commission meetings, including components of the farm's irrigation system in Sunderland and an enlarged gravel driveway in Montague.

The agency gave the farm a list of 15 directives, with deadlines ranging from one week after the order was issued to the end of November, at which point the property will be expected to have fully implemented agency-approved plans to "effectively manage stormwater... to prevent future direct or indirect discharge of sediment-laden stormwater into resource areas," as well as to "restore and mitigate any alteration to areas subject to protection."

Failure to comply may lead to fines of up to \$25,000 – per violation, per day.

Though Sunderland's conservation commission had reported it had not been notified in advance of MassDEP's July site visit, leading the *Reporter* to erroneously describe it as "unannounced" in our August 8 edition, Falls Farm accounting manager Diane McClellan reached out to correct the record on this point. The agency's order confirms that the visit was announced.

"I'll say that Falls Farm has implemented, in the last week, pretty significant erosion control," town administrator Walter Ramsey told the Montague selectboard on Monday, 10 days after the order was issued.

MassDEP's most immediate demands, due for completion by August 16, were for the farm to install signs – now visible along Old Sunderland Road – displaying the MassDEP order number and to undertake "all practicable" short-term site stabilization methods.

Throughout the week of August 12 to 16, the *Reporter* observed that the farm was abuzz with activity. Workers drove vibratory soil compactors with five-foot-diameter drum rollers over the sandy soil, then installed a new array of straw wattles to slow stormwater as it flows towards wetlands areas. Falls Farm did not reply to a request to elaborate on its methodology beyond writing that it had "implemented significant measures on the site for erosion control."

Michael McHugh and Dan Hall, wetlands chief and water resource

es deputy director for MassDEP's western region, met on Monday to inspect the farm's work and discuss upcoming priorities with McClellan, Ramsey, and the Montague highway department's new superintendent Sam Urkiel and foreman Will Stratford.

"It was a very positive meeting," McClellan said of the gathering, adding that the farm was "continuing to work with [MassDEP] to resolve this issue."

For its next deadline, by this Friday, August 23 Falls Farm must nominate two consultants to MassDEP. If they are recognized by the agency as qualified, each will be hired to develop and submit a plan of action.

The first, an erosion and sediment control specialist, must produce a plan for long-term site stabilization and stormwater management. They will also be required to inspect the farm's soil stabilization measures both weekly and after every rainfall of more than half an inch. This plan is due September 8, and must be fully implemented by October 30.

The second, an expert in wetlands delineation and restoration, will identify the full extent of disturbance and sedimentation since Falls Farm acquired the property, and submit a plan by September 23 to restore the affected resource areas; full implementation is due by November 30.

According to the order, each deadline may only be extended if "a documented unforeseen occurrence legitimately renders this deadline impossible to achieve."

Gratuity Not Included

Just as carrying an umbrella is a time-honored way of discouraging rain, town planner and conservation agent Maureen Pollock's prognostication at the August 8 meeting of the Montague conservation commission that "it's probably going to rain every week" may have brought about a fortnight of reduced rainfall, and fewer heavy rain events.

The culvert basin along Meadow Road which has repeatedly filled with silt, debris, and muddy water carried by an intermittent stream flowing from Falls Farm did not clog and overflow onto the roadway since our last edition, following six weeks during which it had required substantial attention, time, and resources from Montague's highway

department (DPW).

This respite gave the town an opportunity to calculate the cost of the DPW's efforts, and to demand Falls Farm accept responsibility for the department's work.

"By your unlawful and unreasonable use of your land," Ramsey wrote in a letter to Arcoleo on August 14, "you are creating a trespass ... and this trespass is creating a public nuisance and a threat to public safety by interfering with safe travel along [Meadow Road]." The letter served as a cease-and-desist order from the town in the interest of protecting town infrastructure.

It served, moreover, as a bill: "The Town further demands that you reimburse the Town for public funds expended in cleaning out the culverts in the amount of \$6,451."

Asked whether Montague has taken such a direct approach in the past with landowners seen as responsible for damage to town infrastructure, Ramsey said the letter had been issued on the recommendation of town counsel, and was coordinated with MassDEP's order, which "neatly lays out the nexus between activities at Falls Farm and the flooding at the culvert..."

"Every situation is unique," he wrote, "and the action is tailored to the particular circumstances.... The Town's letter is an entry point into formal engagement about how to resolve the issue. That engagement has begun. There is no clear precedent for [a] situation like this."

Meanwhile, freed from culvert duty, the highway department has repaved a stretch of Old Sunderland Road which had degraded substantially this summer, apparently due in part to stormwater flowing down a recently expanded gravel driveway on the farm. The DPW also installed a new asphalt curb to guide this water towards catch-basin grates in the roadway. Ramsey told the *Reporter* that the cost of these repairs was included in the town's \$6,451 invoice to Falls Farm.

Reached for comment about the DPW's work during his first weeks as superintendent, Urkiel said that while the recent patches and curbing on Old Sunderland Road were repairs, the entire length of that road is due to be repaved by the end of the year, a project which was already scheduled and is part of the town's budget. However, he empha-

sized that Falls Farm will be responsible for remediation of the Meadow Road culvert areas.

You'll Never Walk Alone

In his presentation to the selectboard on Monday, Ramsey offered some hints of things to come once the farm brings on its consultants.

"Of the many things that they need to do with the wetlands professional, they've agreed to prioritize addressing the ravine that is washing out and causing problems with the problematic culvert," he said. "Everyone's agreed that that's the priority number one to address – which is great, because that's going to help resolve the town's primary infrastructure concern, that culvert on Meadow Road."

"They're under some very tight timeframes by DEP," he added, "and DEP is helping us keep them honest to those timeframes."

"I'm glad that DEP got you involved, and the landowner and everybody could get on the same page, too," selectboard member Matt Lord told him. "That doesn't always happen with these types of things – it's nice to see that that touch is happening here."

Similar expressions of relief that the state was assuming responsibility, but not cutting the towns out of the process, were heard in Sunderland the next day at their conservation commission meeting.

At Tuesday's meeting the con com discussed MassDEP's administrative order amongst themselves and with concerned neighbors. The state agency's description of the farm's irrigation system drew particular interest. According to the document, the farm had partially dammed a perennial stream and was pumping its water into a 10,000-gallon underground storage tank.

Commissioners noted that this may have been responsible for the farm's namesake waterfall drying up on July 25, an incident that has not been observed since.

MassDEP wrote that the "installation of the irrigation system including the boards, pump, underground tank, and pipeline" was in violation of four different WPA regulations.

Several months earlier, Sunderland's con com had issued two enforcement orders against Falls Farm. Though these town orders included certain demands similar to the state agency's, they were apparently not as successful in inspiring vigorous corrective action. Though town and state orders are both enforceable by fines, MassDEP's penalties for noncompliance are about 100 times larger. In light of the agency's intervention, the commission voted to rescind its earlier orders.

"We are different enforcement bodies," chair Jennifer Unkles explained. "It's not required to rescind our orders, but it makes it clearer for the people trying to do the work."

Unkles added that in a recent conversation with McHugh, the MassDEP regional wetlands chief, she had conveyed her commission's hope that going forward it can play the role of relaying information between the agency and the public.

"Is there a sense of relief in the neighborhood?" conservation commission member Nancy Pick asked attendees as the agenda item came to a close.

One, a neighbor of the farm, replied to the commissioners: "I heard it most loudly from the four of you!"

Excerpts
... from MassDEP's 8/9/24 Unilateral Administrative Order

During the site inspection:

- i. Falls Farms representatives explained that recent activities at the Site included the expansion of fields, construction of a new building, widening of a driveway, and putting in a new irrigation system... the irrigation system consisted of withdrawing water from the unnamed perennial stream to a 10,000-gallon underground storage tank, from which it was distributed via piping to various locations on the Site. MassDEP staff directly observed wooden boards installed within the perennial stream to impound water, the inlets of pipes within the perennial stream, pipes buried within BVW associated with the unnamed perennial stream, sedimentation within BVW, and the aboveground portion of the infrastructure associated within the belowground water tank, which was within 100 feet of the mean annual highwater mark of the stream....
- ii. MassDEP staff directly observed sediment deposits within BVW associated with the tributary to the unnamed perennial stream on Town of Sunderland Assessors Parcel 1-0-17 at the Site. MassDEP followed the sediment plume up-gradient and determined the source of the sediment to be unstable and eroding soils surrounding the construction of the new building in the southernmost field and associated grading activities.
- iii. By conducting a GIS desktop analysis of publicly available aerial images MassDEP confirmed that the cleared portion of the Site on Town of Sunderland Assessors Parcel 1-0-17 had recently been converted from forested areas. Portions of these cleared areas were within the Buffer Zone. MassDEP staff determined the forest clearing occurred between 2021 and 2023.
- iv. MassDEP observed widening, grading, and the addition of gravel to a driveway within the Buffer Zone of one of the unnamed intermittent streams on parcels 50-0-05 and 50-0-18. Stormwater flow from the newly graded driveway surface resulted in the erosion to the Bank of the intermittent stream.
- v. MassDEP directly observed sediment deposits throughout the BVW, Bank, and LUWW associated within the three intermittent streams on the Site. By following newly deposited sediment up and/or down gradient, MassDEP determined the source of the sediment to be the graded, unstable and exposed soils within the Site.
- vi. MassDEP staff observed and followed the sediment deposits downstream within both mapped intermittent streams. MassDEP staff observed sediment deposits along the east side of Meadow Street within LUWW and Bank. Areas of deposition were observed to be greater than 24 inches deep. At the outlet of the northernmost unnamed intermittent stream into the Connecticut River, MassDEP observed and documented a newly-formed sediment delta.
- vii. MassDEP determined that the above-described activities, all of which occurred at least in part on land owned by Falls Farm and were undertaken by agents of Falls Farm, resulted in "alteration"... of at least 4,000 linear feet of Bank, 4,000 square feet of LUWW, 1,000 square feet of BVW, and 500 square feet of Riverfront Area.



The DPW says it installed a new curb on Old Sunderland Road to contain runoff from a newly-widened driveway on the farm.

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Last Chance: Call for Artists

TURNERS FALLS – The *Montague Reporter* announces a call for artists for the 2024 Wrapping Paper Edition. 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, a double page measuring 20" by 22". Artists may design in full color or in black and white, in any style; designs do not have to reference holidays. The paper offers a **\$200 stipend** to each of seven chosen artists, thanks to several anonymous donors. Winners will be announced September 16 and will have until the end of October to submit final designs.

A submission form is available at tinyurl.com/more-wrap. Artists and designers may submit up to three designs. Those who can't use the online form may send their name, address, phone number, and up to three images or proposals to



NINA ROSSI PHOTO

features@montaguereporter.org with "Wrap" in the subject line.

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

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 our weird non-profit community paper!

DETOUR Bike Path Along Canal Closed For Two Months

TURNERS FALLS – "Beginning Wednesday, August 21," FirstLight Power announced this week, "a portion of the Canalside Rail Trail Bike Path from the 11th Street Bridge to Depot Street will be closed to allow FirstLight to complete a maintenance project on the Turners Falls Power Canal Left Dike. The closure is expected to continue through late October."

The announcement included a map, which we have not reproduced on this page, indicating that a person can just go straight down Montague City Road, obviously, instead.

Not all of the bike path will be blocked off – just the big open section between the two-way bridge to the Patch and the little side street you come out on near where the Farren used to be. Canals need fixing too. Watch out for traffic.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT Live Downtown? Join Town Meeting!

TURNERS FALLS – Precinct 5 needs more town meeting members! Come vote on town issues, advocate for your neighbors' interests, and learn more about Montague.

Precinct 5, shown at right, includes most blocks between the Turners Falls-Gill bridge and Fifth Street; the area between Fifth, L, Seventh, and K streets; the beginning of the Hill as far as the north (but not the south!) side of Central; and the area between Unity and the river as far as Hillside Avenue.

One-sixth of all residents of Montague are squished into this tiny zone, and one-sixth of the seats at Montague's representative town meeting – 21 – are reserved for people who live here. A number of these seats are currently vacant, though, which means that the neighborhood is underrepresented



when it comes to making important decisions at the town level.

There is a way for the precinct representatives to fill these seats without waiting for next May's election, and the plan is underway. We just need to find people willing to run! Call Ryne at (617) 396-4156 if you are interested, or would like to learn more.

LEVERETT from page A1

Selectboard chair Tom Hankinson said town officials were "still in the process of sorting out" how they plan to manage negotiations with the estate, but he thought the planning board might take the lead on initial steps – including public hearings – while the selectboard would take responsibility for others, such as holding a special town meeting (STM) in the fall.

The zoning board of appeals, he said, would also be "jumping in at an appropriate time."

Carol Heim, a Leverett resident and professor emerita of economics at UMass, asked the board to request funds soon from the finance committee to hire an attorney, rather than wait for funds to be approved at a special town meeting, as had been discussed previously. It would be important to have that "expertise in the room," she said, adding that she would "really prefer that our town officials not have further discussions with Kittredge representatives until they have an attorney to advise them."

Heim said she believed the money was available now, and could be replenished at an STM later. One reason the town should seek legal advice, she warned, was that it was "not clear that all the provisions of an LIP would necessarily stick."

Heim said she had researched LIP processes in other towns and found that a large amount of information was often required from developers before public hearings were scheduled.

"Public input is great," she said, "but I think it would be premature to have public hearings similarly within the next few weeks without a lot more information.... People will simply not have enough information to give meaningful input."

She also noted that Wallack was not a developer but a "development manager," or "kind of a middleman," and that a developer would need to be identified before a comprehensive permit application could be started.

Hankinson said that he had "lost sleep" over the issue of legal consultation, but also said that he was "quite positive" and "optimistic"

about recent talks with Kittredge representatives. The estate, he said, appeared to view the LIP as the "best route," and seemed willing to let Leverett take the time it needs to deliberate.

Hankinson said the board would probably appoint an *ad hoc* committee to work on the matter, and asked Heim if she would be willing to serve on it. Heim replied that she was "potentially interested."

Volunteer Recruitment

The selectboard voted to include an appeal in the town newsletter for volunteers to fill open positions on town boards and committees, and approved other outreach efforts, including using the highway department's electronic road sign and putting out flyers at locations such as the transfer station, the library, and the Leverett Co-Op.

Board member Patricia Duffy said these efforts would be part of a "recruitment drive" beginning in September. The possibility of bulk-mailing a letter was discussed, but Duffy said this would be expensive, and that she generally favored "trying the cheapest stuff first."

If there was no response, she added, the board could "amp it up."

Hankinson said publishing the appeal would "demonstrate to the town that the selectboard has a commitment to fill these empty positions," and that the board would use "one tool after another" to accomplish this goal.

Proujansky suggested the board members could also be more proactive, and could show up at the transfer station themselves to pass out flyers and answer residents' questions about public service.

Other Business

The new principal of Leverett Elementary School, Siby Adina, introduced herself to the board. Adina, smiling, said she began work on August 1, and was excited to be part of the school community. She said she understood that school business was often discussed at selectboard meetings, and that she would be available whenever information was needed.

The board welcomed her aboard.

MONTAGUE REPORTER



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

Above: "This summer, my boys and I had a wonderful adventure driving from Upinngil to Colorado to hike the Rockies with my father," Isaac Bingham, shown holding the June 27 edition, reports. "Sorrel stayed back in Gill to manage the farm with her father. My mother-in-law Patricia Crosby reminded me to pack a copy of the Reporter. [This] photo was taken on the Continental Divide near Arapahoe Pass."

Below: Norm Fuller, Jr. of Savage, Minnesota, formerly of Turners Falls, enjoys the same June 27 edition at Salisbury Beach, Massachusetts. (Thanks to Rick Kostanski for the photo and caption!)



Submitted photo



Roz Howard photo

Russ and Roz Howard of Burke, Virginia write: "From our home in Virginia, we drove to Montague to meet Russ's third cousin for the first time: Maggie Sadoway of Turners Falls. Upper Bend, Wagon Wheel, Hope & Olive, Loot, Unnameable Books, Discovery Center, Migratory Way - what a treasure this area is. And what a fun fundraiser the Montague Reporter's wrapping paper edition is! We took the June 20 issue home to stay in touch." Above: Russ, in front of the State House in Annapolis, Maryland, recalling it fondly.

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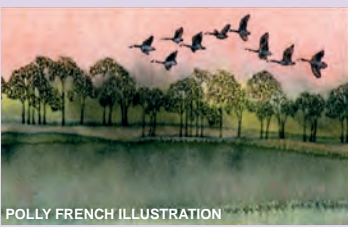


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AUGUST 22, 2024



WEST ALONG THE RIVER

LAZING ON A SUNNY AFTERNOON

By DAVID BRULE

*Now I'm sitting here,
Sipping on an ice-cold beer
Lazing on a sunny afternoon,
In the summertime...*

THE FLAT, ERVINGSIDE – Only hardly past mid-summer, how can anyone already have a certain nostalgia for the scenes of the summer that is still happening? I find myself already wistful over the remembrance of things that have just barely occurred hours or days ago, snapshots in the album of the mind.

Of course, no one does have real photo albums anymore. That was the old-fashioned past practice when you arranged photographs in a special book to be placed on some shelf, to be taken out once a year or every two years to look over and remember.

All that is now archived in a smartphone, so ephemeral as to be lost and crowded out by other photos, selfies, images of food and meals you're about to consume, really interesting only for your selfish self.

Some rare few of us write it down instead. Some try to express it in poetry, although to my mind most poetry these days is dedicated to studying one's navel, lamenting and expressing the dredges of the human experience. It seems many poets struggle with modern-day victimhood, poems are full of anger and insults. Some others still struggle to draw and paint what they see. I'm probably one of those, but I'm not sure.

I just take a sip of my ice-cold beer, in the summertime, in the summertime...

To be sure, *I can't sail my yacht*, like in the song. But I did sail out, in my kayak. Sleek and trim, with a lime-green hull, I skimmed out like an otter to the marsh of my boyhood memories to drift and stop among the cattails and arrowheaded

water plants, lingering near the August cardinal flowers on the shore. That's one of my mental snapshots.

Then there is the mountain of pale orange jewelweeds abuzz with bumblebees and hummingbirds.

The two fledgling ruby-throats, silly sisters, needle through the air, often pursued by their annoying brother, jealously guarding the sugar water and the treasure trove of touch-me-not blossoms. He takes himself for the cock of the walk, but his sisters try their best to ignore him.

Suddenly, *whoa!* An electric blue indigo bunting flashes through the yard like blue lightning and joins the hummingbirds on a favorite perch five feet away from my Adirondack chair. The bunting lingers for a split second, then vanishes. The sister hummingbird flies up to my face, hovering there to stare into my reading glasses, as if to check that I did just see that other indigo blue apparition.

Skunk showed up last night in his silken-slipped feet, drilling neat little holes in the lawn. He had been digging up pesky late-summer grubs and ground wasp yellow jackets. He also raided the compost bucket full of the remains of our sweet corn feast. He took hold of the corncobs, finished off the remaining kernels sweet with butter and stinging salt.

He left his perfume lingering in the night air. That calling card scent reached us through the upstairs bedroom window left open to the sounds of the west-flowing river running high, the rainforest cacophony of nighttime katydids, locusts, thousands of fiddling crickets.

You can't catch that on a smartphone.

There's the haunting high and lonesome call of the westbound train up at the junction above the village. Loud, then fading, as it heads out along the edge of the

see **WEST ALONG** page B3



LOUIS AGASSIZ FUERTES ILLUSTRATION

Indigo bunting, passerina cyanea.

Above: The runway at the Turners Falls municipal airport, as seen from higher up.

REVIEW/PREVIEW

New Film On Hippies Better Than Most

Far Out: Life On & After the Commune (2024).
Green Mountain Post Films. Charles Light, dir.

By MIKE JACKSON

FRANKLIN COUNTY – When I received Charlie Light's press release in my little editor's inbox this summer I admit that my first thought was dismay. *Again?* For those of us born later on, even with this or that point of affinity, the Hippie generation (the Baby Boomers in more culturally neutral terms) have generally not been inviting terrain for investigation. At least not head-on.

Our local landscape is absolutely slathered with the detritus of one or two or three simultaneously existing 1960s-'70s major collective ruptures, and for those of us who weren't *there man* it's just oddly entertaining to think about the years when the Renaissance Community up here in Turners overlapped with the Montague Farm in the far corner of town. Same and different.

As the vibe of an epochal overturning spread out to all the nooks and crannies of the country, I've come to gather, the weirdness played out a little differently everywhere. One thing that distinguished the *local* scene was that a number of the key players were not just city people trying to flee forever into green rolling hills and be thereby reborn, but *well-connected media workers of the New Left* whose fleeing was multi-layered and *relentlessly* self-documented.

Even if this handful of collective-living farmhouses – the southern corner of a dense network that spread up through Vermont as “back to the land” became a hip thing – hadn't stumbled into catalyzing a nationwide political movement (opposition to the nuclear industry), it would still have left a large archive.

Montague Farm and its “sister” house, Total Loss Farm up in Guilford, Vermont, didn't end up continuing



Liberation News Service even though they had very famously absconded with most of its equipment, but they did start a literary journal in the skin of an underground newspaper: *The New Babylon Times*, which by Issue 2 became *The Green Mountain Post*.

Charlie Light, who had a bit of a different background and had ended up at the Montague Farm after surviving a tragedy at another southern Vermont commune just over the hill from Total Loss, got tangled up with the scene's media aspects and, along with housemate Dan Keller, ended up running a little film company.

see **PREVIEW** page B2

RECIPES

A Modest-Mannered Global Traveler

By CLAIRE HOPLEY

LEVERETT – Tapioca pudding often appeared on our school lunch menus. We called it frogspawn, and some kids utterly refused to touch it. Most ate it though, perhaps enticed by the blob of red jam dolloped onto each serving. It was certainly an incentive to me, because tapioca pudding at home came without jam.

On the other hand, my mother made it with evaporated milk, so it had a rich golden color that undermined the frogspawn slur, plus a caramelized deliciousness that jam couldn't beat.

Like me, many people probably remember tapioca pudding from way back, but have never eaten tapioca in other forms. Younger people, on the other hand, may never have tasted tapioca pudding but have likely drunk bubble tea perhaps without knowing that its fun *boba* balls are tapioca.

Another form of tapioca is tapioca flour, which is used to thicken sauces and pie fillings. It's also a

valuable wheat substitute for those on gluten-free diets.

The word *tapioca* comes from Tupi, an indigenous language of Brazil, the South American homeland of cassava, the source of tapioca. Also called *manioc* and *yuca*, cassava is a perennial plant that needs a hot climate, but tolerates poor soil, dry spells, lack of cultivation, and leaving the tubers that supply tapioca in

the ground until needed.

These stellar qualities make cassava popular in tropical countries, especially as it provides lots of energy-boosting carbohydrate. On the down side it lacks body-building protein and most other nutrients. Another problem is that before cassava can be eaten it must be soaked to remove toxic compounds.

see **RECIPES** page B5



Have you had the pleasure of grating fresh nutmeg onto homemade tapioca pudding?

RECIPES from page B1

Surprisingly, much of the work to get cassava from its tropical fields and into our pudding bowls used to happen right on our doorstep. As Cathy Stanton explained in her recent *Montague Reporter* series “The Rise and Fall of Orange’s Tapioca Empire,” the tapioca used for puddings and pie-filling thickeners was once the major industry of Orange.

The business got its start in the 1890s, when, as Stanton explains, tapioca was “a trendy new food, the açai berry of its day.” Its very whiteness seemed to signify healthfulness. Another selling point was that the red boxes of Minute Tapioca made by the Whitman Grocery Company in Orange were easy to use. Soon every store and supermarket stocked them.

Those boxes can still be found, but by no means everywhere. While tapioca flour is often sold in supermarket gluten-free or health food sections, tapioca pearls are now easier to find in Asian markets. Chinese stores, for example, have them in many colors for making bubble tea. They may also have *hu tieu*, a thick Vietnamese noodle appreciated for its chewiness.

Indian stores stock tapioca pearls by their Hindi name, *sabudana*. Indian cooks make them into pancakes or team them with diced potatoes, spices, and peanuts to make *sabudana khichdi*. It’s popular as both a quick pick-me-up and essential sustenance during fasts when grains are forbidden.

Such savory dishes sound odd to anyone raised on sweet tapioca puddings or bubble tea, but tapioca is a staple main dish in parts of Asia, Africa, and South America. For example, in Nigeria, now the world’s largest cassava producer, it’s used to make *fufu* – puffy buns served in bowls of spicy soup or stew. In Brazil tapioca flour is made into breakfast pancakes and tasty cheese breads called *pão de queijo*.

Brazilian cheese breads are one source for the tart in the first recipe at right. The other source is Yorkshire pudding. The recipe below it for *sabudana khichdi* comes from India, while the tapioca pudding recipe is just one of myriad versions from around the world.

As these recipes show, despite its modest appearance, tapioca is a global traveler.



SAUSAGE AND PEPPER TAPIOCA TART

Crust
 6 Tbsp. canola, peanut, or other vegetable oil
 ⅓ cup milk
 2 eggs
 2 oz. grated extra-sharp Cheddar (about ¾ cup)
 1½ cups tapioca flour
 ½ tsp. salt

Filling
 12 oz. sweet Italian sausage
 1 to 2 Tbsp. olive or vegetable oil
 1 medium onion, chopped
 1 medium green bell pepper, in strips
 ½ medium red bell pepper, in strips
 1 to 2 garlic cloves, minced
 1½ cups chopped fresh or canned tomatoes
 1 tsp. dried thyme
 1 tsp. oregano
 ¼ tsp. powdered chili pepper (optional)
 salt to taste



Turn the oven to 400 degrees. Thoroughly grease a shallow baking dish or 8-inch pie dish with 2 tablespoons of oil. Some should remain standing on the base.

In a blender or a food processor, whisk together the remaining quarter-cup of oil, the milk, and the eggs. Mix in the cheese, and then the tapioca flour and salt, and process for about 2 minutes until the mixture is full of bubbles. (To work by hand, whisk the ingredients briskly until very bubbly, using an electric beater if available.)

Pour the mixture into the prepared pan and place it in the top half of the oven. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes. Test for doneness by sliding in a thin knife blade. If it comes out sticky, continue baking. During baking the edges rise, creating a bowl or tart shape.

While the tapioca tart is baking, make the sausage-and-pepper filling.

Cut the Italian sausage in one-inch pieces. Heat the oil in a frying pan, add the sausage pieces, and fry for 4 or 5 minutes, turning to brown them all over.

Now add the chopped onion and fry for another 2 or 3 minutes, then mix in the pepper strips and garlic. Finally add the chopped tomato, thyme, oregano, powdered chili, and salt. Cover the pan and simmer for 5 minutes, stirring once or twice.

Remove the lid, taste, and adjust the flavorings as needed. Simmer until the sausage and peppers are cooked through and the tomatoes have formed a sauce. To serve, pour into the hollow center of the tapioca tart.

Serves 3 to 4.

TAPIOCA PUDDING



HOIPLEY PHOTOS

red wine in Brazil. Nutmeg is the flavoring here, but cardamom is typical in India.

Put the tapioca pearls in a 1½-quart ovenproof bowl or shallow baking dish. Add cold water to cover by about an inch. Soak for 4 to 6 hours. The pearls will absorb most of the water.

Turn the oven to 350 degrees. Stir the sugar into the tapioca, then pour in the evaporated milk and the whole milk. Stir to mix. Grate the nutmeg plentifully on top, or sprinkle if using ready-ground product.

Cook in the middle of the oven for 45 to 60 minutes. Check often. As the pudding bubbles, a brown skin will form. Break it and stir it in. Repeat this a couple of times, adding more milk if the original amount has been absorbed. When the tapioca is tender and the milk has thickened, the pudding is ready.

Eat right away or serve chilled. (You can bake tapioca pudding along with other dishes, even in a hotter or cooler oven.)

Serves 4.

½ cup tapioca pearls
 ½ cup sugar or more to taste
 one 12-oz. can evaporated milk
 1½ cups whole milk
 ¼ tsp. nutmeg, ideally freshly grated

While milk is the usual liquid in American and European tapioca puddings, coconut milk is used in Vietnam, and spiced

SABUDANA KHICHDI

1 cup tapioca pearls
 2 medium potatoes
 1 jalapeno or serrano pepper
 ½ cup dry-roasted peanuts
 2 Tbsp. flavorless cooking oil
 1 Tbsp. butter
 1½ tsp. cumin seeds
 1 tsp. grated fresh ginger
 ½ tsp. turmeric
 salt to taste
 ½ lemon
 2 Tbsp. cilantro, torn

Put the tapioca in a large bowl and rinse it under cold running water. Swish it around to remove the starch, which could make it sticky. Repeat a couple of times until the water looks clear, drain it, return the tapioca to the bowl, and add enough cold water to cover it by a half-inch.

Soak for at least six hours. Test if it’s ready by rubbing a pearl between your thumb and forefinger – it should disintegrate.

Scrub the potatoes then boil in their skins for 14 minutes or until they are almost done. Cool with cold water, peel, and cut in half-inch cubes. Wash and coarsely chop the pepper, omitting some of the seeds if you want it less spicy.

Grind half the peanuts into a coarse powder in a food processor, or by putting them in a bag and bashing them with something heavy.

When ready to cook, thoroughly drain the tapioca. Heat the oil and butter in a wide pan and stir in the cumin seeds, then the ginger and turmeric. Now add the potato cubes and cook over moderate heat, stirring when necessary to prevent sticking for 5 minutes or until the potatoes have browned a little at the edges and are tender.

Add the tapioca, scattered with the ground peanuts. Season to taste with salt, and cook for 3 or 4 minutes, stirring gently to mix.



Finally, squeeze on half a lemon and stir in the remaining peanuts and the cilantro. Plain yogurt with chopped mint is a common accompaniment.

Serves 2 to 3.

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Aquí se habla español

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



Turismo en la Comunidad Valenciana, España

Por VICTORIA MAÍLLO DE AGUILERA

GREENFIELD – La ciudad de Valencia ha sido elegida en los últimos años por la revista Forbes como mejor ciudad del mundo para vivir, ganando en el *ranking* a ciudades como Madrid, Lisboa o Barcelona. La lista se ha hecho preguntando a expatriados que viven en diversas partes del mundo sus prioridades para ser felices. Las personas entrevistadas destacaron la seguridad que hay en Valencia, el clima, el transporte público limpio y barato, así como los parques y lugares para practicar deportes al aire libre.

He pasado parte de mis vacaciones en Valencia y en Altea y les voy a contar mi experiencia de primera mano.

Respecto al aeropuerto, prefiero salir desde Hartford, Connecticut ya que es más manejable, el parking es más barato que en Boston, y hay algunas compañías con vuelos baratos que enlazan con diferentes ciudades en Europa. Los vuelos provenientes de Estados Unidos suelen llegar por la mañana a Europa, normalmente muy temprano. Si usted desea seguir su viaje hacia Levante puede optar por enlazar con otro vuelo en Madrid o Barcelona, o si lo prefiere puede ir en tren de alta velocidad.

En mi opinión el tren es la opción más cómoda y barata. Puede utilizar una línea de tren de cercanías desde el aeropuerto hasta la estación de tren que tarda unos 20 minutos y tiene una frecuencia bastante amplia. La línea de cercanías le permite viajar gratis con el mismo billete de tren de larga distancia. Tiene usted diferentes opciones y precios desde la estación de Chamartín-Clara Campoamor y la media del trayecto es de dos horas desde Madrid a Alicante o Valencia que cubre una distancia de unos 360 km.

Los precios dependiendo del tipo de asiento, horario o tipo de tren pueden ir desde los 20 hasta los 80 euros. El precio más caro incluye asiento grande y oferta de comida a bordo, con diferentes menús que se preparan en el momento. Los asientos tienen cargador USB, aire acondicionado, y una pequeña mesita para apoyar su botella y computadora.

Si es usted estadounidense se preguntará por qué no he mencionado la opción de alquilar un coche, pero definitivamente no es la mejor opción. Alquilar un coche automático en España es más caro, la gasolina es tres veces más cara que en Estados Unidos y el transporte público es cómodo, limpio, barato, y rápido.

Ya está usted en el tren, ahora relájese en su asiento, o vaya a la cafetería a tomarse un café con leche y una tapa de tortilla de patatas o un refresco. Así mismo, el tren dispone de baños.

Estamos en Valencia. La estación de tren es moderna, con



Puesto de frutas en el Mercado Central.

mucha luz y fácil de manejar.

Valencia está en el Este de España, a orillas del mar Mediterráneo. Perteneció a la Comunidad Valenciana que consta de las provincias de Valencia, Alicante y Castellón. Las tres provincias son y han sido destinos turísticos desde hace años. Valencia es la capital de la Comunidad Valenciana y tiene unos 800.000 habitantes, siendo la tercera ciudad más grande de España detrás de Madrid y Barcelona y su puerto es el quinto en importancia en Europa.

En sus límites geográficos está La Albufera, una extensión de unos 12 km que es una especie de laguna donde se cultiva el arroz que se usa para cocinar la famosa paella. La paella original contiene arroz, judías verdes, conejo y pollo con tomate y ajo para el sofrito. A los valencianos no les gusta que se llame paella a otros tipos y simplemente los llaman arroz de marisco, arroz de pescado o despectivamente *arroz con cosas*.

El clima es muy benigno, con unos inviernos suaves y unos veranos calurosos y secos. La temperatura media anual es de 18 grados Celsius. La lluvia aparece normalmente en los meses de otoño y primavera y la nieve se ve una vez cada 30 años.

Los idiomas oficiales de la Comunidad Valenciana son castellano y valenciano, que es similar al catalán.

La historia de la ciudad de Valencia empieza como casi todas las ciudades de la península ibérica durante la época del imperio romano. Posteriormente formó parte del imperio visigodo hasta la aparición de los musulmanes en siglo VIII y que permanecieron durante cinco siglos en lo que se denomina Al-Andalus. Valencia fue la capital del Taifa de Valencia.

Como curiosidad, la influencia del árabe es notable en las lenguas oficiales de España y todas las palabras que empiezan por AL (el artículo en árabe) provienen de este, por ejemplo: *albufera, almohada, algarroba, alcoba, alpargata*, etc.

A partir del siglo XV, la ciudad de Valencia estuvo ligada por razones económicas y políticas a diferentes repúblicas y reinos italianos

como Génova debido al comercio de la seda. A partir del siglo XVIII se convierte en una de las ciudades más industrializadas de España. En la Guerra Civil española fue una de las ciudades que más bombardeos sufrió por parte del ejército nazi.

Actualmente es una de las ciudades que mayor desarrollo económico ha experimentado, especialmente después de la crisis de 2008, siendo una de las regiones que más contribuyen al PIB del país.

Como he mencionado anteriormente, a partir de los años 60 la ciudad y la propia comunidad se convierten en centros de desarrollo turístico. En julio y agosto, los españoles que vivían en la meseta o en regiones de España con clima menos cálido se subían en sus recién comprados Seat 600 o Renault

8 y con toda la familia se dirigían a las playas de las costas de Levante. En aquellos años el viaje duraba unas 8 horas, en un coche pequeño, lleno de personas y bultos y sin aire acondicionado.

¿Qué se puede hacer en Valencia? Primero debemos obtener alojamiento. Hay muchísima oferta: hoteles, apartamentos, casas rurales, hostales. Les recomendaría que eligieran el más acorde a sus necesidades y gustos. No importa mucho la zona, Valencia es una ciudad segura y el transporte público funciona fenomenal.

Vamos a empezar por la atracción principal de Valencia que es la **Ciudad de las Artes y de las Ciencias**. El arquitecto responsable de su construcción es el arquitecto Santiago Calatrava. Está situado en la antigua cuenca del río Turia que ha sido desviado y en su lugar se ha construido un parque de dimensiones kilométricas. Hay líneas de autobuses que llegan con mucha frecuencia a esta atracción. Se debe pagar una entrada que cuesta 40 euros para adultos y con descuento, 30 euros.

La Ciudad de las Artes y las Ciencias consta de varios edificios, el primero de ellos es el oceanográfico con 45.000 animales de 500 especies diferentes. Hay delfines, focas, leones marinos, tiburones, etc.

El Hemisferio es otro de los edificios. Se trata de una enorme sala de cine en 3D. Las proyecciones son en su mayoría documentales de 45 minutos de duración. Las gafas 3D

que le dan con la entrada le permiten también cambiar el idioma de la proyección. El Museo de las Ciencias es otro edificio del complejo que ofrece exposiciones interactivas sobre ciencia y tecnología cuyo lema es "Prohibido no tocar."

El Palacio de las Artes es un gran teatro donde se hacen espectáculos de danza, ópera, música o zarzuela. Y el más espectacular según mi opinión es el Umbracle que es un jardín enorme, donde crecen más de 15.000 árboles y plantas diferentes adornados con esculturas de artistas contemporáneos. Por la noche hay un espectacular bar con terraza y juegos de luces donde puedes tomarte una cerveza y disfrutar del microclima.

Otro de los lugares que merece la pena visitar es el Mercado Central que es el mayor mercado de productos frescos de Europa. Tiene unos 300 puestos con verduras, frutas, pescados, quesos, mariscos, etc. Allí está también el Bar Central a cargo de un cocinero con estrella Michelin.

Otro de los lugares a visitar es el barrio del Carmen, allí podrá ver las torres de Quart. Cada calle tiene su encanto y las placitas tienen terrazas donde encontrar un poco de sombra mientras toma un agua de Valencia.

Mi otro destino ha sido Altea, que se encuentra en la provincia de Alicante, a 1 hora y veinte minutos de Valencia por la autopista del Mediterráneo. Se puede acceder por tren y autobús.

Altea fue fundada por los griegos y tuvo un importante papel en el Al-Andalus. Tiene una población regular de unos 20.000 habitantes que se incrementa por tres en julio y agosto. Hace unos años era solamente un pueblito de pescadores con casitas blancas con puertas azules, casi todas con una terraza que les permitía ver la llegada de los barcos colgadas de la montaña. Está rodeada de campos de naranjos y limoneros.

Hay un paseo marítimo que va paralelo al mar, lleno de bares, restaurantes y tiendas de artesanía. El centro urbano es empinado, con grandes cuevas o escaleras, que discurren entre casitas de dos pisos. La cima de la montaña está coronada por la iglesia y el castillo. La iglesia tiene el tejado de tejas azules como la mayoría de edificios de la zona, y es el símbolo de la arquitectura local.

La playa es de piedras pequeñas, no de arena, y por ello no es tan frecuentada como otras playas de otros lugares cercanos que son de arena. Tiene también un puerto deportivo con alquiler de barcos, donde hacen también rutas por el mar, por ejemplo al peñón de Ifach.

Si lo que busca son excursiones a pie, puede subir al faro que está en la llamada Punta del Caballo. La subida es pronunciada, son casi 4 millas de ascenso, pero las vistas son inigualables, a un lado el pueblo de Altea y al otro lado la costa de Benidorm.



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looking forward...

THURSDAY, AUGUST 22

Unnameable Books, Turners Falls: *Matthew Ryals/Stephan Haluska, Jen Gelineau, Julie Bodian, Vic Rawlings/Arkm Foam*. \$ 6 p.m.

Energy Park, Greenfield: *Jim Egan, Jennie McAvoy, TBD*. Free. 6 p.m.

Peskeompskut Park, Turners Falls: *Wes Brown & Friends*. Free. 6:30 p.m.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Dana Lyn & Kyle Sanna, Seamus Egan*. \$ 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 23

Shutesbury Athletic Club, Shutesbury: *Wildcat O'Halloran*. No cover. 7 p.m.

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Back Porch Songwriters present Songs of Paul Simon*. \$ 7 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Grace, Jeff Buckley tribute*. \$ 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 24

Arcadia, Easthampton: *Sarah Jarosz, Felice Brothers, Mipso, Amythst Kiah, Heather Maloney, Alisa Amador, Mamma's Marmalade, Little Roots, The Moon Shells*, more. \$ 10:30 a.m.

Greenfield Public Library: *Tim Van Egmond*. Free. 12:30 p.m.

Lake Pleasant: *150th Anniversary Block Party* feat. *Big Destiny, Force & Friends, Signature Dish*, more. Free. 1 p.m.

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turn-

ers Falls: *Tracy and Company*. No cover. 7 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Davy Knowles*. \$ 8 p.m.

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

SUNDAY, AUGUST 25

Dream Away Lodge, Becket: *Frank Hurricane*. \$ 8 p.m.

MONDAY, AUGUST 26

Tree House Brewing, Deerfield: *Dark Star Orchestra*. \$ 7 p.m.

Buoyant Heart, Brattleboro: *Distend, Namasitogwizo, Holy Taker*. \$ 7 p.m.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 27

Tree House Brewing, Deerfield: *Dark Star Orchestra*. \$ 7 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 28

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Ragged Blue* with *Jim Armenti*. \$ 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 29

Magpie Farm & Art, Shelburne Falls: *Wild Bill and the Flying Sparks, Tandem Jump*. Benefit for Memorial Hall capital campaign. \$ 7 p.m.

Tree House Brewing, Deerfield: *Waxahatchee, Tim Heidecker, Snail Mail*. \$ 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 30

Millers Falls Rod & Gun Club, Montague: *Jasta, Deceased, Belushi Speed Ball, Anthropagous*, more. \$ 3 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Smif-N-Wessun, STL GLD, Tem Blessed*, more. Free. 5:30 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Cinemastorm* double feature: *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure* (1989), *Time Bandits* (1981). Free. 7:30 p.m.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Tetchy, Ex-Temper, Aaron Noble & The Clones*. \$ 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Eric and the Wildfire*. No cover. 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 31

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

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *Farley String Band*. Free. 12 p.m.

Northampton Center for the Arts: *Spectre Folk, Ron Schneiderman, Bev Ketch & Dark Master, Dan Gay, J. Burkett, Jeff Unfortunately*. \$ 3 p.m.

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *Small Town Radio*. No cover. 7 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *The Gaslight Tinkers*. \$ 7 p.m.

1794 Meetinghouse, New Salem: *John Gorka*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Padded Waltz, Intac, Deep Seize*. \$ 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Teen Driver*. No cover. 9:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 1

Millers Falls Rod & Gun Club, Montague: *Misery Index, Gobel, Nixil*, more. \$ 12 p.m.

Dream Away Lodge, Becket:

Dead Gowns. \$ 7:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

Tree House Brewing Company, Deerfield: *The Beths*. \$ 7 p.m.

No Fun, Troy NY: *Sweeping Promises, Sky Furrows, STroma, Itch*. \$ 7 p.m.

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

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Johnny Folsom 4, Johnny Cash* tribute. \$ 7:30 p.m.

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *Next Stop Comedy*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

CitySpace, Easthampton: *Film and Gender*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

Institute for Musical Arts, Goshen: *Bitch, Melissa Ferrick*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

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

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *Rock 201*. No cover. 7 p.m.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Bob Mould, J. Robbins*. \$ 7 p.m.

1794 Meetinghouse, New Salem: *Samirah Evans Project, Anand Nayak*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

1794 Meetinghouse, New Salem: *Steven Schoenberg*. \$ 4 p.m.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Frente Cumbiero*. \$ 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

CitySpace, Easthampton: *Mal Devisa*. \$ 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Gary & Graham Higgins, Plastic Crimewave Syndicate, Allysen Callery, Frozen Corn*. \$ 8 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Soft Machine*. \$ 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

Williamsburg Grange Hall: *Etran de L'Air*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

Big E, West Springfield: *Pepa of Salt-n-Pepa*. \$ 8 p.m.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Deerhoof, Ekko Astral*. \$ 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

Nova Arts, Keene: *Steve Gunn, Blue Cactus*. \$ 7 p.m.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3

Dream Away Lodge, Becket: *Thalia Zedek, Damon & Naomi*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11

Palladium, Worcester: *Sepultura, Obituary, Agnostic Front, Claustrophobia, Harvest*. \$ 6 p.m.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31

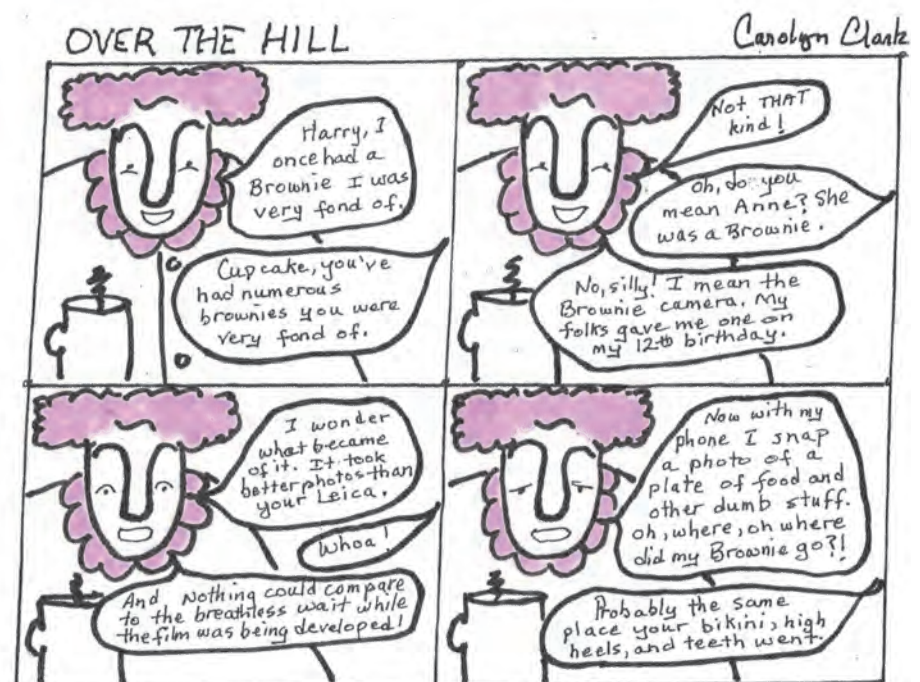
Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Guerilla Toss, Rough Francis, Aspero Siacos*. \$ 8 p.m.



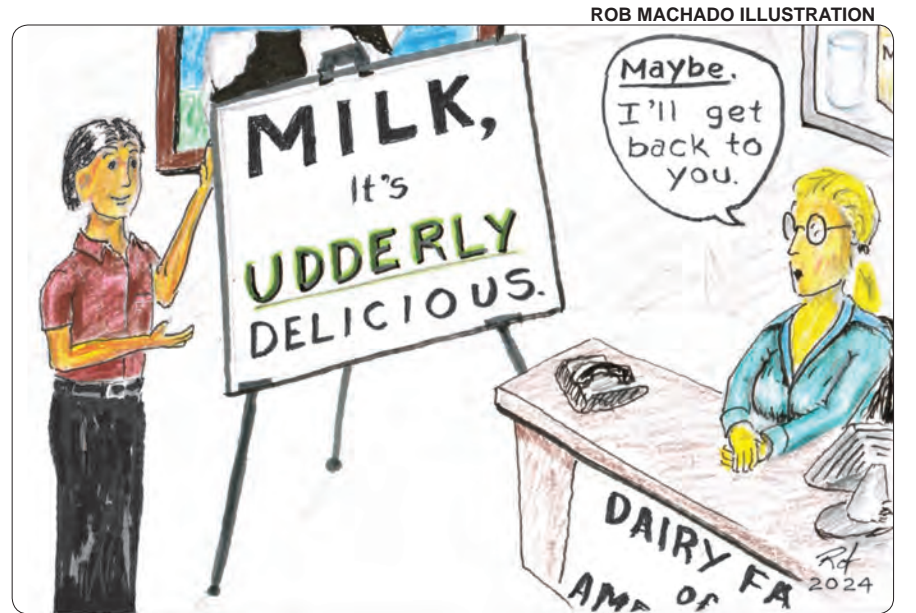
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72. Bromptreb

Interview by J. BURKETT

TURNERS FALLS – If you have lived in the valley for the past 10 to 20 years, and have been to underground music shows or played in bands, chances are you have bumped into the valley's own Neil Young – a.k.a. Bromptreb!

Along with playing in Fat Worm Of Error, his Bromptreb solo shows, and in the improvisational quintet Gloyd, Neil was behind many events including the Peskeompskut Noisecapades and a great series called the Montague Phantom Brain Exchange. (He was particularly involved in shows around Hampshire College and then in the Turners area, back when it was very different, three to 15 years ago. It was slower, yet wilder, then, and another amazing presence also buzzed around Avenue A: the prince, Danny Cruz, who is missed every day!)

Somehow Neil has never been interviewed in the paper in all these years, so it seemed like a good time to catch up a bit and yak about the olde days a bit too. Thanks to Neil for all he does.

By the way, we are still open to ideas for interviews and reviews, so get in touch...

MMM: What are the origins of Bromptreb? Where's the name from?

BT: Bromptreb first emerged in the late '90s in a tiny Northampton bedroom painted bright yellow. I was recording for the sake of recording whatever junk I had around, making interesting textures and producing beats with Casio keyboard drum machines and live percussion. At the time I was writing and recording dopey little pop songs, doing the singer/guitar player thing as well as starting to see a lot of improvised music, noise/sound art and free jazz happening in little pockets around the valley at that time.

I always improvised my way into making riffs and eventually songs, so I clumsily worked my way into improvising as an end in itself. Recording for the sake of recording and improvising for the sake of improvising easily morphed into a system of trying stuff from a point of pure expression, and then being stuck with the result because it was recorded.

My friend, the brilliant and hyperactive musician Steve Koziol (also a Pittsfield-born Berkshire brother) and I were both goofing off in our own ways with microcassette recorders, answering machines, and any cheap or low-fidelity recording devices that we could find. One time hanging out at his apartment in Turners Falls, on Second or First Street, we were animatedly riffing about what we were calling "treble music," the hissy and shrill squawk of recordings made on microcassette.

What does a treble-based genre of music sound like? I recall he said something like "pulp treble," referring to the gloopy sounds of churning paper pulp in the nearby factory and the scratchy dry crumpling of paper – maybe it would be recorded with all of the noisy tape machines and played back at the wrong speeds, or fast-forwarded in screechy squiggles. We imagined a ridiculous opposite world to the cool world of bass music with its baggy fashions, clean and impeccably fast sports cars. We imagined a very uncool "Treb" scene, featuring uptight costumes and nerds driving dilapidated cars very slowly and blasting shrieking white noise.

In any case, that Treb name stuck in my brain for a bit until I started to discover the joys of the Bromptreb via subwoofers and bass feedback tones. The two words eventually collided in one onomatopoeic whole as "Bromptreb" when I needed a band name for my first little tour in 2001 – or 2002? Or was it two tours? Anyway, I went down to visit my old high-school bandmates – from the band Lampstand – Davey G. Cookson and Doug Miller (The Beat Machine) to play a house-show party in their apartment in Baltimore.

At that time I think I was still playing under a name like K-Lean-X or something like that – I had lots of variations, all bad – and my gear was CDR loops, mixer feedback, and piles of broken circuit bent toy instruments. It was a lot of screaming and flopping around over looping beats and noise. I don't recall anybody liking it, but I wanted so badly to be picking up what the Japanese noise-rock experimenters The Boredoms were putting down.

Eventually I drew in other occa-

sional collaborators, like Liza Nicol, Joshua Vrysen, and even Jess Goddard and Dan "Diagram A" Greenwood, for odd iterations of the project. Once I found open-reel tape machines and settled into some routine studio experimentation and more solo performances I really settled into calling my project Bromptreb.

MMM: Did Fat Worm Of Error influence it at all, and did you ever do a solo set on a bill with them?

BT: Around 2002 Jess Goddard and I started to share a studio in the southern outskirts of Northampton. I wanted a place to set up and play with all of the music and video junk I was collecting from flea markets, tag sales, and dumps, and she wanted a place to paint. It was walking distance from our apartments, so we were going over there all the time, and I was pretty pumped to start a new band. Her partner Chris Cooper and I spent a lot of time listening to records and jamming and dreaming up the right people to play with when he started playing with Tim Sheldon.

I think Donny Shaw was going to a lot of the Flywheel Arts shows Cooper and Goddard and Matt Weston were organizing, and eventually we sucked him into playing with us. For a while, we almost tried out this wacky guy from Worcester named Jacob Berendes – "he likes monsters and stuff!" – to be a vocalist, when somehow Goddard stepped up and joined us to become our singer.

I'd actually really like to know how a lot of this happened myself, as it all just feels like some weird fog descended upon us and we were suddenly a cohesive five-piece band. Goddard found the phrase "like a fat worm of error in repose" in a Friedrich Nietzsche text eviscerating Kant's argument for an objective concept of beauty, and so we took on the name Fat Worm of Error.

I don't think there's any instances of Bromptreb and Fat Worm playing the same gig, though there have been times, like in Antwerp on a day off from the band touring, when a few of us played solo sets in some other event. Everyone in that band had solo and other projects.

MMM: Do you view the project differently now than earlier on? Has living on the West Coast affected it?

BT: Bromptreb as a project is definitely an ever-evolving thing. My discography is fairly long – full of many, many self-released cassettes, CDRs, 7" records, and digital releases – but I have only done two proper LPs, and they seem fairly different from each other.

It has only been two years since we moved to California, so it is hard for me to tell what is different about my playing.

MMM: Is your label still going?

BT: Yeay! Tapes, or as I more broadly call it now Yeay! Plastics, is just a catch-all name for all of my physical object outputs. The label is basically a project that I do when I

want to put something out into the world and I can't convince any other label to release it for me through their channels.

The whole process of making records and films is so futile, but I am compelled to do it. I really wanna make a book, likely photos and film stills, maybe a bit of writing. But for now I've switched the recording label to a broader, maybe dumber, name: Carbus Tapes, a subsidiary of the Yeay! Plastics empire. Carbus Tapes is the label Donny and I started to put out our first tape as Carbus, our electroacoustic noise duo. I've gone on to put out a solo digital release and a couple of Gloyd recordings using this label. We have a very long Carbus tape that we will hopefully finish soon.

MMM: Are you still playing shows overseas? How is that different than shows in the States?

BT: I had an amazing time in Europe in 2023. It was built around two things: first, that I was not yet tied down to a "regular" day job, and second, that years ago I had accepted an offer to do a one-month residency in southern Switzerland. My collaborators and I would get a place to stay and a stipend for the month if we could get to the remote Alpine village on our own dime and play a concert for the town. The date offered was four years in advance, and at that time I had no idea where I would be, or if I could take the necessary time off.

Boy, was I glad about that decision! By the time it became apparent that Fafnir was going to take the new teaching job in Long Beach, I realized that a couple months after moving I would need to be in Switzerland. So, right after all of the chaos of selling our house, moving across the country, and trying to settle into a whole new life, environment, and lifestyle, I pushed my energies into preparing for and booking a tour in Europe, with enough shows hopefully paying me enough to afford my travel and survival.

I left about a month ahead of the residency and played a very psycho 20 performances over nine countries in a 22-day-long solo Bromptreb tour. I reconnected with many old friends around Europe, and made many new ones playing in cities and countries I'd never been to.

How is it different? Well, I was away for almost three months, and not once did I drive a car! I was on choochoos, planes, boats, and bicycles and did so much walking. Several amazing espressos a day – the kind with the tiny cup and saucer and mandatory side glass of fizzy water, all of it meant to be drunk quickly, standing up and without talking. It was great. I was all over Italy, and by the time the whole trip was over I was dying for a taco and a tamale and some actually spicy food.

MMM: Do you ever talk about doing FWOE reunion shows?

BT: Technically we never broke

up, and we've tried unsuccessfully to complete some projects before we went on hiatus when Chris and Jess moved to CA in the fall of 2013. FWOE has a fairly active group chat rolling, but it's mostly just dumb jokes and chatter.

Donny and I have remained fairly active in collaboration, especially in Carbus, but also a little bit with Gloyd. I've seen Cooper and Goddard only a small handful of times since moving to the same coast, and there was some odd promise that we made years ago about playing a certain couple's wedding, but they haven't mentioned it to us in a while. Tim is holding strong with a couple kiddos and partner in Ithaca.

It would be quite a hump fiscally, but I bet we could throw some spaghetti on the saddle if the sauce was rich enough.

MMM: Any news about Gloyd?

BT: Gloyd is also in hiatus mode. There are two digital releases on Bandcamp, but we never made anything physical.

MMM: Have you ever been interviewed in the Montague Reporter?

BT: That's a good question! I know that my partner Fafnir and I co-wrote a review of a gardening class for the MR, and there have been announcements and reviews of Fat Worm and Bromptreb performances as well as reports about Montague Phantom Brain Exchange and the Peskeompskut Noisecapades events over the years, but an interview? I don't think so. I could be wrong!

MMM: What do you miss about Montague the most? (We all miss you!) Is it different when you visit?

BT: I miss our garden. I miss the river, and running into all of my favorite goofball neighbors and interesting characters that live in the villages. I very much miss the Montague loop I was riding on my bike almost every other day... it was almost 14.5 miles and went through every village, with a pretty nice variety of elevations, surfaces, and habitats. I miss getting the Reporter every week – the physical record of our times. I miss the seasonal extremes, and the ways the plants and animals respond to them.

I've been back like three times since moving away two years ago, and while some superficial things change here and there, the vibe is basically unchanged.

MMM: Any other jokes, stories, or western Mass-related notes?

BT: Oof! I'm drawing a blank on jokes. I'm zoning out in silence when I'm supposed to play. Too often I like to milk the bomb house crickets with a little comedy-without-jokes routine. It's a tough move, in improvisation, to hang out there like a wet rag in a desert breeze.

I would like to return and play a proper public show in western Mass this fall. If anyone has any ideas, please get in touch!

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