

The Montague Reporter

Montague Inks Ten-Year Tax Deal With FirstLight

By JEFF SINGLETON

On June 30 the Montague select-board officially endorsed a 10-year “payment *in lieu* of taxes” (PILOT) agreement with FirstLight Power, the town’s largest taxpayer, which owns the Turners Falls dam, the power canal, and the hydroelectric plant at the end of the canal Cabot Station.

The decision means a significant cut in the revenue on which the new fiscal year’s town budget was

built, but prevents steeper cuts that could have followed an adverse ruling by the state Appellate Tax Board (ATB), which helped broker the compromise.

On Tuesday night the Turners Falls fire district, which also taxes FirstLight’s properties, held an emergency special district meeting to empower its prudential committee to endorse the same agreement. A version had already been signed by the committee, as well as the

see **TAX DEAL** page A5

Leverett Selectboard Board Bars Staff From Becoming ICE Deputies

By GEORGE BRACE

At its most recent meeting on July 1, Leverett’s selectboard voted to direct town employees not to cooperate with federal immigration authorities unless legally bound to do so. The board also continued to discuss creating a “pre-application” process for potential developers of affordable housing, and heard a proposal to impound private boats being stored at a public boat launch.

In response to a push by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to seek cooperation from local and state police in enforcing immigration laws, the board voted to explicitly bar town employees from participating in such activities or agreements.

Selectboard member Jed Proujansky proposed the policy, saying he believed the local enforcement support sought by federal agencies was “illegal” in Massachusetts in any case, and “not appropriate for our police department” to engage in, except when it is required to do so, such as when a judicial arrest

see **LEVERETT** page A8

River Drop Dramatic, But Briefer Than Feared



A reader who asked not to be credited sent in this photo of the mud flat stretching across much of Barton Cove during Tuesday’s dam repairs.

By MIKE JACKSON

TURNERS FALLS – The owner of the Turners Falls hydroelectric dam allowed the section of the Connecticut River above the dam to drain on Tuesday to its lowest point since 1968, a company representative confirmed, to safely allow for mechanical repairs to one of its gates.

Though FirstLight Power had publicly announced that the drawdown could last for up to four days, a single day proved sufficient for the job, and the company allowed

the water to fill back up to a typical range on Wednesday.

“We [initially] gave a longer window because we couldn’t know what the root issue was, and therefore how long a repair would take, until we were able to access the gate,” spokesperson Claire Belanger told the *Reporter*. “Once we were able to safely access the area, the location and type of repair necessary allowed us to meet the shorter repair window.”

The project took place several weeks after a failure of the bascule

see **RIVER** page A5

START ‘EM EARLY

Before lighting the village’s traditional Independence Day bonfire last Thursday evening, the Montague Center fire department set up a “muster” to give kids and their families a chance to try to control a fire hose. Above: Firefighter and EMT Owen Whiddon demonstrates the equipment to Kella, Greg, and Ellyana Cote.

Wendell Selectboard Eversource Eyeing Albatross

By JOSH HEINEMANN

The Wendell selectboard’s July 2 meeting, its first of the 2026 fiscal year, was relatively short. It ended after Dan Leahy came with an update on the town-owned property at 40 Gate Lane. Earlier in the meeting, treasurer Carolyn Manley had urged the selectboard to keep at the process of extricating Wendell from ownership of that property. Liability

insurance for the condemned house, she said, costs the town \$800 a year.

Leahy, who retired as open space committee chair with the new fiscal year, said he had visited the property with wetland specialists from Eversource, and the company’s environmental consulting firm, SWCA. Eversource is considering the property as a wetland mitigation site to compensate for a wetland

see **WENDELL** page A6

Sports Reporting Keeping Busy in the Offseason

By MATT ROBINSON

TURNERS FALLS – Since school ended, I have kept pretty busy enjoying the sights, sounds, and events of the summer. Most of which were in and around the town of Montague.

There have been Flying High Dogs, an Unsprung Moto Rally, a Mini-Block Party, Family Fish Day, several exhibitions at the Great Falls Discovery Center, and concerts by Johnny Folsom 4, Shubal-

ananda Kirtan, the Wildcat O’Halloran Band, AudioBomb, Dan De-walt Sextet, Karla Bonoff, rice: An American Band, the Falltown String Band, and the Montague Community Band, as well as the Montague World Music Mini-Festival.

Events were held at Barton’s Cove, the Discovery Center, Montague Center, the Shea Theater, Lake Pleasant, Peskeompskut Park, Ja’Duke Theater, downtown Turners Falls, the Millers Falls

see **OFFSEASON** page A6

Montague Selectboard Town to Join United Front Against Area Mosquitoes

By JEFF SINGLETON

On Monday the Montague selectboard endorsed a recommendation of the board of health to join the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District (PVMCD), which monitors member towns for rare but potentially deadly mosquito-borne viruses such as Eastern Equine Encephalitis and West Nile virus.

District commissioner Carolyn Shores-Ness of Deerfield and director John Briggs assured the board and residents at the well-attended meeting that they do not support the spraying of potentially toxic pesticides, and argued that joining could even help Montague avoid statewide aerial spraying.

The PVMCD was organized in 2017 with the assistance of a state grant. Shores-Ness, a member of the Deerfield selectboard at that time, played a key role in the process. The district has 24 member towns and cities.

Discussion of mosquito control in Montague has been ongoing since at least 2021, when the town

see **MONTAGUE** page A7

Low Water at Barton Cove Reveals Submerged History

By BEN GAGNON

TURNERS FALLS – The drawdown of the Connecticut River to allow for repairs to the Turners Falls dam appears to have exposed a day of hijinx by members of the Turners Falls High School Class of 1937.

The low water has revealed several names, the year “1937,” and images carved into flat rocks just past the end of the field to the east of Unity Park, apparently revealing a day of teenage fun enjoyed 88 years ago. The water line was likely low at that time due to the original construction of the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge in 1937 and 1938, funded by a \$372,722 grant from the federal Works Progress Administration under President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

The carved rocks inspire the imagination: Perhaps they were



“Stubby” Zurko, Frank Bush, Edward “Dicker” Mleczyko, and Edward “Ben” Yarmac once scraped their names onto this long-submerged rock, as did Nemo, Al, and Mortimer.

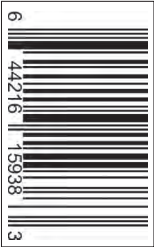


Another rock carries both the name and logo of the White Eagles.

made at a lively picnic held among friends after high school graduation; maybe they brought their fishing rods along. But when the day was done, they must have known that once the bridge was completed and the waters rose back to normal levels, the etchings they made in the rock would disappear like a time capsule.

Today, with the evidence of their celebration exposed again, the group of friends is brought back to life with help from the Turners Falls High School Yearbook of 1937.

see **REVEALS** page A4



What's a Little National News Between Friends?

Op/Ed: Strains of History.....	A2	Blueberry Ideas for You.....	B1
Turners Falls & Vicinity.....	A3	M/M/M: Tones of Frog.....	B1
Op/Ed: More Kids Good For Kids.....	A3	ElderConnect: Leaping Still Worth It.....	B2
Gill Selectboard Notes.....	A5	Montague Police Log Highlights.....	B3
Gill-Montague School Committee Notes.....	A6	Three Comics.....	B4
Erving Selectboard Notes.....	A7	The Montague Cryptojam.....	B4
Faces & Places: Morning Strolls.....	A8	Events and Exhibits.....	B6-B7
West Along the River: Winging a Staycation.....	B1	Device/Advice: Green Bubbles, Blue Bubbles.....	B8

SUMMER SCHEDULE:
VOL. 23 #32: JULY 24
VOL. 23 #33: AUGUST 7
VOL. 23 #34: AUGUST 21

The Montague Reporter

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OP ED

Black Fiddlers,
Aaron Copland, and
People My Ancestors Enslaved

By JANINE ROBERTS

LEVERETT – As a 12-year-old at Fort Flagler Music Camp, I loved playing the syncopated, slant harmonies of Aaron Copland’s “Hoe-Down” on my violin. Sixty-six years later I learn from Jake Blount that Copland commandeered the tune – “Bonaparte’s Retreat” – from white fiddler Bill Stepp, who learned it from a Black fiddler. His name has not been passed down.

Blount is tearing loose on his five-string fiddle at a Juneteenth concert at Deerfield Community Center. Following footfalls of musicians Regina Carter, Rhiannon Giddens, and others, Blount researches and performs traditional music of African-Americans, tracing it back to enslaved people.

As he fiddles and sings “Brown Skin Baby,” I hunch into myself. Two years ago I slit family secrecy and unearthed 48 people my ancestors enslaved in Culpeper County, Virginia: “Sawney, Seth, Rose, Nell, Nan, Winny, Alice, Jacob, Ginney, Sarah, Bett, Jack, Eve, Easter, Georgia, Will, Adam, James, Joe, Voll, Kesar, Lett, Jenny, Lucy, Sam, Tim, Sue, Molly, Dolly, Phyllis, Harvey, Simon, Dennis, Reuben, Lewis, Leanor, Richard, Lett, Kale, Priscilla, Maria,” and the most devastating of all, “7 small negroes,” unnamed.

I carry these people with me. They inform me each day of my accountability to find out more about them and honor them. To tell the histories of white supremacy through my family story.

In Deerfield, Blount talks

about how enslaved people countered with language, ritual, dance, and music the dawn-to-dusk forced labor of children, women, and men. His bow flicks, jiggling melodies accompanied by vivid drone, evoking connection and resilience, then and now.

Meanwhile, my mind gnaws these facts: “on the 24th day of August, 1838” my third great-grandfather, George Melton Roberts, paid his debt to James Shotwell with “six slaves to wit Kale, Sam, Priscilla, Maria, Wyatt, and Ellen.”

In the 1830s thousands of enslaved people were sold in the upper South, coffled – chained together with wrists manacled behind their backs – and marched to Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. Black fiddlers were forced to lead these coffles.

Fiddles and songs, “typical expedients to keep the chain moving.” Were Kale, Sam, Wyatt, or any of the others my ancestors sold, chained and marched south? Did they play the fiddle at the front of a column? Cultural strengths of Blacks used by white supremacists for deeply cruel coercion and control.

There were fiddles on my relatives’ “plantations.” The “appraisement of the estate of Benjamin Roberts Jr. in 1783” lists one valued at a pound. It is in the realm of possibility that people my relatives enslaved sang, fiddled, and danced to the songs Jake Blount is playing. Songs not passed down to my own fiddler daughter, but ones that, in privileged twists of fate, she now teaches and performs.



This engraving from *The Suppressed Book About Slavery*, an anonymous 1864 anti-slavery book, illustrates a “coffle-gang.” In his 2016 history of slavery *The Half Has Never Been Told*, Edward E. Baptist writes: “The coffles marched south and west, with men linked together by a long chain, manacled hands, and women following them, under guard. Fiddles, songs, and whiskey were typical expedients to keep the chain moving forward.”

NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION

Journeyman electrician Josh Lacosse calls it a day and gets ready to head home in his truck. Lacosse, a fully-insured residential electrician based in Franklin County, can be found on Facebook as “Volt Electric.” (There are several businesses with that name – he’s the one with a red logo!)

Letters to

the Editors

Praise for Grassroots Powerhouse

We’re celebrating Franklin County’s 2025 “Commonwealth Heroine,” one of 125 women statewide honored by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women in a recent ceremony at the State House in Boston. Orange resident Pat Larson was nominated for the award by

Two months ago, researchers in Virginia helped me find freedman Sam Roberts, age 76, in the 1870 census. He’s a “Farm Hand,” married to Clara, 73, who is “Keeping House.” Also in their household is Georgi, age 4. A playful and curious great-grandson?

They live on land next door to James Shotwell and his wife Sarah Roberts. Freedman Roberts is most likely Sam who my third great-grandfather sold to Mr. Shotwell in 1838.

Mr. Roberts died April 7, 1874, age 80. Slightly older than me. Only nine years of freedom. I shudder with the deep contrasts of our lives.

After Jake’s concert, back at home, I raise my old violin to the comfort of my shoulder. Bow crisscrosses the strings, notes of the “Bonaparte” / “Hoe-Down” melody twirl, haunt. Thank you Mr. Blount and multitudes of Black artists and scholars. Still so much to uncover and learn.

Janine Roberts, professor emerita at UMass Amherst, lives in Leverett. Her essay “Accosting My Own White Supremacy” and two poems appear in the latest issue (Vol. 19, No. 2) of Meat for Tea: The Valley Review. Copies are available at Amherst Books, Beyond Words, and the Odyssey, and PDFs are \$5 at meatfortea.com.

state senator Jo Comerford for her multifaceted work in education and grassroots organizing.

Senator Comerford noted in a press release, “I have long been inspired by Pat’s life and work,” and as someone privileged to call Pat a friend, I share that sense of inspiration. Her community activism and advocacy reflect many of the progressive movements and justice-oriented causes that have deep roots in our part of the state, especially those focused on adult education, public transportation, energy use, environmental stewardship, peace, and food security.

If you’re involved in any of those issues in this area, there’s a good chance you’ve crossed paths with Pat at some point. The Literacy Project, North Quabbin Energy, Quabbin Harvest Food Co-op, Quabbin Food Connector, Indivisible North Quabbin, and the years-long, statewide grassroots organizing that blocked a proposed natural gas pipeline in 2016 are just some of the organizations and efforts that have benefited from her energy and deep concern for community and democracy.

I’ve learned a huge amount about effective community organizing by working alongside Pat in various roles over the years. She’s fundamentally motivated by a sense of what a just and inclusive world would be and feel like, in a way that’s always firmly grounded in personal connections and participatory processes.

She unfailingly shows up when it counts and never stops cultivating existing relationships – including with people she may not always see eye-to-eye with – and pursuing new ones. She’s especially fierce about finding ways



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Pat Larson, packing member shares at the Quabbin Harvest food co-op in December 2017.

to involve those outside the circle of “usual suspects,” which is often a challenge for a lot of movement-building work. She makes sure that everyone’s voice is heard in thoughtful and inclusive ways.

In a time of such political turmoil and rancor, Pat’s work in the community is a reminder that our core task as humans is to find ways to take care of each other and the Earth, and that we continually need to nurture the skills of collaborating and making collective decisions in order to do that. Guided by that radically simple principle over decades of organizing and engagement, she has had a ripple effect in Orange, the North Quabbin, and beyond, helping to make this the kind of home where we’re able to face the many challenges of the present moment and work toward a future that works for all.

Cathy Stanton
Wendell

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PHONE: (413) 863-8666
EMAIL:

editor@montaguereporter.org
ads@montaguereporter.org
bills@montaguereporter.org
subscriptions@montaguereporter.org
events@montaguereporter.org
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TURNERS FALLS AND VICINITY.

Compiled by MIKE JACKSON

Biweekly **summer mode** activated – chaos on the face of the earth –

It happens every year. The *Montague Reporter* received an anonymous handwritten note in our mailbox: “**Saw Dead Fish** Floating on River as we walked over the Bridge Bike path / Could be release of oil Fluids from First light”

Now, okay, there’s no such thing as a bad news tip. And yeah, the dam, and any number of other things. But this was last week, post-clean-up and pre-repairs, and we are assuming, because this is also the exact time of the year many many many many many many many shad die after spawning and wash up on the riverbanks and *stink* and rot for a month, and because we are for some reason the best place to notify about it if you moved here fairly recently and haven’t yet figured out it happens every year...

The *Reporter* is going to skip a year on our major fall fundraiser, the art wrapping paper edition we have created and sold for the last several years, but we have something different and better for you this year: a **Spectacular Fall-Planting Bulb Sale!** Look in your paper next week for a form to order any of a number of dazzling flower variety bulbs, which will arrive in time to be planted in October.

The plan also includes a “Garden Angel” program – you can donate your money and earmark bulbs to be purchased for local community gardens, town cemeteries, etc. of your choosing.

All proceeds go to support our wacky non-profit little newspaper!

Speaking of nonprofit.... that’s our own busi-



ness manager taking a staycation last week, and enjoying the newly-filled-back-up-with-water and newly-turned-back-on **fountain at Peskeompskut Park**. As well as doing a little *Montague Reporter on the Road* bit. Two for one.

We heard through the grapevine Greenfield Savings Bank’s Linda Ackerman is retiring, for realies this time? It’s the end of an era, if true! Linda, if you read the column, congratulations and best wishes! If true! Weird of me to just put it in the paper instead of reaching out but that’s the power of the press, it corrupts us!



Above: The most misunderstood fish in the Connecticut River just got misunderstood-ier! An anonymously submitted struggling lamprey pic, from during this week’ drawdown. Sorry lil bud.

The **power has been going out** in Turners Falls this summer – readers in other towns, is that happening where you are? One of the out-ages involved a fire in the woods in the Patch, in some way I can’t understand.

The Patch was also hit by lightning last week – there was a massive thunderpeal Thursday night, and the DIAL/SELF program house was near enough to the strike that director Phil Ringwood tells us it fried the alarm system.

It’s **another two weeks** before the next edition. Please remember.

I’ll leave you with some **outside reading**.

Back in April, when the **federal Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals** ordered the US government to bring Kilmar Ábrego Garcia back from the torture camp he was unaccountably sent to in El Salvador, judge J. Harvie Wilkinson III included a notable written opinion. (Ábrego Garcia is now back in the States, and his attorneys have outlined conditions at the CECOT facility that frankly amount to torture. The man is an important witness.)

Wilkinson’s opinion, however, is worth reading in and of itself, and will be worth returning to every few months as this *situation* progresses. The chief significance is that he is widely recognized as a dedicated conservative, appointed in 1983 by Ronald Reagan.

Here’s how it ends:

“The Executive possesses enormous powers to prosecute and to deport, but with powers come restraints. If today the Executive claims the right to deport without due process and in disregard of court orders, what assurance will there be tomorrow that it will not deport American citizens and then disclaim responsibility to bring them home? And what assurance shall there be that the Executive will not train its broad discretionary powers upon its political enemies? The threat, even if not the actuality, would always be present, and the Executive’s obligation to ‘take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed’ would lose its meaning. U.S. CONST. art. II, § 3; see also *id.* art. II, § 1, cl. 8.

“Today, both the United States and the El Salvadoran governments disclaim any authority and/or responsibility to return Abrego Garcia. See *President Trump Participates in a Bilateral Meeting with the President of El Salvador, WHITE HOUSE* (Apr. 14, 2025). We are told that neither government has the power to act. The result will be to leave matters generally and Abrego Garcia specifically in an interminable limbo without recourse to law of any sort.

“The basic differences between the branches mandate a serious effort at mutual respect. The respect that courts must accord the Executive must be reciprocated by the Executive’s respect for the courts. Too often today this has not been the case, as calls for impeachment of judges for decisions the Executive disfavors and exhortations to disregard court orders sadly illustrate.

“It is in this atmosphere that we are reminded of President Eisenhower’s sage example. Putting his “personal opinions” aside, President Eisenhower honored his “inescapable” duty to enforce the Supreme Court’s decision in *Brown v. Board of Education II* to desegregate schools “with all deliberate speed.” Address by the President of the United States, Delivered from his Office at the White House 1-2 (Sept. 24, 1957); 349 U.S. 294, 301 (1955). This great man expressed his unflagging belief that “[t]he very basis of our individual rights and freedoms is the certainty that the President and the Executive Branch of Government will support and [e]nsure the carrying out of the decisions of the Federal Courts.” *Id.* at 3. Indeed, in our late Executive’s own words, “[u]nless the President did so, anarchy would result.” *Id.*

“Now the branches come too close to grinding irrevocably against one another in a conflict that promises to diminish both. This is a losing proposition all around. The Judiciary will lose much from the constant intimations of its illegitimacy, to which by dent of custom and detachment we can only sparingly reply. The Executive will lose much from a public perception of its lawlessness and all of its attendant contagions. The Executive may succeed for a time in weakening the courts, but over time history will script the tragic gap between what was and all that might have been, and law in time will sign its epitaph.”

Send your little bits of news to editor@montaguereporter.org.

Farm Auction

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Another Letter to the Editors

Civic Engagement More Important Than Ever

Now that Montague’s town election and annual meeting are in the rearview mirror, we want to thank all of those who stepped up to run for elected positions. We appreciate *all* of our town leaders – both staff and volunteers who serve on boards, commissions, and committees. It truly takes a village to run five villages!

But you don’t have to work or volunteer for the town to be engaged and informed about the town’s business. Regular meetings of the selectboard and town committees are available to any resident. Selectboard meetings are accessible on Zoom, and it’s easy to look online to view agendas and meeting minutes. Check out the town webpage at www.montague-ma.gov/e/1/ for details.

To stay informed about the Gill-Montague school committee, you can go to www.gmrtd.org. Their meetings usually take place only in person.

As we watch what the federal government is doing to impair the rights of our families, friends, and neighbors, this is a reminder that while participating as a voter is important, it is as important to stay engaged throughout the year. Our community will remain strong if we are engaged and ready to serve.

And a big shout out to the *Montague Reporter* for keeping us informed about Town business in each weekly edition.

Leigh Rae and Judith Lorei
Montague Center

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Quale Promises to Bring Disaster to Life Once More

MILLERS FALLS – Will Quale delivers another history story at the Millers Falls library on Thursday, July 24 at 6 p.m.

In Millers Falls, a “careless” collision (1876), a “magnificent” fire (1886), and an “unprecedented” flood (1887) altered the village’s terrain, reshaped its surrounding roads and rails, and shifted the balance of power between private corporations and state regulation.

None of these disasters were directly photographed, but vivid descriptions were written by state commissions, veteran journalists, and at least one talented teenager.

A presentation drawn from their accounts, illustrated by a collection of period maps, related photographs, and comparisons with the present, will bring these moments which reshaped early Millers Falls – and improved transportation safety statewide – to life.

The presentation is free and open to the public. Quale, a Trustee of the Montague Public Libraries and an independent historical researcher, is delivering a series of local history presentations Montague’s libraries. Don’t miss it!

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OP ED

Larger Enrollments Will Produce Greater Educational Opportunities For Students

By GREG SNEDEKER and ALAN GENOVESE

FRANKLIN COUNTY – Much focus has been given to the state’s Chapter 70 formula for education funding, and it is true that the formula needs to be amended to address inequities that benefit the eastern part of the state, where some populations and district enrollments are still growing.

But there is often a misunderstanding of what the fundamental problem is with small rural schools here in Massachusetts. Ed Moscovitch, one of the original authors of the Chapter 70 formula, noted at the onset of implementing the formula that it “works well for schools with increasing enrollments, but unfortunately doesn’t work so well for schools with declining enrollments.”

Though there are many reasons we need more state funding for our rural schools, it is important to understand that more funding will not address these structural enrollment declines. There is often a perception that if we just had more state funding our western Mass schools wouldn’t be struggling. However, it is enrollment that drives the finances of our schools, not the other way around. Enrollment also determines the breadth of learning opportunities and other programs our districts and schools can offer.

Using the Gill-Montague and Pioneer Valley regional school districts as examples of enrollment declines over the past 30 years, both districts peaked in enrollment in 1996. The Gill-Montague district’s enrollment that year was 1,646 students. Today the district has 916 students, a decrease of 45%. The Pioneer Valley enrollment was 1,242 students. Today it has 533, a 57% decrease.

Western Mass rural schools with low and declining enrollments are challenged by two kinds of economies of scale: financial and educational.

Financial economies of scale can be understood as the cost savings that can come from adding more students, as in a classroom. For instance, having classes of five to 10 students may

be appealing to parents as they believe their child is receiving more individual attention, but the cost per student for that teacher is high.

Increasing the class size to 15 to 20 students for the same teacher lowers the cost per student and is more likely to enhance each student’s learning experience with more student diversity and perspectives with which to engage. Reducing the number of courses available in order to increase class sizes results in missed opportunities of enriching and engaging electives and other courses.

Educational economies of scale can be understood as the increase in educational opportunities due to an increase in a school or district’s total enrollment. Increases in enrollment equate to more opportunities. These educational economies of scale are often overlooked or ignored completely, but are extremely important for both students and staff.

Again, the common denominator for both these economies of scale is *enrollment!*

Enrollment declines can have severe negative impacts on small rural schools, especially on middle and high schools where students transition to subject area course instruction, electives, and co-curricular course offerings.

The Six-Town Regionalization Planning Board (STRPB) researched the ramifications on the Gill-Montague and Pioneer districts’ middle and high schools and found that the declines in enrollment resulted in, among other things:

- Reductions in teaching and support staff, which in turn reduce the approaches to learning, the teachers’ overall professional and departmental experience, collaboration among teachers, and the number of required and elective course offerings;
- Constrictions in the daily class schedule. If you can only fill one algebra class with your ninth graders, there is little opportunity to offer those students an elective during that class period;
- Significant challenges in fielding athletic teams and other co-curriculars, such as clubs and performing arts groups. There needs to be

a critical mass of students enrolled to be able to field a varsity, let alone a JV, team, and to have enough students for a marching band;

- Reductions in special education and para-professional support systems;
- Greater challenges competing in the market of choice, charter, and private schools, because in general smaller schools can’t offer the same level of programs and services that larger schools can – not because of finances, but because they don’t have enough students to support the same amount of programming; and
- Additional pressure on students and staff, as each strives to engage in as many extracurricular opportunities as possible to support the school experience, which can lead to fatigue and burnout, and in turn to an exodus of students and adults from the district.

In contrast, increasing student enrollment can reverse the trend we have been experiencing of cutting staff, programs and services to students.

More regionalization will be inevitable in western Mass as our population ages and families have fewer children, but regionalization efforts will need state support, like that included in Representative Blais and Senator Comerford’s bills, H.517 and S.314.

The STRPB is in the final stages of our work. After the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education completes its legal review of our proposed Regional Agreement, and we review it again with input from others, we will send it to the six member towns of Bernardston, Gill, Leyden, Montague, Northfield, and Warwick for their review. This fall, the six towns will each vote at a Special Town Meeting to either accept the proposed agreement or not.

Over the next few months, efforts will be made to provide the public with more information, including articles in local newspapers and town newsletters.

Greg Snedeker is the treasurer and secretary of the STRPB. Alan Genovese is its chairperson.

REVEALS from page A1

The most prominent name carved in the rocks is “Frankie Bush,” described in the 1937 yearbook as “[t]he third of the famous Bush athletes, [who] added to the family reputation with his abilities in baseball, basketball, and track.”

Bush passed away on February 6, 2018, at his home in Greenfield at the age of 97. The obituary reported that “his baseball team played for the State Championship against Lynn ‘English’ at Braves Field in Boston.” He was awarded a full scholarship to attend Williams College, and was a veteran of WWII and the Korean War. His obituary notes that Bush enjoyed ballroom dancing with his friend Audrey Farnum well into his 90s.

Just above “Frankie Bush” is the inscription “Stubby,” with the “y” extended and made into the image of a stork-like bird. The yearbook reveals that Stubby was the nick-

name of Stanley Zurko, who was manager of the basketball team and also played on the baseball team with Bush. Next to Zurko’s picture in the yearbook is the following quotation: “When Stubby doth his fast ball throw / Nobody knows where it will go.”

The suggestion that Bush and Zurko were fun-loving types is evident in other parts of the yearbook: “Stubby is a quiet boy, but as soon as he and Nadeau pair up there is bound to be monkey business. Stub and Nadeau have tried to blow up the ‘Chem Lab’ many times but the closest they have come is breaking test tubes.”

And regarding Bush: “In order that he may be able to get in, hereafter, on Easter mornings, we give to Frank Bush a skeleton key with a flashlight attached, so that no one can hear him coming in at 2:00 A.M.”

Perhaps the most enigmatic inscription on the rocks is the apparent nickname “Wooz” – including the quotation marks – found above

the year “1937.” Nearby the name “Wooz” is repeated, including quotation marks, located mysteriously below the word “zoom.”

Again, the yearbook offers a possible clue to the puzzle. Under the heading of “Most Likely To Succeed” appear the names Frank Bush and Nellie Wozniak. Both were also members of the French Club, the Latin Club, and the Pro Merito Society, a group of students who averaged a B or better over four years. The yearbook reports that just 15.8% of the Class of 1937 were in the Pro Merito Society.

Another piece of evidence suggesting that Nellie Wozniak could have been present that day at Barton’s Cove – if she was the one going by the nickname “Wooz” – was the yearbook identifying her hobby as “The Polish language.” Near the inscription of her possible nickname is an artistic carving of an eagle just below the words, “White Eagles.”

The white eagle was an emblem of the Polish community. At the time, the White Eagle Society was based in South Deerfield – its Greenfield location would open a few years later – and sponsored a baseball team that played in the Franklin County Twilight League. Frank Bush played on this “Polish team” and his older brother, Lou Bush, joined on occasion.

Wozniak was the class historian and wrote in the yearbook that her freshman class was “the first class to attend school in the afternoon because of overcrowded conditions...” As sophomores, she noted that “the boys appeared to dance with much more grace than they did a year ago.” During senior year, she reported that eight new classrooms, a new gymnasium, and a new auditorium were completed.

She also wrote for the school newspaper, *Netop*, and was the honor essayist at commencement. Her “Pet Expression” was “Heavens!” Some light may be shed on the etching of the word “zoom” next to “Wooz,” as it appears Wozniak was a busy girl during high school – the yearbook lists her “bug-



bear” as “slipshod work,” and her “characteristic” as “efficacious.”

It seems that Frank Bush shared Wozniak’s love of writing: not only was he selected to be among just eight students out of 50 who applied for “Prize Speaking,” but the yearbook also reports that “most of all he will be remembered for his scholarship in winning highest honors in the class as Honor Essayist.”

His “Class Ode” was published in the yearbook:

*Alma Mater, the parting draws near
We must turn the page of four years of cheer,
Though you taught us how to face a world
And to fight and win with colors unfurl’d,
You have not taught us how to say “Good-bye”
To our fostering mother, Turners High;
Though our eyes now shine with a hopeful gleam,
Ready to buffet the current of life’s great stream,
Though we climb the rough road to
a rugged height,
Our hearts are dreading this parting tonight.*

*Tonight we leave your ivy-clad walls,
To answer the summons of life’s clear calls,
We carry high the torch you gave for the fray
Of eternal fire to light our long, dark way,
Your love and friendship and undying remembrance,
We take with us on our unfaltering ascendance,
That we may sing to you in one mighty choir
Not “Good-bye” but “Au Revoir”
is our desire.*



GAGNON PHOTOS

Editor’s note: Additional research was added from the 1937 Greenfield Recorder-Gazette.

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NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

‘We Have Never Seen It That Low’

By KATE SAVAGE

The Gill selectboard appointed a new tax collector last Monday, June 30, and worried over the long-term consequences of low river levels.

“The river’s been down for many, many weeks,” said selectboard member Greg Snedeker, even before FirstLight Power’s scheduled drawdown to fix a broken bascule gate. “They’re going to lower the river five feet below their lowest permitted level,” he said. “We have never seen it that low.”

Snedeker reported that a FirstLight representative told him the river above the dam might not have been this low since the 1960s. While the company said they expected the work to take three days, they couldn’t be certain about the exact timing.

Snedeker said he worried the extended low water levels – and extreme fluctuations – could cause greater bank erosion. “Do we have eyes on this, and what the potential impact will be?” he asked. “Because in the future, when it fills back up, it’s not like everything just goes back to normal. You had a month and a half to two months of it just drying out.”

Selectboard member John Ward noted the low levels could help the town understand how the dam affects the surrounding neighborhood in other ways.

“It’ll be interesting to see what happens with inflow and infiltration in the Riverside sewer system,”

Ward said. For years, the sewer appears to be taking on extra water from an external source, which increases sewer bills.

Ward also mused that residents might see a change in the amount of water they have to pump out of their basements as the water table drops.

Other Business

The board appointed Aimee Williams as tax collector until the end of the elected term in May 2026. “We had two excellent candidates,” said town administrator Ray Purington, “and Aimee really stood out as being the right person for the tax collector position.”

The post became vacant when prior tax collector Thomas Hodak passed away in March. After this term, the position will be filled by appointment rather than election.

The selectboard re-appointed volunteers and staff to over 100 town roles. “Thanks, everybody, for not paying attention to the end of the [fiscal] year and letting us appoint them again,” Snedeker joked.

“Is that why we have a fiscal year starting July first, when no one’s paying attention?” asked selectboard chair Charles Garbiel.

Garbiel called for additional volunteers to the cable committee, which negotiates renewals of the Comcast cable license. “There are currently only two members on the cable committee, and I’m one of them,” he said. “If anybody out there is looking for something to do,

we don’t meet that often, so it’s not a huge commitment.”

Though the negotiations are ostensibly about access to cable TV, the lines also determine who has access to high-speed internet.

The board signed on with Gill’s participation in the next hazardous waste collection event, which will take place September 20. A recommended budget of \$1,250 for the program will come from recycling dividends program funds.

The board voted to allow highway superintendent John Miner to carry 30 hours of vacation time into the new fiscal year, as his vacation plans were disrupted by other employees taking time off and a desire to use the road grader while it was temporarily available.

Gill’s next selectboard meeting will be held Monday, July 14, at 5:30 p.m. at the town hall.

Help Shape Montague’s Response to the Opioid Crisis

The Town of Montague has secured funds from the statewide Opioid Settlement Agreement – which allocates resources from pharmaceutical manufacturers and distributors to support prevention, treatment, harm reduction, and recovery services. **Now, we need your voice.**

Join a Focus Group

We’re convening a small group of residents to share real-world perspectives on how to invest these resources most effectively. Whether you have lived experience with opioid use, are a family member or caregiver, a service provider, or simply care deeply about this issue, your insights will guide decisions on:

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- Fostering community-based support

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RIVER from page A1

gate’s hydraulic mechanism resulted in 445 gallons of hydraulic fluid spilling into the river, by the power company’s own count.

On Wednesday Belanger was willing to provide another “preliminary” estimate: between the overall repairs and the relative loss of revenue from generating electricity, both at the pumped-storage facility upstream at Northfield Mountain and at the Cabot Station plant the Turners dam and canal feed, the malfunction has cost the company “over \$2 million.”

This maintenance expense – and the dramatic and visible impact on the Connecticut River caused by the company drawing it down to 171 feet above sea level at Northfield, five feet lower than the minimum allowed under its federal license – was incurred the same week the town of Montague agreed to acknowledge that the company’s property in the town is less valuable than previously assessed, and to repay the company \$1 million in taxes collected in recent years.

It also comes during a very late stage of the federal process of reissuing what will likely be a new 50-year license to generate electricity with the Connecticut’s water. This week the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) extended by a month the public comment period on its 1,029-page draft statement of the environmental impacts of the company’s proposed future operations.

The drawdown’s impacts on river habitat, meanwhile, were not immediately clear, though the *Reporter* received widespread anecdotal reports of species typically found within water seen visibly without it, as well as some photographs to that effect.

“FirstLight acknowledges that there will be some impacts on fish passage and spawning and rearing habitats,” regulatory compliance manager Alan Douglass wrote to FERC on June 24 in a letter sharing the outline of the repair plan with the public.

In anticipation of the drawdown, the US Fish and Wildlife Service and MassWildlife “recommended that FirstLight conduct reconnaissance to search for stranded freshwater mussels and relocate them to submerged habitat to the extent practical,” according to a document shared by the company this week.

The plan to save beached mussels involved a two-day effort in which five biologists would paddle in light watercraft, starting upstream in Vermont, and walk along the river’s banks looking for mussels and moving them into the water.

“We worked through the New Hampshire and Vermont portions of the Turners Falls Impoundment yesterday,” Belanger told the *Reporter*, “and were planning to continue in Massachusetts today, but the effort was called off since we began the refill last night.”

Nina Gordon-Kirsch, the Massachusetts river steward at the nonprofit Connecticut River Conservancy (CRC), said her organization was involved in raising concerns about the mussels – and that she believed many other aquatic species were also at risk for the drawdown’s duration.

“Sea lamprey have their nests right now,” she said. “They are actually spawning later this year than we’ve seen in previous years, we imagine because of the colder rains that continued into the spring.”

Fortunately, Gordon-Kirsch said, lamprey tend to build nests in rocky gravel-like substrate, and do not tend to nest in the impoundment zone which tends to be siltier and muckier.

Last week, FirstLight issued a public statement “urg[ing] community members and recreation users to avoid the river during the drawdown, as the riverbed will be wet, presenting a sinking hazard.”

After the repairs, Belanger said she was unaware of any such incidents. Efforts to drain the water gradually before the repairs were successful in minimizing silt washouts, she said – “[w]e did not see any significant sediment transport” – and the initial rate of refilling the impoundment was also limited “at the recommendation of state and federal agencies to protect an endangered dragonfly species.”

Gordon-Kirsch said she spoke this week with older, lifelong local residents who told her the Connecticut was “lower than they had ever seen it.” CRC, she said, is now collecting testimony from the public of any impacts of the operation that they either experienced or witnessed.

“We’ll submit it to the state and federal agencies, but also to the [FERC] docket, so that it’s all on file,” she said.

Multiple biologists currently or formerly employed in the public sector declined when contacted by the *Reporter* to speak on record about the drawdown.

Asked to comment on a popular local belief that Tuesday’s river elevation was the lowest since 1968 – when the water level was brought down to facilitate a major project to build the dam higher – Belanger said FirstLight Power believes this to be correct.

TAX DEAL from page A1

Montague board of assessors, on May 1, but the district’s lawyers determined that an open meeting was required to grant that authority.

At the June 30 selectboard meeting town administrator Walter Ramsey presented the final agreement, which the annual town meeting on May 14 had given the board the authority to negotiate. He explained that the proposal “was developed out of a mediation that went before the Appellate Tax Board” to resolve a disagreement over the assessed value of FirstLight’s property in the 2022 through 2024 fiscal years.

That dispute was resolved by the May 1 “settlement agreement,” which included a \$1 million abatement to the power company for the past years as well as a proposed schedule of payments from the company to the town and fire district for the 2026 through 2035 fiscal years.

At both the annual town meeting and on June 30, Ramsey argued that the PILOT agreement would protect Montague from adverse ATB decisions, reduce revenue and budget uncertainty, and allow the town to reduce the money it allocates to its “assessors’ overlay” account, which is used to cover tax abatements and exemptions.

In the first year of the agreement – FY’26, which began on July 1 – FirstLight’s property would be valued at a total of \$95.5 million, with an annual escalator of 0.75% thereafter. The payment to the town in the first year, \$2.35 million, is roughly \$900,000 less than the average revenue collected from FirstLight in the last three years, Ramsey said, so

“the selectboard is going to have to account for this revenue loss...”

This includes the town budget for FY’26, which was already approved at the May town meeting.

Using “very rough numbers,” Ramsey calculated that offsetting this loss could mean increasing the average homeowner’s annual tax bill by \$110, though he noted that this could vary a great deal based on home assessments.

“I think we’ve pretty well reviewed this,” said board member Rich Kuklewicz. “There was a huge risk to the community. My concern was the uncertainty of recent suits, and the risk to the community.”

Ramsey was asked about the settlement agreement, which included both the compromise over past assessments and a 10-year PILOT schedule identical to the one in the agreement before the board. The board of assessors, the fire district prudential committee, and a representative of FirstLight, had all signed it on May 1 – two weeks before the annual town meeting.

Ramsey responded by distinguishing the settlement agreement from the PILOT agreement, which he added had been endorsed that very morning by the board of assessors and still needed to be voted on by the fire district.

“Attend that meeting if you can, fire district members,” he said.

Ramsey, it turned out, did attend the fire district meeting on Tuesday, which was short and sweet. Shortly after the 6 p.m. start time, enough district residents arrived to reach the required quorum of 25 voters.

After a brief presentation by former Montague assessing director

Karen Tonelli, who negotiated the agreements on behalf of the town, and an assurance by the district’s accountant Eduard Bublik that there were sufficient funds in the reserves to compensate for the revenue loss in the new fiscal year, the meeting, which was chaired by none other than Rich Kuklewicz, voted unanimously to grant the prudential committee the power to negotiate the PILOT agreement it had already endorsed.



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Eric Hoffer, ‘The Temper of Our Time’

WENDELL from page A1

their work will impact elsewhere in Wendell.

As part of acquiring the property, Eversource would pay for taking the condemned house down. Leahy said the house site is a decent one, almost at the level of Gate Lane, and the land then slopes down through a clearing that gives a nice view with a wetland and stream near the bottom.

Electric service is carried along Gate Lane as far as #40, although there are more houses beyond it.

Manley said the town may only dispose of the property through an auction, or by issuing a request for proposals (RFP). She said people have approached her with the intention of taking the house down and leaving the property as open space.

Selectboard member Paul Doud asked whether the property could be grandfathered

in as a building lot with the house still standing. Along with the electric service, the property has a drilled well. Doud asked whether the town would want another, structurally sound, house on the road.

Leahy said Joe Cuneo, Wendell's recently-retired fire chief, was uninterested in burning the structure for firefighting practice because Gate Lane is narrow, and offers no place to turn a fire truck around. Eversource's proposal, he said, may be Wendell's last and best opportunity to dispose of the property.

After hearing Leahy's input, selectboard chair Laurie DiDonato said the property's disposition should be on the agenda for the board's first meeting in August.

Highway commission chair Phil Delorey's decision to reduce his responsibility as project manager to roads and infrastructure only, and no longer buildings, leaves Wendell with

no manager overseeing available grants and other building maintenance. The only building-related project the town faces this summer is painting the library, and librarian Miriam Warner is pursuing that.

Beyond that, selectboard member Adam Feltman said he has read Delorey's job description and may accept the responsibility. His paying job, he pointed out, involves project management and procurement. He would need clearance from the state ethics commission.

At Manley's recommendation, the board approved transferring funds to cover department cost overruns in FY'25, including \$4,800 from the short-term loan interest account into tax title expenses, \$650 from the tax collector's expense line to the assistant tax collector, \$198 from general indemnity insurance to pay the assistant treasurer, and \$935

from the town coordinator's special project account to pay the selectboard clerk.

Town coordinator Kelly Tyler has assumed responsibility for the town's Zoom account and CodeRED system, which allows her to send important, possibly emergency, notices to town residents.

Until – and unless – the ballot vote on August 4 allows a Proposition 2½ override, Wendell's finances are functioning under a slightly smaller budget within Proposition 2½ limits, including either fewer hours or a lower pay rate for Tyler. Saying she does not have enough hours for the work, Tyler said she would continue to work at the lower pay rate for now.

Tyler reported that plaques for three prior Citizens of the Year are in. Former moderator Kathy Becker was happy with hers, and has nominated some people for this year's Citizen of the Year.



NOTES FROM THE GILL-MONTAGUE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Committee Sets Goals, Welcomes Interim Super, Praises New Website

By ALI RAE CROWLEY

GILL-MONTAGUE – On Tuesday night the Gill-Montague school committee welcomed the new interim superintendent Tari Thomas to her first school committee meeting in the role. It was only her second day on the job, and she shared her experiences so far.

“Everyone has been wonderfully welcoming,” Thomas said. “You really have some wonderful people in your communities. Buildings look great. Everybody has been so giving of their time and positive energy.”

Delivering her first “superintendent’s report,” Thomas shared her perspectives on the work ahead and what she wants to achieve. “The goal is for me to really hit the ground listening and learning,” she told the committee. “As an educational leader, it’s really critical for me to make the best matches for our students and their needs, the teachers and staff and their needs, administrators, and community at large.”

Thomas submitted an entry/transition plan to the committee and asked for feedback from members by their next meeting on July 22, explaining that she wants their insights before beginning any planning or professional development with administrators.

In response to questions from the committee, she said her highest priority was a review of “safety and security, first and foremost, and other systems and structures, as well as how we are doing to take care of all of our students and their needs.”

Beyond these first priorities, she called out academic performance: “A large piece of the work is taking a look at student achievement data – where we are doing things really well, where do we have some gaps.”

The next item to receive much of the committee’s attention was the new *GMRSD.org* website. The site was updated recently, and it was the committee’s first time reviewing it since it went live.

Technology director Tina Mahaney led the presentation, and reflected that this major work started during the school year, originally because the engine behind the website had become obsolete. The new

site is hosted by WordPress, which allowed for a redesign to a simpler, icon-based format.

“Let’s make it something our families can go, ‘This is exactly what I want,’” Mahaney said. Artwork for the site was created by Gill-Montague alumna Samantha Kolodziej, with local views in different seasons.

Special attention was drawn to a section on “resources for families,” which includes calendars and information about registration and bus routes and which will be updated regularly. “It’s the same kind of data, but a simpler format,” Mahaney shared. “What’s been there you will still find.”

“The new format is easily read and navigated on your smaller devices,” Thomas commented. “It’s really vibrant, easy to move around... It’s really impressive!”

The rest of the meeting covered ongoing business, including a vote to re-appoint Dr. Dean Singer as school physician, reports about the Collaborative for Education Services, reflections from the recent pool dedication event, and a review of bank accounts.

The committee also spent time talking about its own goals, including planning a “retreat” session for the purposes of group strengthening and some goal work. It will be an open meeting at the high school, tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, August 12.

Montague member Steve Ellis raised questions about the upcoming proposal for a new “Great River” regional district, which would include Bernardston, Gill, Leyden, Montague, Northfield, and Warwick. “Conversation about that is expected to intensify,” Ellis said. “I don’t know whether this board has considered the pros and cons of that. It feels like the single biggest strategic decision that we could make.”

The committee agreed to invite someone from the six-town planning board to an upcoming meeting, and chair Jane Oakes suggested it become an ongoing agenda topic. Ellis encouraged the committee to determine its “disposition” on the proposal by early September.

The school committee’s next regular meetings are scheduled for July 22 and August 19.

OFFSEASON from page A1

Rod and Gun Club, the Carnegie Library, and Turners Rod & Gun Club, as well as Franklin Tech and Turners Falls High.

On Saturday, June 28, the Friends of the Discovery Center hosted a multimedia presentation by geology professor Richard Little on the “Jurassic Armored Mud Balls.” Professor Little explained that Franklin County is one of the only places in the world where these ancient mud balls can be easily seen. A geologic sedimentary structure replete with armored mud balls was unveiled on the grounds of the Center.

Though this event was not sports-related, there was some overlap: as I sat in the audience, one of the players from the softball tournament entered and explained that her team was done for the day and would return on Sunday for the finals. And when I returned to the tournament, a father stopped me and said he was just at the Mud Ball presentation.

Last Tuesday, July 1, the Turners Falls High School aquatic center was named in honor of Wes Snapp. Mr. Snapp originated the Turners Falls Swim Club in 1974.

I was on that original squad. Because we were only a club at that time, we did not have any meets – we basically just did endless laps. We did laps using different strokes, and when we did the American Crawl, we had to use just our legs or just our arms. Although I never competed against other swimmers, when I got to Chesterfield Scout Camp I was able to swim the mile.

From there he transformed it into an official team, and went on to win several championships. Great mentoring, Mr. Snapp!

Although the schools are on summer break, the local sports scene is alive and kicking – much to the credit of Joe Gamache. Coach Gamache has organized two girls’ leagues as well as a tournament for teams from all over New England.

Every Monday and Wednesday, he hosts a softball league on the four diamonds at Murphy Park in Greenfield. The teams are a mix of girls from all over western Mass. It’s interesting to see athletes from rival schools playing for the same team.

At one game I sat next to legendary Turners coach Gary Mullins. As we watched the action he schooled me on how to prevent a batter from popping up, how to throw a change-up, and what the players on the field were doing right or wrong.

Two weekends ago, Gamache directed the “Mid-Summer Storm I” softball tournament at Turners High School and Murphy Park. The event included 33 teams from all over New England. It was fun chatting with folks from Bangor, Maine; St. Johnsbury, Vermont; and Merrimack, New Hampshire. The teams had cool names like “Sluggers” and “Voodoo,” but my favorite was “8zero2.” When I finally figured out it was Vermont’s area code, one of the mothers laughed and said, “Yes, we can be very creative in Vermont.”

Coach Gamache doesn’t take much time off. On Tuesdays and Thursdays he runs a girls’ basketball league at Franklin Tech. Three games are played each night, and unlike the softball league, schools can play as a unit. Most of the teams are from western Mass, but Keene fields a squad.

Needless to say, I wasn’t able to attend *all* the events. For example, the Montague Center Fire Department held a bonfire on the same night as the parks department hosted an outdoor movie at Peske Park. Some folks ate at the bonfire and then went to the movie.

Later in July there will be many more events in the area including an Artisans’ Craft Fair and the Christmas in July celebration at Unity Park. Check out RiverCulture for a full listing of upcoming events!



Turners Falls High School alumnus Chris Pinardi (left) and athletic director Jen Luciano (right) unveiled the signage last Tuesday for the high school's Wes Snapp Aquatic Center, dedicated to esteemed swim coach and teacher Wes Snapp. (Our regular sports photographer was also on the scene!)



“The Jurassic Armored Mudball dedication program at the Discovery Center on Saturday, June 28 was a huge success,” writes photographer Ed Gregory. “The Great Hall was near capacity as Professor Richard Little presented his program to an enthusiastic gallery. A ribbon-cutting followed at the Discovery Center garden's north end, where the 500-pound conglomerate boulder that contains the armored mud ball will be permanently located as a Center attraction.”

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THE

SPIRIT SHOPPE

MONTAGUE from page A1

successfully appealed to “opt out” of mandated statewide aerial spraying. That year town meeting voted to give the selectboard the power to decide, at the recommendation of the board of health, whether to join the PVMCD, and appropriated \$10,000 for the services.

The health board nearly recommended joining the district last September, but held off pending legislation introduced by state senator Jo Comerford that would have banned aerial spraying and given towns more flexibility in choosing mosquito control methods.

Public health director Ryan Paxton introduced the proposal on Monday, noting that the “pending” legislation “has not passed to date... and in light of there not being new legislation to consider, the board felt we are in support of this.” Paxton said testing conducted by the PVMCD would give the town “more specifics to consider,” at an annual cost of \$5,250.

Shores-Ness and Briggs stressed the educational functions of the district, which publishes a newsletter, and said its surveillance and treatment programs address potential disease “hot spots” without relying on spraying, which they called “ineffective.”

“This allows us to have the opportunity to know what’s floating in the air,” said health board member Melanie Zamojski. “Without the surveillance aspect of this, it’s difficult to target the education points to put out to the public.”

Shores-Ness emphasized that the PVMCD does not even have the equipment to spray pesticides, but said it has treated certain infected zones with *Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis* (Bti) pellets. According to the federal Environmental Protection Agency, these are “spores that produce toxins that specifically target and only affect the larvae of the mosquito, black fly and fungus gnat.”

The agency has approved five products that contain Bti, including for aerial spraying, and asserts that they do not “pose a risk to humans.”

Sally Pick, a member of the town’s energy committee, said that while she supported education and monitoring, in her understanding the Massachusetts Audubon Society has warned that Bti is toxic to tadpoles and aquatic flies and “reduces the biodiversity of treated wetlands.”

Shores-Ness replied that the district only uses Bti where a significant “disease load” is detected, such as the area behind the visitors’ center in Historic Deerfield.

Briggs added that he performs a “biodiversity analysis” of infected areas, and if he finds “predatory species” such as dragonflies that reduce the mosquito population, he will not use Bti.

After more comments about the dangers of aerial spraying, chair Matt Lord called for a motion to join the PVMCD, which passed unanimously. Lord noted that town meeting, the board of health, and the selectboard will face “future decision points” over the mosquito control budget and decision-making process.

Chief Screeners

The board selected the committee charged with screening candidates to replace police chief Chris Williams, who plans to retire at the end of the year.

A week earlier, the board had agreed to appoint a committee consisting of town administrator Walter Ramsey, one member of the police department, one selectboard member, and two candidates from the general public. Williams will serve as an *ex officio*, or non-voting, member.

At that meeting Ramsey said the committee’s main goal was to cull the initial pool of candidates down to a manageable number in non-public executive sessions, allowed under the state open meeting law. The finalists would then be interviewed, and a choice made by the selectboard, at a public session.

Lord suggested also allowing one selectboard member, who would not constitute a quorum, to speak with each of the finalists in private. Ramsey said he would “double-check” whether this would be allowed under the open meeting law.

Given that outreach might take a month but the job needs to be filled well before December to create “overlap” with the current chief, Ramsey said, the committee should begin interviews by the end of August.

This Monday, the board nominated member Rich Kuklewicz to join Ramsey and police sergeant Jacob Dlugosz on the committee. This left two additional town residents to be chosen from a list of eight who had expressed interest.

Kuklewicz said he was pleased at the size of the list, but that it made a decision harder. He said he believed there should be a woman on the committee, as well as “representation from both sides of the thought process.” He suggested appointing Leigh Rae, who currently serves on the finance committee.

Selectboard member Marina Goldman said she had spoken with a number of friends and nearly all favored former police officer Doug Brown. Lord seconded this, and the board unanimously appointed Rae and Brown.

Other Business

In other personnel news the board revised the reappointments of three members of the cemetery commission, who they had renewed for three-year terms the previous week, to staggered terms of one and two years. Two new members, James Simpson and Jamie Fuller, were then appointed for three years.

Two reappointments to the Economic Development and Industrial Commission were also rescinded because the members were discovered to have resigned, leaving the seven-member commission, whose responsibilities include leasing property at the industrial park, with two vacancies. Assistant town administrator Chris Nolan-Zeller said the town is interested in filling the seats, with one reserved for an applicant experienced in “industrial development.”

Nolan-Zeller reported on the cleanup of hazardous fill at the First Street parking lot slated for new Habitat for Humanity housing. The state Department of Environmental Protection has agreed to “handle the site cleanup, and the associated costs with that,” he said, but the town is “on the hook” for hiring a professional to oversee the project.

The engineering firm Weston & Sampson has agreed to do the work for \$40,000, he added, which can be covered by money Montague

receives under the state’s Chapter 40R affordable housing incentives program.

Without taking a formal vote, the board agreed to negotiate a 10-year extension of the lease with the Shea Theater Arts Center, Inc. to run the town-owned Shea Theater. Kuklewicz said he would like to discuss the agreement’s maintenance provisions at a future meeting. Lord agreed, noting that the town is “not on a huge time crunch with this.”

At the June 30 meeting the board approved a number of requests related to the Pocumtuck Homelands Festival, an event from August 1 to 3 dedicated to the history and culture of indigenous people. These included closing most of First Street, issuing an entertainment license, and entering an agreement with First-Light Power for the use of a portion of the company’s land along the Connecticut River.

At that meeting the board also approved collective bargaining contracts negotiated with the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers and the National Association of Government Employees.

The selectboard’s next meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 21.



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PUBLIC HEARING

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 138, General Laws, as amended, the Inhabitants of the Town of Montague are hereby notified that **El Nopalito Restaurant, LLC**, d/b/a El Nopalito, Jahmes Campos Peters as manager, has applied for an alteration to the on premise All Alcoholic Beverages Liquor License (Restaurant). The premise is located at 196 Turners Falls Road, Montague, MA consisting of a free standing one story building with kitchen, prep and dining area and walk in cooler. Ingress and egress on east, south and north sides of building. The proposed 281 square foot patio area will be located on the south side of building with a seating capacity of up to 32 patrons. The floor plan is available in the Selectboard’s Office.

Date and place of hearing: **Monday, July 21, 2025 at 6:30 P.M.** via ZOOM.
Link is available on Town’s website calendar:
www.montague-ma.gov/d/13696/Selectboard-Meeting

Montague License Commissioners

NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Papermakers Aim for Dryer Sludge Cake; Engineers Sell Care Drive Combo Deal; Clinicians Might Stop Co-Responding

By KEITH WATERS

As of their meeting on Monday, the members of the Erving selectboard had changed: Scott Bastarache has left the board, and William Bembury has rejoined it.

Morris Housen, CEO and president of Erving Industries, and a crew of four engineers presented the board with a plan to add a new dryer at POTW #2, the wastewater plant operated by the paper company which also treats municipal waste from Erving Center.

The current process at POTW #2 produces a waste product sludge, which must be hauled away, but which is still primarily water by mass. The proposed process would further dry this sludge, reducing its water content from 55% to around 10%. It would require one more truck’s worth of fossil fuel gas to be delivered every three to four days, but reduce the number of truckloads of sludge removed by up to 50%.

The selectboard and water and wastewater superintendent Pete Sanders questioned Housen and his crew, and agreed to look at the proposal more closely and take it up at the board’s next meeting.

The board and Sanders also discussed an update on the water situation at the senior housing complex being planned on Care Drive. The town had decided to contract engineers Tighe & Bond to draw up designs for the project’s wastewater system, including a new sewer pump station, but the firm responded that it would be very inefficient to design wastewater utilities at a separate time from the water utilities, and offered to do both together.

At a special town meeting on June 25, voters agreed that a previous \$149,297.80 appropriation for the wastewater designs, permitting, bidding, and construction administration could also cover the water system.

On Monday, town administrator Bryan Smith recommended contracting Tighe & Bond for both water and wastewater, but only through the design and permitting phases, at a cost of \$128,500. The board agreed to do that.

For the fifth time, the board and Sanders went over the fine points of proposed updates to the town’s water and sewer use regulations. Many fine points remained outstanding after the discussion, and the officials agreed to readdress them after specified corrections have been made.

Specs for Mods

Selectboard chair Jacob Smith led the meeting through a review of the proposed modular offices for the town’s public works department. Bryan Smith helped clarify as the group went through the specifications outlined in the plan.

The proposal is for two units composed of two offices each. From there the issue becomes how many access doors are provided, how big the offices are, and many other details. The board is hoping to get the offices installed this year, though given the current date and the back-and-forth time likely after finishing the specs and putting the job out to bid, they realized this may not be possible.

Towards that end, though, the board did finalize the proposed details on Monday, and gave them to Bryan Smith to forward to vendors.

Other Business

The town has heard from the state that funding for the program that sends Clinical & Support Options staff out for assistance with some mental health-related public safety calls will be provided for another 75 days, extending the “co-responder” service until September 15.

The board voted to approve this extension of the grant, and will continue to think about other ways to continue the service if the state does not fund it any further.

The board voted to renew the town’s agreement with the Franklin County Waste Management District for hazardous waste removal.

The board reviewed a contract renewal with the Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority for administering the town’s low-income housing rehab loan program. They agreed to ask for minor clarifications to the contract, and hope to return to it after those are made.

Candace Gore was appointed to the recently-created Pearl B. Care Museum committee.

The difference between federal and state control of marijuana use came up in relation to a Drug Free Work Place policy and the Council on Aging van program. Federally, marijuana use is entirely prohibited, but the state allows recreational and medicinal use.

Bryan Smith had sought input from town counsel on the issue, but received it too late for the board to review. They will take it up at their next meeting.

The board talked about their schedule for the rest of the summer. They plan to meet every two weeks, starting next Monday, July 21.

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MAGGIE SADOWAY PHOTO

“Nice & Easy Walks,” geared toward seniors but open to all, set out every Thursday at 10 a.m. all summer from the Great Falls Discovery Center. With no paper to proofread on July 3, our reporter joined about a dozen other walkers to hear Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation interpreter Wren Wood tell how bald eagles have built nests on Barton Island in the Cove since 1989. “This is the first time in about seven years that the nests have been empty,” Wood explained, part of a normal but not well-understood cycle. Peering across the river below the dam, the group could see the giant pine tree where eagles perched in years past.

LEVERETT from page A1

warrant has been issued.

Selectboard chair Patricia Duffy said that as ICE has been seeking cooperation from schools and other non-police municipal departments, it made sense to extend the prohibition to all town employees.

Proujansky agreed, saying he wanted to establish the “thickest barrier” possible.

After some changes were made to the wording, member Tom Hankinson suggested that the board pass a motion that night and reword it later if necessary, rather than wait until its next meeting. The vote was unanimous.

Housing Intake

The selectboard came close to finalizing a document outlining the information it will require from developers before discussing proposed affordable housing projects with them.

Proujansky, who also drafted this measure, said he wanted to prevent town bodies from wasting time entertaining proposals without having enough basic information to review before discussion, as recently took place with the Kittredge estate on Juggler Meadow Road.

Under Chapter 40B of Massachusetts General Laws, because Leverett’s “affordable” housing stock is below 10% of total units – according to the state Subsidized Housing Inventory, the figure stands at 0.25% – developers may bypass local zoning and apply to the state to build housing if a certain fraction of it is set aside as affordable.

Chapter 40B also establishes a “Local Initiative Program,” under which these municipalities can cooperate with the developers. Entering a project in this program requires approval from the select-

board. The board members agreed, however, that seeking details about any proposed development, not just those requiring their approval, could benefit the town.

“We’ve all expressed, at one point or another, a desire for more affordable housing in Leverett,” Proujansky said. The form, he explained, is meant as a short “pre-application” document to “get the ball rolling” on discussion, and if it is “framed in a positive way” it could even encourage such development, though land availability remains a problem.

The board invited Carol Heim, a professor emerita of economics at UMass Amherst who has been researching affordable housing for Leverett, to share her thoughts. Heim said it was important for the board to “get all the information that you need to make an informed decision,” and that a pre-application form could be part of that effort. She commended the board for breaking discussions off with the Kittredge developers when they failed to provide requested information.

Heim also said it was important to be “encouraging,” to not reject larger projects out of hand, to give developers a chance to make their case or alter their proposals, and to keep residents informed and create opportunities for public input.

She suggested asking for only a small amount of information initially, so as not to deter smaller projects, but then seeking more details on larger or more complicated projects, similar to what a developer would need to provide agencies when applying for aid. Onerous up-front requirements, she warned, could create a potential for litigation.

Proujansky agreed the initial document should be short, and said he would edit it further and bring it

back to a future meeting.

“As they say in my business, a short paper is harder to write than a long paper,” Heim replied.

Boat Patrol

Duffy called attention to a problem of people using the Leverett Pond public boat launch area to illegally store private boats. Some, she said, were even being chained to the public picnic tables at the launch, interfering with the use of the tables.

Duffy proposed the town place red stickers on the offending boats, notifying owners that they have one week to remove them before they are impounded and brought to the transfer station. An owner would then have an additional week to pick a boat up, after which it would be considered abandoned property and given away.

She suggested the town’s Code-RED emergency notification system could be used to announce the crackdown. Proujansky said he worried that using the CodeRED system for “non-critical” problems would reduce its effectiveness, but once or twice might be okay.

The board did not take a vote on the issue.

State Grants

Town administrator Marjorie McGinnis reported that due to an application error made by an “expeditor,” money received this year from the state’s Green Communities grant program would be insufficient to fund all three of the projects Leverett applied for.

Small insulation projects at Leverett Elementary School and the town hall would be canceled, she said, and the total award would be devoted to insulating the Leverett

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LEVERETT CONSERVATION COMMISSION NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Leverett Conservation Commission, in accordance with the Wetlands Protection Act (MGL c.131 §40), will hold a public hearing on July 21, 2025 at a meeting beginning at 7:00 p.m. at the Leverett Town Hall, 9 Montague Road, Leverett, MA to review an NOI submitted by **Tighe & Bond** for a **drainage improvement project along Dudleyville Road** impacting BLSF, Riverfront Area, and a 100-foot buffer zone. The application is on file and is available for public inspection in the Conservation Commission office on Wednesdays, 12:00 to 2:00 p.m., or by appointment at (413) 548-1022 ext. 3. This notice is also available at www.masspublicnotices.org.

Library, which accounted for 80% to 90% percent of the original request.

Duffy recommended the town wait to begin planning for pedestrian improvements in Leverett Center near the town hall – the first priority for funding awarded under the state’s Complete Streets program – until the outcome of a different grant application, for a “town center revisioning study,” is known.

In the meantime, she said, planning could start on crossing improvements at the Cave Hill Road intersection in the North Leverett Historic District, the town’s second priority. She noted that North Leverett “often gets neglected,” and getting started on that project could be a way to address that.

Other Business

Dudleyville Road resident Raymond LaClaire used the public comment portion of the meeting to state that “several LaClaires” among the road’s residents want its surface to remain dirt, rather than be paved at the end of a planned drainage project.

The board informed him that while the work will begin this summer, resurfacing would not begin until Year Three, and there would be plenty of time for residents to express their surface preferences.

Maureen Ippolito provided an update on the *ad hoc* committee for the future of the Field Building, saying that it was ready to hire a consultant to gather information needed to conduct public forums and find out what residents want to do with the historic, town-owned property.

Ippolito said she expected the evaluation could be finished by November 30, followed by forums in January, and a report from the committee in time for a decision at the annual town meeting next spring.

At her request, the board changed the committee’s charter to include seven members rather than 11, to make it easier for them to reach a quorum.

The board awarded a \$13,625 contract for archeological mapping of the Graves Ironworks site, a Community Preservation Act project, to SWCA Environmental Consultants of Amherst.

Proujansky was appointed to represent the Leverett selectboard in the Massachusetts Campaign for Single Payer Healthcare, a coalition supporting Medicare for All legislation at the state level.

The board signed a letter endorsing an initiative of the UMass Amherst Student Government Association to expand PVTA bus services.

Seven members were appointed to a screening committee to review applicants for a new fire chief. Several applications had been received, and the position is now closed to new applicants.



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CHRISTINA TRINCHERO PHOTO

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WEST ALONG THE RIVER GOING NOWHERE FAST

By DAVID BRULE

THE FLAT, ERVINGSIDE – I’m sitting here in the garden, the Old House to my back, feeling cool and satisfied in the early morning before the heat, basically content with my plan for the summer, which is to go nowhere.

I’ve got a few books to read, I’m taking time to linger in all this greenery, listening to the morning birds, watching the bluebirds keeping their youngsters fed. I’ll be talking to myself then writing it down.

I’m content with my lot, with one more summer coming on, intending to follow my feet and my heart, running its heedless ways as usual.

Billy Collins and I are of the same mind:

How agreeable it is to not be touring Italy this summer, wandering her cities and ascending her torrid hilltowns. How much better to cruise these local, familiar streets...

My own plan is to follow his example by remembering the places I’m *not* going to go this summer, once again. I have no need for a passport, any destination of mine will not require that. Just a full tank of gas, to be able to go and come back in the same day.

There were years when I spent weeks and months at a time in beautiful places: France, Brittany, Ireland, Spain. Footloose then, and what did I care about money?

But somehow the wanderlust has left me these days, and I like to just think about those places I used to go. I can do some Adirondack-armchair traveling to faraway destinations that I might well visit again one of these years, maybe even next summer, you never know.

But in the meantime, I’ll just settle back and take this summer as it comes. I’ll keep my feet on the ground, no flying or air fares. Or maybe those feet will find themselves in a slow drifting kayak. That will be the extent of my risk-taking.

There are places I go on the great river that will suffice. Especially in the gathering evening dusk, I can seek out secluded inlets among cattails and cardinal flowers to quietly sip from a cold can of Narragansett and wait for an egret or heron coming in to roost.

Mind you, there was a time when I would assume a similar posture, a bend in the elbow, sipping a glass of *rosé*, sitting on the

banks of the Seine. There’s always a river in the picture, whether it’s the Seine, the Corrib, the Rhône, or the Connecticut.

There was a time when I could be found in any given July at the bar in a pub on wild and stoney Inishmeán, my fist firmly clutching a pint of Guinness. That’d be me standing next to a farmer poet, who famously had a faint smear of sheep dung on the back of his Irish handknit, Gaelic chatter mixed with English amid a constant flowing of conversation and *craic*.

This summer it’ll be the Element pub instead, where friends gather just up the street from this house. No need to fly to Dublin, rent a car, drive out west to Doolin, catch the ferry out to the Aran Islands. Instead, in this small village of Millers Falls, we’ll be snug in our local on Bridge Street. We’ll tune the fiddles and mandolin, play and sing until closing.



KEVIN BRULE PHOTO

This female Eastern bluebird (Sialia sialis) is raising her second brood in a birdbox in the author’s garden.

Then I’ll be winging my way home on foot through the close summer darkness, accompanied by the chimney swifts overhead, a few local bats, moths fluttering under the glow of the street lights. In a few minutes I’ll be at my own front door, back at the house on the banks of the river.

How much better to command the simple precinct of home, the poet writes.

That wisdom plants the seeds of affirmation that I’m doing the right thing by limiting plans for my peregrinations to more modest expectations.

see **WEST ALONG** page B2

Above: Christina Trinchero captured this sunrise on Old Greenfield Road in Montague two Tuesdays ago.

RECIPES

OUR INNUMERABLE WHORTLEBERRIES

By CLAIRE HOPLEY

LEVERETT – Blueberries are such a New England favorite that it’s surprising that the region’s earliest cookbooks don’t have recipes for blueberry pie, or anything else that includes blueberries. There’s no mention in the first American cookbook – Amelia Simmons’s *American Cookery*, first published in Hartford in 1796 – nor in Lydia Maria Child’s *American Frugal Housewife*, published in Boston in 1831.

Both books, however, have recipes for *whortleberry* pie. How many recipes have you seen in modern cookbooks for whortleberry pie? We just don’t see them nowadays. Nor do we see whortleberries in stores or on farmstands, though when Louisa Bowman (Kimball) Comins wrote her autobiography in 1873 her memories of growing up in East Leverett in the 1820s and ’30s, she included a pasture with “innumerable whortleberries, where we often resorted to gather the berries for pies and to dry.”

What has happened since her day is that the berries our forebears called whortleberries – or sometimes whortles or hurtleberries – we now call blueberries. That may be partly because it’s a lot clearer how to pronounce the prefix “blue” than “whortle.” But it’s also due both to the language of the colonists and to botanical and agricultural developments.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) explains that the words “whortle” and “whortleberry,” recorded from 1598, are typical of southwestern England, or more generally, southern England. In the 17th century

see **RECIPES** page B5



HOPLEY PHOTO

Whatever the name, we are entering the highest point of summer: blueberry season. Read on for recipes, and good ideas.

MONTV / MUSIK / MOUNTAIN

Interview by J. BURKETT and TROY CURRY

TURNERS FALLS – Frogtones is yet another cool, up-and-coming name in the zany western Mass music scene! Apparently Frogtones is basically Will Amend recording solo at home, but sometimes others are involved.

Frogtones originally came to our attention when some cool videos with lo-fi animation and home-cooked sounds started showing up on Instagram... a combo of acoustic, electronic, soundtracky, and jazz sounds. They eventually won us over and made us interested enough to have this mysterious act involved in a Mystra event – they were really good that night, as a live duo – and now this interview!

We are psyched to talk to Will this week. Catch Frogtones at venues such as Bookends, where they just played on Sunday, and the Rendezvous, and at the Mystra Ooze Fest this September.

MMM: Hi! What are the origins of Frogtones?

FT: A few years back I had basically never released any music to the public, and hadn’t really tried to record much music in general, because I don’t really write songs. Yet my perception of what was necessary in order to proceed and “succeed” as a musician led me to think I ought to have a digital footprint of some kind.

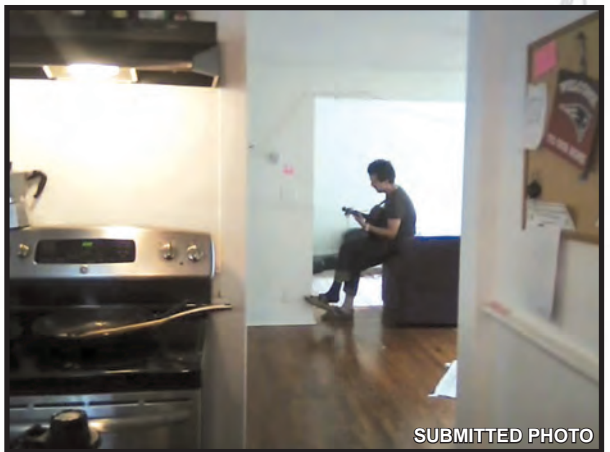
So, I started making things which could be put out. Almost all the music I upload is made way before I

decide to release it. Usually I need to wait before I like it enough, and want to make animation to go with it.

MMM: How did you get started with music? Were you in bands in school?

FT: I didn’t really start playing and expressing myself musically until I was 18 and in college. I started trying to practice. I played a bit with some friends in school before dropping out and moving back to my hometown, Kansas City.

see **MUSIK** page B3



SUBMITTED PHOTO

#LXXXI: Frogtones

Pet of the Week



‘MARCELINE’

Marceline, also known as Marcy, is a love bug who greets her person at the door with soft meows. She is wary of new people, and will likely take some time to warm up. Marcy would do best in a quieter environment without other pets. She is low-energy and low-maintenance, but she sometimes gets the zoomies at night. Her people say she is affectionate, curious, independent, play-

ful, quirky, and shy. She is FIV+. Marcy is spayed, current on shots, microchipped, housetrained, and deserves a loving home. She is currently located in Easthampton. To apply to adopt her, find “Available Community Animals” under the “Adopt” menu at www.dakinhumane.org. A potential adopter must submit an application, interview and meet the pets, and sign an adoption contract.

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WEST ALONG from page B1

For sure, I’ll travel by way of my books of poetry, and I’ll escape to the Cape with my annual summer read of Henry Beston’s *Outermost House*. Mind you, I did truly escape to the shore and dunes for years in the summer, but I don’t feel the need to do that – or overdo that – again.

No, in this household we’ll follow Voltaire’s advice from *Candide* and tend to our garden, and let the rest of the world go by.

*It is enough to climb back into the car
as if it were the great car of English itself
and sounding my loud vernacular horn, speed off
down a road that will never lead to Rome, not even Bologna.*

(Excerpts from “Consolation,” by Billy Collins.)



No Regrets About Pursuing Joy...

By LEE WICKS

MONTAGUE CENTER – Four years ago, almost to the day, my husband Roy and I brought home an 11-week-old Great Pyrenees puppy. We named him Ziggy, and he already weighed close to 20 pounds. Many people wondered why we would do such a thing at our age. We were closing in on 80, and big dogs are hard to handle.

Ziggy was a notorious puppy. If we ignored him and he was silent in another room, it meant he was up to no good. He destroyed furniture, rugs, windowsills, and even some

clapboards when we put him out in the yard. When we tried to walk him he leapt into the air, grabbed the leash, and insisted on walking us. People laughed as we went by.

He also won hearts. *So cute*, friends would murmur, but I could tell they were secretly grateful that Ziggy was our problem and not theirs.

Some *MR* readers may remember that I wrote a mock advertisement for his adoption – and then, in his voice, a rebuttal. Every time I wanted to give up and demand we rehome him, I couldn’t do it: not to him, and not to Roy, who had been ill with a condition that caused all his joints and muscles to ache. He was improving from walking, and I was happy about that.

Ziggy slept on his back with his feet against the wall, and I liked to watch his round belly swell as he breathed. I loved his sleepy blinking eyes when he woke up in the morning. I began scrambling him an egg for breakfast.

We found trainers. Elise McMahon, who lives in Montague, has helped us with four other dogs, and she gave us a lifeline when she told us to contain the little monster and limit his access to trouble. He was too young to learn much, and he was teething. We put up gates and froze twisted washcloths.

Then we met Sam Mimitz, who also lives in Montague and works at Pet Behavior Consultants in Granby, where Ziggy goes once a week for training and socialization. He picked up where Elise left off, and told us how to follow up on the training he did at the farm.

Ziggy is now four, calm, and well-behaved. He brings much-needed joy every day. I try to avoid politics in this column, but I need to say I’m sad about the meanness that has invaded our culture and the recent legislation that threatens Medicaid (MassHealth in Massachusetts), Medicare, and social services that have been a lifeline for people in need. I once volunteered at the Survival Center. Plenty of the people who came in worked hard at full-time jobs and still could not feed their children.

When I hear human beings demonized, I want to know what has happened to kindness.

When I can no longer bear the

news I bury my face in Ziggy’s thick coat and listen to him snore. When we take him on his morning walk, we hear birdsong and appreciate the cool morning air and the way light settles on the fields. I am reminded of what’s good and everlasting. When Roy walks down the street without the pain that tortured him four years ago, I am grateful to Ziggy for getting us out in all kinds of weather. And when Ziggy settles for an afternoon nap, as big lazy dogs tend to do, we also rest and read, enjoying the peace and quiet of our home.

I am now glad that we took on this big, sweet dog at our age, even though it didn’t seem wise at the time. It was a last chance to be bold. If it was folly, it proves that sometimes folly is worth the risk. New challenges, like learning to use a smart phone – there are classes at the senior center – or taking up a hobby, or starting an exercise program, help our bodies and our minds. So does meeting new people, and helping our community by volunteering with groups like Montague Villages.

It is so easy to become “set in our ways.” That doesn’t mean routine is bad. It can be reassuring and add stability to our days, but it can also be a trap if we never take chances.

Ziggy has inspired me to write a new memoir, to be called *A Five Dog Memoir*. It’s about the five dogs Roy and I have rescued and raised which have provided the laugh track to our 40 years together. Our dogs have tested our patience, stretched our capacity to love and forgive, and kept us young in spirit. They have limited our ability and desire to travel and forced us to re-establish priorities. I will die with a yard filled with holes excavated by Ziggy, and hardwood floors covered with scratch marks. It’s okay.

Ziggy was a gift to Roy on his 76th birthday. Ziggy was so much trouble in his first year that I told poor Roy he’d never get another gift from me. That’s no longer true. Ziggy keeps on giving as we celebrate his life and ours, and my message to readers today is that if you’re contemplating something new and possibly risky, go for it. Turn off the news where you can, and embrace joy.

Senior Center Activities JULY 14 THROUGH 25

WENDELL

Foot care clinic is the first Wednesday of each month. The next clinic is August 6. Call Katie Nolan at (978) 544-2306 for information or appointments. For Senior Health Rides, contact Nancy Spittle at (978) 544-6760.

ERVING

Open Mondays through Fridays from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 1 Care Drive. Daily snacks and coffee. Fitness room and pool table open.

Monday 7/14

9 a.m. Good for U
10 a.m. Seated Fitness
12 p.m. Pitch Cards
12 p.m. Brown Bag Lunch
1 p.m. Yoga

Tuesday 7/15

9 a.m. Stretch & Balance
10 a.m. Line Dancing
11 a.m. Social Stringer

Wednesday 7/16

9 a.m. Interval Training
10 a.m. Chair Aerobics
11:30 a.m. Bingo

Thursday 7/17

9 a.m. Barre Fusion
10 a.m. Pilates Flow

Friday 7/18

9 a.m. Quilting Open Sew

Monday 7/21

9 a.m. Good for U
10 a.m. Seated Fitness
12 p.m. Pitch Cards
1 p.m. Yoga

Tuesday 7/22

9 a.m. Stretch & Balance
10 a.m. Line Dancing
11 a.m. Social Stringer

Wednesday 7/23

9 a.m. Interval Training
10 a.m. Chair Aerobics
11:30 a.m. Bingo

Thursday 7/24

9 a.m. Barre Fusion
10 a.m. Pilates Flow

Friday 7/25

9 a.m. Quilting Open Sew

GILL and MONTAGUE

The Gill Montague Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls is open Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information, please call 863-9357.

Monday 7/14

10:30 a.m. Brown Bag Lunch
1:30 p.m. COA Meeting

Tuesday 7/15

9 a.m. Chair Yoga
11 a.m. Money Matters
12:30 p.m. Tech Tuesday
3 p.m. Tai Chi

Wednesday 7/16

10:15 a.m. Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Outdoor Yoga
(weather permitting)

11 a.m. Chair Exercise

12 p.m. Bring Your Lunch Bingo

1 p.m. Mobile Food Bank

4 p.m. Mat Yoga

Thursday 7/17

1 p.m. Pitch

Friday 7/18

10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
2 p.m. Chair Dance

Monday 7/21

10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
1 p.m. Kitchen Club
6 p.m. Cemetery Commission

Tuesday 7/22

9 a.m. Chair Yoga
12:30 p.m. Tech Tuesday

Wednesday 7/23

10:15 a.m. Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Outdoor Yoga
(weather permitting)

11 a.m. Chair Exercise
12 p.m. Bring Your Lunch Bingo
4 p.m. Mat Yoga

Thursday 7/24

1 p.m. Pitch

Friday 7/25

10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
2 p.m. Chair Dance

LEVERETT

Chair Yoga classes are held Wednesdays at 10 a.m., hybrid, at the town hall and on Zoom. Foot care clinics are the third Tuesday of each month. The next clinic is July 15. Luncheons are the fourth Friday at town hall. For more information, contact (413) 548-1022 or coa@leverett.ma.us.

Check the town newsletter or the LeverettConnects listserv for info.

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MUSIK from page B1

Out there I was always trying to facilitate jam sessions with friends, but it took a while before I joined an actual band, playing synth and aux percussion and eventually bass. We had a good time, but it wasn’t the kind of music I wanted to be playing, and it felt like it wasn’t enough. I think, for myself, it’s good to have a lot of different creative projects going on, because one is basically never enough to explore what’s interesting about music.

Eventually I moved back to western Mass to continue college and stuck around, finding a lot more sympathetic creative people here across a variety of musical backgrounds. In college I fell in with the jazz-playing crowd, and that was intriguing to me and eventually became a much bigger part of my musical interest, and a consistent challenge/anchor in my practice.

Being a jazz musician is perhaps the least successful domain of my artistic pursuit, but the one which I hold dearest in my heart.

MMM: Can you describe the *Frogtones* project? Do you have other musical outlets?

FT: I don’t really feel that good striving to be an independent artist performing my own work, generally speaking. I don’t like to pretend that what I’m doing is, in itself, conceptually interesting. It’s usually not a vehicle for concepts. There’s the occasional exception or formal experiment which catches my curiosity, but most of the time I’d rather be collaborating with other people and creating ideas from that place.

At this moment I feel very fortunate to be in a couple of amazing bands. The primary one is playing

drums in Norma Dream, a band which has been a serious anchor for me at times when music hasn’t felt very good anywhere else.

I also am maybe playing drums in The Classics, and although we haven’t started yet, also playing drums with the great Mal Devisa for the new band she’s conceiving. She asked me to play after we met at a poetry reading.

Again, I’ve almost never written a song, but I do really like to write poems, stories, and comics. I’m currently working on my first comic book publication, which is titled *Ghost Spaghetti*. I’ve not been on tour, but I’d like to!

Other amazing bands I play in less consistently include Jetties, the musical project of the great Mood Salad; Stone in Water, a noise band I made which has only played once, but that show was good enough for me to think it counts as a band I’m always in; and Happy Animal – this project is, I think, my most substantial contribution to “experimental improv,” whatever that is.

MMM: What are a few of your all-time musical faves or influences?

FT: I’ve been working on a farm and have had a lot of time to more intentionally listen to music, which has been swell.

I’ve been listening to a lot of Daniel Lanois, and basically anything that Brian Blade plays on – later Wayne Shorter music, the Sam Yahel Trio, and his own music as well.

MMM: Can you recommend some other newer musicians? And thanks for your time!

FT: I recommend .!



TELEVISION

Marvel’s *Ironheart* (2025)

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – Marvel Entertainment has tried its hand at making some TV series that haven’t been a success. These shows have really only maybe introduced one or two characters in the Marvel Cinematic Universe.

I was already familiar with the character Riri Williams, played by Dominique Thorne, from seeing her in *Black Panther*. She is a very smart, tech-savvy person who wants to build her own super-tech suit like Iron Man and the Black Panther did.

In this new miniseries, *Ironheart*, we see that Riri gets into MIT – and then gets kicked out, because she is caught selling some of her own work to other students. She is using the money to continue to build her own super-tech suit, but she is not having much luck in getting her suit to work well.

This show premiered on June 24 on the Disney+ streaming network, with the first three episodes of the series showing up then.

When we see Riri in the first episode, we also see the people who are in her world at the moment, including family. In this episode we watch a group of thieves with tech skills pull a heist. A family member of one of the thieves, played by Anthony Ramos, has a



hood with superpowers that looks very cool on screen. I had gotten a glimpse of him in a preview. I am familiar with this actor and had seen him in *Transformers: Rise of the Beasts*. I enjoyed that movie and his acting in it.

Riri gets connected with this group when they offer her some cash to help with their heists. We don’t get to see this supernatural element here, but we get a glimpse of the guy that indicates there may be something unique about him.

Speaking of character, Riri gives us insight into what she values which includes her not roasting Tony Stark. She values the man and what he did with technology.

I learned from the other episodes that have shown up online that Riri and The Hood are going to clash with each other. Also, at the end of the first episode, Riri has a little tech mishap that creates something she has no clue how she did that.

I don’t understand some of the bad reviews I’ve found about *Ironheart*. It got off to a good start in the first episode.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Camper, Bears, Scam, Cars, Trucks, Trees, Girl, Dogs, Phone, Fires, Chickens, Guitar, Fireworks, Deer, Skunk, Fox, Vandals, Thuds, Transformer, Horn, Party, Scooter, Dumpster, Jerks

Monday, 6/23

9:56 a.m. Landlord from Davis Street requesting officer assistance; states she gave notice that inspections would be today, and tenant is now freaking out. Officer advises tenant refused to let management in for inspection.

1:52 p.m. Officer checking on RV that has been parked on Bridge Street for some time. Parking ticket from June 19 still on windshield. No record of recent contact with owner. Second ticket issued.

4:46 p.m. Caller from Rau’s would like an officer to stop by so he can show them something. Male party entered fenced area and took a part off his vehicle that was being stored at Rau’s.

7:27 p.m. 911 report of a car into a telephone pole at Route 63 and Dewolf Road. Officers advised; transferred to Shelburne Control for EMS. AMR transporting patient. Tow en route.

Tuesday, 6/24

5:16 a.m. 911 caller states a bear just ran through his yard and headed down Dell Street. Caller states the bear is holding its right paw and looks injured. Unable to locate.

8:21 a.m. Walk-in reporting a scam on Craigslist for an apartment. Filled out a statement form.

1:35 p.m. Caller from Third Street reports a vehicle came through the back lot and almost hit their girlfriend’s young daughter. Party stopped and got out of car; appeared intoxicated. Caller also reports that Sunday night a car drove by them slowly, then followed them in an erratic manner; thinks it’s the same vehicle. Referred to an officer.

3:29 p.m. Caller would like to speak to an officer about ongoing fraud at Food City. Officer spoke with caller.

4:39 p.m. Caller states that a vehicle is parked in the travel lane on Fairway Avenue; is worried there is going to be a terrible accident. Owner located; vehicle being moved.

11:49 p.m. Caller requesting officer drive through Hatchery Road; he saw a vehicle and someone walking near the residence, which is odd this time of night. Area checked; no vehicle or person near house. A vehicle was observed leaving area upon officer’s arrival; unable to get a plate or determine type of vehicle.

Wednesday, 6/25

9:55 a.m. Message left stating that the caller got

a call from someone claiming to be the police department, looking for money. Caller just wanted the department to be aware.

11:11 a.m. Caller states she was just hit by a black four-door sedan on Turnpike Road, and the vehicle took off. Caller will send pictures and will stop in as soon as she can to speak with an officer.

1:34 p.m. 911 caller states someone just hit his truck at Cumberland Farms and his boss told him to call the police. Minor accident; report taken.

5:36 p.m. Caller states yesterday around 10:30 a.m. a Buick followed her very closely on First Street, then passed her across a double-solid line where people were crossing in the crosswalk. Vehicle info provided.

Thursday, 6/26

5:07 a.m. Caller reports tree on wires on Norman Circle. Eversource advises 15-minute ETA. DPW contacted for road closure.

10:04 a.m. Fire department notified of a girl in the breakdown lane on Millers Falls Road; wanted a check. Officer checked area. A girl was waiting by the airport for the bus; nothing out of the ordinary.

2:12 p.m. Caller from Fourth Street states that she is looking out the window and watching the sale of narcotics, at all hours of the day and with kids around. Stated this has been going on for five years, and she would like the police to watch the area and catch these people. Stated “Shame on you guys,” then disconnected phone.

2:59 p.m. Bear hit by car at routes 47 and 63. Approximately 30 pounds; possible broken back leg. Environmental police contacted; no available resources. Advised to put bear down or let nature run its course. Bear is about 30 feet up a pine tree and seems to be fine at this time. Will let nature run its course. No one on scene knew who hit the bear.

3:03 p.m. 911 caller and additional calls reporting dog in Twelfth Street area; seems to be wandering around; unsure who it belongs to. People are attempting to feed it. Number for animal control officer provided.

5:38 p.m. Caller from Family Dollar states a customer in the store stole an employee’s cell phone and is refusing to give it back or leave the store. Caller is not on scene right now; received call from employee on store phone. Officers advising not as reported. Involved female bought a

prepaid phone card from a third party within the store, and it does not work. She will follow up tomorrow.

Friday, 6/27

8:25 a.m. Tow company from Springfield will pick up camper from Bridge Street. Officer advises camper towed.

8:55 a.m. Officer advising stop sign at Industrial Boulevard and Millers Falls Road looks like it was hit; leaning over, almost on the ground. DPW advised.

12:18 p.m. Caller reports that while he was driving, a car ran a stop sign. He honked at them and they stopped. He states he then passed the car, stopped at another stop sign, and the vehicle passed him. Wants on record.

2:14 p.m. 911 call; Control advising tree down on East Chestnut Hill Road, blocking entire road; no wires or poles involved. Officer advises small tree, appears someone cut it and moved it out of the roadway.

4:26 p.m. 911 caller from Montague Street reports her neighbor’s house is filled with smoke and no one is home. All alarms sounding. Transferred to Control; officers advised. Working fire in progress. Control calling in out-of-town assistance. Requesting DPW close surrounding streets. Homeowner called; states she and her husband are each over five hours away; husband is turning around and heading back. No one else in home. Firewatch on scene.

Saturday, 6/28

5:41 p.m. Caller from Marshall Street reports loud music in the area of Stevens Street; would like an officer to check it out. Officer states all quiet upon arrival. Someone was learning to play the guitar.

8:23 p.m. Caller looking to speak to an officer about ongoing harassment of his stepson.

8:55 p.m. 911 caller from Highland School Apartments reports hearing gunshots. Two more calls reporting similar. State police called to report that fireworks are being lit in the area. Officer checked area; no signs of large groups or parties.

9:21 p.m. 911 caller from Avenue A states she was threatened by a neighbor

and their dog, and fears for her life. States dog has bitten 10 people and is a killer; would like officer and a dog catcher and a big net to scene, and to hurry; she is waiting in her apartment. Officer spoke with both parties and would like to have the board of health contacted re: lack of electricity in the apartment.

9:33 p.m. Officer out on Bridge Street assisting Erving PD with male party shadowboxing the bridge.

11:51 p.m. Caller states she hit a deer on Millers Falls Road and it ran off. Very minor damage to fender. Report taken.

Sunday, 6/29

4:48 p.m. 911 caller reporting bear on Avenue A. Officer checked area; nothing seen at this time.

Greenfield dispatch called the bear in on the golf course. Officer checked golf course; no sign of the bear.

7:24 p.m. Two- or three-car accident on Bridge Street; officers assisting Erving PD.

Monday, 6/30

8:54 a.m. Walk-in from Park Villa Drive reports being harassed by a neighbor. Advised of options.

9:38 a.m. Report of skunk trapped in skatepark. ACO will respond; one hour ETA. Skunk was captured in a box and released by the river. No need for ACO.

11:28 a.m. 911 report of black bear near mailboxes on Laurel Lane. Unable to locate.

11:59 a.m. Report of disruptive female yelling and taking food from the pantry at Franklin Area Survival Center. Peace restored.

3:18 p.m. Walk-in from Millers Falls Road wanted to speak with an officer about a lock being cut on an air conditioning unit.

4:04 p.m. 911 caller from Park Villa Drive states the woman in the apartment above her is throwing furniture and causing a disturbance; would like someone to check on her. Quiet upon arrival. Officers spoke with both parties.

Tuesday, 7/1

1:23 a.m. 911 caller from Avenue A reports apartment upstairs is playing loud music. Caller states it has been going on since midnight. Officer requests caller be called back and asked to open main door of building. Attempted calling the caller back three times; no answer. No noise heard from outside.

10:02 a.m. Caller states someone has taken a sewer cover off on Millers Falls Road due to an issue at a couple of houses.

see MPD next page

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CALL TO CONFIRM: (413) 423-3328

MPD from previous pg

Caller requesting traffic control. DPW *en route*. No one in area; no cover disturbed; road open with no issues.

2:48 p.m. 911 caller states they just got into an accident at Avenue A and Seventh Street. Control to dispatch FD and EMS.

4:44 p.m. 911 caller from Union Street states that an outlet fire is believed to be out, but would like to have it checked. Contacted Control.

5:59 p.m. Caller from Couture Brothers warehouse states there is a truck parked in the street outside his business with no plates and a couple of guys acting weird; would like an officer to check it out. Operator just waiting for a new lead.

Wednesday, 7/2

4 a.m. 911 caller reports an injured deer on Lake Pleasant Road, possibly struck by a motorist. Officer advises deer has been dispatched. Message left for DPW.

8:29 a.m. Chief Williams requesting an officer check out a sick-looking fox on Willmark Avenue. Message left for ACO; not on until 9 a.m. Officers unable to locate. Will continue to check area throughout shift.

8:38 a.m. Caller from Bookmill/Lady Killigrew states that they were vandalized last night. Report taken.

1:47 p.m. Caller states she was just involved in an

accident at Avenue A and Third Street and the other vehicle took off. Tow requested. Investigated.

Thursday, 7/3

2:50 a.m. Caller from Eleventh Street reports loud yelling and thudding noises coming from outside. Second caller reports hearing yelling, screaming, and slamming of objects. Officer advises involved parties were arguing about vehicle issues. They will be going to Vermont. Situation mediated.

9:43 a.m. Caller from Third Street reports hearing a loud boom. Power out in the area. Found to be a blown transformer.

3:07 p.m. Walk-in looking to get her license plates back. Officer spoke to her; she will need to go to the RMV. Party called in stating officer is breaking the law by not giving her plates back, and she can't be stuck at home for five days. Officer again advised she needs to get new plates from the RMV. Caller very upset.

7:26 p.m. Caller from J Street reporting male party who recently moved into building is in the driveway repeatedly honking his car horn. Officer spoke to involved male, who states he and the caller don't like each other. Party told to stop.

Friday, 7/4

12:15 p.m. Caller from Greenfield Road reporting her neighbors are having a party and one of their

guests backed into her car. Referred to an officer.

5:01 p.m. Motor vehicle stop on Unity Street. Summons issued for operating with revoked registration, uninsured vehicle, and unregistered vehicle.

Saturday, 7/5

5:33 p.m. Report of an older male on a scooter on Avenue A with an open container of alcohol. Unable to locate.

7:59 p.m. Male came into lobby to use the ATM. He kept talking to himself about how much he dislikes police while pointing at the window. Party left lobby before officers arrived.

Sunday, 7/6

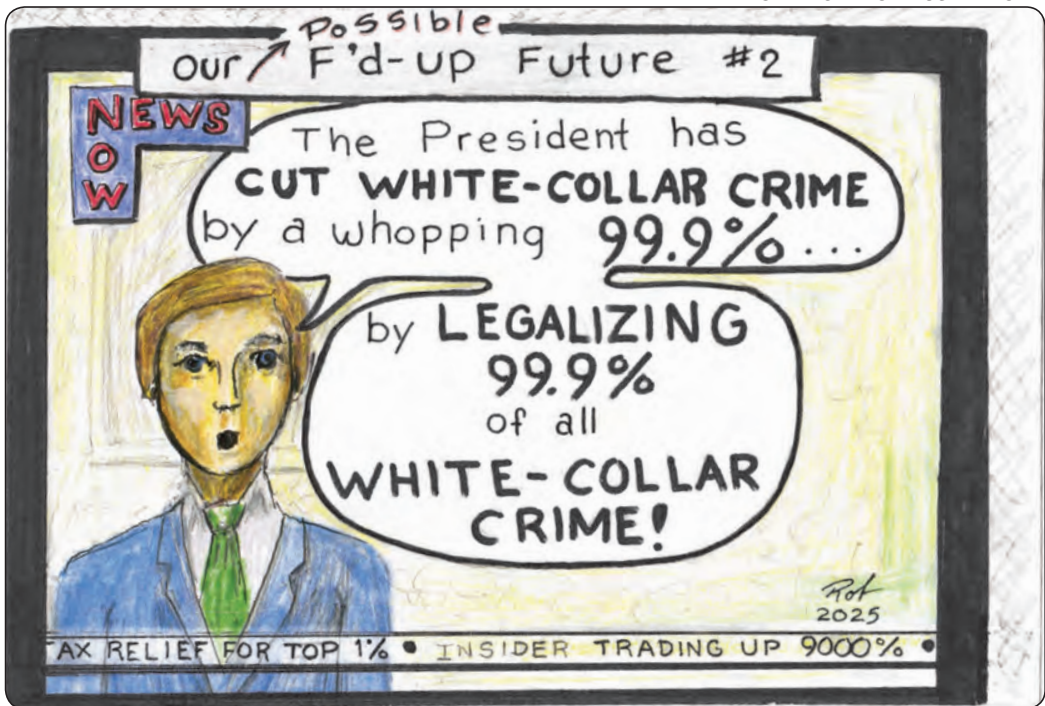
4:40 p.m. Officer moving along 15 people from the water off Green Pond Road.

8:20 p.m. Male party from Lake Pleasant Road states he was assaulted and has left, but is looking to speak with officers and EMS. Control contacted to dispatch EMS. Caller reports involved male party is fighting and drunk; would like him removed. Officer gave male party a statement form to fill out and return. Other parties declined to fill out form.

10:52 p.m. Multiple 911 calls about a possible fire in and around a dumpster on Avenue A. Control contacted. FD *en route*. Officer advises fire threatening one structure. Control advised.



ROB MACHADO ILLUSTRATION



SUZETTE SNOW-COBB ILLUSTRATION

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RECIPES from page B1

many Puritans from this region came to New England. Naturally they took a keen interest in what was growing. One 17th-century colonist reported back “All our grains grow well here... and hurtleberries.”

Long before that, indigenous Americans had been teaming blueberries with crushed dried corn and water in a dish called *sautauthig*. They also sometimes used them in pemmican, a mixture of dried meat and berries with fat made for winter food.

The first recorded date of the word “blueberry” in the *OED* is from 1790. It comes from Captain Cook’s *Voyages*, in which he reports seeing blueberries and cranberries in North America. Notably Cook was from northern England, where the European form of blueberry – called “bilberry” in England and “blueberry” in Scotland – was well-known.

In America, the word blueberry is mentioned in Sarah Josepha Hale’s *The Good Housekeeper* in 1841, and a recipe for blueberry pies appears in Maria Parloa’s *Ap-*

pledore Cook Book, published in Boston 1872.

While the use of “whortleberry” continued into the 20th century, “blueberry” was clearly taking over, possibly speeded by the development of blueberry cultivation in New Jersey. This was prompted by Elizabeth Coleman White, whose family farmed cranberries. She paid local people for samples of exceptionally big wild blueberries, and worked with Frederick Vernon Coville of the USDA to develop large blueberries that grow on easier-to-harvest high bushes rather than low to the ground, which is where wild blueberries ramble about.

Cultivating blueberries enabled them to be marketed in supermarkets, and also inspired the cultivation of other wild berries such as raspberries and blackberries.

It also inspired a host of new recipes. Blueberry pies, muffins, and pancakes are the most iconic, but older cookbooks also have lots of recipes for puddings, cakes, and mousse-like desserts.

There are also lots of ways to use

them that are just good ideas, rather than formalized recipes. For example, substitute blue cornmeal rather than yellow to make a really blue blueberry corn muffin. Or scatter dark-bloomed blueberries on a slice of palest green honeydew melon. This delights the eye as well as the palate, as do blueberries served with a pool of lime yogurt for breakfast or a summer snack. The lime flavor

deliciously enhances the berries.

So does lavender. You have to use culinary lavender, sold as an herb, or lavender from a garden you know is free from agricultural chemicals. Lavender-blueberry sauce is excellent with duck or lamb. The recipe is below.

As for whortleberries, nowadays botanists have sorted out many variants of blueberries and named them

all. Big cultivated blueberries are hybrids of *Vaccinium corymbosum*, *Vaccinium ashei*, and *Vaccinium angustifolium*. Whortleberries, meanwhile, are *Vaccinium uliginosum*.

Their odd English name has the same root as *hurt*; the *OED* suggests that’s because of their bruise-colored juice. Clearly, we now prefer to name them for their blue-bloomed skin.



BLUEBERRY-ALMOND TART

For the shell:

- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- 2 Tbsp. cornstarch
- 2 tsp. sugar
- 1 stick cold butter, cut into small pieces
- 1 egg yolk

For the filling:

- 1 pint (2 cups) blueberries
- 1½ cups confectioners’ sugar, plus extra for dusting
- 1 cup ground almonds
- 1 tsp. almond extract (or to taste)
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- ½ cup sliced almonds (optional)

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees and grease an 8-inch pie pan with sloping sides.

In a large bowl mix the flour, cornstarch, and sugar. Add the lit-

tle bits of butter and rub them into the dry ingredients until the mixture looks like coarse breadcrumbs.

Mix the egg yolk with 2 Tbsp. of cold water, pour it into the mixture, and with your hands pull it together to form a pastry ball. If it is too dry, add more water a teaspoon at a time until the pastry coheres.

Roll it out on a floured surface, then line the pie pan. Chill, then cover the base with foil and dry beans or rice and bake for 18 to 20 minutes. Remove from the oven and discard the foil and beans or rice. Reduce the oven temperature to 325 degrees.

Put the berries into the tart shell. To make the topping, mix the confectioners’ sugar with the ground almonds. (If you cannot buy ground almonds, grind your own by putting 1½ cups of sliced almonds in a food processor bowl fitted with a metal blade. Add a teaspoon of white sugar and process until they look like coarse cornmeal.)

Add the eggs, almond extract, and a tablespoon of water to the almond mixture and stir until everything is combined. Pour this mixture over the berries. If you are using sliced almonds, sprinkle them on top now.

Bake for 35 to 40 minutes, or until the top is golden with perhaps a few juicy blueberries peeking through. Serve warm, dusted with confectioners’ sugar.

Serves 6 to 8.

LAMB CHOPS WITH BLUEBERRY-LAVENDER SAUCE

For the lamb:

- 2 large garlic cloves
- one 2-inch stem of rosemary
- four 5- to 6-oz. lamb chops, or eight smaller ones
- salt and pepper
- olive or vegetable oil

For the sauce:

- ¼ cup chicken or other stock
- 1½ cups washed fresh blueberries
- ½ tsp. dried lavender
- pinch of salt or to taste
- ½ cup full-flavored red wine

Two to three hours before serving time, peel the garlic and cut it into thin slivers. Tear several leaves from the rosemary. Make 2 or 3 cuts in each chop and insert a garlic sliver and a rosemary leaf or two. Season with salt, and set aside in a cool place (not the fridge).

Begin the blueberry-lavender sauce by putting the blueberries in a pan with the stock. Sprinkle with the lavender, and add a pinch of salt. Simmer until much of the liquid has evaporated, then set aside.

Just before serving, heat 2 Tbsp. of oil in a frying pan over high heat. Add the chops and sear on each side for 2 minutes, then reduce the heat and cook gently. De-



HOPLEY PHOTOS

pending on the thickness, cook another 3 to 5 minutes, taking less time if you want the center of the chops rare.

While the chops are cooking, return the sauce to the heat and stir in the wine. Let it bubble until there is little free-running liquid left. Spoon it onto four plates. Place the chops on top and garnish with leftover rosemary. Lavender blooms are nice garnishes, too.

Serves 4.

BLUEBERRY UPSIDE-DOWN CAKE

- 2 cups fresh blueberries
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ tsp. powdered coriander
- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. freshly grated nutmeg, or ¼ tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 stick (4 oz.) cold butter
- 1 egg
- ½ cup milk or as needed
- 1 tsp. confectioners’ sugar

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 9-inch round layer-cake pan. Put the blueberries in and sprinkle with half a cup of the sugar and the coriander.

Mix together the flour, remaining sugar, baking powder, and nutmeg if using it. Cut the butter into 8 to 10 pieces and rub them into the flour mixture until it looks like fine breadcrumbs.

Break the egg into a half-cup

measure, beat it lightly with a fork, then fill the measure up with milk. Add the vanilla if using it.

Thoroughly blend this into the dry mixture. If the batter is stiff, add more milk to give it a spread-



An easy cake with an enticing berry top.

ing consistency.

(To use a food processor, process the flour with the baking powder, nutmeg, and the rest of the sugar. Drop in the butter a few pieces at a time and pulse until the mixture looks like breadcrumbs. Add the remaining ingredients and process until smooth.)

Spread the batter over the blueberries in the pan and bake for 25 to 35 minutes, or until a skewer poked in the center comes out clean. Cool on a rack until just warm.

Run a knife between the cake and the pan to loosen it, and then, while it’s still slightly warm, place a serving plate on top of the baking pan; holding both tightly together, invert and let the cake fall, blueberry-side-up, onto the plate. Dust lightly with confectioners’ sugar.

Serves 6.

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EVENTS

submissions:
events@montaguereporter.org

THURSDAY, JULY 10

Energy Park, Greenfield: *Pat & Tex LaMountain, Jennie McAvoy, Rob Adams & Dennis Avery.* 6 p.m. Free.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *Film Night with Julian Lowenthal and Improv Alliance.* 6:30 p.m. By donation.

Tree House Brewing, Deerfield: *Disco Biscuits.* 6:30 p.m. \$.

Last Ditch, Greenfield: *Rhubarb Duo, So Over It, Grazer, Two Wrong Turns.* 7:30 p.m. \$.

Midnight's, Brattleboro: *Ragz to Stitchez, Phrogs, Technicolour Ltd.* 8 p.m. \$.

Dream Away Lodge, Becket: *Samuel Boat.* 8 p.m. No cover.

FRIDAY, JULY 11

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Kidleidoscope Story Hour: Dinosaurs,* with paleontologist Dr. Paul Olsen. Ages 3 to 6. Story, activities, and crafts. 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Free.

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: *Terrific Turtles,* with Mass Audubon educator Kelly Walbert. Ages 5 to 12. Games, turtle shells, crafts. 3:30 p.m. Free.

St. Kaz, Turners Falls: *Pookah's Sabbath Feast* with DJs *Shannon Ketch* and *Clark Griffin.* 6 p.m. \$.

Floodwater Brewing, Shelburne Falls: *Little House Blues.* 7 p.m. No cover.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Climate Cycles & Volcanic Singularities During the Dawn of the Age of Dinosaurs,* with paleontologist Dr. Paul Olsen. 7 p.m. Free.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Big Freedia.* 7 p.m. \$.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *DeepC Divers.* 8 p.m. No cover.

Cold Spring Hollow, Belchertown: *Jayden Barber, Goddess Mommy Diva Queen, medium, Dead Bitches Global, barbie ai.* 8 p.m. \$.

Dream Away Lodge, Becket: *Smoota Tete-A-Tete, Moon Radio.* 8 p.m. No cover.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Witts End.* 9:30 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, JULY 12

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Gel Printing Trace Fossils* with paint, paper, and gel. Ages 6 and up. 2 p.m. Free.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Wendell Reggae Fest,* with *Simon White & Rhythm Inc., Iani Soultree & The Soulrizer Crew, Soulkeys, Rebelle, Chopcity Rebelz,* more. 2 p.m. \$.

Element Brewing, Millers Falls: *Low Class Citizens.* 3 p.m. No cover.

Latchis Theater, Brattleboro: Documentary, *Braiding a New Life: From Ghana to the Green Mountains.* Discussion afterward with the directors and Community Asylum Seekers Project staff. 4:30 p.m. \$.

Black Birch Vineyard, North Hatfield: *Luke Concannon & Stephanie Hollenberg.* 5:30 p.m. \$.

Floodwater Brewing, Shelburne Falls: *Psychedelic Farm Girls.* 7 p.m. No cover.

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

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Owsley's Owls, Grateful Dead* tribute. 8 p.m. \$.



Folk scene archetype John Gorka plays the 1794 Meetinghouse this Saturday.

Knights of Columbus, Holyoke: *Space Camp, When the Time Comes, Unabomber, Made Manifest.* 8 p.m. \$.

Rat Trap, Holyoke: *Fat Cap, Spike Pit, Cheap Heat, 666 Minutes of Bad Indigestion.* 8 p.m. \$.

Hutghi's, Westfield: *LacquerHead, APE, Slob Drop, Monarchs and Masses.* 8 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Jeff Unfortunately, Daniel Gay, FishMac Stew.* 9:30 p.m. \$.

Camp Keewanee, Greenfield: *Harry Smith Anthology Vol. 3 Midnight Reenactment.* 11:59 p.m. \$.

SUNDAY, JULY 13

Peskeompskut Park, Turners Falls: *Do It Now Book Fair.* Authors welcome to set up a free table for book sales at 1 p.m. Event at 2 p.m. Free.

Erving Public Library, Erving: *Word Game Extravaganza and Puzzle Swap.* Ages 16 and up. 1 to 3 p.m. Free.

1794 Meetinghouse, New Salem: *Orkestar Banitsa.* 4 p.m. \$.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Judy Collins.* 7:30 p.m. \$.

MONDAY, JULY 14

Peskeompskut Park, Turners Falls: Montague Community Band. 7 p.m. Free.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Jon Spencer.* 7 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Sexwave.* 8:30 p.m. No cover.

TUESDAY, JULY 15

Leverett Library, Leverett: Music on the Patio, *On the Lam.* 6:30 p.m.

Tree House Brewing, Deerfield: *Dinosaur Jr., Snail Mail, Easy Action.* 6:30 p.m. \$.

Midnight's, Brattleboro: *Pressure Care, beetsblog, elie mcafee-hahn, Lampland.* 8 p.m. \$.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 16

Gill-Montague Senior Center, Turners Falls: *Mobile Food Bank.* All welcome to receive food. 1 to 2 p.m. Free.

Greenfield Public Library, Greenfield: Music historian Craig Harris discusses his book *Last Waltz: The Full Story of The Band.* 6 p.m. Free.

Porter-Phelps-Huntington Museum, Hadley: *Afro-Semitic Experience.* 6:30 p.m.

EXHIBITS

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Ways of My Ancestors: We Are Still Here,* work by Native American photographer Scott Strong Hawk Foster highlighting the culture and history of Indigenous peoples in New England. Through Tuesday, July 29, with a closing reception from 2 to 4 p.m. that day.

Sawmill River Arts, Montague Center: Guest artist Amanda Petrovato shows paper works inspired by sky, landscape, and natural history, through July. One-day trunk show with works by Sarah Adam this Saturday, July 12 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Leverett Crafts & Arts, Leverett: *Transcendent Ink: the Nature of (Queer) Belonging.* Jasper Alexander, Emet Aron, Jayce Neal, and Pascale Jarvis explore block printing as a grounding force to navigate alienation. Reception July 20 from 1 to 5 p.m.;

gallery open weekends in July.

Artspace, Greenfield: *River Valley Radical Futures,* artists Sunny Allis, Mary Katherine Cleary, David von Dufving, Bo Kim, Sharon Leshner, Michael Medeiros, Laura Torracco, and Alix Gerber envisioning a world after the end of capitalism, through this Friday, July 11.

Looky Here, Greenfield: *Artists in Residence,* work by Levi Diamond and Arantza Peña, through July 25.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *Portraits in RED: Missing and Murdered Indigenous People,* paintings by Nayanna LaFond, through July. *Words on Art on Words,* an evolving installation of art and written work with an invitation to contribute, through August.

Fiddleheads Gallery, Northfield: *A Touch of Whimsy: artwork that makes you smile,* group show, through this Sunday, July 13.

Gallery A3, Amherst: *Call and Response,* paintings by Evelyn Pye, through July.

Shelburne Arts Coop, Shelburne Falls: *Where the River Knows Your Name,* photographs of the beauty of Shelburne Falls and vicinity by Martin Yaffee, through July.

Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne: *Hilltown Happenings,* abstract paintings by Tuyet Linh LaFleur, and *Meet Your Neighbors: A Celebration of New England Wildlife,* digital art by Jeanne Weintraub-Mason, through August 29. Reception this Saturday, July 12 from 2 to 4 p.m.

CALL FOR ART

Northampton Print and Book Fair: The 10-year anniversary edition of the fair will take place September 27 at 33 Hawley Street. LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC artists and publishers, artists of all ages and abilities, past participants, and those who have never participated in an art/book/zine fair before are invited to submit their work before July 15. Notifications will go out on or before August 1. Apply at northamptonprintandbookfair.net/apply.

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CALENDAR

Whately Town Hall,
Whately: *Hot Club of
Cowtown*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls:
Wes Brown. 8 p.m. No cover.

The Drake, Amherst:
Os Mutantes. 8 p.m. \$.

THURSDAY, JULY 17
Brick House Community
Resource Center, Turners
Falls: *Creative Arts for Parents
and Caregivers: Vision Boards*.
To arrange childcare, call
Stacey at (413) 800-2496.
10:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Free.

Great Falls Discovery Center,
Turners Falls: *Nice & Easy
Walk*. 10 a.m. Free.

Franklin County Fairgrounds,
Greenfield: *The Point 5K*,
outdoor dining to benefit
Big Brothers Big Sisters of
Western Massachusetts.
Food and drink from
local businesses, music.
Pirate-themed. Register at
tinyurl.com/point5kdining.
4:30 p.m. \$.

Energy Park, Greenfield:
*Larry LeBlanc; Orlen,
Gabriel, & Avery; Austin
& Elliott*. 6 p.m. Free.

Cold Spring Hollow,
Belchertown: *Toothwinner,
Dimension Viewer, Retail
Man, Swamp God*. 6 p.m. \$.

Peskeompskut Park,
Turners Falls: *Wet Tuna,
Vimana*. 6:30 p.m. Free.

Last Ditch, Greenfield:
*Lavender Country Line
Dancing*. 18+. 7 p.m. \$.

Dream Away Lodge,
Becket: *Allysen Callery*.
8 p.m. No cover.

FRIDAY, JULY 18
LAVA Center, Greenfield:
*Theater of Ideas: Community
Conversation on Single Payer
Health Care*. 6 p.m. Free.

Public Library Annex,
Easthampton: *Hoonah*.
6:30 p.m. Free.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls:
The Samples. 8 p.m. \$.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Jakob
Kordas*. 8 p.m. No cover.

Last Ditch, Greenfield:
*Grazer, Spaceship Musiq,
If Not When, Bassal*. 8 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners
Falls: *Stephen Sunshine*.
9:30 p.m. No cover.

SATURDAY, JULY 19
Great Falls Discovery Center,
Turners Falls: *Urban Fern
Walk*. 10 to 11:30 a.m. Free.

Peskeompskut Park, Turners
Falls: *Paws in the Park*. 1 p.m.

Unnameable Books, Turners
Falls: Reading, *Jon Ruseki,
Dara Barrois/Dixon*.
6 p.m. No cover.

Millers Falls Rod & Gun
Club, Montague: *AfterGlo,
barbeque*. 6 p.m. \$.

Shea Theater, Turners
Falls: *Ladysmith Black
Mambazo*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

1794 Meetinghouse,
New Salem: *Robert
Messore*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Midnight's, Brattleboro:
*Eight Foot Manchild,
Draiodoir*, Warm. 8 p.m. \$.

Marigold Theater,
Easthampton: *Electric
Citizen, Magick Potion,
Earthlore, Blue Manic*. 8 p.m. \$.

MASS MoCA, North Adams:
Sarah Sherman. 8 p.m. \$.

Bishop's Lounge,
Northampton: *Mal Devisa,
Sediment Club, Reason
Being & Jymmy Kafka,
Club Casualties*. 9 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls:
Eleanor Levine. 9:30 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls:
Open Mic with Jim McRae.
8:30 p.m. Free.

TUESDAY, JULY 22
Leverett Library, Leverett:
Music on the Patio,
Stamell Brothers. 6:30 p.m.

Tree House Brewing, Deerfield:
Lucius, Neal Francis. 7 p.m. \$.

Buoyant Heart, Brattleboro:
*Lina Tullgren, Mia Friedman
Band, beetsblog*. 7 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners
Falls: *Leshy, Rare Geese,
Anna-Claire*, more TBA.
8 p.m. No cover.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 23
United Arc, Turners Falls:
Visit from Baystate Health's
Wellness on Wheels Bus. Free
blood pressure and diabetes
screenings, COVID-19 tests,
healthy living resources,
more. 1 to 4 p.m. Free.

Tree House Brewing,
Deerfield: *Jeff Tweedy,
Hannah Cohen*. 7 p.m. \$.

Last Ditch, Greenfield: *Slob
Drop, Glad I Didn't Get My
Stupid Wish, I've Never Been
Here Before, .mOlly, God Is
Watching, Datura*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Whately Town Hall,
Whately: *Solas*, Celtic
music. 7:30 p.m. \$\$.

The Drake, Amherst: *Mal
Blum, Charlie Mtn*. 8 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls:
The Andrew Brooks Band.
9 p.m. No cover.

FRIDAY, JULY 25
Millers Falls Rod & Gun Club,
Montague: *TroutStock* feat.
*Leon Trout, Kendall Street
Company, Trichomes*,
many more. 10 a.m. \$.

Northfield Mountain
Recreation Center, Northfield:
*Big Machines at the
Mountain*. Large machines
to explore, storywalk, crafts,
free books, community
resources, school bus safety.
10 a.m. to noon. Free.

Great Falls Discovery Center,
Turners Falls: *Whalemobile*
with whale watch naturalist
Cynde McInnis. Register at
tinyurl.com/whalemobile1
or call (413) 863-3214.
Ages 7 to 12. 3:30 p.m. Free.

Look Park, Northampton:
The Swell Season. 7 p.m. \$.

Marigold Theater,
Easthampton: *Yeison Landero,
DJ Bongohead*. 7 p.m. \$.

Cold Spring Hollow,
Belchertown: *Mound of
Glass, Python Pit, Babygrinder,
Noise Nomads*. 7 p.m. \$.

Peskeompskut Park,
Turners Falls: *Movie,
If* (2024). 7:45 p.m. Free.

Last Ditch, Greenfield:
*Slob Drop, Sleep Destroyer,
Stagnax*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners
Falls: *Ashley Rhodes*.
9:30 p.m. No cover.

SATURDAY, JULY 26
Millers Falls Rod & Gun
Club, Montague: *TroutStock*
feat. *Leon Trout, Stop Light
Observations, Space Bacon*,
many more. 10 a.m. \$.

Unity Park, Turners Falls:
*Pioneer Valley Artisan Craft
Fair*. 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Free.

Wendell Free Library, Wendell:
Author and illustrator *Sylvia
Wetherby* reads her children's
book *Oak Seed*, followed by
crafts for kids. 1 p.m. Free.

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls:
Poop Museum. 2 p.m. Free.

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

MONDAY, JULY 28
Buoyant Heart, Brattleboro:
*Little Wings, beetsblog,
Jetties*. 6 p.m. \$.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 30
No Fun, Troy NY: *Wolf Eyes,
Melting Regular, Forced
Stability, Bloodx3*. 6 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 2
Hutghi's, Westfield:
*Moron, Wishful Thinking,
Gluebag, Gay Mayor,
Red Herrings*. 8 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 9
Peskeompskut Park, Turners
Falls: *Home Body, Wishbone
Zoe*. 6:30 p.m. Free.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 12
Daily Op, Easthampton:
Talib Kweli. 7 p.m. \$.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 19
Antenna Cloud Farm, Gill:
*Christopher Dylan Herbert,
Chris Reynolds*. 6 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 23
Arcadia Wildlife
Sanctuary, Easthampton:
*Josh Ritter & The Royal
City Band, Amy Helm,
Steve Poltz, Cloudbelly*,
more. 10:30 a.m. \$.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro:
*Mirah, Footings,
Mimi Fang*. 7 p.m. \$.

Shea Theater, Turners
Falls: *Iris Dement*. 8 p.m. \$.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 1
Look Park, Northampton:
*Rilo Kiley, Natalie
Bergman*. 5 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13
Brick House, Turners
Falls: *Ada Lea, Norma
Dream*. 6:30 p.m. \$.

Big E Arena, West
Springfield: *Busta Rhymes,
Rick Ross*. 7:30 p.m. \$\$.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19
Stone Church,
Brattleboro: *Tropical
Fuck Storm*. 8 p.m. \$.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1
Whately Town Hall,
Whately: *Tannahill
Weavers*. 7:30 p.m. \$\$.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 7
The Drake, Amherst:
*Water From Your Eyes,
Her New Knife*. 8 p.m. \$.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19
Palladium, Worcester:
*GWAR, Helmet,
The Dwarves, Blood
Vulture*. 7 p.m. \$\$.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Heads up: Only 80 people are going to be able to get inside this life-sized inflatable humpback whale – 20 at a time – when it comes with naturalist and whalefan Cynde McInnis to the Great Hall of the Discovery Center on Friday, July 25. If you or someone you know needs to get inside of it, find the registration link in the next column. McInnis will present facts on whales before inflation.

SUNDAY, JULY 20
Erving Public Library, Erving:
How to Draw Pokémon.
Signup at (413) 423-3348
required. Ages 8 and up; kids
under 11 must bring an adult.
11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Free.

Incandescent Brewing,
Bernardston: *AT & The
Fantasy Suites*. 2 p.m. Free.

Feeding Tube Records,
Florence: *New Riders of the
Purple Dawn* feat. *Rivkah
Gevinson*. 4 p.m. No cover.

Montague Common
Hall, Montague Center:
*Community Contra Dance
with Monday Night Session
Band, George Marshall* calling.
Proceeds benefit accessibility
fund. 7 p.m. By donation.

Darling's, Easthampton:
Mibble; Babe, Wait. 7 p.m. \$.

Toad's Place, New Haven CT:
*Kurt Vile & the Violators,
Merce Lemon*. 7 p.m. \$.

MONDAY, JULY 21
Look Park, Northampton:
*Iron & Wine, I'm With Her,
Ken Pomeroy*. 6:30 p.m. \$.

Erving Public Library,
Erving: *Minecraft
Paper Cubes*. All ages;
children under 11 must bring
an adult. 1 to 3 p.m. Free.

Retreat Farm, Brattleboro:
*Vermont Jazz Center
Big Band*, outdoor
concert. 5:30 p.m. Free.

Porter-Phelps-Huntington
Museum, Hadley: *Tony
Vacca with World
Rhythms*. 6:30 p.m. \$

Mahaiwe Performing Arts
Center, Great Barrington:
Roseanne Cash. 8 p.m. \$\$.

Rendezvous, Turners
Falls: *Jesse Carr Trio*.
8:30 p.m. No cover.

THURSDAY, JULY 24
Great Falls Discovery Center,
Turners Falls: *Nice & Easy
Walk*. 10 a.m. Free.

First Congregational Church,
Montague Center: *Just Fine,
Thank You*. Concert on
the lawn. 6 p.m. Free.

Energy Park, Greenfield: *Jim
Eagan, The Klines, The Frost
Heaves and Hales*. 6 p.m. Free.

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FIRST HONORS Ryker Bray, Rowan Deery, Brenna Guilbault, Konrad Henry, Rylee Malek, Blake Minckler, Aaron Neupane, Aerilyn Perez, Madison Phillips, Lilith Sumner, Malcolm Tyler, William Tyler, Anthony Warren	SECOND HONORS Dayzar Crapps, Carter Flagg, Kenzie Flaxington, Lukas Gexler, Carter Greene, Hanna Kyselyova, Liam McGuigan, Ryan Newton, Yoreli Ovalle Mejia, Alannah Renaud, Jacob Torres
	THIRD HONORS Louis Burek, Evelyn Galvez Mendez, Dagny Ovalle Perez, Ava Sena

– Grade 7 –

FIRST HONORS Jonathan Bones, Kaleb Briggs, Lydia Cadran, Nevaeh Call, Mikayla Cormie, Kaelynn Dudek, Andrew Eichorn, Braedyn Firth, Jazelle Gonzalez, Josephine Hayman, Page Katsoulis, Jo Licata, Silas Lively, Amber Marcy, Axel Martin Ovalle, Nethanel Martin, Anna McCarthy, Daisha Ovalle Perez, Alexis Parker, Gracie Jo Philip, Liam Pielock, Eleni Reipold, Fiona Ribeiro, Janessa Sadler, Johnathan Sicard, Rhiannon Smith, Maria Solano, Taelynn Supernault	SECOND HONORS Jesi Berry, Lylah Brocklesby, Eliza Carew, Audrina Gexler, Lailah Jenks, Ava Laffey, Mariah Larson, Cooper Malone, Izzabella Otto, Gabriel Palazzo, James Sanchez, Ella Shaw-Jarvis, Leon Tomas Mejia, Parker Walters
	THIRD HONORS Lucas Billings, Julian Bowden-Smith, Samuel Choleva, Tyler Girard, Isabella Griffith, Braden Hurlburt, Eva Lareau, Genevieve Otero, Malakai Patnode, Rhaynen Reese, Westin Tela

– Grade 8 –

FIRST HONORS Lucas Black, Max Briere, Santiago Buri Rosales, Liliyana Jette, Liam Kerivan, Adelaide Kolakoski, Ella Larouche, Austin Platek, Myaa Reed, Emely Sanchez Abarua, Taylor-Marie Scanlon, Sofia Sinclair, Sylar Torunski	THIRD HONORS Chloey Bucinskas, Camden Cogswell, Colby Hebert, Zuleimy Morales Morales, Melody O'Donnell, Gracie O'Neil, Allison Raymond, Nikolay Shlegel, Hunter Stacy, Bristol Stevens, Autumn Thornton, Bethany Whitney
SECOND HONORS Kaiya Adams, Kaylee Adamski, Bryan Cordero Lopez, Connor Glennon, Matthew Guilbault, Ellis Holmes, Adrianna Lemerise-Reinking, Tyler Newton, Brielle Perez, Isabella Pfisterer-Hill, Axel Richardson, Mckenzie Stafford, Kevin Tomas Mejia, Jayden Weber, Owen Zilinski	

– Grade 9 –

FIRST HONORS Sato Bazemore, Madison Haight, William Hutchison, Bennett Lanoue, Addison Lively, Trevor Lyons, Ashton Marshall, Chase Maynard, Braeden Moore, Lynx Petraccia, Nicole Porter, Scarlett Pouliot, Rain Sanborn, Jakhia Williams, Olivia Wolbach, Chloe Wonsey, Kamden Zagame	SECOND HONORS Freilyn Abarua Corona, Sergey Alexeyenko, Lachlan Banister Potter, Jameson Better, Cameryn Carner, Tori Chagnon, Jaclyn Galvez Martin, Michael Johnson, Daniel Morales Gonzalez, Jocelyn Ovalle Roblero, Genesis Pereira, Liam Perkins, Marshall Pike, Emily Shaw, Emmett Spriggs, Troy Thomas
	THIRD HONORS Morgan Deluca, Ameliya Galbraith, Kylee Jenks, Jakira Leno, Alyssa Nelson, Vinicio Palazzo, Aiyana Simmons, Athena Willor

– Grade 10 –

FIRST HONORS Keira Feeley, Gianna Marigliano, Layla Mathieu, Andrew Sinpunpakd, Brayden Slauenwhite, Addison Talbot, Marketa Vachula-Curtis	SECOND HONORS Johnny Bartolon, Jaydon Gary, Derek Jean, Rachel Juarbe, Julian Kaiser, Ophelia Little, Brianna Preston, Kimberly Ramirez Martin, Angel Ruiz Scott, Kaya Shipley-Aja, Paige Simmons, Brayden Sloan, Rihanna Thompson
	THIRD HONORS Patrick Andrews, John Burt, Heather Goodsell, Ivy Lopez, Yashiro-Rose Pape-Donatone

– Grade 11 –

FIRST HONORS Jackson Cogswell, Ella DeLorenzo, Lily DeLorenzo, Kai Dennett, Elsee Galvez Martin, Clara Guidaboni, Cameron Johnson, Michaela Klempner-Siano, Noah Kolodziej, Shayly Martin Ovalle, David Ortiz, Mario Pareja, John Ramirez Martin, Khalifa Seck, Nathaniel Trinque, Naomi Wilson-Hill	SECOND HONORS Moises Borrayes Velasquez, Trinity Davis, Madisyn Dietz, Ethan Eichorn, Rojelio Galvez Mendez, Brody Girard, Allister Kolakoski, Janelle Massey, Yolvin Ovalle Mejia, Jenna Sanford, Kainen Stevens, Michael Waite
	THIRD HONORS Michael Berdugo, Evelyn Moore, Kevin Perez Cueto

– Grade 12 –

FIRST HONORS Samantha Carr, Ella Guidaboni, Khiarielix Huertas Hernandez, Zachary Keeney, Logan Leblanc, Madison Liimatainen, Mia Marigliano, Sofia Moreno, Ledwin Villafana Abarua	SECOND HONORS Pamela Bartolon-Martin, Kamryn Berry, Avery Cook, Kailey James-Putnam, Teagan Lavallee, Linnea Macek, Avery Miner, Gary Smith
	THIRD HONORS Maya Deramo, Raymond Hillock, Gabriel Page, Venus Reipold, Carmelo Rivera



Smart Phones, ‘Rich’ Communication

By RYNE HAGER

TURNERS FALLS – The basic act of sending a text message is one of the simplest actions we can think to do on our phones – short of the whole “phone” part that makes calls, maybe. Unfortunately, while it may be a simple act, it’s far from a simple process most of the time, between green bubbles, blue bubbles, and the rise of Rich Communication Services. The type of phone you have, the carrier you’re on, and the content you send all have an impact, even though in an ideal world they shouldn’t.

This week’s topic comes courtesy of a request to demystify the operating principles behind SMS, RCS, and how to fix simple messaging issues on your own phone.

To start, a little terminology. SMS stands for Short Message Service, and MMS stands for Multimedia Messaging Service. The only thing you really need to know about either is that they’re the old standards that used to dictate how text, photo, and video messages were sent using your carrier messaging service.

Today, though, most of your messages are either routed through iMessage – if you’re on an Apple device and you’ve set it up – or RCS, which stands for Rich Communications Services. These more robust systems can send higher-quality photos and video, as well as more modern functionality such as message reactions, read receipts, typing indicators, and group chats.

There was a time that these two services couldn’t talk with each other, but that’s passed now – *mostly*. While dozens of companies participated in cellular standards development over more than a decade to produce today’s RCS, a universal, interoperable standard, Apple wanted to keep its customers locked in with iMessage for pretty obvious advantages, so for a long time iMessage didn’t play nice with RCS.

At one point, Apple even forced its customers to accept SMS as the only fallback alternative, despite the SMS standard’s security and privacy failings – and despite Apple’s privacy-centric marketing.

RCS works by allowing a bunch of separate servers to talk with one another over an open network, so a phone can pass a message to any of these servers and it should be handed off where it needs to go. Though it uses this “open” system, it sup-

ports end-to-end encryption for customer privacy and security.

In an ideal world, everyone in the entire chain of smartphone-based communication would have adopted RCS when the interoperable Universal Profile standard debuted in 2017, and everyone would be able to send messages from anywhere and to anywhere without any issues.

Surprise! This did not happen.

Like everything else that could have been cool, people trying to find ways to make more money almost ruined it. The carriers, which sell services, were incentivized to treat RCS as a service they could either upcharge customers for or to lock them into, so that in-network communication would work better than out-of-network communication. The last thing on their mind was the fundamental benefit of interoperability.

Eventually it took Google to fix things. The company rolled out its own RCS servers that bypassed these carriers, giving everyone who wanted it the benefit of interoperable, carrier-agnostic, rich media messaging. This had the drawback of centralizing a system that was designed to be decentralized, but it took the power away from T-Mobile, AT&T, and Verizon, who weren’t interested in its intrinsic customer benefits. As a result, these carriers finally stopped trying to make three different locked-in versions of RCS, and adopted the standard rather than be left behind on future improvements.

Now there are two ways to get RCS: through Google, and its Google Messages app, or through your carrier, if your carrier supports it. Note that iPhone users will need that carrier support to use RCS, and they’ll have to be running iOS 18 or later, as Apple didn’t support the standard until just last year.

Thankfully, in this ostensibly futuristic year of 2025 *most* carriers in the United States support RCS. Some Mobile Virtual Network Operator (MVNO) providers – companies like Mint Mobile, which resell cell service from “the big three” – only recently got RCS support, and some MVNOs still don’t have it. In these cases, switching to the Google Messages app will get you RCS. That’s one of my first troubleshooting tips if you’re on Android and you run into trouble sending messages or media over RCS.

Another key thing to remember is that RCS is tied to your phone number. This may seem obvious, but it

means your phone number has to be registered with the RCS network for you to send and receive messages. This process should be automatic, but a lot of things that *should* work simply don’t. Each app that supports RCS has its own settings page somewhere that indicates whether your device and number have successfully registered for service, and that’s another place to check for issues. If RCS doesn’t report as functional or connected, it won’t work.

When you change phones, it’s also possible that your old device will stay registered in the place of the new one. Google has a system for deregistering phone numbers in this case: search for “How to turn off RCS chats,” and the Android website with the required form should be among the top results.

On iPhones, you can enable RCS in *Settings* → *Apps* → *Messages* → *RCS Messaging*. If that section isn’t present or you can’t enable it, odds are your carrier is stuck in the non-RCS stone age. You can double-check this in *Settings* → *General* → *About*, then tap “Carrier” until the field changes to “IMS Status” to see the compatible services available. If RCS isn’t listed there together with Voice and SMS, you’re out of luck.

My last piece of advice, if you face issues, is to just reboot your phone and wait. Sometimes there’s a random issue on the carrier end or a hiccup during the registration process, and only time and a fresh attempt can fix it.

If worse comes to worst and nothing can fix your RCS woes, any messages you tried to send over RCS *should* eventually fall back through SMS/MMS, though it can take hours or even days for that to happen. And if you’re using an unusual device that doesn’t fit the traditional Android/iPhone grouping, you’re just out of luck – I switch to a Light Phone whenever I can to disconnect and be more present offline, and unfortunately it doesn’t yet support RCS.

Unfortunately, this is much more complicated than RCS was supposed to be, and we can thank the carriers – and Apple – for any frustrations we may have with blurry photos or missed messages.

For more questions about consumer technology, how gadgets work, or which doodad to buy if you need X, Y, and Z, shoot Ryne an email at deviceadvice@montaguereporter.org.

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