

The Montague Reporter

Tiny Bakery Making Waves at Lake Pleasant



GAGNON PHOTO
The Fox Den Bakery, a self-serve stand that opened in April on Broadway, has been an unexpected success.

By BEN GAGNON

LAKE PLEASANT – Over the last three months, a small woodshed converted into a self-serve bakery has swiftly become a hot spot in the small village of Lake Pleasant, attracting people near and far to sample pies, cakes, cookies, and specialty breads. It’s the only retail outlet in town, complete with a table, two chairs, and a Coke machine.

Despite its small size, Fox Den Bakery has its own address and appears on GPS at 23 Broadway, although it’s operated out of Mary

Bordeaux’s kitchen across the way on Rose Street.

“At first I thought maybe I’ll get a couple of people in town to show up and buy a few cupcakes, but people just started to come,” Mary said. “It’s busier than I ever thought it would be.” The bakery has already attracted almost 400 Facebook followers, some of whom make special requests.

“People asked for apple crisps so I started making those,” said Mary. “Other people wanted cinnamon buns and they’ve been getting very popular, and I got a

see **BAKERY** page A5

Buildup to Homelands Fest Includes Portraits, Canoeing

By JAMIE SIMPSON

PESKEOMPSKUT – When Native American photographer Scott Quanon Menuhkesu (Strong Hawk) Foster, Hassanamisco Nipmuc Band, was composing a portrait of a Nipmuc man in his traditional regalia against a backdrop of the Declaration of Independence, he scoured the document for a particular phrase he wanted to highlight. When he finally found the phrase, he saw that a feather he had placed in the composition

was pointing directly at it.

“I didn’t even realize it,” he said. “It gave me chills.”

The phrase was “Merciless Indian Savages.” This was how founding father Thomas Jefferson described this land’s original inhabitants – just a few lines below where he had proclaimed that “all men are created equal.”

Strong Hawk’s photographic exhibit, entitled *Ways of Our Ancestors – We Are Still Here*, celebrates

see **HOMELANDS** page A6



SIMPSON PHOTO
A crowd packed the Great Falls Discovery Center last Saturday to hear photographer Scott (Strong Hawk) Foster discuss his ongoing work in Native portraiture.

Senator Joins In Criticism of Data Centers’ Resource Use

By SARAH ROBERTSON

BOSTON – On Wednesday, hours after the Trump administration issued three executive orders to expedite the development of large-scale data and computing centers by fast-tracking permitting, US senator Ed Markey of Massachusetts hosted a public webinar discussing the environmental risks of the artificial intelligence-fueled building boom.

“Our environment doesn’t have to be a sacrificial lamb on the altar of innovation,” Markey said. “Unregulated and uncontrolled data center development is sucking our communities dry, draining our water to cool their computers and giving it back to us polluted with chemicals, and taking our money in the form of higher energy bills and tax incentives to offset their incessant hunger for power.”

Markey was joined by US representative Steve Cohen of Tennessee and activists from across the country to talk about the ways these giant computing centers drive up energy costs and pollute air and water.

see **CENTERS** page A8

Wendell Selectboard Town Budget Hinging On August 4 Debt, Override Votes

By JOSH HEINEMANN

The Wendell selectboard’s July 16 meeting lasted just over an hour of the hot humid evening. One point of discussion was how to get information to voters before the Proposition 2½ ballot votes on August 4.

Treasurer Carolyn Manley said the state Office of Campaign and Political Finance told her town officials may publicize information, but may not advocate a position, or use town money to do so. Officials may tell residents that information is available at a specific site.

Manley said the finance committee has a little more latitude, and may publish the impact of the “non-contingency” budget – Wendell’s FY’26 budget if the vote fails – on town departments.

Until the August 4 election, Wendell is operating under the non-contingency budget. Manley said the highway department has already laid off one employee.

The Wendell Country Store supports the Wendell Townsfolk email listserv, and neither the store nor the listserv is part of the town. To promote one point of view, the store

see **WENDELL** page A4

GILL-MONTAGUE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Feds’ Freeze Imperils Jobs; High School Principal Splits

By MIKE JACKSON

GILL-MONTAGUE – Tari Thomas’s second meeting with the Gill-Montague school committee as interim superintendent of schools was held Tuesday evening, and Thomas had two pieces of challenging news to announce.

First, a freeze of several major grant programs at the US Department of Education meant \$74,000 of the district’s current year revenue is cast in uncertainty, three pockets of funding earmarked either directly for instruction or for staff training.

And second, Shawn Rickan, see **GMRSD** page A4



ROB MACHADO PHOTO
Above: Golden hour at the Unity Park picnic tables.

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

To Become a Climate Leader, Montague Must Make Map To Decarbonize Dump Shack

By JEFF SINGLETON

The Montague selectboard heard a lengthy and complex proposal from the town energy committee Monday night to strengthen the local building code and reduce the town’s use of fossil fuels to qualify for state grants as a “Climate Leader Community.” The proposal would require changes in town bylaws, which must be endorsed by town meeting.

The board also approved a new license agreement with the cable provider Comcast, endorsed numerous personnel changes at the library,

ies, and tweaked the salaries of non-union town staff to be consistent with employees covered by recently renewed union contracts.

The energy committee outlined a proposal for Montague to join the state’s Climate Leader Communities program. Amendments to the bylaws could be sent to one of the two special town meetings likely to be scheduled this fall.

Energy committee co-chair Tim Van Egmond explained the basics, noting that participation would allow Montague to apply to the state “for up to \$1 million in qualifying

see **MONTAGUE** page A7

Hearing on Trolley Barn Continues, Contentiously

By JEFF SINGLETON

MONTAGUE CITY – The saga of a proposed self-storage facility at a former street trolley barn will continue, as Montague’s zoning board of appeals (ZBA) voted again on Wednesday to continue a special permit hearing on the project in hopes of seeing a more detailed site plan.

The building, at 314 Montague City Road, was constructed in the 1890s by a streetcar railroad company, and Ashfield developer Michael Skalski is seeking to convert it into commercial self-storage units. The area is zoned for Neigh-

borhood Business, which does not allow self-storage, but because the building has been used for storage since before the zoning was implemented, it is being treated as a legal “non-conforming use.”

However, Skalski must still obtain a special permit from the ZBA after showing that his proposal is not “substantially more detrimental than the existing nonconforming use... to the neighborhood,” in the words of the town’s zoning bylaws, which directly quote state law.

The hearing’s first session on June 11 was attended by several

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The Montague Reporter

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Dire Warnings

From a statement signed Monday by ministers of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Greece, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom:

"[T]he war in Gaza must end now. The suffering of civilians in Gaza has reached new depths. The Israeli government's aid delivery model is dangerous, fuels instability and deprives Gazans of human dignity. We condemn the drip feeding of aid and the inhumane killing of civilians, including children, seeking to meet their most basic needs of water and food. It is horrifying that over 800 Palestinians have been killed while seeking aid. **The Israeli Government's denial of essential humanitarian assistance to the civilian population is unacceptable....** Proposals to remove the Palestinian population into a 'humanitarian city' are completely unacceptable. Permanent forced displacement is a violation of international humanitarian law.... Meanwhile, settlement building across the West Bank including East Jerusalem has accelerated while settler violence against Palestinians has soared. **This must stop."**

From a statement signed Wednesday by 109 non-governmental organizations including Amnesty International, Oxfam, Caritas, Doctors Without Borders, CARE International, Save the Children, War On Want, AFSC, Global Witness, Mercy Corps, Action Against Hunger, and Pax Christi:

"Massacres at food distribution sites in Gaza are occurring near-daily. As of July 13, the UN confirmed 875 Palestinians were killed while seeking food, 201 on aid routes and the rest at distribution points. Thousands more have been injured. Meanwhile, Israeli forces have forcibly displaced nearly two million exhausted Palestinians with the most recent mass displacement order issued on July 20, confining Palestinians to less than 12% of Gaza...**The starvation of civilians as a method of warfare is a war crime....** The Government of Israel's restrictions, delays, and fragmentation under its total siege have created chaos, starvation, and death.... Piecemeal arrangements and symbolic gestures, like airdrops or flawed aid deals, serve as a smokescreen for inaction. They cannot replace states' legal and moral obligations to protect Palestinian civilians and ensure meaningful access at scale. **States can and must save lives before there are none left to save."**

Access Is Still a Civil Right

We celebrate 35 years of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which includes work, accessible buildings, and school support for disabled people, signed by President George H. W. Bush at the south lawn of the White House on July 26, 1990.

It was a packed house of our courageous disabled citizens and advocates for this important legislation. Many disabled people crawled up the stairs of the White House to demonstrate their hardships and that "access is a civil right." Senator Tom Harkin delivered his speech upon the bill's passage in American Sign Language, the only time a senator has used sign language.

As we move forward 35 years later, ongoing advocacy is needed to support the disabled. Over 70% of us are estimated to be over 40, with aging needs.

Many bills to support the disabled and elders are currently being addressed at the State House. These include, and are not limited to: sign language training; affordable housing; accessible housing (grab bars in the bathroom, etc.); a wheelchair repair bill (as warranties are needed); and increasing the personal needs allowance for individuals in nursing homes, as the money allocation is not high enough for all their personal items. Other concerns include accessible accommodations at voting locations (e.g., large print ballots); more homecare staff; increased pay for homecare staff; and accessible buildings with ramps and railings.

Federal budget cuts have been made in Medicaid and social service programs. Rest assured we continue to make strides as many advocates are fighting to support your present and future needs. But all our support is needed for our neighbors, elders, children, family members, disabled citizens, and ourselves. Phone calls to your legislators to express your concerns are necessary. If you have a hardship getting into any town building, call your town administrator.

Betty Tegel
Turners Falls

NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION



Andrea Chesnes holds a pose in her Root Yoga Studio on the Patch in Turners Falls. Chesnes is trained in hatha, vinyasa, yin, and restorative yoga and has taught yoga since 2011, maintained a Vipassana meditation and Zen practice since 2013, and taught meditation since 2018.

Letters to the Editors

Broadway on the Connecticut

Growing up in Massachusetts, my parents Hans and Annelore were cultured and fond of the arts and opera and especially Broadway. They made it a practice to take my brother Mike and I to NYC at least once a year to see a show. We'd get reasonably priced rooms in Times Square and wait in line on the day of productions for discount tickets. Winters were especially fun, the smell of roasted chestnuts on every corner.

My children's father and I decided to honor the tradition with our own children, hence my sons Hans and Briggs enjoyed *Les Mis*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *The Producers*, *Mama Mia*, and many more. They were both musically inclined, with genes inherited from their dad, and enjoyed children's choirs, voice lessons, piano lessons, and more as their childhood disciplines, so Broadway shows were part and parcel of their growing up.

This weekend I drove up from Virginia, where I live now on a little farm in the Blue Ridge Mountains, to see my boy Briggs perform in a JaDuke Theater production of *Chicago*.

I'm not a pedigreed *NY Times* Broadway critic, not by a long shot, but in the last 40 years or so I've seen my share of Broadway plays and so am comfortable critiquing.

WOW... The actors captivated the audience with stage presence, charisma, dancing, singing, acting... all these skills bundled into a show-stopping bomb! The tapestry of pure passion was electrifying.

Nick Waynelovich, Director, I applaud you, and all those involved from set design to lighting, and sound design, you know who you all are – and the actors who portrayed Velma and Roxie, you blew us away. Wow, just wow.

I'll drive up from Virginia in a heartbeat to watch all of you again. What a privilege.

The last show was Sunday, July 20, but be sure to monitor JaDuke's website (www.jaduke.com) for other upcoming performances.

Chris Doxsen
Rappahannock, Virginia

Cool, Not Cool

The "cool" ones who lifted the two spotlights off the island at Greenfield Road and Montague City Road – highlighting the stunning painting by Lahri Bond, of Lake Pleasant, welcoming people to Montague City – are, well, actually not so cool. Oh, I'm sure you feel very "cool" for "getting away" with your little theft. Some friends may even laud you for being so "cool"; others, maybe, not so much.

If you're fortunate, the adults that care about you won't think it's "cool" at all. Others, like me, who don't even know you, aren't likely to think it's "cool" either.

Perhaps you're not feeling too "cool" yourself right now. The dopamine rush is over, the thrill is long gone. The place where you ditched them, or the object that is now the focus of the spotlights... they're not likely "feeling" very "cool," either.

Mary Kay Mattiace
Turners Falls

P.S. They "know" the score... you may be the only souls who don't.

Leverett Young Enterprise Fund

I intend to create a Leverett Young Enterprise Fund to address what I see as two Leverett problems. One is the lack of sufficient Leverett employment opportunities so that young people have to leave town after school or college graduation. The second is a lack of sufficient business tax income to bode well for the long-term future of Leverett.

A competition would be held later this year to review submitted plans, from any Leverett-residing 16- to 24-year-old, and the winner would receive \$4,000 (my funding) to aid with the startup or continued progress of their existing business.

At the moment I am thinking to request plans to be submitted by October 1, with the award to be given on November 1. I will be creating a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit and seeking to raise funds to make this an annual event.

Feedback, questions, comments, etc. are solicited. Please reply to rhopley548@gmail.com.

Bob Hopley
Leverett

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TURNERS FALLS AND VICINITY.

Compiled by MIKE JACKSON

This town has a park with a **friendly cat** in it.

Reading the new Gill-Montague *School Committee News* newsletter (see my GMRSD coverage from Page A1), I have to say I am impressed. I’ve always fantasized about a resource that correlates reporting on local public meetings with both their official agendas and minutes **and links to the on-line video recordings**. This is pretty much exactly that – and it looks like a lot of effort, but if they keep it up, it is a great resource and makes some aspects of our coverage feel more redundant.

An independent press presence is of course inherently valuable, and I’m not saying we would ever stop sending reporters, but having the dry nuts-and-bolts recap already covered in such an accessible way frees us up for other approaches, like better pursuing human stories, or manufacturing juicy scandals.

Leverett police sergeant Steven Gould took to the town listserv Wednesday evening with a request for assistance.

“Good evening,” he wrote, “earlier today a **propane truck struck the railroad bridge** on Juggler Meadow Road. This caused the bridge to shift which then caused one of the rails to bow out about a foot. Luckily the engineer noticed the deformity in the track and was able to stop the freight train. I’ve been told this very well could have been a derailment....”

Gould went on to ask the public for leads on the truck, which he said fled the scene.

I think we’re doing a pretty good job with our big Events Calendar these days (see Pages B8 and B9), but by the time we’re getting ready to send this thing to press we are *always* coming across event announcements we missed, misplaced, or just caught wind of late.

We did include a bare bones note of the **Pioneer Valley Artisans Craft Fair**, but given the effort being marshaled for the event, I think it deserves a little more attention. Here’s the promo duly sent in by RiverCulture a while back:

“Over twenty artisans will set up at Unity

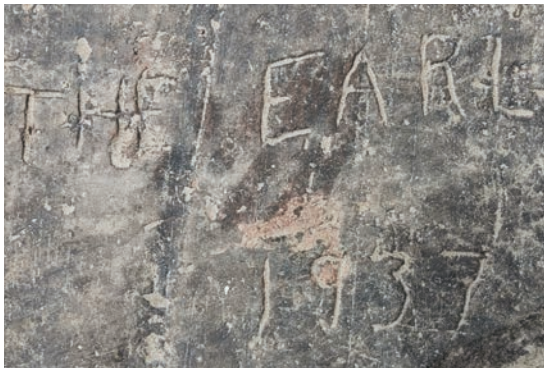
Park, 56 First Street in Turners Falls, on Saturday, July 26 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sponsored by Pioneer Valley Artisans, the event will feature tote bags, handmade pottery, jewelry, photography, plaques, knick-knacks, handpainted slates, crocheted items and more. A craft workshop will be set up for kids and cotton candy, popcorn, and other treats will be available.

“Families are especially encouraged to enjoy the wonderful amenities at Unity Park – maybe even take a stroll on the Canalside Rail Trail or stay late for Christmas in July Fireworks on the riverfront at 9 p.m.”

Looking through our calendar, there’s also a seminar on poop at the Carnegie Library at 2 p.m., a “very normal” puppet show at the Brick House at 7 p.m., an impressive and probably immersive electronic music showcase at the Shea Theater, and a late rock-type show at the Voo.

Busy time of year!

In our July 10 edition, reporter Ben Gagnon wrote an article about **rock carvings made visible that week** by a dramatic drawdown of the Connecticut River above the Turners Falls dam to facilitate repairs (*Low Water at Barton Cove Reveals Submerged History*, Page A1). Some of the carvers left their names, and the number “1937.” Some of the names matched characters from the Turners Falls High School Class of 1937 yearbook. It was a great little weird little article.



“I forgot about one mystery photo,” Ben wrote in after the edition had already gone to press. “It might be fun to ask readers for help identifying what it means...” Here’s the rock – do any of you know who The Earl might have been?

Joe R. Parzych, a reader and often a contributor here at the *Reporter*, wrote in recently:

“I was wondering if can anyone remember **the former *Greenfield Town Crier***, which ran from the years of 1960 to 2012. It was a free paper, because ads paid for the paper. The *Town Crier* had publications in Massachusetts and Vermont. It mostly covered hilltowns back in the day. It had short profile stories / photos on advertisers, local news bits, arts and entertainment, editor’s choice specials – a little of everything. It was located where GCTV is now....

“It’s too bad it went out business! I have many questions: What happened to it, and what happened to the former staff, editor, writers, etc. It was a small family newspaper, and it was my stepping stone when I started out 27 years ago. Back then I used a 35mm film camera and used a dark room to develop the film, then sent photo prints to publications.”

If any readers have answers for Joe, we’re happy to pass them on in this space!

Last Saturday they installed a life-sized **bronze statue of W.E.B. Du Bois** in front of a public library in Great Barrington, the town where the great historian, theorist, and activist was born and returned through out his life.

The Berkshires are a completely different Western Mass than the one we’re in up here, but it’s always interesting to think about Du Bois as a part of this region... and vice versa.

The **Bridge of Flowers** in Shelburne Falls, which was completely dis-flowered and repaired and replanted over the last year, is back in business – we’re told it enjoyed a “soft opening” a couple weeks back, and a ribbon-cutting extravaganza is scheduled for Monday, August 18.

Speaking of bridges – and of political theorists – how many **coordinated standouts with banners on highway overpasses** do people figure it’ll to take to change where Things are Heading? Asking for a friend!!!

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



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NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

Gill Accepts Help In Exploring Its Vulnerability

By KATE SAVAGE

In a ten-minute meeting last Monday, July 14, the Gill select-board moved forward on climate resilience planning and filled out some vacancies on the town’s cultural council.

The board approved a proposal from Franklin Regional Council of Governments to help the town complete the planning process for the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program. The MVP is a state program that aims to help towns prepare for the looming disasters of climate change, such as floods and severe heat waves. The town will pay for this planning phase with a \$20,000 grant awarded for the purpose by the MVP program.

Gill residents anxious about a climate-unstable future can join the process to discuss how to best spend state funds to keep each other safe. Town administrator Ray Purington said he plans to put out a call in the town newsletter for volunteers to provide input about priorities and insights into risk-prone areas of town.

The board appointed Isaac Bing-

ham and Lynn Tomb to the Gill cultural council for three-year terms, and reappointed Karen Larsen for another three years. The council provides grants to “performers, artists, historians, naturalists, speakers, musicians, and workshop presenters” creating events and activities in Gill and the surrounding area, according to the town website.

The board agreed to allow a resident to park cars at the town-owned Riverside municipal building while a driveway is being paved. Janet Masucci and her tenant, who sells used cars, plan to keep their vehicles there for seven to 10 days. Purington asked that the cars be parked on the Meadow Street side of the building, not block the handicapped space or the electric vehicle charging station, and not display any “for sale” signs while they are there.

The board voted to allow the town administrator to sit on the cable committee, along with a select-board representative and one to five residents. They then appointed Purington to the committee.

The Gill selectboard will next meet on Monday, July 28.

DISPATCHES FROM THE CARNEGIE BASEMENT

Architects Hired for Library Expansion; Public Feedback Events Begin Next Week

By CAITLIN KELLEY

TURNERS FALLS – The Library Building Steering Committee has been busy! Our committee received a whopping 17 bids from architectural firms interested in designing our library building project.

After interviewing four firms whose work demonstrated a commitment to respecting historic context, thoughtful renovation experience, and innovative use of space and materials, the committee unanimously voted to hire Schwartz/Silver, an architectural firm based in Boston.

Our design team is being led by award-winning architect Angela Ward-Hyatt, who has decades of experience working on library projects. She emphasized during the firm’s interview that none of their library projects look alike because they are committed to designing buildings based on the needs, wants, and architectural context of the different communities they’re building for.

After their contract was finalized, the Schwartz/Silver team got right to work, reviewing building documents from the Carnegie’s archive, taking measurements, and synthesizing that information into a digital three-dimensional model of the building.

At our first design meeting, the Library Building Steering Committee, the Downes Construction project-management team, and the Schwartz/Silver team discussed the project timeline together, as well as the importance of a robust community engagement process. We intend to host several events over the course of the next five months, and community members are

encouraged to share their thoughts and provide input on Schwartz/Silver’s project designs and plans.

The first of these events will be held next Tuesday, July 29 at 6 p.m., at the Gill-Montague senior center on Fifth Street and via Zoom. Event participants, including virtual attendees, will have the opportunity to hear from the design team, to ask questions, and, most importantly, to share ideas about the spaces, services, and collections they envision for a new or improved main library project.

It is crucial that the final project design – whether it be an addition to the Carnegie Library or a new building located at 38 Avenue A – adequately represents the interests and needs of the community. We’re counting on community members to let us know what is important to them throughout the process.

To make sure the community knows what’s going on and can ask questions of both the Library Building Steering Committee *and* our project managers at Downes Construction, the team has put together two pages of information online: the library’s project page, which provides background information about the project and an extensive FAQ section, *and* Downes Construction’s project page, which provides up-to-date information about the project’s status, including timelines and, eventually, illustrations of building concepts.

Both websites have links where residents can submit questions. You can access the library page at www.tinyurl.com/MPLBuild and the Downes Construction page at www.tinyurl.com/DownesMPL.

We hope to see you on the 29th!

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As Planning Enters Home Stretch For Six-Town School District, Wonks Hired to Crunch Final Costs

By ALI RAE CROWLEY

FRANKLIN COUNTY - Tuesday night, July 15, was a focused meeting for the Six Town Regionalization Planning Board. The board, whose mission for the last five years has been stewarding a proposed combination of Bernardston, Gill, Leyden, Montague, Northfield, and Warwick into the new Great River Regional School District, seemed keenly aware they are in the home stretch of the proposal, which will be turned over to all of the towns’ voters to decide this November.

Two key votes were the main business of the day, and the one needing the most discussion concerned hiring an outside company to compile a data-driven assessment of the six towns’ Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB). All of the towns have long-term financial commitments to staff and educators of the existing Gill-Montague and Pioneer Valley districts, such as pensions and other retirement benefits.

Warwick representative David Young said these reports are standard in educational systems. “This is a liability that is met by a current

GMRSD from page A1

principal at Great Falls Middle School and Turners Falls High School, is leaving for a position at a central Massachusetts middle school. He has served at Gill-Montague for nearly a year.

Thomas wrote that she is “filled with enthusiasm” in a cover letter for an entry plan she shared with the school committee. Thomas, a retired Massachusetts and New Hampshire superintendent who has more recently been giving professional coaching to superintendents, was hired last month in a quick process to fill a seat being vacated by Brian Beck.

Thomas’s interim role is expected to last one year and to enable the district to undergo a thorough process for its next long-term leader. She wrote that she plans to listen and learn from all quarters – including an online survey this fall – before identifying “patterns” and discussing with the school committee what her priorities should be during her term.

The committee quickly and unanimously approved Thomas’s plan, and she told them to expect a “report of entry findings” by early October.

As for the suspended federal money, Thomas said the state Association of School Superintendents was giving legal advice, and that though she was “very hopeful” the funds would be released, the administration was taking “difficult steps” – including stipulating in certain staff contracts that the positions were contingent on the grants. At risk is \$40,000 in professional development money, \$25,000 for student support and academic enrichment, and \$9,000 to support English language learners.

School committee chair Jane Oakes called the freeze “appalling.”

Business manager Joanne Blier said a grant to cover afterschool programming, which the district had planned to apply for, was also fr-

zen, but that direct support from the town of Montague for the program at Sheffield Elementary last year was not entirely spent, and the remainder can be used in the coming year.

When it came time for the committee to approve invoice payments, Montague member Cliff Spatcher once again raised concerns at the extent of ongoing HVAC maintenance and repairs in some of the district’s older buildings – to the tune of \$78,450, though Blier defended the expense and said the large total was partly due to the vendor’s “problematic” invoices timing.

Spatcher said he had reached out to facilities manager Heath Cummings at the urging of the rest of the committee to discuss the matter, but “he hasn’t got back to me.”

“Maybe a follow-up reminding Heath that that would be good?” Oakes said, looking at Blier.

Montague member Heather Katsoulis announced that she was starting a newsletter on the district website for “School Committee News,” to give the public “a little rundown of our meeting... right after the meeting.” The newsletter can be accessed directly at www.bit.ly/gmrscnews and by Wednesday a recap of Tuesday’s meeting appeared there, including timestamped links to pertinent sections of Montague Community Television’s stream of the meeting and a listing of upcoming events.

Though Katsoulis left the meeting early she was appointed *in absentia* to represent the committee this fall at the state Association of School Committees’ annual conference.

The school committee will meet next on August 12 for a “retreat,” open to the public but not broadcast on local cable, to discuss its goals for the year and plans for its mandatory self-evaluation. Its next regular meeting will be held August 19.



WENDELL from page A1

would have to file a Form M22 to declare that the town is not paying for disseminating the opinion.

The ballot will have four questions: whether to allow Wendell to exceed its Proposition 2½ levy limit by \$133,999 for operating expenses; whether to allow the town to exceed the levy limit by \$40,000 to put money into stabilization; whether to allow a Proposition 2½ debt exclusion of \$16,615 to pay debt service on door and window repair at the Swift River School; and whether to allow a debt exclusion of \$525,000 to buy the fire department a tank truck.

Early voting had already started, and would be available Tuesday evenings, July 22 and 29.

Fire chief Matt O’Donnell came to the meeting to advocate for the new tank truck, and a favorable vote on that debt exclusion question.

O’Donnell said the department’s present tanker has lap belts rather than shoulder belts, no rollover protection, and a high center of gravity; its pump no longer works, and repair parts are no longer available, so it cannot refill itself or fight a fire; and it has no room for carrying hose or other firefighting equipment.

Furthermore, O’Donnell said, potential new firefighters are not used to the truck’s wide-ratio manual transmission, and during a recent four-day wildland fire the Wendell department had no one able to drive it and had to call for mutual aid. He said in the near future the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is likely to declare it unsafe.

The proposed new tanker is smaller, and would be more able to travel some of Wendell’s narrow roads. It is a production model, built with standard features only between custom builds, so it is less expensive than a custom-built truck. Wendell’s potential truck is being built now, but will go to another town if Wendell voters do not approve the debt exclusion. The price is not likely to go down in future years.

Wearing Two Hats

Selectboard member Adam Feltman said the state ethics commission gave him three options if he wants to become Wendell’s facilities manager: he can resign from the selectboard; he can be approved as both a selectboard member and facilities manager by a town meeting vote; or the facilities work can be rolled into the selectboard’s responsibilities.

Feltman suggested posting the position with the job description, and if no one applies, either his ap-

pointment could be approved at a town meeting or the job could be added to the selectboard’s responsibilities.

Manley said that before Wendell had a facilities manager, each town department was responsible for finding its own grants and overseeing the work needed to maintain its facilities. Selectboard chair Laurie DiDonato said the two buildings the selectboard currently oversees are the town hall and the office building.

Manley proposed posting the job of facilities manager, and the board agreed.

Other Business

Former selectboard member Dan Keller applied for a permit to hold an auction at his farm on July 19, and to be certified as an auctioneer for one year. He has previously auctioned the town’s surplus property, and expects to continue doing that, but did not know he was supposed to be certified. Keller still serves as an assessor.

The Wendell Country Store is being fined for selling tobacco to a minor. The board of health is involved, but has not faced this situation before, and its members are unsure of the board’s role. The store is reportedly considering an appeal.

DiDonato said she would share a list of potential citizens of the year, including both recent and prior nominations, with the other selectboard members for their consideration. She suggested either holding an off-schedule board meeting with declaring a citizen of the year as the only topic, or else just having each board member list their top three choices and comparing the results.

Feltman said he liked the second approach better.

The board voted to reappoint Manley to the Franklin County Regional Retirement Advisory Board, and to appoint Matt O’Donnell as emergency response coordinator, Nina Keller to the zoning board of appeals, and selectboard member Paul Doud to a one-year term on the Franklin County cooperative inspection advisory board.

Citizen Donna Horn was not at the meeting, but has reportedly expressed interest in managing the art exhibits in the town office building, with the goal of expanding the exposure of local artists. The selectboard plans to wait until she can discuss the offer with them.

The Friends of the Wendell Meetinghouse were granted a one-day liquor license for Old Home Day on Saturday, August 9.



Montague Community Television News

Hear Them Any Time

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – Enjoy the Montague Community Band by tuning into Channel 9 on local cable! They are now in season. You can catch their performances all summer throughout Montague, or you can also find our concert coverage online through via our website, Montaguetv.org, by clicking the “Videos” tab.

There you will also find folders directing you to the Montague and Gill selectboard meetings, in

which you will find the most recent meetings as well as all of our previous recordings.

If you would like to make a video, or if you know of an event that should be filmed, let us know. You can come by the station at 34 Second Street in Turners Falls to talk with Dean or Deirdre, Mondays through Fridays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Email us at infomontaguetv@gmail.com or even call us up at (413) 863-9200.

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BAKERY from page A1

request for peanut butter cookies. It goes on and on.” Mary has even started baking peanut butter dog treats.

So how did this cottage industry get off the ground?

As awareness continues to grow about healthy eating, Mary noticed her extended family and friends were eating fewer baked treats, but her desire to bake pies, cakes, and cookies was as strong as ever. For Mary, baking is an art form.

“I just feel like baking is a very creative process that I enjoy,” she said. “There are so many ways to change it up every time, and you can always make something different. I was finding that people don’t want to eat so many sweets anymore, so I thought, ‘If only I could find other people outside the house to eat them...’”

On April 26, Fox Den Bakery became the solution to satisfy her creative urge.

“I decide early in the week what I want to do,” said Mary. “For July 4th weekend it was apple pie, and the next week it was strawberry jam, and then it will be peach cobbler or something else.”

Mary and her husband Mark grew up a few houses apart on Rose Street and were high school sweethearts – today he does all the shopping for the bakery, including trips to Nourse Farms in Whately for fresh blueberries and strawberries, and Clarkdale Fruit Farms in Deerfield for peaches. Their daughter Karlee does “all the IT stuff,” which includes posting a new video to Facebook each week, complete with theme music and narration describing what’s available.

The name “Fox Den Bakery” originated from the number of foxes the family sees crossing through their backyard, leading them to believe there’s a den somewhere nearby. Since the bakery opened, Mary has been the recipient of various fox items and

artifacts, including teddy bears and a Fox Den apron she wears in the kitchen.

But it hasn’t been all smooth sailing. Foxes aren’t the only wild animals that roam Lake Pleasant, and many are naturally attracted to the fragrant aroma of baked goods.

“I soon found out that squirrels like any kind of bread that I put out there,” said Mary, adding that birds were starting to make nests in the former woodshed. The answer was to install plexiglass sliders and chicken wire to protect the baked goods. Next, a thick layer of mulch was put down like a moat around the woodshed to protect against an invasion of ants.

One day she spied a bear loitering near the bakery stand, but so far has avoided any serious trouble with the local bruins.

“It has not been an easy process, and we’ve had our trials and tribulations, but I feel like I’m getting things ironed out and I’m getting a rhythm going,” said Mary, who puts in 12 hours of baking every Friday to gear up for the weekend, when Fox Den Bakery is busiest.

On Mondays and Tuesdays, Mary works part-time at the Greenfield health department, so she understood from the beginning the array of requirements necessary before launching a home-based bakery. She had to take online courses to get a ServSafe certification and an Allergen Awareness certification, and she needed to get her kitchen officially certified.

The education came in handy when Mary discovered that several children in the neighborhood are allergic to dairy and/or peanuts, so she started making cookies and cakes that are free of dairy, eggs, and peanuts. Among the most popular allergen-free items is a cookie she calls “chocolate on chocolate.”

Another requirement for selling food to the public is providing a list of ingredients for every item. Unlike most processed foods, it’s easy to identify the simple ingredients printed on the products at Fox Den Bakery – there isn’t a single multi-syllabic chemical on the list.



Fox Den Bakery owner Mary Bordeaux stirs chocolate frosting for her husband Mark’s birthday cake.

It’s not that Mary is philosophically opposed to processed foods: for example, she still uses PAM to grease pans when she cooks for her family. But when Mary cooks for the bakery, she uses olive oil from a spray bottle so she doesn’t have to copy down all the long names of the chemicals.

“Writing down all the junk and all that labeling would take forever,” she said. “I just said to myself, ‘Forget it – keep it simple.’”

Although Fox Den Bakery features a different culinary theme every week, Mary’s chocolate chip cookies have proven to be the most popular and enduring.

“I freeze the raw dough and make big batches of them, and every time I think I’m getting ahead, I have to make another batch,”

she said. “And I’m always out of cinnamon buns – I just can’t keep them in there!”

Other popular staples include cheese bagels, banana bread, and pumpkin bread. What started as a way to attract a few people in the neighborhood to share her love of baked treats has grown into a going concern in just three months.

“Word got around,” she said, “and people just started coming.”

Customers are trusted to pay by using Venmo, or by leaving cash in a money box. Most people were paying cash at first, but Mary said recently the trend is more high-tech, with about 80% using Venmo.

“We operate on a trust basis, and so far it’s worked out fine,” she said.



NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Officials Bristle Over School District’s Interest In Its Member Towns’ Finances

By **GEORGE BRACE**

At their July 15 meeting, Leverett’s selectboard met with the town’s finance committee to discuss a request from Amherst-Pelham Regional School District superintendent E. Xiomara Herman to help fund an independent financial study of the four towns that make up the district, Amherst, Pelham, Shutesbury, and Leverett.

Herman’s request that each town contribute \$800 toward the \$3,200 study came at a meeting of a four-town working group recently created after years of disagreement among the towns over their assessments to the regional budget. Selectboard chair Patricia Duffy said the district plans to fund the study with or without the contributions, but had asked the towns to chip in.

Fin com member Steve Weiss said the working group is trying to do several things: “understand the basic financial realities of each of the four towns, and what is reasonable to ask of them financially;” learn “why costs keep rising, despite declining enrollment;” and work out “how best to make an assessment... over a longer timeframe than one year after another year.”

Weiss said that while the regional school committee has a “large potential role” to play in looking at costs, financial analysis of the four towns is “really the responsibility” of committees within each town, and that although \$800 is “not an outrageous amount of money”

and other members of the working group thought the study would be “very important,” he felt the initiative was “inappropriate.”

The higher priorities, he said, should be coming up with a long-term solution to the assessment question, and “containing and reducing costs” in the district overall.

“I don’t like it,” said fin com chair Phil Carter. “Why is the superintendent studying our finances? That’s not her job – that’s our business.”

Selectboard member Jed Proujansky said he was “very hesitant” to support the expense. “The regional school should be funding this study,” he said. “We already fund them, why are they coming back to us for more?”

Proujansky said he was also concerned with the potential for creating division, with towns looking at each other’s budgets and telling one another what they can afford. “It looks a little bit like a setup for disaster,” he said.

After further discussion, however, Proujansky said that “to keep peace in the family” he wouldn’t oppose the four-town group reviewing publicly available data. Analyzing that information with the intent of building a budget formulaically was more problematic, he argued, as each town’s situation is “unique.”

Echoing Weiss, Proujansky said looking first at how to get more money from the towns rather than how to limit overall spending was “going the wrong direction.”

Fin com member Nancy Gross-

man agreed, saying that the issue in need of attention is “out-of-control” costs, not the towns’ taxing capacity. She added that “voting a budget is not just dollars and cents,” but includes a “gut feeling” about the impact it will have on taxpayers.

P. Geoffrey Allen also agreed that the working group may be too focused on the “supply side of the issue,” rather than the “demand side: how many pupils do you have, what should infrastructure look like, where can you make changes that might save you some money?”

(This was Allen’s first discussion as a fin com member, having been appointed earlier in the meeting to fill a vacancy. The 35-“ish”-year resident of Leverett, a professor *emeritus* in the Department of Resource Economics at UMass Amherst, said he had not previously been involved in town government.)

Selectboard member Tom Hankinson said he thought an independent analysis was a good idea, and he was in favor of funding the study. “A certain amount of relationship-building is going on here, which we should foster,” he argued.

Town administrator Marjorie McGinnis pointed out that Leverett does not have \$800 “sitting around,” and that the funds would need to come from either the selectboard budget or a town meeting article.

Duffy said that since the money would need to be appropriated anyway, it made sense to postpone a decision, and explore the matter further in the hopes of reaching

“more of a consensus.”

The board voted unanimously in favor of postponement.

Housing Development

The selectboard approved a document titled “Application Process and Review Guidelines for 40B housing consideration,” outlining information required from prospective developers before the board will discuss their proposals.

Developers must submit a letter of intent with a description of the property, evidence of its ownership, the names and resumes of the development team, and a summary of the proposal including the number of units, whether they would be owned or rented, how many would be income-restricted, and the targeted mix of residents’ incomes.

The document, which will be posted on the town website, also notes that additional information might be requested, but proclaims Leverett’s desire to work with “any serious group or individual” interested in bringing affordable or low-income housing stock to the town.

Other Business

The selectboard unanimously voted to support an application for a conservation restriction on the Whitney Road and Marvell Family Conservation Area, owned by the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust (RGT). The 46-acre parcel abuts the town-owned Rattlesnake Gutter Conservation Area and features a number of hiking trails.

RGT trustee Eva Gibavic said the restriction would be held by the Franklin Land Trust to provide an extra layer of protection.

The board also awarded a contract to remove trees from the Rattlesnake Gutter Conservation Area to Wagner Wood, which submitted the low bid of \$11,417 for the work. Funds will come either from grants or the RGT.

The board awarded an \$18,900 contract to architectural historian Eric Gradoia for an evaluation of the Field Building, using Community Preservation funds.

Proujansky was appointed the selectboard’s representative to the Franklin Regional Council of Governments.

Two transfer station appointments were made, Ezra Wilde as a supervisor and David Nelson Hospers as an attendant, pending checks of their references.

The selectboard and fin com approved \$37,000 in end-of-year transfers to reconcile department overages and close out FY’25. McGinnis noted that this sum was significantly lower than the previous two years.

Several minor changes were made to the town’s intermunicipal agreement on “joint policing” with Wendell.

The board declared a number of items as surplus. A set of folding wooden chairs from the town hall and obsolete fire department equipment can be given away or thrown out, while three printers must be assessed for their value in sale or as spares before being disposed of.

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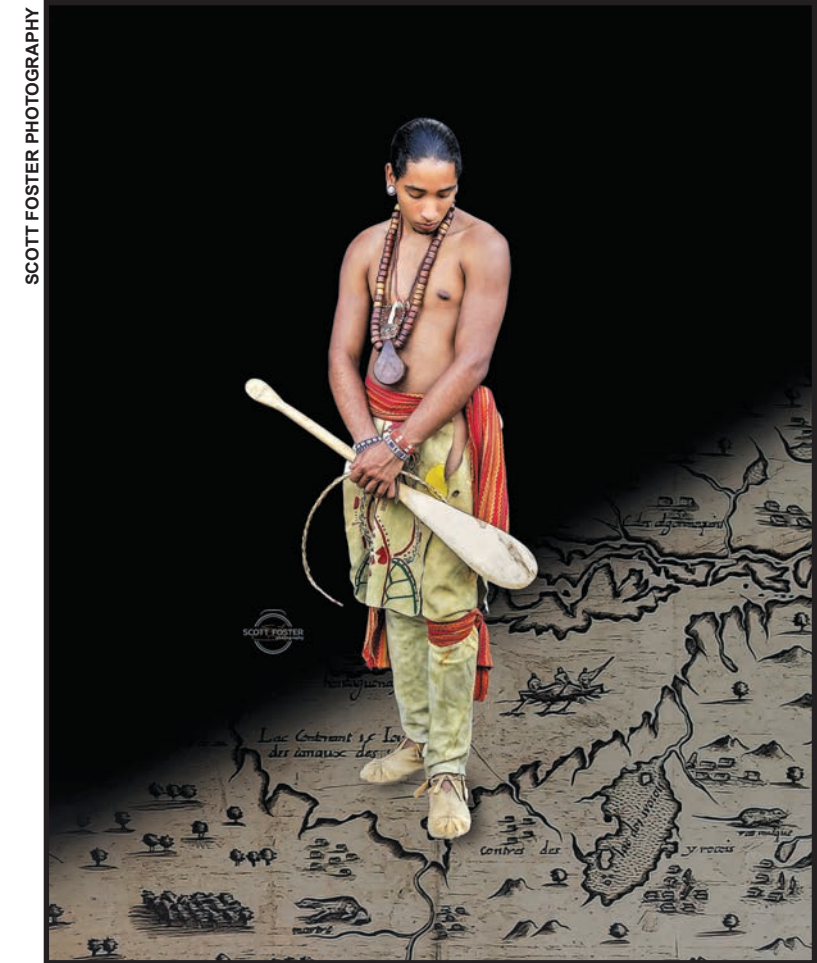
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Eric Hoffer, ‘The Temper of Our Time’



Foster's portrait of Daishuan Tall Hair Red Deer Garate, III, shows the Nipmuc Nation member standing on a colonial map of the region.

HOMELANDS from page A1

Native American ancestral traditions and documents their revival, and is on display at the Great Falls Discovery Center through July 29.

Last Saturday, the artist gave a carefully crafted presentation in the Great Hall, expanding on the work adorning the walls and offering hopeful possibilities of dialogue, healing, and reconciliation, in contrast to the dark and often violent history of European colonists here.

"I'm not a historian," Strong Hawk told the standing-room-only crowd. "I just want to tell my ancestors' stories – the truth as I have come to know it."

And storytell he did. Many of his vivid, layered photographs are portraits, showcasing the rich, diverse, and resilient descendants of traditional tribal cultures, customs, and regalia.

The presentation fell on the eve of this year's Pocumtuck Homelands Festival, an annual celebration of Native American culture, sponsored by the Nolumbeka Project and named for the people who originally lived here, and their village, near the Great Falls. The festival takes place mostly at Unity Park, honoring the river area that was a traditional gathering place of many tribes, and is free and open to all.

Nolumbeka Project president David Brule introduced the photographer. Strong Hawk outlined his presentation, then invited the audience to reflect on their own personal values with thought-provoking questions like: "If you could relive one day of your life, which one would it be, and why?"

He went on to explore what photography is, and how he began taking pictures at age 15, going "all in" 40 years later after being "downsized" during the pandemic. He shared about how he had to earn the trust of the Indigenous community to faithfully capture them in portraiture during powwows and other cultural events.

Using his large, museum-quality print portraits on display as a jumping-off point, Strong Hawk showed many more on screen, representatives of many area tribes proudly wearing their traditional clothing. His first such portrait, captured in

2010, featured his own mother as subject. This image gave birth to the photo series.

Though Strong Hawk denies being a historian, his work, and his presentation, inevitably challenges the history most of us were taught. Another of his portraits shows a Nipmuc man holding a paddle, standing on a colonial map labeled only with French place names, as if the original inhabitants and their communities had never existed.

History is nothing if not people's stories, and Strong Hawk's work vividly portrays the stories of the continent's first peoples: proud members and descendants of many tribes, warriors and medicine women, youth, elders, and wisdom keepers. Despite centuries-long attempts to erase them and their cultures, they are still here.

Ways of Our Ancestors – We Are Still Here is on display through July 29, just a few days away.

The Pocumtuck Homelands Festival itself takes place the first weekend in August. The event, now in its 12th year, hosts two days of live drumming and dancing, artisans and craft vendors, history talks, and food at Unity Park on Saturday, August 2, and Sunday, August 3.

This year's festival adds two affiliated events on Friday, August 1.

From 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. that day, members of the public are invited to join Northeastern tribal members and partners for the "Peskeompskut Paddle," a round trip on the Connecticut River in a *mishoon*, a traditional dugout canoe – or in a modern canoe or kayak. The event launches from Barton Cove Canoe Rental in Gill.

And at 2:45 p.m., the New England Peace Pagoda will lead a Peace Walk, starting at the old Faren Hospital site on Montague City Road, pausing in Peskeompskut Park, and continuing on to Unity Park for a 5 p.m. ceremony honoring Mohawk Nation spiritual leader Tom Porter and the traveling cultural education group he founded, the White Roots of Peace. The public is welcome to attend both the walk and the ceremony.

For more details about all of these events, visit the Nolumbeka Project website, www.nolumbekaproject.org.



NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Study Finds Speeding Endemic

By KATIE NOLAN

Erving selectboard members reviewed data Monday night from a traffic study conducted from June 11 to 23 by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, and discussed possible responses.

The study showed that 77% of drivers on Lester Street exceeded the 25 mph speed limit at the intersection with Pratt Street, with a maximum recorded speed of 79 mph.

On Moore Street at Mechanic Street, 95% of drivers exceeded the 25 mph limit, with one reaching 64 mph, and at Moore at Pleasant Street, 38% exceeded the 35 mph limit, with a maximum of 105 mph.

At all three locations, most drivers stayed within 10 mph of the posted limit.

Selectboard member William Bembury suggested consulting with police chief Robert Holst and "putting a selected officer on overtime to deal with those problematic areas." Selectboard chair Jacob Smith and selectboard member James Loynd both agreed with this concept, especially with the schedule of additional enforcement once or twice a month.

Loynd said he felt the issue should be considered townwide. "There are other areas in town that we've received similar complaints from excessive speeding," he said.

The board praised highway superintendent Glenn McCrory for installing pedestrian crossing signs at crosswalks in North, Central, and Pratt Streets. "I think they're a good idea," commented Bembury. "It's a passive way of slowing down the traffic."

"I'd love to put one down at the bottom of Lester Street, and at the bottom of Gunn," McCrory told the board.

When selectboard members expressed approval, McCrory told them he would install the signs after leaving the meeting. "They're in the

truck," he said. "I came prepared."

The board asked town administrator Bryan Smith to discuss the idea of increased speed limit enforcement with Holst.

"We'll keep working on it," Jacob Smith concluded.

Sludge Drying

The selectboard continued a discussion of the installation of sludge cake dryers at the POTW#2 wastewater treatment plant that began at their July 7 meeting. The plant is owned by the town and operated by ERSECO, a subsidiary of Erving Industries, which owns the adjoining Erving Paper mill.

In a memo dated July 18, Bryan Smith listed five "areas of concern" for the town, and information or action expected from ERSECO.

These included more details about the dryers' odor-scrubbing technology; a noise impact assessment near the plant and its neighborhood; information about the storage or "stockpiling" of dried sludge onsite; clarity as to whether the upgrade would impact the plant's operating permits issued by state and federal environmental regulators; and how the town would continue to treat sewage from Erving Center if the process should become non-viable, or if the paper mill ever decides to stop operating the plant.

Jacob Smith added that if the dried sludge cake would be sold, he felt the town should receive some revenue from the profits. He recommended that the town provide its expectations about the plant in writing, and get answers in writing from ERSECO.

The board will meet with Erving Industries representatives again at its August 4 meeting for further discussion on the proposal.

Other Business

The agreement between Erving and Bernardston-Northfield

Community Television (BNCTV) for filming and broadcasting town meetings and events on the public-access TV channel ends August 31. Bryan Smith asked if the selectboard wanted to extend the agreement until a new contract is negotiated, and how much input they want from the recently reconstituted cable advisory committee.

The board decided to extend the current agreement for four months, and to solicit the committee's input while retaining their authority to decide on the procurement.

At a joint meeting held on July 15, the selectboard and finance committee approved transferring \$30,553.21 from a reserve fund to pay for PFAS monitoring at the former Maple Avenue landfill.

On Monday, the selectboard approved the federal drug-free workplace policy for Council on Aging van drivers. According to Franklin Regional Transportation Authority, the town's less comprehensive drug-free policy must be replaced with the federal policy because federal money funds the van.

A revised set of water regulations were approved, after several meetings of discussion and editing. Bryan Smith said that before revisions to the town's sewer regulations could be finalized, more research on commercial and industrial user fees was needed. After the sewer regulations are finalized, the board will post legal advertisements and hold a hearing, as required by state law.

Leslie Brown was appointed to the recently-created museum committee, and Bembury was nominated as the selectboard liaison to the committee.

The board decided to establish a five-member search committee for a Council on Aging activities coordinator. Bryan Smith said he would consult with senior center director Dulcie McAndrews for recommendations on committee members.

FACES & PLACES



Leverett's New England Peace Pagoda, on a very very hot day in early summer.

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MONTAGUE from page A1

energy upgrades, including solar for town buildings and municipal electric vehicles.” Town meeting would first need to approve a “non-binding resolution” to end the use of fossil fuels by town buildings and new town vehicles by 2050, and modify the building code to require increased energy efficiency in new construction.

Chris Mason, formerly Montague’s energy committee chair and now the “regional Green Communities coordinator” for the state, filled in more details. After reviewing the history of the two programs, which are designed to help Massachusetts meet the targets of its 2008 Global Warming Solutions Act and its 2021 update, he described the new initiative to end fossil fuel use in municipal buildings and vehicles.

Mason stressed that this was only a goal and that the requirement would only apply to new purchases, and not necessarily to police cruisers or public works trucks. Similarly, the “enhanced stretch code” the program would mandate for buildings would require solar panels on new houses, but only if they are properly aligned with the sun.

Assistant town administrator Chris Nolan-Zeller clarified after the meeting that Montague’s currently existing energy “stretch code” would still apply, both to new construction and to renovations.

Mason touched briefly on numerous other criteria of the program, noting that this was just an initial presentation. He pointed out that 300 towns and cities in the state, including Montague, have adopted the earlier stretch code, and 55 have agreed to implement the enhanced version.

As the discussion was about to conclude, energy committee co-chair Sally Pick asked the selectboard to endorse two town meeting resolutions which were included in the materials attached to the evening’s agenda.

“We are not there yet,” responded selectboard chair Matt Lord, explaining that any articles would be discussed by the board after town administrator Walter Ramsey first puts together a draft special town meeting warrant.

“This may be a good time to talk to Walter, if you have the specific language of the warrant items that the state has suggested,” he told Pick.

Three town-owned buildings do not yet have “roadmaps” to reduce fossil fuel use, a central requirement of the Green Communities and Climate Leaders programs: the Millers Falls branch library, the Turners Falls airport, and a building at the transfer station. The board voted to apply for a “decarbonization planning grant” from the state Department of Energy Resources to fund these reports.

Lord asked whether the building at the transfer station was the regional dog shelter on Sandy Lane, or the “tiny shack” used by public works staff.

Nolan-Zeller confirmed that it was the “shack,” which was “included in our Green Communities baseline, for some reason.”

“Whoa, okay,” Lord responded enthusiastically.

Work Zones

The board approved a number of items related to infrastructure, including a contract with the engineering firm Weston & Sampson to

oversee remediation of toxic soil from the First Street lot slated for Habitat for Humanity housing; a loan from the state Department of Environmental Protection to fund ongoing repairs of the sewer system; and a contract with All Star Abatement to remove asbestos insulation from sewer pipes attached to the footbridge over the power canal to the Strathmore mill, so that the footbridge itself can be safely dismantled.

Flashing beacons will soon be installed at the dangerous intersection of School and Main streets as part of a “traffic calming” project in Montague Center, Nolan-Zeller announced, and the Third and Fourth Street municipal parking lots in Turners Falls will be closed for repaving during the first few weeks of August.

At Nolan-Zeller’s request the board also endorsed a letter thanking state representatives Natalie Blais and Susannah Whips for a \$50,000 earmark that funded a variety of improvements to the Gill-Montague senior center.

Beloved Cable Company

The board held a very brief hearing on a new 10-year license agreement with the cable provider Comcast, then approved the proposed license. Most of the hearing consisted of a presentation by Bill August, legal counsel to the town’s cable advisory committee (CAC), which had negotiated the license renewal.

August said the agreement is a “strong license,” not based on a “boilerplate” model suggested by Comcast but on “licenses used by many other municipalities.” He explained that it is not “exclusive,” so other companies could also apply to provide cable service in Montague, though they would need to go through the same process, including negotiation with the CAC and a public hearing.

The license stipulates that the company use 5% of its “gross cable television revenue” from Montague customers, plus a separate unspecified capital payment, to fund the local access station, Montague Community Television.

August was asked if the number of television subscribers in Montague had declined due to increased use of the internet – largely over Comcast’s cables – and whether this was a concern of the CAC.

“Definitely,” he said. “And we have no control over that.”

August went on to say this problem was not yet a “crisis” for the cable access station, but saw “slippage each year – but no one has a crystal ball.”

A Precise Patio

The board also held a hearing on a modification of the liquor license held by the restaurant El Nopalito to allow the Turners Falls Road business to serve alcohol on its patio.

No opposition to the modification was voiced, but Kristi Bodin, a town meeting member who has served as an attorney to a number of local restaurants, warned that the business should be very precise in its application to the state Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission (ABC). She mentioned, for example, the dimensions of the fence surrounding the patio.

Ramsey said he would “follow up” on the fencing criteria described in the application.

“This is a great idea,” said Bodin. “I would hate to see the ABC bounce it back.” She estimated that it would take the state six to eight weeks to approve the change.

Other Business

It was a very busy evening for the board. Changing into their personnel board hats, its members appointed three part-time library assistants to fill in when the Carnegie and branch libraries are short-staffed, and Kimber Gray as the libraries’ new community relations coordinator at 13.5 hours per week. Libraries director Caitlin Kelley noted that Gray had prior experience in Kentucky working both in libraries and in marketing.

The board accepted the resignation of Jacob Lapean as a detective in the police department and his request to return to patrol duty at a lower pay grade. In a letter explaining his request, Lapean wrote that he “missed” being a patrol officer and that the decision was “not easy to make.”

Ramsey said this left vacant a detective position that will need to be filled.

The board also accepted Josh Lively’s resignation from the library building steering committee and appointed Lisa Davol in his place. Jason Kingsbury was appointed as the “lead” public works staff member for grounds maintenance, replacing an employee who has left the department. Kingsbury also serves as the town’s tree warden.

Ramsey reviewed a recommendation from a recent wage report to bring the contracts of 15 non-union employees, mostly department heads, in line with renewed collective bargaining agreements. The issue had been “previewed” in June.

Ramsey suggested two approaches. The first would move all 15 employees to a new pay scale as close to the union contracts as possible, adding \$20,236 to the current fiscal year’s budget and more than that next year. The second would move 13 but keep Ramsey and Nolan-Zeller on the old wage scale, saving the town approximately \$2,800 in the current year.

The board approved the first approach. “Those positions are critical,” said selectboard member Rich Kuklewicz, “and we should move everybody all in one step.”

On the cultural front the board approved the use of public property on August 16 for a bike parade from 62 Avenue A to Peskeompskut Park, to join an already-scheduled “fairy house day” celebration. The ride will start at 2 p.m. and approximately 30 paraders are expected, according to RiverCulture director Suzanne LoManto.

A request to use public property on the morning of September 13 for a 5K race and 1.4-mile “fun run” to benefit the Montague Elks was also approved. Ramsey apologized for not including a map of the routes, but both will start and end at the Elks lodge in downtown Turners Falls.

At the end of the meeting, at the request of the tree advisory committee, the board approved a letter to the Franklin County Technical School encouraging the school to continue its tree nursery program in the face of the retirement of its director, Kurt Richardson.

The next selectboard meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 4.



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CONTINUES from page A1

dozen residents, and nearly all who spoke opposed the project. Lilith Wolinsky, whose home abuts the trolley barn property on two sides, argued that the traffic, parking, and lighting associated with Skalski’s business would indeed be more detrimental to the neighborhood than its most recent use, which was to store stonemasonry produced onsite by one individual.

Several speakers who do not live in the neighborhood but use the Canalside Rail Trail bike path, which passes directly by the property on Depot Street, argued that the commercial facility’s increased traffic would create a danger for cyclists.

These comments appeared to offend members of the ZBA, who said they saw self-storage as a reasonable use of the barn and consistent with its history. “I appreciate the passion, but some of this is overreach,” said member Bill Doyle.

Another member, David Jensen, said he had “done the math” and estimated that self-storage facilities attract an average of three visitors a day.

Before granting the permit, though, members began asking about elements of Skalski’s plan that differed from his original application. Chair Josh Lively wanted to know how many storage units there would be, and Jensen asked whether the historical structure’s windows would continue to be boarded up. The hearing was continued to give Skalski a chance to provide more details.

Wednesday’s audience was much more sparse: Skalski, his son Troy, and a friend who lives in the neighborhood; Wolinsky and an attorney, John McLaughlin; a member of the local press; and town meeting member Kristi Bodin, who did not speak.

“It’s the summer,” Wolinsky said when a ZBA member asked if the low attendance reflected a lack of concern about the project in the neighborhood. “People are taking vacations.”

Lively announced that he had been “talking to some people at town hall,” and was told a self-storage facility in a Neighborhood Business zone was going to be a “hard sell” there. He acknowledged that there may be a difference between a “warehouse,” the earlier use, and commercial self-storage.

“I’d be happy to debate that with you,” said Jensen, and read aloud a definition of “self-service storage” from the town bylaws.

Jensen said he had spent years arguing over the status of “non-conforming structures” as the town’s building inspector.

“We’re here to determine whether the neighborhood claim, that the proposed use is substantially different from the previous use, is valid,” he said. “And that’s it.”

Asked about details missing from his previous proposal, Skalski said the facility would contain 18 storage units, all on one floor, and they would be neither “climate controlled” nor “cold storage.” He said he could not yet respond to the question of the boarded windows, because “I don’t know what’s behind them.” McLaughlin came armed with a 15-page document outlining objections to the proposal. He repeated the argument that self-storage would be “substantially more detrimental” to neighbors than the previous use, and noted that a true “site plan” needs to be prepared by a professional engineer.

Wolinsky’s property, McLaughlin told the ZBA, came with an easement that extends into an area between the trolley barn and Montague City Road which Skalski intends to use for parking. This, he suggested, would not be allowed.

Skalski responded that he could accommodate the easement and still use the space for parking, but became so enraged that he later apologized. A similar confrontation with Lively prompted Skalski’s son to implement physical calming measures.

Depot Street resident Cody Celino, a friend of Troy Skalski, said he supported the proposal as “the lesser of evils.”

Wolinsky claimed that self-storage units are often inhabited by homeless people, and said her earlier comments about the proposal had been distorted to suggest that the only use of the building she would support was a small workshop like the one operated by its previous owner. She said she would like to see it developed into a railroad museum, or condominiums.

Several ZBA members responded that these would produce more traffic and bright lights than a storage facility.

ZBA member Bob Obear urged the committee to consider the dangers of potential alternatives if the barn is not used for storage, including the possibility that it would be turned into a strip club.

As the hearing moved beyond its allotted hour, ZBA members, Wolinsky, McLaughlin, and Michael Skalski all seemed to agree on the need for a more detailed site plan, including vegetation on the property and a fence separating it from Wolinsky’s lot. By a unanimous vote, the hearing was continued until September 10.



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MONTAGUE REPORTER

At right: That's ace reporter Sarah Robertson (left) of Wendell at the Double Arch in Utah's Arches National Park back in April, loyally clutching our April 10 edition with traveling companion Jared Pearson.

ON THE ROAD



At left: And that's Buckingham Rabbits proprietrix Alexandra McGuigan (left), of Turners Falls, on a visit to London, England with our June 26 edition and her sister Deva Djaafar. Behind them and beyond the wrought iron bars is seen Buckingham Palace, which is a lot of Buckinghams.

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

M.R. SUMMER SCHEDULE:
VOL. 23 #33: AUGUST 7
VOL. 23 #34: AUGUST 21

Tip of the week ...

Homes located on streets with trees are susceptible to sewer and water pipe damage caused by tree roots. You can usually add coverage for this to your homeowners policy for a minimal additional premium.

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CENTERS from page A1

Tyson Slocum, director of the nonprofit Public Citizen’s energy and climate program, said that in some parts of the country, public utilities have had to pay to upgrade electrical transmission infrastructure to accommodate the new data centers, driving up costs for all ratepayers.

“Just seven big tech companies involved in artificial intelligence have a combined market capitalization of roughly \$13 trillion,” Slocum said. “Not only are these companies insanely profitable, but they uniformly have a terrible track record when it comes to protecting the public and the public interest.”

A new supercomputer in South Memphis, Tennessee named Colossus, built last year by the Elon Musk-controlled company xAI, was the subject of particularly intense criticism in the webinar. According to Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC) senior attorney Amanda Garcia, xAI never received the proper permits to install dozens of natural gas-powered turbines on the project site, and only stopped using them after the SELC threatened a lawsuit under the Clean Air Act.

“Under normal circumstances we would expect our local air agency, and the EPA as their guiding support, to protect the community – to balance the needs of industry with the needs of the community to breathe clean air,” Garcia said. “We need to have economic development that also allows people the space to breathe clean air and drink clean water. And we can have both.”

The company is now building a second, larger computer in Memphis, which it calls “Colossus 2.”

“Musk came at Memphis – a poor city – and he promised us tax money, which we’ll get,” Cohen said. “But he came at Memphis kind of the same way that Jeffrey Epstein went after those 14-year-old girls.”

Jackie Sawicky, a leader of the National Coalition Against Cryptomining, said that

companies building data centers look for states with cheap land and few restrictions on access to electric infrastructure. In Texas, she said, so many companies are mining bitcoin at such a large scale that it is destabilizing the energy market, and ultimately the energy grid.

Virginia has the highest concentration of large-scale computing centers in the US, according to Piedmont Environmental Council land use director Julie Bolthouse, and demand for electricity is expected to double across the state by 2045 as a result.

Located in Holyoke’s canal district, the Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center (MGHPCC) is the largest computing center in this state – and one of the the largest research computers in the world. The center, a joint venture of Boston University, Harvard, MIT, Northeastern University, the University of Massachusetts system, and the companies EMC and Cisco Systems, was completed in 2010.

Executive director John Goodhue told the *Montague Reporter* that the consortium chose to build in Holyoke because the adjacent municipally-owned hydropower facility “minimized the amount of new construction needed to deliver power.” The site also offered an opportunity to remediate a brownfield site and build with energy efficiency in mind.

The city of Holyoke spent about \$15 million for electrical system upgrades that facilitated the construction of the MGHPCC in 2010, the *Springfield Republican* reported, with \$2.1 million of that coming from a federal grant. The investment was made with the goal of spurring further economic development in the canal district, and the project increased the city’s electrical grid capacity from 2.5 MW to 35 MW.

The MGHPCC uses between 10 and 15 megawatts (MW) of electricity, enough to power about 10,000 homes. By comparison, Colossus runs at about 150 MW, and is expected to double that in its second phase.

“Just like any development project, whether one considers environmental impact when constructing and operating a data center is a choice, influenced by multiple constraints,” Goodhue said. “My sense is it is becoming increasingly difficult to find good sources of affordable electric power, not just for data centers but other new applications such as electric vehicles and industrial processes that are designed to reduce carbon footprint by employing electric power.”

A time capsule curated and buried by Holyoke High School students at the MGHPCC groundbreaking ceremony is scheduled to be opened in 2110.

The MGHPCC will now serve as the brain for the Massachusetts AI Hub, which brings together public, private, and academic institutions to advance the research and adoption of AI systems.

At a press conference in December announcing its creation, Governor Maura Healey said the state has committed “tens of millions of dollars” to the new collaborative. “We’re going to make AI work for our workforce,” Healey said. “We will provide workers from a wide range of backgrounds with leading-edge skills that meet industry needs.”

“We are by far not the largest part of this enterprise, but without [us], it couldn’t exist,” Goodhue said at the AI Hub press conference.

The state legislature passed a bill last November exempting data centers from sales tax, and the *Boston Globe* reported that “as a result,” a large data center project is back on track in Westfield. The WestMass Area Development Corporation has been trying for years to move the 10-building, \$3 billion project forward, and the developer, Servistar Realities, had previously secured tax breaks from city government and a deal for discounted power with Westfield Gas & Electric.

An attorney for Servistar told the *Globe* that the sales tax exemption had led to immediate interest from “several potential anchor

tenants,” which the paper speculated could include Amazon, Microsoft, and Google.

“Data center developers have long steered clear of New England,” the article noted, “in large part because of the high cost of electricity here.”

This spring, the Alliance for Climate Transition (ACT) and Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) held a joint conference to discuss the implications of the data center boom for the state’s goal of sustainable energy transition. “The prevailing concerns about new data center development centered around unclear societal benefits,” the groups noted in a report published after the event.

“Panelists agreed that data centers will inevitably drive more fossil fuel use, with particular trepidation about new diesel backup generation being deployed in the state,” they reported, and there was apparently talk of Massachusetts requiring data centers to “bring new energy resources with them.” Ireland, for comparison, requires supercomputers to be “co-located” with large-scale battery storage, to reduce fluctuations in their demand on the grid.

But any new regulation at the state level faces strong federal headwinds. On Wednesday the Trump administration released a 28-page document titled “America’s AI Action Plan,” outlining the administration’s AI-accelerating policies. In order for the US to become a global leader in AI tech, the plan states that the country must “reject radical climate dogma and bureaucratic red tape” to build the energy infrastructure necessary to meet growing demand.

“We must make sure the Trump administration’s no-holds-barred approach to AI does not come at the expense of our environment and our health,” Senator Markey told the audience at the webinar later that day. “We can have green growth.”

Additional reporting was provided by Mike Jackson. 

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Above: The Turners Falls power canal takes a moment to reflect.

LOOKING BACK

150, 20, & 10 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

The following seasonal history news was compiled from the old Turners Falls Reporter’s “Turners Falls and Vicinity” column, and the Montague Reporter’s own archive. Thanks to Maggie Sadoway for the help in curation! – Eds.

June 30, 1875

The river is yet much swollen from the recent rains. Fred Colle had about sixty couples at his anniversary party, Thursday night. Mr. Stoughton and Dr. Field disposed of many valuable specimens of bird tracks and Indian relics to Prof. Marsh, last week. There will be a grand temperance picnic at Lake Pleasant, Saturday. Many eminent temperance speakers will be present. Samuel R. Pierce has bought the lot on the north-west corner of Seventh and K streets, and will build at once a brick dwelling, 30x40 feet. Some one took Park Wise’s boat without leave, Sunday morning, and when Park found it out, if you had heard him, you would have believed he was conversing with a



An engraving of the Montague Paper Company mill, drawn by P.F. Goist for L. H. Everts’s 1879 History of the Connecticut Valley in Massachusetts.

man up on Toby. The little boys are beginning to climb the trees after green apples, and Mr Wells, the marble worker of Greenfield, is at work roughing out quite a lot of grave stones of about the size suitable for boys. The history of Northfield, just published, is attracting the attention of the inhabitants of that town. Why

could not Montague, with a history of greater interest than that of Northfield, afford to have it written up by some capable historian? It is proposed by the residents of this vicinity to arrange for the bi-centennial celebration of the great falls fight, under Turner, on the 19th of the coming May, in a fitting see **LOOKING** page B4

THEATER REVIEW

Chicago Showcases a ‘Best-Kept Secret’

By CHIP AINSWORTH

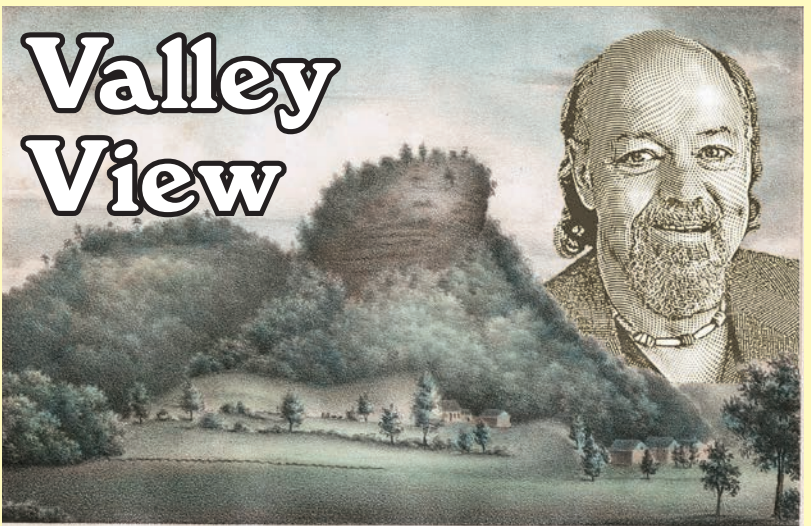
TURNERS FALLS – The curtain closed Sunday on the seventh and final performance of the musical comedy *Chicago* at the JaDuke Theater on Industrial Boulevard next to the tech school. Theater has intrigued me since the day I hitchhiked from New London to buy tickets for a Broadway show to impress my girlfriend, a wannabe actress. Without the inter-

net there were only brick-and-mortar box offices in those days, and I asked about a musical called *Jimmy*. “Barnes didn’t like it,” said the clerk. Clive Barnes was the *New York Times* theater critic and a bad review from him spelled doom, so I opted for the Burt Bacharach/Hal David musical *Promises, Promises* starring Jerry Orbach and Jill O’Hara. The show was a success, the relationship was not.

Orbach was subsequently recruited for *Chicago* to play the scurrilous lawyer Billy Flynn, with Gwen Verdon as accused murderer Roxie Hart and Chita Rivera as her jailmate friend Velma Kelly. The original play dates back to 1926 at the Music Box Theatre, and was based on the trials of two women who were acquitted of murder. Maurine Dallas Watkins covered both of the trials for the *Chicago Tribune* and penned the play for her Yale drama class. It closed after 172 shows but was resurrected a half-century later as a vaudeville musical, the brainchild of legendary director and choreographer Bob Fosse, with music and lyrics by John Kander and Fred Ebb, respectively. One reviewer, Walter Kerr, labeled it “grotesquerie” and likened it to a bastardized version of *Cabaret*, but Barnes loved it. “We are given three knock-em-in-the aisles superlative performances by three stars who glitter like gold dust all evening,” he wrote. *Chicago* debuted on June 3, 1975, at the Richard Rodgers Theatre see **CHICAGO** page B10



Ruthie Cogswell (left) as Roxie Hart and Samantha Myburgh (right) as Velma Kelly in *Chicago*, performed earlier this month at the JaDuke Theater.



Valley View

By GARY SANDERSON

GREENFIELD – On the walls surrounding a small bookcase in the southeast corner of my study hangs a trio of framed images – one a small oil painting of a spaniel retrieving a cock pheasant; another a sepia-toned, circa 1882, Lewis Kingsley photo of my great-grandfather Willis Chapman Sanderson’s East Whately family, restored by Chris Clawson; the third a numbered print (3/999) of an Indian squatting down to read tracks in the snow. It’s the third that I wish to focus on today: a thoughtful, spur-of-the-moment gift from friend John Nove, a bookbinder I got to know and like in many arenas after he moved to my hometown of South Deerfield around 2010 and ran the Grey Seal Bindery from his Mountain Road home. John died at 77 on July 1, the day after my 72nd birthday. I’m going to miss him. I knew John’s home as that of Ray Bergiel, a town cop with a daughter Elaine in my graduating class. I used to stand talking to John on the deck leading into his kitchen, pointing out the old shade-tobacco plots to the immediate north and south, and, east, to the high, lonesome North Sugarloaf Indian cave I frequented as a kid. I promised to take him there some day if he wanted to see it. It



This spur-of-the-moment gift to the author, a print from Italian illustrator Lele Vianello’s Deerfield 1704, is a now a lasting reminder of its giver.

never occurred. I would have liked to lead him up there, assuredly telling him childhood tales from the South Deerfield I knew, a fun place that ain’t what it used to be. John, a career scientist, took up bookbinding after retirement, training for two years at Boston’s prestigious North Bennet Street School, which teaches old trades. He was a good man, soft-spoken and fair, active in the community as chairman of the Deerfield historical commission and as Deerfield’s representative on the Battlefield Grant Advisory Committee researching the historic “Falls Fight” (May 19, 1676) of King Philip’s War. John read my column and knew of my interest in deep local history, thus the cherished gift of this print he gave me on a thoughtful whim. Though I don’t know this for a fact, it must have come to him from someone in Old Deerfield as a memento of the 300th-anniversary remembrance of the 1704 attack on Deerfield. I promptly had it framed and hung it in my study for posterity – now a daily reminder of my late friend. Soft-spoken and kind, John always treated me fair and engaged in interesting conversation. I know I’m not the only person who’ll miss him dearly. He was a good, honest man. A straight shooter. Ethical to the core. I would be remiss, if not dishonest, to let an error from my last column pass without notice. The inaccuracy had nothing to do with the mid-19th-century painting I recently bought and featured in the column, but rather with what turned out to be a bogus example of artistic license I attributed to 19th-century artist Charles Louis Heyde on his circa-1852 oil painting *Deerfield Toll Bridge*, acquired recently by Historic Deerfield. It was an unfortunate case of misreading the Heyde painting’s perspective. Because of my bad fix on the site, I inaccurately see **VALLEY VIEW** page B6

Pet of the Week



‘BUTCHIE’

Meet Butchie, an adult bluetick coonhound/Staffordshire bull terrier mix. Butchie’s people describe him as adventurous, confident, affectionate, curious, gentle, snuggly, playful, independent, and quiet.

Butchie needs to be the only dog in a home and needs an experienced adopter, because he has challenges with cats and dogs indoors due to resource guarding. He gets along with adults and children alike.

Butchie is current with shots, is neutered, housetrained, and micro-chipped. He is being rehomed due to landlord permission issues.

Butchie is currently living in Leeds. To apply to adopt him, 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.

Local Electro Heroes

Give a Lesson In Punk

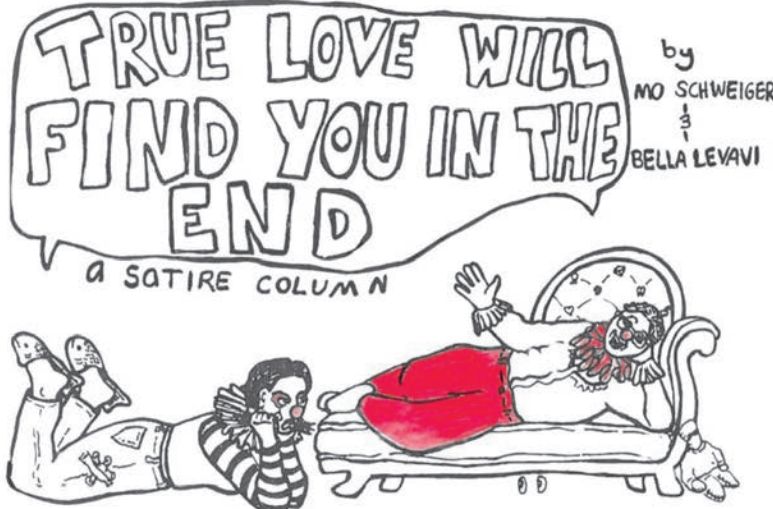
By M@NDY MUDB@LLS

GREENFIELD – “Meet us at the dumpster behind El Greco.”

This story starts six months ago, at the Looky Here Victorian Saloon Piano Karaoke Bar Gala. Community members had submitted their best artwork to adorn the walls of the People’s Pint, and that evening it was being auctioned off to support the beloved art supply thrift store/gallery/workshop space/Hannah Brookman’s storage closet.

Fearing FOMO, I had to be a part of the event. I decided to contribute the most precious thing I have to offer: one edition of my monthly column, dedicated to the highest bidder. Well, Looky Here, consider the \$35 donation you received from local “fame-ish” icons Haley Morgan and Eric Hnatow an investment in your future.

Morgan and Hnatow comprise the electronic duo Home Body, a project they have been cultivating over the last decade, after meeting at Hampshire College in 2006 and falling in love in the campus bookstore. They’ll be playing their annual summer show at Peskeompskut Park in



Turners Falls on Sunday, August 10.

“We sold a song to Google for \$5,000, but in our day jobs we work in the public eye,” Morgan and Hnatow, who work as a server and shelf-stocker, tell me, finishing each other’s sentences, when I ask about the scope of the project. “It’s easy for people to see our faces all the time, so it’s hard to tell if they know me from that or from the band.”

“We’ve played 600 shows in 11 years,” Morgan says, before launching into a story about the pair’s favorite show they’ve ever played: a DIY situation with a \$1 cover in a room called the Busta Crack Shack at the center of an apartment complex in Cedar City, Utah. (“I guess a guy used to cook crack in there,” Hnatow says, explaining the name. “His name was Busta. He was nice, but eventually he got taken out of there.”)

“We made \$50,” Hnatow says when I stop him to ask if he is describing their best or worst show. “It was great!”

That’s the thing about Home Body. Talking to them, it’s apparent that the two are full of joy, working as a couple and loving the punk lives they lead. They even have a room in their shared apartment called “The Sparkle Room” complete with six disco balls, a collection of transparent boxes which hold samples of sand from beaches they’ve visited, and an altar covered in multicolored plastic scraps they find on the street and clean for display. Clearly, they’re having fun.

But listening to their music, one might have a different impression: “Sterilize me, I’m dirty / My wounds are clean, my face is hot / Thought I knew better, but I forgot,” Morgan sings over a stinging, almost violently arpeggiating, synth on “White Hands,” a track on Home Body’s latest album *Spiritus*.

“My early solo stuff was really bombastic and colorful,” says Hnatow. “Then life happens, and you get inspired by the things that you don’t necessarily choose.”

After meeting at the aforementioned dumpster behind El Greco, Morgan and Hnatow lead me to their practice space in the basement of Greenfield Gallery.

“I like to cough as I walk through here, to disrupt whatever might be happening,” says Hnatow as we walk through the alley toward the door, surrounded by lumps of coal.

The inside of their studio couldn’t be a starker contrast to the entrance, with the exception of a toilet that they keep half full to stop roaches from climbing out of it. The walls are completely covered with bright construction paper – bought at Baker’s closing sale – that the pair draws on together to start every practice. The only paper on the walls that wasn’t created by them is a handmade Nan Parati sign reading “Home Body,” from when they played the Green River Festival in 2019.

The pair then have a freestyle jam based on the doodle that they drew. After deciding there is nothing worth salvaging from the jam, the two start practice in earnest, clapping for themselves after every song, which they tell me they do even when they don’t have a voyeuristic journalist sitting in the corner munching on long pretzel sticks, which they refer to as “rods.”

Another contrast then emerges, as the sonic atmosphere becomes pensive while the fairy-lit room remains cheery.

“The truth of it,” says Morgan, “is that we’ve had a lot of people die in our lives, and a lot of hard times. The sounds that are most cathartic, and that we get the most juiced on, are the ones that are most nourishing to what we need.”

Spending an hour with Morgan and Hnatow, it’s clear to me that the key to the longevity of their musical partnership is this dichotomy: they have sacrificed their sadness to the gods of music, who in turn have granted them freedom from the chains of owning property, having children, or working desk jobs so that they can imbue the rest of their lives with joy – a.k.a. hang out, make music, and eat sugar snap peas with their stuffed cat Shmo.

“We have prioritized having this creative life. It’s way more fun to have this life where we get to play together,” Morgan says before blindfolding me, throwing me in the back of the band’s touring van, and driving me the one block to my house.

Want to experience sadness and happiness all at once while rejoicing in the magic of punk? See Home Body perform at Peskeompskut Park on August 10!

True Love Will Find You In the End (TLWfyite),

M@ndy Mudb@lls

Senior Center Activities JULY 28 TO AUGUST 8

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 7/28
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise

Tuesday 7/29
9 a.m. Chair Yoga
12:30 p.m. Tech Tuesday
3 p.m. Tai Chi
6 p.m. Your Library Your Voice

Wednesday 7/30
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 7/31
1 p.m. Pitch

Friday 8/1
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
2 p.m. Chair Dance

Monday 8/4
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
1 p.m. Kitchen Club

Tuesday 8/5
9 a.m. Chair Yoga
12:30 p.m. Tech Tuesday
3 p.m. Tai Chi

Wednesday 8/6
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 8/7
10:30 a.m. Brown Bag
1 p.m. Pitch
3:30 p.m. Montague Villages Board Meeting

Friday 8/8
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 August 19. 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.

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 7/28
9 a.m. Good for U
10 a.m. Seated Fitness
12 p.m. Pitch Cards
1 p.m. Yoga

Tuesday 7/29
9 a.m. Stretch & Balance
10 a.m. Line Dancing
11 a.m. Social Stringer

Wednesday 7/30

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

Thursday 7/31
9 a.m. Barre Fusion
10 a.m. Pilates Flow

Friday 8/1
9 a.m. Quilting Open Sew

Monday 8/4
9 a.m. Good for U
10 a.m. Seated Fitness
12 p.m. Pitch Cards
1 p.m. Yoga

Tuesday 8/5

8:15 a.m. Nails
9 a.m. Nurse
9 a.m. Good for U
10 a.m. Line Dancing
11 a.m. Social Stringer

Wednesday 8/6
9 a.m. Interval Training
10 a.m. Chair Aerobics
11:30 a.m. Bingo

Thursday 8/7
9 a.m. Barre Fusion
10 a.m. Pilates Flow
12 p.m. Brown Bag Lunch

Friday 8/8
9 a.m. Quilting Open Sew

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.



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Franklin County Technical School

Semester 2 Honor Roll

– Freshmen –

HIGH HONORS	HONORS
Benjamin Baker, Cole Bassett, Mason Bassett, Chloe Bigelow, Joseph Bobala, David Chagnon, Kairi Chubb, Nicholas Constantine, Zachary Consantine, Azariah Cosme, Joseph DiSciuolo, Everett Eichorn, Aubrie Fitzgerald, Laura Fuess, Zoe Gledhill, Jonathan Holmes, Cecelia Laflamme, Carter Leete, Joshua Leonovich, Tyler Lively, Jedidiah Niquette, Madison Pettengill, Mylena Prunier, Serenity Rider, Everia Rivera, Landon Smead, Nicholas Spencer, Kendra Steiner, Aiden Taylor, Ava Taylor, Brooke Taylor, Jeanna Taylor, Jacob Thomas, Rhys Urkiel, Keith Warger, Landon Warger, Nathan Warger, Holden Wolfe	Kenzie Alicea, Eric Antunes, Harley Archambault, Ariana Bachand, Mamadou Bah, Baryden Bailey, Colten Bailey, Lilyann Baldwin, Bennett Bardwell, Elejandra Bartolon, Landon Bass, Carsyn Bauer, Owen Bliss, Brayden Brissou, Aurora Brown, Sawyer Cadran, Gabriel Cesaitis, Izzabella Clarke, Isabel Cottrell-Bouchard, Oliver Cranston, Grady Deery, Abigail Dobias, Logan Dow, Austin Drowski, John Duncan, James Edson, Samuel Eichorn, Brady Gancarz, Faith Gilbert, Edward Gomarlo, Levi Holden, Levi Inman, Natal'a Johnson, Jeremiah Jones, Olivia Kaleta, Maxwell Kenfield, Logan Kingsley, Michael Korpiewski, Kylie Krupinski, Lopez Cruz, Max Luippold, James May, Johnathan McIntyre, Amayah Ortiz, Madisyn Pelletier, Adam Phillips, Makayla Pierce, Nicholas Prasol, Travis Rathburn, Dustin Reade, Julia Reynolds, Willow Reynolds, Madison Richards, Sienna Robidoux, Luke Sheridan, La'Naija Smith, Christopher Taylor, Brandon Thomasson, Isabel Thompson, Carly Walsh, Edward Walsh, Holden Wolfe, Cody Yetter, Zia Zaykoski, Mercury Ziff

– Sophomores –

HIGH HONORS	HONORS
Evan Alden, Kyle Bjorlin, Lila Boyden, Brayleigh Burgh, Sebastian Carlo, Olivia Cody, Camden Cousineau, Jillian Deady, Wyatt Dejnak, Zophia Duda, Dyllan Duval, Dean Hall, Layla Hammond, Cameron Jacques, Alexander Purington, Amelia Rider, Chelsey Rockwood, Brenton Russell, Wyatt Sisum, Braeden Talbot, Hannah Unaitis, Joseph Valvo, Wyatt Whitman, Lilly Williams, Matrim Zale	Cayleigh Aldrich, Briar Allis, Sheyenne Ballentine, Caleb Begos, Tatiana Bell, Joshua Bennett, Owen Blanchard, Aiden Bouchard, Landon Clark, Seamus Collins, Douglas Coulesey, James Cusimano, Nora Cutting, Isabella Douglas, Kaia Drake, Gabriella Duda, Levi Dunn, Brody Eastman, Jillyn Eastman, Samuel Falceanu, Brandon Gent, Julianna Gledhill, Ren Gradoia, Travis Graves, George Gutierrez, Raymon Gutierrez, Nicholas Hayes, Conner Herzig, Brody Hicks, Trevor Jarvis, Sandra Johnson, Alexis Kidder, Aidan King, Ian Kohlstrom, Truman Long, Lauryn Lovett, Kaylynn Lupien, Samuel Maiewski, Alexandria McGuire, Matthew McIntyre, Kaelyn Mclean, Eli Messer, Emmalyn Nash, Jack Newman, Joseph O'Donnell, Aidan Pasic, Kaiden Price, Raiden Quinones, Johnathan Scribner, Taylor Underwood, Isabella Utley, Madalyn Vescovi, Savannah Vonschmidt, Abigail West, Lucja Yagodzinski, Taylor Youmell

– Juniors –

HIGH HONORS	HONORS
Natalya Aubrey, Tristan Bliss, Samuel Bodenstein, Teagan Boliski, Camden Bonnett, Maxon Brunette, Emmett Chrzanowski, Carsten Couture, Jared Currier, Ian Doyle, Samantha Duncan, Adam Felle, Jaylice Gary,Gavin Graton, Jaeden Graves, Alexander Hannum, Molly Howe, Jack Jette, Lily Josephs, Kasey Kellogg, Breanna Kempf, Dillon Laffond, Jacqueline LeBlanc, Emma Little, Kaitlyn Lively, Anya Livingstone, Madysou Lynde, Sorin Marin, Talia Pederzini-Curtis, Emily Sadlowski, Gabriel Schutt, Shelby Senn, Alexis Smith, Meadow Thompson, Clara Troisi, Kaden VanValkenburgh, Ella Vassar, Benjamin Waring, Brenton Wheelock	Christopher Bachelder, Shane Bailey, Erin Banister Potter, Shawn Beckwith, Liam Bliss, Madelynn Bowers, Logan Brodeur, Dylan Brunault, Logan Caron, Christopher Chabott, Ashlyn Chapin, Arianah Chatterton, Allysia Corbin, Jayden Dufresne, Noah Ferris, Logan Fournier, Ava Garappollo, Jaylice Gary, Alison George, Dylan Gilbert, Summer Goewey, Elias Gradoia, Gavin Graton, Beck Gritzner, Addalyn Hart, Corey Herold, Trevor Hudson, Brandon Janik, Ezra Kurinsky, Zoey Kus, Lillian LaBelle, Lilliana Lonergan, Sophia Mccomb, Rylie Mitchell, Quinn Morrow, Blake Normandin, Elijah Oberempt, Ricki Perez, Alyssa Peters, Ariel Peters, Jenna Petrowicz, William Renaud, Tristen Robidoux, Nathan Sabolevski, Mercedes Selivanoff, Julia Shaw, Hazel Simmens, Becca-Anne Skelton, Mila Skiff, Braeden Snow, Maisy St. Hilaire, William Thomas, Payton Tierney, Lillian Vandal, Bradley Welcome, Faith Wilder Greene

– Seniors –

HIGH HONORS	HONORS
Alex Amato, Natalie Bardwell, Owen Cody, Dylan Cullen, Aislynn DeCoteau, Kylee Gamache, Ashlynn, Kristine Given, Cordelia Guerin, Alyssa Hall, Caleb Hall, Kaitlyn Harris, Avery Heathwaite, Owen Heilman, Ruby Henry, Tucker Hicks, Ryan Kokoszyna, Kathryn Lengieza, Riley Leslie, Josiah Little, Yaricelis Lopez, Aiden Lucas-Mullen, Ruby March, Madison Markwell, Colby Merritt, Tyler Page, Matthew Richards, Dakota Santos, Joshua Sawin, Theo Shahan, McKenzie Soutdiffe-Phelps, Danielle Walker, Ariana Whaley-Britt, Madix Whitman, Tyler Yetter	Emily Clemons, Harper Cutting, Gianna DiSciuolo, Nicolas Drake, Norah Drowski, Collin Eddy, Lucas Gadway, Hannah Gilbert, Lilianna Inman, Tobias Kuhn, Joshua Laflamme, Hunter Lanoue, Natalie Lapa, Colby Leete, Dane Lupien, Matthew Martin, Cameron May, Callirae Medina, Taylor Menard, Brynn Mullen, Jaime Muniz, Aiyannah Norwood, Rile Pereira, Levi Plesnar, Logan Plesnar, Tiana Rosario, Jayson Scribner, Gracelyn Stewart, Mason Thurston, Lilly Warchol, Solstice Williams, Elise Wolfe, Laken Woodard Zachary Zilinski, Baileigh Zingler

– Pre-Employment Program –

HIGH HONORS: John Fortner

HONORS: Freilyn Abarua Corona, Sergey Alexeyenko, Lachlan Banister Potter, Jameson Betters, 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

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG


Mean Dogs; Llama And/Or Alpaca In Need Of Wrangling; Loud Shower; Neglectful Phone Company; Earbuds Tracked

Monday, 7/7
9:17 a.m. Caller from Oakman Street states that two dogs at a neighboring property are very aggressive and have gone after people walking by multiple times. It just happened again. Caller given number for animal control officer (ACO).
3:34 p.m. Party into station so that officer could take pictures of her car, which was side-swiped in a hit-and-run accident. Report taken.
3:43 p.m. Caller states that their vehicle was struck while backing up on Avenue A and the other vehicle took off. Other vehicle described as small pickup truck with a brown trailer, headed north toward Gill.
6:47 p.m. Caller states that while they were hiking on a path near I Street, a power line came down and started some brush on fire. Multiple additional callers reporting transformer blew; lots of smoke; possible fire in area. One caller reporting traffic lights are out on Avenue A. Officer advises wire down. Ever-source on scene.
Tuesday, 7/8
9:29 a.m. Party into station to report that a dog has been barking for long periods of time on West Mineral Road. She is able to hear it across the water at her residence in Gill. Would like to speak to ACO; has pictures/videos to forward along. Message left for ACO.
3:22 p.m. Caller from Swamp Road reports that every day for the past couple of weeks there has been a man in a light blue sedan with Florida plates parking on the road, sitting in his car, and slowly following people. Caller states sometimes he is passed out behind the wheel. He was parked there when the caller left this morning, and he was still there upon her return home. Unable to locate.
8:50 p.m. Caller reporting someone digging through the trash bins and throwing trash all over the place at a Third Street apartment building. Officer advises a male party is collecting cans. There is no trash outside the bins.
Wednesday, 7/9
2 p.m. Caller reports that his ex-wife is selling his belongings on Facebook Marketplace. He can currently see a set of four tires and other items listed; states he has photos. Caller advises there is an open investigation with Northfield PD, and she is being charged with larceny of a motor vehicle for stealing and carving up his Mercedes. Caller advised of options.
3:54 p.m. Caller reports noticing a gun-like outline of something behind a pole at Montague and Roosevelt streets. Officer advises object is a pellet gun.
4:23 p.m. Reports of threatening/harassment on Mormon Hollow Road. Ongoing civil matter. Parties advised of options.
Thursday, 7/10
2:07 a.m. Report of loud noise disturbance on Third Street. Officer unable to make contact with involved female. Caller advised of options and advised to contact landlord.
5:03 p.m. A 31-year-old Turners Falls man was arrested on two default warrants.
Friday, 7/11
2:30 p.m. 911 call from Grand Avenue, transferred by Shelburne Control; caller states there is a large black bear on her deck and earlier there was a cub on her deck. Advised caller ACO would be contacted.
4:21 p.m. Report of license plate stolen off vehicle on Wentworth Avenue. Caller advised of options and process for reporting to RMV.
5:35 p.m. 911 caller from K Street states that ACO just picked up his dog, and he was trying to get him back so that he didn't have to stay in the shelter all weekend. Contacted ACO.
Saturday, 7/12
1:50 p.m. Multiple callers reporting a baby llama walking around in the Wendell Road area. Unsure who owner is, but it is not Diemand Farm. ACO is currently on a call in Northfield. Llama is now in the woods out of the road. Owner located by Shelburne Control; advises that if animal is wrangled up the road toward the farm, it will find its way back from there.
3:43 p.m. Caller states that while riding her bike near Walnut Street and Montague City Road, she encountered a bear with a lot of brown on its face. Wanted it documented as she is having a bear problem at or around her home in Greenfield also.
6:58 p.m. Caller from Mormon Hollow Road states there is an alpaca in her back yard that has been there for half an hour. Tan with a long neck. Message left for ACO.
8:40 p.m. Caller reports hearing a dog in distress near Bob's Auto Body on Avenue A. Officer states that he heard it during a vehicle stop, and believes it is wildlife. Caller called back stating that she had been there for half an hour with no response. Informed caller that officers in the area heard the sound and believe it is a fisher cat or coydog.
9:18 p.m. Caller from Davis Street states neighbor is having a party with a big tent and the radio is so loud he can't hear his TV. Officer spoke to other party and advised of options.
10:28 p.m. Caller from Seventh Street states neighbors have been partying all day and into the night; she would like them to turn down the music. Officer states they were having some sort of baby shower; he spoke to a couple of people there, and they are going to turn down the music.

Sunday, 7/13
12:05 a.m. 911 caller reporting roughly four sheep in the roadway on Federal Street. Officer advises sheep located near Hunting Hills; attempting to get them out of roadway. Contacted owner and advised her that her sheep were loose. Owner headed out to get them now.
3:51 p.m. Caller from Avenue A states he was threatened with two baseball bats by another male party driving a green Subaru. Issue seems to have happened in Greenfield. Officer advised both parties of options and to stay away from each other.
Monday, 7/14
11:40 a.m. Walk-in dropped off a trespass notice that he got from the courthouse, stating that he served the involved male in hand and told him he was no longer allowed on his Millers Falls property. Party advised that these notices are generally served by the sheriff's office. Caller stated the court gave him the form and told him he could serve it to someone and then give a copy to the police department. Officer stated it is not enforceable unless it is served by the sheriff's office. If party reports a trespassing incident, he should be referred to a sergeant or officer in charge.
Tuesday, 7/15
9:24 a.m. Control advising they received a call about a MassDOT lawnmower clipping a trash truck near the Federal Street-Sunderland Road crossover. While passing a truck picking up trash in the breakdown lane, a tire from the mower deck clipped the driver's side mirror, causing minimal damage. Both vehicles are able to operate, but per protocol, truck company maintenance and MassDOT supervisors are *en route*.
5:42 p.m. 911 caller from East Main Street reports that a male with gray hair and glasses threatened to kill him. No weapons seen. Situation mediated by officers.
5:56 p.m. Following a traffic stop on Fourth Street,

a 54-year-old Turners Falls man was arrested and charged with operating under the influence of liquor, over .08%; possessing an open container of alcohol in a motor vehicle; and possession of a Class A drug. Same male also arrested on a straight warrant.
9:58 p.m. Baystate Medical Center in Springfield advises that a Montague Center woman left the ER with an IV in her arm. Requesting her welfare be checked if she is located.
Wednesday, 7/16
4:45 p.m. Caller states that he hit a deer on North Leverett Road this morning; he has gone back, and she is still alive. Officer advises deer taken care of. DPW contacted for removal.
10:30 p.m. Caller from Maple Street states there is a bat. Referred to an officer.
Thursday, 7/17
6:07 a.m. Caller advises they are having an issue with the crossing on Lake Pleasant Road near Federal Street. An operator is on their way to fix it.
10:06 a.m. 911 caller reports a dog is scratching cars on Avenue A. All parties advised of options; ACO has an open case involving this issue.
Friday, 7/18
7:11 a.m. Caller from Masonic Avenue states that she came outside and found a large branch had fallen on her car and the tree it fell from is now resting on wires. Her car has a lot of damage. Eversource advises only phone and cable wires are involved. Verizon notified, but as of 2:30 p.m., had not shown up. Contacted them again; operator stated that the previous call taker did not mention in their ticket about the road being blocked, or part of the tree being on top of and through the windshield of one of two damaged vehicles. Operator spoke with a supervisor; they said that since it is so late, they will send a tree crew out Saturday morning. Crew must come from Rhode Island.
6:15 p.m. Caller states that her purse was stolen while she was at the Salvation Army. They saw it on camera, but it was grainy. She would like a report in case there are charges on the cards.
6:52 p.m. Caller from Easthampton states that he dropped his AirPods at his workplace; when he returned to get them, they were stolen. He is tracking them and reports that they are now near the Shea Theater. Officer called party back.
7:09 p.m. Caller from Newton Street states a vehicle is parked on her street. Officer advised to see **MPD** next page


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CALL TO CONFIRM: (413) 423-3328

MPD from prev. pg.

property that doesn't belong there. Caller states it was parked there last night; a male took some blankets and possibly walked down to the river. Caller looking to have vehicle removed. Services rendered. 8:32 p.m. Caller from ServiceNet reports that a male ran away from the group home on Central Street. Requested officers be put on the lookout for the party, last seen leaving on foot toward Unity Park. Advised staff of missing person report procedure. Investigated. **Saturday, 7/19** 12:37 a.m. Caller reports sheep in roadway near Hunting Hills. Contacted owner. Of-

ficer advises sheep are back with owner. 2:38 p.m. Caller states that a black Mercedes sedan is racing around the Patch with a very loud exhaust and is disturbing the peace. Vehicle located on Migratory Way with no one inside. Next shift will go back there. Officer spoke to owner. 2:59 p.m. First of two calls reporting a motorcycle left running behind a building on Third Street. Caller has a headache from the fumes, and would like an officer to tell the operator to shut it off. No motorcycle located. **Sunday, 7/20** 4:01 p.m. Caller from Franklin Street advises that several items have gone missing

since July 2 from the garage where she resides. Caller put a note on the garage door on July 15 asking for the items to be returned. Caller returned home on July 17 and the note was crumpled up on the ground. Officer advised caller of options. 7:12 p.m. 911 caller reports witnessing a hit-and-run accident at Avenue A and Third Street; no injuries or fluids. Provided plate number for suspect vehicle. Officer *en route* to registered owner's residence in Greenfield. Operator claims his vehicle has not been driven today and he is not involved. Waiting for potential dashcam footage from witness. Summons issued.



TELEVISION

Strange New Worlds Back for Third Season

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – I really like *Star Trek: Strange New Worlds* with Anson Mount as Captain Christopher Pike, the captain of the Starship *Enterprise* before Kirk. I enjoyed the first two seasons of the show. Season 2 ended on a juicy cliffhanger. Pike was left hanging with a gut-wrenching decision. The Gorn, monstrous lizard creatures, had taken part of his crew from him, but he was then ordered to depart.

Season 3 premiered on July 17, and it backed up that cliffhanger with a juicy return. Captain Pike does get the go-ahead on rescuing his missing crew from the Gorn. But on top of this rescue mission, he also has to save the life of his girlfriend, fellow Captain Marie Batel, from danger she was put in by the Gorn.

There are a lot of twists and turns when it comes to helping her. The plan they initially come up with doesn't work. Despite this, and despite how insanely dangerous the Gorn are, the missing crew members – including La'An, who has a history with the Gorn – find a way to help themselves. Another decent source of help is Scotty, the future *Enterprise* engineer, still being on the ship to help, along with a device he made to fight the Gorn.

In another huge turn, Captain Pike and his crew must try to stop an invasion while in the middle of the rescue. This doesn't affect the rescue, because they end up meeting up with the rest of the crew.

I know what the rest of the season is going to be like from seeing



videos about it online before it premiered. Scotty and Batel will continue to be part of the show. Kirk, played by Paul Wesley, will briefly act as a Captain while second in command of another ship, and for some reason a fair share of the crew will learn what it's like to be a Vulcan, literally walking in the shoes of Spock, played by Ethan Peck.

As in the previous seasons, some of the plots will be comedic in nature. One such episode in Season 1 involved a body swap featuring Spock, and another in Season 2 saw Spock as a full-blooded human. The one where the crew are Vulcans should be equally fun to watch. Why not do something like that again, since the Vulcan side of things was still left around to be done!

Strange New Worlds doesn't appear to be losing steam at all when it comes to enjoyable episodes. I believe the fans' response will still be high for Season 3.

LOOKING from page B1

manner. The battle was the most important event of its time, to all western Massachusetts, and the proposed celebration should be heartily seconded by all towns that suffered from Indian barbarities. The Pocumtuck Memorial Association will probably manage the affair. There is no reason why five thousand person could not be collected on that day, under judicious management.

John Shebel of Riverside received a bad wound in the foot from a harrow-tooth, while at work in his field the other day.

July 7, 1875

The rain of the past few days will help the rivermen wonderfully.

For two or three days last week the river was thick with mud, caused probably by the caving in of a bank up at Bellows Falls.

The Pulp mill is closed for a week to remove part of the old machinery and make various changes in old apartment.

The new building for the Montague Paper Company is completed to the roof.

Millers Falls has a barber. D.A. Jackson, formerly of Turners Falls, opened a shop in Creagh's building a few weeks ago.

The County Commissioners, with Engineer Stratton, verified the surveys for the location of a new bridge, last week, the measurements varying but a foot or two from those made by Mr. Stoughton some time ago.

D.M. Randall has purchased the lot on Avenue A, opposite that of Starbuck, and intends to commence, in a month or two, the erection of a three-story brick block, 40 x 50 feet, the lower story to contain two stores and the upper ones to be fitted up as a hotel, which is to be kept by Mr. Randall on the European plan.

A horse, attached to a dump cart, ran all the way from this place to Greenfield, last Wednesday, but having got completely out of wind, was stopped by a man when it reached there.

The grand union temperance picnic at the Lake, Saturday, was a fizzle. Ten or fifteen thousand people were expected, but not many more than as many hundred came. Little interest was manifested in the speeches, and one would think from the number of drunken people that rum was pretty freely circulated.

A great many dead fish have been seen floating down the river during the week.

July 14, 1875

Everybody has a boat now.

Torch-light peddlers have been numerous in these parts. If you want some pure fun, get a torch and go spearing bull-frogs.

R.L. Goss turns out 40,000 brick per day, from his Montague City yard.

They have put gravel at the approaches to the ferry, which was much needed.

Tax collector Oakman advertises for sale the land of a number of delinquent tax payers.

There is a bad wash-out at the corner of L and First streets, rather dangerous to passing teams.

No logs have arrived yet. It is the intention now of sorting the logs as fast as they come, and keep the river clear.

Rev. Mr. Howes' usual Tuesday evening prayer-meeting was not largely attended last evening. In fact, the reverend gentleman was the only worshipper.

The rivermen stationed here at present are a fine looking lot of men, who appear as though they wouldn't stand idly by and see a little fellow get a licking.

The wheel of the Rev. Mr. Wyman's carriage gave way while coming down Mount Toby the other day and a lady who was with him was thrown to the ground, spraining her ankle. He was not hurt.

The croquet ball is kept a-rolling.

July 21, 1875

There is a jam of logs at the French King.

Not many took advantage of the beautiful moonlight nights for rowing excursions.

They are building the old pulp mill chimney to the height of the tall ones of the Montague mill.

The hay crop throughout the town is not two-thirds the average, but the farmers expect an extraordinary heavy crop of rowen, which will about even up the yield.

Dr. Sornberger has watermelons on his vines which would weigh about a half-pound. But, boys, the doctor keeps a ferocious looking dog, a terror to the watermelon thief.

Mr. A. Ward will commence with a gang of men, Monday, to extend the aqueduct pipes from Third street down the avenue to D.M. Randall's lot, and from J.P. Morgan's shop on K street to Seventh street and down to Clapp's block on the avenue.

The Turners Falls Company have men at work

clearing away the rocks thrown into the log-way while blasting for the fishway, on Great Island, last winter, in order to let the logs pass over the falls without jamming. The rivermen threatened to run their logs over the dam if the log-way was not cleared.

While Chris Crimmer and Alfred Adams were working in the flume of the Montague Mill, the other day, J.D. Farwell incautiously opened the wicket gate, the water coming in in such force as to almost drown the occupants of the flume. One of the men managed to get to the wash-hole before the water rose far, but the other was completely drenched.

The *Gazette* reports several well-dressed young men from Turners Falls as being noisy in Greenfield while under the influence of liquor.

The Emmett band will appear in uniform at the band picnic, at Lake Pleasant, on the 30th.

July 28, 1875

Business is unusually dull here now.

Fishermen's torches blazed at the fishway two or three evenings last week.

Another boat-load of rivermen has arrived. The rear of the drive will be here in a week or ten days.

They are covering Second street from the avenue to Canal, with coal ashes, and will make a pretty street of it before they get through.

In the death of Mrs. Jacob Bangs which occurred at Montague City on Wednesday last, a beautiful lady, beloved by all who knew her, has been taken from among us.

Constable Allen gathered in Florence Sullivan, Monday, for being naughty and throwing his fists about in a very careless manner.

The Keith base ball club have received a challenge from the best club in Athol which they will possibly accept and play the match when they go to Athol to play the return game with the club that came here a week or two ago.

Mr. Revely's greyhound-shepherd dog entered the water a few hundred feet above the fall, resting several minutes on the dam, over which fully a foot of water was flowing. In returning he made a tremendous spring and swam to the shore in safety. The dog is a powerful animal and was raised by the Baptist minister of Shelburne Falls, who gave him to Wm. Cushman of Shelburne Falls who sold him to Dr. Chapman, who in turn sold him to Mr. Revely.

A travelling air gun and target with a man attached occupied the boulevards the other evening.

People continue to get offended when we send a bill to them for the amount of their subscription and it happens to be incorrect. They should understand that we have no desire to collect a bill that has been paid, but the books were left in such a state that it is impossible to tell who had paid and who had not. Produce your receipt, or if you are an honest man, not given to lying, and have no receipt, shall we take your word for it.

June 30, 2005



Shaking his head, Gary Turn of Montague Center said, "Looks like we're going to be in the paper, huh?" During the intense storm that blew through on Wednesday, the Turns' 60-year-old white pine tree came down. "It could have been worse. The tree landed where we usually park the car. It would have been crushed flat."

The tree stood over 40 feet tall and perhaps 25 feet wide, but now it smelled like a freshly-cut Christmas tree. It's going to be an expensive job to remove: "Probably \$1,700."

The Montague Center Congregational Church's weathervane was blown off the peak of the church. It hangs there now by a single bolt.

An air circulator provided the only relief in sight for the Montague selectboard Monday night as it met at the Millers Falls Library in its annual summer pilgrimage to the villages of Montague. The 15 residents in attendance had plenty to say, leveling pointed criticism at town officials and urging them to address certain longstanding issues once and for all.

The Millers Falls Streetscape Project topped the see **LOOKING** next page

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LOOKING from previous page

agenda. In a 12-page packet complete with maps and a list of questions, Jeanne Golrick challenged the board to keep utility lines off Main Street, stressing her willingness to provide a necessary easement as private landowner. However, neither the board nor utility company representatives were receptive to her proposal.

July 14, 2005



In a surprisingly brief exchange of words between the Montague selectboard, Wendell Road resident James Senn, and his lawyer Michael Pill, agreement appears to have been reached in the long-standing dispute over access to the Dry Hill Cemetery.

After years of legal wrangling and posturing, the road will once again be open to the general public, if a verbal settlement reached at Monday night’s selectboard meeting at the Montague Center fire station holds good. While a number of issues remain outstanding, a course of action has been identified pointing the way to resolving one of the thorniest standoffs in recent town history.

With two surveys in hand, town administrator Frank Abbondanzio reviewed the progress of accurately mapping Dry Hill Road at the Wendell Road intersection, by Senn’s house and property. He added the town was now looking for a solution to opening access to the public cemetery “one way or another.”

“What we would like to do is establish a drivable and passable road to the cemetery. We have a historical right to the road,” said board chair Allen Ross.

Ross did offer Senn the possibility of opening an alternative access route to the Dry Hill Cemetery, which would require an exchange of land. However, Pill stated that his client would not challenge the town’s authority over the historical roadway, and awaited the surveyor’s visit to determine the placement of the new fence posts.

On Thursday, the Montague Center volunteer fire department presented Rau’s service station on Turners Falls Road with a “memorial bench” in honor of the late Ralph Rau, Sr., who died a year ago on July 11. He had been a member of the fire department and a number of other community organizations, including a bowling team called “Ralph’s Harem,” of which he was the only male member.

The bench was prepared by Andy’s Oak Shop in Greenfield and placed right in front of the station, where Ralph could often be seen talking to neighbors and friends on a hot summer day.

July 28, 2005

On July 13, at a special town meeting, 150 Wendell residents filled the hall to capacity and then some, debated long, and passed the entire warrant, authorizing the construction of a new library to be built on the site of the present town office building, and a new town office building to be built on the property recently purchased from Anne Marie Meltzer.

The total amount spent at this special town meeting was \$2,996,591, of which \$926,566 will be paid by a grant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC). Other grant applications are pending. The town has anticipated these expenses and, for years, has been setting money aside into a stabilization fund to help defray their costs.

The Erving selectboard received a letter from MassHighway stating that the replacement of the pedestrian walkway and bike path over the Millers River, from Erving to Montague, has been completed.

The bridge, closed to auto traffic for years, connects to Dorsey Road via a footpath on the Erving side of the river, and to East Mineral Road on the Montague side. It will be the point of crossing on the Millers River for the bike path that will eventually connect Northfield Mountain Environmental Center to the rest of the Franklin County bikeway.

July 2, 2015

Erving’s administrative coordinator Tom Sharp announced at the June 29 special town meeting that he is retiring as of July 10. Sharp has worked for the town for 12 years. Sharp told the meeting he was “ready to

close this chapter of [his] life.” He said that he was leaving behind a town with an active selectboard, a great town hall staff, a strong volunteer committee network, and able police and fire chiefs.

The special town meeting approved an article expressing opposition to Kinder Morgan’s Northeast Direct pipeline, opposing any pipeline in Erving carrying natural gas obtained through fracturing, and instructing the selectboard to obtain voter approval before making future decisions concerning the proposed pipeline or compressor station.

After the article passed by majority voice vote, the crowd erupted in delighted shouts and clapping.

July 9, 2015

Downtown Turners Falls shopkeeper Rodney Madison was arrested early Monday afternoon on Avenue A by Montague police officer Mike Sevene, on charges of disorderly conduct and assault and battery on a police officer.

Officer Sevene had no comment on Madison’s arrest. He was advised on the arrest by staff sergeant Christopher Williams, who, when asked by the dispatcher on duty to speak with the *Montague Reporter*, said, “I’m not going to give [Madison] any publicity, good or bad.”

Police chief Charles “Chip” Dodge said Tuesday he was unsure of the circumstances that initiated a police presence, but confirmed that Sevene is alleging that Madison assaulted him, and said it was possible that the original circumstances escalated into the current charges.

As to what action or actions were the basis for the charge, Dodge said, “I guess I shouldn’t get into it.”



According to his narrative in the police report, Sevene was passing Gary’s Coins, at 115 Avenue A, when shop owner Gary Konvelski hailed him to tell him that he and Madison had been in an altercation, and that Madison had said he was going to call the police.

Then, according to Sevene’s report, Madison approached him, “demanding and yelling that I charge Gary.” Sevene called for Sgt. Williams, advising him that Madison was “flipping out.”

Sevene wrote that Madison stated, “in a yelling manner,” that Konvelski had “chest bumped him,” and that he subsequently demonstrated this to the officer by chest bumping him.

According to interviews with both Madison and Konvelski, their altercation began when Konvelski asked Madison to move flower boxes he had recently placed in front of Konvelski’s antique store.

Madison states that he has the permission to manage the plants outside that building, which was purchased in May by Ya-Ping Douglas. Konvelski said the boxes were a hazard to his customers and impeded movement on the public sidewalk.

As Konvelski moved the boxes on his own, according to both men, they came into contact. Madison then left to call the police.

July 23, 2015

On July 14, Mitch Mulholland came before the Leverett selectboard to discuss hydro-raking Leverett Pond. “The cheapest way is to use chemicals, but we don’t want to go there,” said Mulholland, adding that the rake costs \$185 an hour. Purchasing a pre-made rake would run \$80,000 to \$100,000.

To balance the environmental needs with budget concerns, the board approved two hours of hydro-raking. Board member Tom Hankinson asked whether boaters bring algae in from other ponds and whether the town could prohibit boats that have been in another lake. Mulholland said there is no law that would allow that, and signage encouraging boaters to clean their boats is the only measure taken against cross-lake contamination.

The Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) has released a 191-page draft of its new Regional Transportation Plan, which is updated every four years. The most dangerous intersection in the county, considering both the rate of crashing and its severity, is apparently at G and Eleventh streets in the Patch of Turners Falls.

Route 63 at North Leverett Road ranks a distant third – Montague accounts for eight of the county’s top 24. And the most dangerous one with a traffic signal is Gill’s Main Road at Route 2.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Pistol Brandished; Car Flies; Trees Topple; Anxious Party Helped Across Bridge

Thursday, 5/1

10:47 p.m. Vehicle off Main Road embankment. No injuries.

Friday, 5/2

10:05 a.m. French King Highway caller reports large machine batteries stolen overnight.

2:34 p.m. Assisted Erving PD with three-car accident with injuries.

3:26 p.m. School bus vs. trash truck, Main Road. No injuries.

8:21 p.m. Walnut Street caller reports squirrel in bathroom. Removed.

Monday, 5/5

11:32 a.m. Head-on accident, Main and West Gill roads. No injuries.

3:37 p.m. UPS driver reports possible wash-out, Hoe Shop Road.

Wednesday, 5/7

6:24 a.m. Caller reports a peacock walking up Main Road.

Saturday, 5/10

3:39 p.m. Saco Lane caller advises two large trees blocking road; no wires. DPW advised.

Sunday, 5/11

6:34 p.m. South Cross Road caller believes a beaver dam above her residence burst. Her yard is flooded, and perhaps her basement.

Monday, 5/12

10:52 a.m. Vehicle failed to stop at light and struck the rear of a flatbed. Truck driver, apparently unaware, continued east on the French King Highway.

No injuries or fluids.

Thursday, 5/15

9:40 a.m. Highland Road resident requests assistance with a raccoon that won’t react.

10:24 a.m. Served warrant, French King Highway.

Monday, 5/19

5:30 p.m. French King Highway caller advises a man pulled a pistol on him in the store.

Tuesday, 5/20

8:14 a.m. French King Highway caller reports a gravel spill at lights. MassDOT advised.

Wednesday, 5/21

6:21 p.m. Mountain Road caller will be doing target practice.

Friday, 5/23

11 a.m. Caller reports a car all over the French King Highway; believes it may be a domestic issue. Officer spoke with passenger outside vehicle. No domestic issues; no erratic operation observed.

Saturday, 5/24

7:52 a.m. North Cross Road caller reports cows in the road.

12:36 p.m. Lamplighter Way caller wants to discuss a party they escorted off campus.

Monday, 5/26

2:45 p.m. French King Highway caller reports a silver BMW went up

the embankment in the Gill Mill parking lot, went airborne, and crash-landed in front of the store. No injuries. Koch’s towed.

Tuesday, 5/27

11:13 a.m. Siren testing at NMH.

Thursday, 5/29

12:47 p.m. Conference Road caller states they had cash stolen.

Friday, 5/30

11:19 a.m. French King Highway caller states one of his vehicles had a window blown out.

6:41 p.m. West Gill Road caller reports a dog chasing a vehicle.

Monday, 6/2

12:05 p.m. West Gill Road 911 caller reports a scared cow at the end of her driveway.

2:16 p.m. Lamplighter Way caller states one of their dogs went into a sewer pool and took her father with it. All parties clear; father claims no injuries.

Tuesday, 6/3

11:10 a.m. Center Road caller was charged by a bear at his trash.

Thursday, 6/5

10:23 a.m. Caller reports she spoke with an animal rehabber about a baby fox under a ramp at NMH.

10:26 a.m. Wyart Road caller has trail camera images of a trespasser in a side-by-side.

5:41 p.m. Assisted Chappell Drive resident with a property-line dispute.

Friday, 6/6

1:41 a.m. French King Highway party reports a dead deer in the road.

Saturday, 6/7

4:55 a.m. Tree on wires, blocking roadway, River and Main roads.

Sunday, 6/8

4:07 p.m. Main Road party requests officer for subject riding mini-bike in parking lot.

Monday, 6/9

5:43 p.m. Served warrant, Main Road.

Thursday, 6/12

5:30 a.m. Car vs. deer accident, Main Road.

8:23 a.m. West Gill Road caller reports fawns hanging out in traffic by dead mother.

12:13 p.m. Caller reports a dead deer near the NMH access road.

Friday, 6/13

7:22 p.m. Barton Cove Road caller advises a man set up a tent blocking the walkway to their group site.

Sunday, 6/15

1:49 a.m. Barton Cove Road caller advises he is at group site 1 and can see people at group site 2 walking around with headlamps and moving stuff.

Monday, 6/16

3:26 p.m. Montague PD request help shut-

ting down a road as they have a male barricaded in a bathroom.

Tuesday, 6/17

7:59 a.m. Barney Hale Road caller reports a tree limb smoldering on power lines.

10:32 p.m. Three youth are riding bikes in circles in the middle of Route 2 near River-view Drive with dark clothing, no lights.

Spoke with same.

Wednesday, 6/18

2:43 p.m. Mountain Road caller reports a tree down, no wires, blocking both lanes.

5:39 p.m. Loose cows reported, Hoe Shop and Bascom roads.

Friday, 6/20

7:38 a.m. French King Highway caller reports a tractor-trailer is on fire; she honked to get driver’s attention unsuccessfully.

Truck doors say “Dole.”

10:52 a.m. Tree and wires blocking the road near Factory Hollow.

11:23 a.m. Main Road caller reports a black BMW with white plates driving 100 mph, crossing lines.

1:26 p.m. Barney Hale Road caller reports past breaking and entering to a vehicle.

9:23 p.m. Male arrested, OUI, West Gill Road.

Sunday, 6/22

3:48 p.m. Caller on Main Road has a flat tire, needs assistance.

Monday, 6/23

9:58 p.m. Caller is on the side of Main Road with a subject having a mental health crisis.

Wednesday, 6/25

11:40 a.m. Medical emergency, West Gill Road.

5:03 p.m. Request to remove a dog from a residence, West Gill Road. Owner has been hospitalized.

Friday, 6/27

9:22 a.m. Caller looking to speak with an officer about fireworks.

8:07 p.m. Oak Street party requests an officer for a band practicing too loudly.

Saturday, 6/28

8:46 a.m. Tree blocking Pisgah Mountain, Barney Hale roads.

11:37 a.m. Located vehicle stopped near the French King Bridge.

Driver has anxiety about being trapped on bridge. Assisted him across bridge.

6:54 p.m. Three-car accident with smoke, French King Highway and Dorsey Road.

Sunday, 6/29

12:44 p.m. Caller reports a coyote pup that appears sickly; its ribs were showing and it was mangy. Last seen on Main Road between Boyle and River roads.

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VALLEY VIEW from page B1

claimed Heyde had conveniently moved Mount Toby a few miles north as a convenient framing device. I was wrong – Heyde’s painting is actually a realistic depiction of the landscape he saw backdrop-ping the bridge at the site of today’s Montague City Bridge from a spot on Greenfield’s Rocky Mountain near where Poet’s Seat Tower stands today.

My incorrect fix on Heyde’s easel placement placed it west and slightly south of the bridge, which crossed the Connecticut River just above the Deerfield River confluence. I figured it for somewhere between Woolman Hill and the Cheap-side Railroad Trestle, and I stuck to it, despite failing to find a likely spot on maps or drive-through searches.

Perhaps, I pondered, Heyde stood on a hill that no longer exists – possibly on a promontory now long gone and hollowed into a massive crater at Trew Corporation’s gravel pit off the south end of River Road in Deerfield. My problem was that the site is a wee bit out of my domain, which begins a couple miles south of it and extends south and west.

With my mistaken prospect interpretation far in my rearview, JoAnn M. Costa posted a late 19th-century engraving that caught my attention on her popular Face-

book page, “Historical Franklin County Massachusetts Realm of Wonders.” There she displayed a sketch of the Heyde painting described as a view of the Deerfield Toll Bridge from Rocky Mountain.

Lesson learned. In the future, I’ll try to stick to intimately familiar landscapes. For me, Rocky Mountain and the last mile of the Deerfield River are not among them.

Speaking of Facebook posts, there seem to be a lot of backyard and downtown black-bear sightings around the state these days.

Viewing the recent photo of a big bear lounging and munching on someone’s downed birdfeeder in a heavily settled, flatland, Franklin County neighborhood, a thought immediately came to mind: How many people born after 1980 viewing the post understand that, prior to that, bear sightings here and throughout the Bay State were rare indeed?

In fact, I would venture a guess that most people in towns like Greenfield, Deerfield, Whately, Montague, Gill, Bernardston, and elsewhere had never seen a bear. Even in the upland towns, sightings were rare.

Now it is not uncommon to see the big beasts on city streets, or treed in the thickly-settled suburban neighborhoods of Boston,

Lawrence, Lowell, Worcester, West Springfield, Pittsfield, and you name it.

For this development we can salute Jim Cardoza, a retired Mass-Wildlife biologist I often spoke with during my days as a fulltime newspaper man and outdoor columnist. Cardoza’s highly-successful bear and wild turkey restoration programs made the struggling, contemporaneous Atlantic salmon restoration program look like an exercise in futility.

Some tough-guy, NRA, sportsmen’s club types criticized Cardoza as an eccentric egghead who ruled from a strong academic bent. Not me. I respected him, viewed him as a friend, and salute him as an exemplary wildlife biologist whose restoration efforts were more successful than anyone could have ever dreamed.

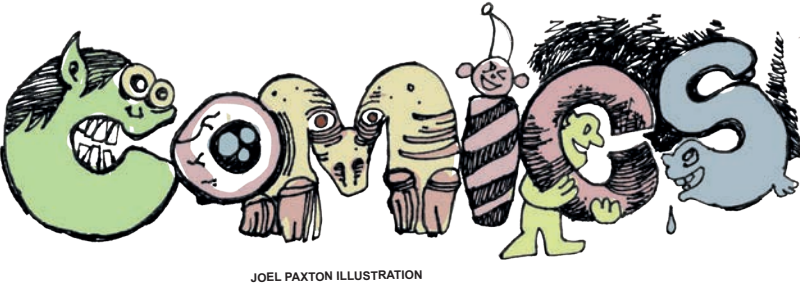
Today, with altruistic hopes of annual Connecticut River salmon runs unplugged forever, state officials aren’t quite sure what to do with all the turkeys and bears brought back to the Bay State by “quirky” Cardoza and the restoration teams he led with aplomb.

Gary Sanderson lives in Greenfield. Questions and comments welcome at gary@oldtavernfarm.com.



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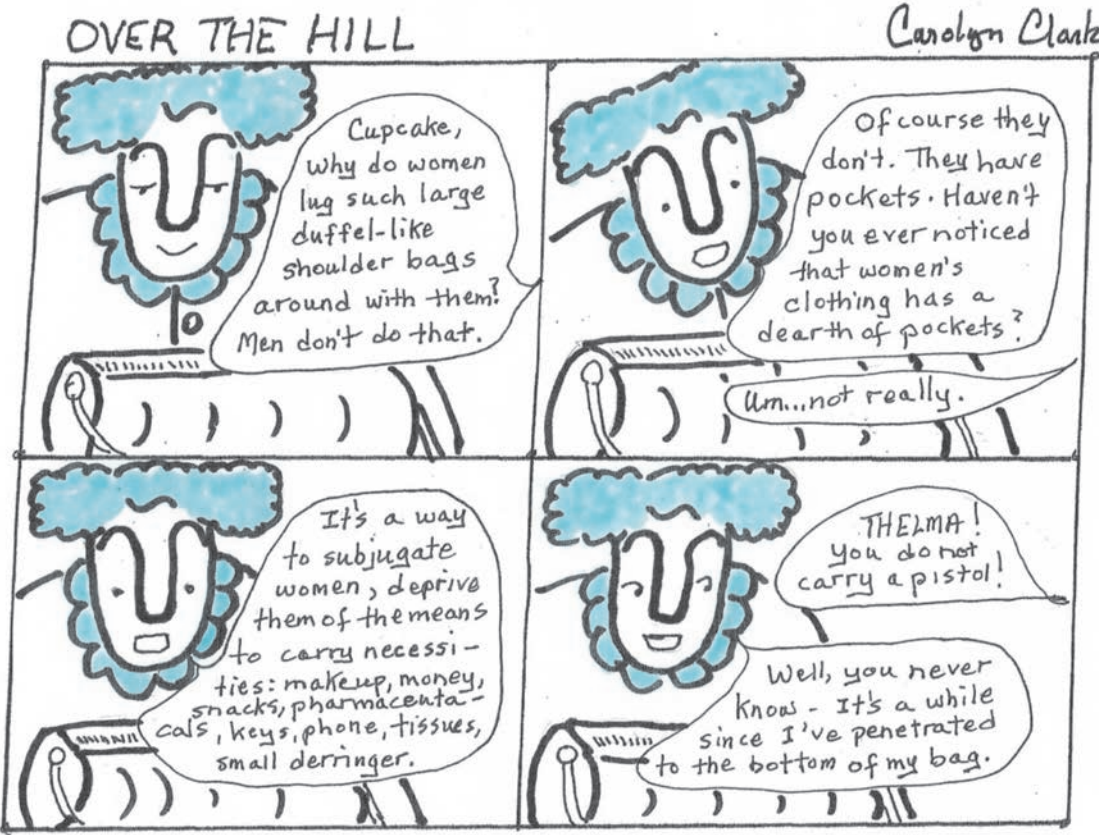
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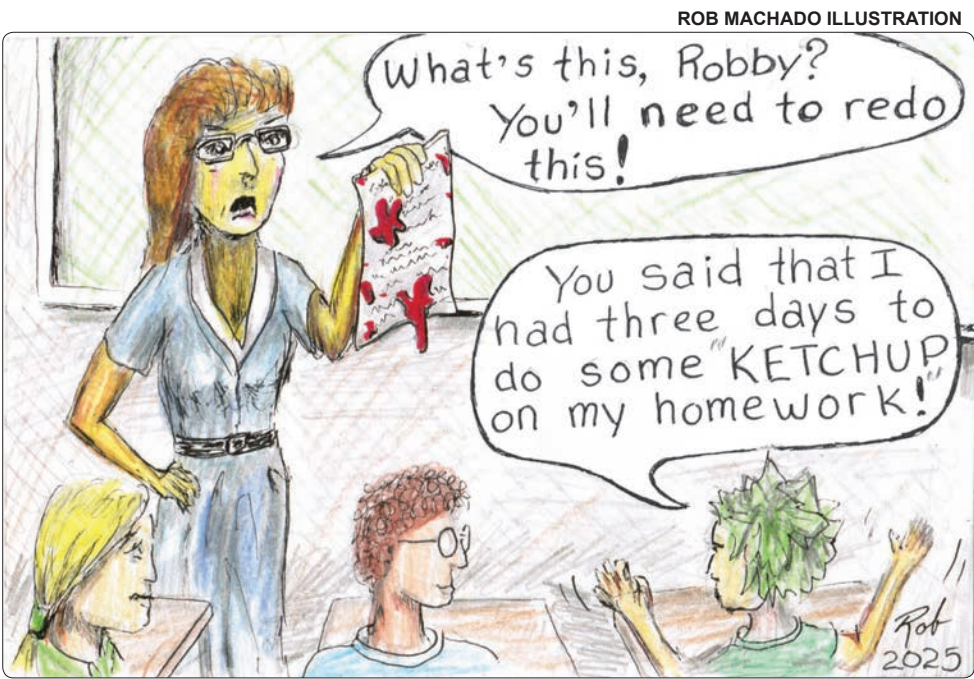
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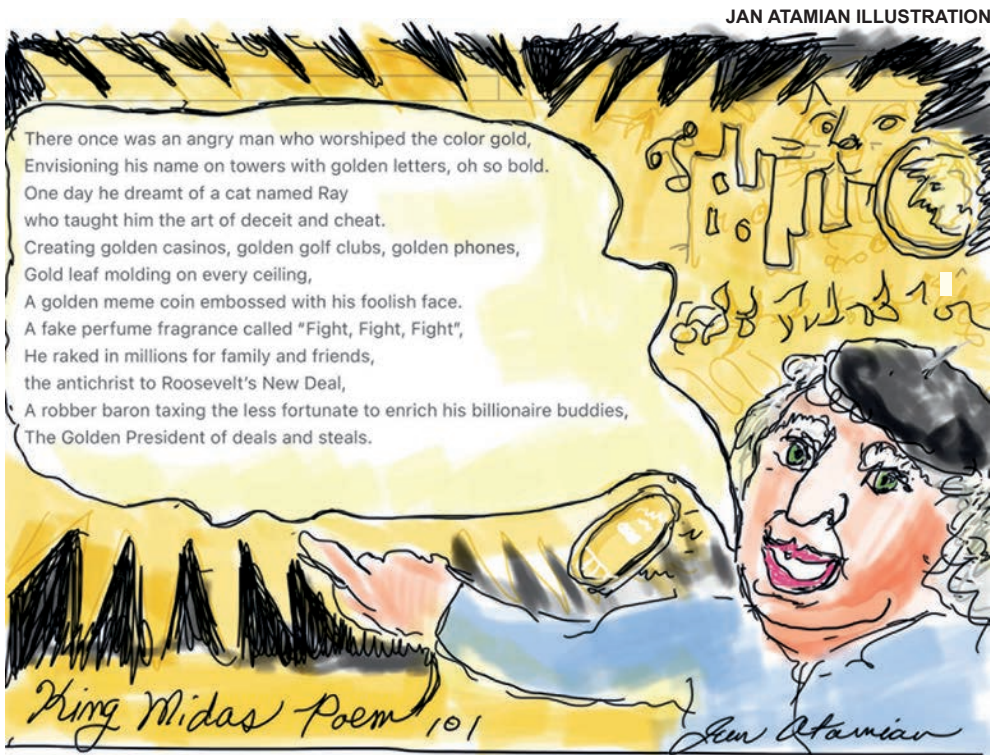
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It is difficult
to get the news from poems
yet men die miserably every day
for lack
of what is found there.

- William Carlos Williams

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

Our July Poetry Page

I don’t want to write about Patrick

What do we do with a problem like Patrick?
In a few months it’ll be somebody else’s worry, but for now – what to do?
Suppose we could not walk on Main St. – avoid him entirely.
We could show an angry face or an indifferent one.
He’d deserve it after the vitriol and searing burning words we heard
How could we not hear, not shouted but angrily growled
and at children no less.
Oh! the anger we feel toward the hurt those poor innocents must feel
all too regularly
Wouldn’t it be raging at a torrent for taking the homestead?
Doesn’t that same water feed life into us?
We are a community.
When his thoughts are clear and clean
he seems kind
and tells us how nice of a dog we have
Should we tell him thank you
Should we tell him off
Should we ignore him, pretend he’s a bus stop sign
Inside Patrick
Isn’t there also a poor innocent
that we would hurt were we to hurt
Game theory says
start kind and return like for like
Why must every victory be pyrrhic?

– Chris Joseph
Greenfield

Grief, *blurred*

Palm-shaped leaves unwrap
Bright white bloodroot blossoms.
Red-bellied woodpeckers
Come and go from a nest hole
In a rotting upright branch
High above.
A graceful black bear
Saunters through my yard.
Mayapples open
Like patio umbrellas.
These signs of renewal are
At odds with my grief,
For the loss of my Mom
And the decay of freedom and caring in our country.
A cruel, power-grabbing regime
Is knowingly inflicting
Terror & pain in so many.
Targeting our most vulnerable.
Cutting jobs, threatening healthcare,
Taking meals from hungry families,
All disingenuously in the name of a streamlined government.
Stealing hard-working parents and their children from homes,
Ignoring their rights to a court hearing,
Deporting even children with cancer!
In the name of a safer country,
When the richness of this nation has always sprung out of our
varied roots, life
experiences, voices, talents...
How to separate the slow healing
Of the scar of losing a mother
From the heartbreak I feel
From the crushing of
Our liberties and our government’s humanity
That my Mom held so dear?

– Sally Pick
Montague

Grounding

Deep breath in,
I gather my bronchioles.
My roots snake through my body,
And emerge from my soles.
Working their way into earth,
Winding through dirt,
Searching for kin.
Roots find roots, bound my mycorrhizal
networks.
I find home.

We greet each other in a flutter of
excitement.
Hi! Hello! I missed you!
Okay, settle down.
There are rituals to be done.

Inhale,
Exhale,
Pushing my roots farther down
underground.
Attaching to mycelium, the earth’s Great
Translator.

Breathe in, you give oxygen,
Breathe out, I give carbon dioxide.
Breathe in, you give life,
Breathe out, I give life.
Breathe in, you feed me,
Breathe out, I feed you.
Breathe in, you give love,
Breathe out, I give love.

I place my hand on your trunk,
And hear ancient howls.
An eternity of forgotten lives,
The stoic teacher.
I love our conversations, and I hear your
lessons.

Breathe in.
Pull my roots back up,
Untangling from yours.
Our connection growing stronger each
time.
Until we meet again, my friend.
Breathe out.

– Star F
Turners Falls

Who We Were
From the time we lived in darkness and terror of unknowns
And scratched crude forms of chasing beasts long extinct
Made crude shapes and symbols to recount our stories
On cavernous walls buried by eons
On slabs of crudely hewn stone
On temples wrought by primitive hands
Obelisks on barren sand swept expanses
Tablets of clay and reeds
Sandstone, basalt, granite
On rough spun fabric and papyrus
Tanned hides, bones
In Canaanite, cuneiform, symbology whose origin and meaning is
lost forever
In codex, on scrolls meticulously copied by firelight
Words spoken by ancients before they passed with their demise
Accounts of hunts and wars and famine and disease
Of entire civilizations now dust and rubble
Of migration and destruction
Of kings and queens
Of grotesque and violent gods and their heavenly realms
Demons of heaven and earth, fantastical creatures unseen
Who we were
How we lived and loved, endured and perished
Of triumph and tragedy
What has been lost?
Burnt to ashes and blown away by the winds
What knowledge forever obscured?

– RM Garcia
Erving


Contributors’ Notes:

Sally Pick has lived in the town of Montague for 24 years and counting, having grown up in the Chicago area. She has planted deep roots in town, literally and figuratively, making her yard a safe haven for native plants, birds, pollinators, and other creatures passing through or sharing their presence. She serves on the Montague energy committee, is engaged in climate work and a range of activism, and so appreciates people who make this community, that she calls home, special.

Chris Joseph writes to avoid his job, which is to write. He runs www.wemailcoconuts.com.

RM Garcia toils by day at a fish lab in Turners and lives in Erving with his patient family and dog. He takes his inspiration from his dearly departed brother, Chris Sawyer-Lauçanno, and dedicates all he writes to him.

Star F writes: “My older sister told me that when I was little and was asked what I wanted to be when I grew up, my answer was always ‘a bird.’ I’m still working on it.”



WRITING THE LAND

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EVENTS

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THURSDAY, JULY 24

Carnegie Library Tent, Turners Falls: *Bilingual Music & Movement*. Designed for ages 0 to 5, older siblings welcome. 10 a.m. Free.

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.

Unnameable Books, Turners Falls: *Jake Alboher & Rivkah Gevison, Eamon Fogarty, Specific Thing*. 7 p.m. By donation.

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. \$\$.

Midnight's, Brattleboro: *Dimples, Thérèse, Liz Durette, Taggie & Kat*. 8 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, Mono Means One*, 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.

American Legion, Holyoke: *Space Camp, Dialog Talk, Cmputergirl, Spriggan, Rhubarb Duo*, 12 other acts, vendors, etc. 21+. 2 p.m. \$.

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

Finders Collective, Turners Falls: *Prisoner Letter Writing Event*. 6:30 p.m. Free.

Unnameable Books, Turners Falls: Poetry reading, *Howie Faerstein, Dina Stander*. 7 p.m. By donation.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *The Comedy Project Revue*. 7 p.m. \$.

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. \$.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Cinemastorm* double feature: *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home* (1986), *Galaxy Quest* (1989). 7:30 p.m. Free.

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

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



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The electronic music showcase Extension Cords returns to the Shea Theater this Saturday evening, headlined by esteemed L.A.-based producer Daedelus (above).

Guided Brick, Holyoke: *Dimples, Thérèse, LOCULUS, It's Mandy*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

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

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Ashley Rhodes*. 9:30 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, JULY 26

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

New Salem Public Library, New Salem: *Touch-a-Truck Community Day*. All ages welcome. 10 a.m. to noon. Free.

Unity Park, Turners Falls: *Pioneer Valley Artisan Craft Fair*. Vendors, craft workshops for kids, food. 11 a.m. to 5 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*. "Science with a silly side." 2 p.m. Free.

Brewery at Four Star Farms, Northfield: *Rough Chop Food Truck*. 2 to 8 p.m. \$.

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

Look Park, Northampton: *The Head and the Heart, Wild Rivers, Marfa*. 6 p.m. \$.

MASS MoCA, North Adams: *The Mountain Goats, Guster*. 7 p.m. \$\$.

1794 Meetinghouse, New Salem: *Southern Rail*. 7 p.m. \$.

Brick House, Turners Falls: *Mr. Free Pile: The Very Normal Puppet Show*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Last Ditch, Greenfield: *Bunnies, The Lookout Honeys, Cousin Greg, PMS*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Palladium, Worcester: *Hot Water Music*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Daedelus, Dan Friel, Head of Wantastiquet, Barbie.AI, Impure Luck, Astral Chill*. 8 p.m. \$.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Anti-Corn League, The Journals Kept, Dylan Patrick Ward, Teen Driver*. 8 p.m. \$.

Dream Away Lodge, Becket: *Stoner Will & the Narks, Hoonah & Lrrr*. 8 p.m. No cover.

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 next Tuesday, July 29, with a closing reception from 2 to 4 p.m. that day.

Montague Center Library, Montague Center: Paintings by Millers Falls artist *Ashley Liu*, August and September with an opening reception Wednesday, August 6 at 6 p.m.

Sawmill River Arts, Montague Center: Guest artist *Amanda Petrovato* shows paper works inspired by sky, landscape, and natural history, through July.

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: Paper and photo collages by *Susan Dorais*, in the Herrick Room through August.

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. Gallery open weekends in July.

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

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *A Woman Under Pressure*, cartoons by Andrea CK. Popup exhibit on July 25 and 26, with an artist talk this Saturday, July 26 at 11 a.m. *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.

New Salem Library, New Salem: *Jeanette Stockton*, new works, through August.

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

Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne Falls: *Hilltown Happenings*, abstract paintings

by Tuyet Linh LaFleur, and *Meet Your Neighbors: A Celebration of New England Wildlife*, digital art by Jeanne Weintraub-Mason, both through August 29.

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.

CALL FOR ART

Wistariahurst Museum, Holyoke: *Identity in Ink: The Art of Tattooing:* Submissions open to licensed tattoo artists and apprentices. Send three or four high-quality images with title, date, medium, and size. Tattooed skin, designs, flash, and process photos accepted. Sensitive areas on client photos must be blurred or not shown, and no logos or watermarks. Include an artist statement (approx. 300 words) and artist bio (150 words) in one PDF, and send submissions to info@wistariahurst.org by August 15.

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CALENDAR

Franklin County Boat Club, Gill: *Christmas in July Fireworks*. 9 p.m. Free.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Technicolour Ltd., NPCSound, Ezra Holiday*. 9:30 p.m. No cover.

SUNDAY, JULY 27

Millers Falls Rod & Gun Club, Montague: *TroutStock* feat. *Hannah's Field, Guest Method, more*. 10 a.m. \$.

Erving Public Library, Erving: Book club, *Tomorrow, and Tomorrow* by Gabrielle Zevin. Ages 16 and up. 2 p.m. Free.

Feeding Tube Records, Florence: *Andrea Pensado, LOCULUS*. 4 p.m. No cover.

Dream Away Lodge, Becket: *Little Wings*. 7 p.m. No cover.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Twang Club*. 8 p.m. No cover.

MONDAY, JULY 28

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

TUESDAY, JULY 29

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *Play readings*, 15-minute table reads by 11 playwrights for audience feedback. 3 p.m. \$.

Leverett Library, Leverett: Music on the Patio, *Masala Jazz*. 6:30 p.m. Free.

Tanglewood, Lenox: *Emmylou Harris, Graham Nash*. 7 p.m. \$\$.

Brick House, Turners Falls: *Saliba, Chris Goudreau, God's Not Buying A Horse Today, Care O'Leary*. 8 p.m. \$.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 30

Tree House Brewing, Deerfield: *Drive-By Truckers, Deer Tick, Thelma & The Sleaze*. 6 p.m. \$.

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

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

THURSDAY, JULY 31

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

Carnegie Library Tent, Turners Falls: *Bilingual Music & Movement*. Designed for ages 0 to 5, older siblings welcome. 10 a.m. Free.

MassHire Career Center, Greenfield: *Job and Resource Fair: Celebrating Mature Workers*. 10 a.m. to noon. Free.

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: *The Many Faces of Dementia: Optimizing Brain Health As We Age*, presented by Linda Puzan, MSW. Discussion, refreshments. 2 p.m. Free.

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: *Vermont Wildlife*. Live animals, furs, skulls, other artifacts. 3 p.m. Free.

First Congregational Church, Montague Center: *Dusty Dufresne*. Concert on the lawn. 6 p.m. Free.

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: Stone Circle Concert, *The Hilltown Ham Hocks*. 6:30 p.m. Free.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *An Adharc, Winds Of Alluria, Neonach, The Oracle*. 8 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Dave Dersham*. 9 p.m. No cover.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Shelburne Falls-based Hilltown Ham Hocks (above), a "modern folk band with old-time roots," will play a free evening show in the Stone Circle behind the Wendell Free Library next Thursday, July 31.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 1

Dickinson Library, Northfield: *Coffee & Tea Social*, and reception for arts and crafts by members and volunteers of Northfield's Neighbors at Home. 10 to 11 a.m. Free.

Barton Cove, Gill: *Peskeompskut Paddle*. Celebrate Indigenous communities with a round-trip mishoon, canoe, and kayak paddle on the Connecticut. Bring your own craft or rent one. 11 a.m. Free.

JaDuke Theater, Turners Falls: *Madagascar: A Musical Adventure Jr.* 6 p.m. \$

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Drew Paton*. 6:30 p.m. No cover.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Mtali Banda*. 7 p.m. \$.

Sena Farm Brewery, Worthington: *AT & The Fantasy Suites*. 7 p.m. No cover.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Quaboag Vibe*. 8 p.m. No cover.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *King Parrot, Bonginator*. 8 p.m. \$.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Epicenter, Horse Grave, Karate Steve, Green Street Fiends*. 8 p.m. \$.

Hutghi's, Westfield: *Peace Talks, De Rodillas, Demented FX, The Eye, Visceral Filth*. 8 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 2

Leverett Public Library, Leverett: *Plant Walk with Jean Bergstrom*. 9:30 a.m.

Unity Park, Turners Falls: *Pocumtuck Homelands Festival*. Native art, history, and culture; music, vendors, food. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Free.

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: *Used Book Sale*. Fiction, paperbacks, kids' books, DVDs, audiobooks, CDs. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Free.

Historic Deerfield, Deerfield: *The Art of the Book: Exploring the Revival of Historic Book Arts*. 10 a.m. \$

SUNDAY, AUGUST 3

Unity Park, Turners Falls: *Pocumtuck Homelands Festival*. Native art, history, and culture; music, vendors, food. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Free.

Erving Public Library, Erving: *Cosplay Workshop*, ages 11 and up. Pre-registration required. 1 to 3 p.m. Free.

JaDuke Theater, Turners Falls: *Madagascar: A Musical Adventure Jr.* 2 p.m. \$

Feeding Tube Records, Florence: *Bobbie, Dogs Swimming in Heavy Water*. 4 p.m. No cover.

MONDAY, AUGUST 4

Tree House Brewing, Deerfield: *Dark Star Orchestra*. 6 p.m. \$.

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: *Fiber Group and Mending Circle*. 6:30 p.m. Free.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Open Mic with Jim McRae*. 8:30 p.m. No cover.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 5

Sadie's Bikes, Turners Falls: *First Tuesday Group Bike Ride*. Rides are upwards of 20 miles. Contact sadiesbikesinfo@gmail.com for more information. 6:15 p.m. Free.

Tree House Brewing, Deerfield: *Dark Star Orchestra*. 6 p.m. \$.

Leverett Public Library, Leverett: Music on the Patio, *Box Shop Duo*. 6:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 6

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: *Big Build Club*, magnetic tile ball runs. Registration required. 3 to 5 p.m. Free.

Montague Center Library, Montague Center: Artist reception for paintings by *Ashley Liu*. 6 p.m. Free.

Rat Trap, Holyoke: *Raskol, Dimension, Valley Gals, Rabid Few*. 8 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Half Shaved Jazz*. 8:30 p.m. No cover.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 7

Carnegie Library Tent, Turners Falls: *Bilingual Music & Movement*. Designed for ages 0 to 5, older siblings welcome. 10 a.m. Free.

Millers Falls Library, Millers Falls: *Community Resource Assistance*, with Brick House staff. Support with signing up for SNAP, WIC, and other programs. 1 to 2 p.m. Free.

Great Falls Harvest, Turners Falls: *Bonnie, Planet Dogg, EDT, Amateur Birders*. 7 p.m. \$.

Black Birch Vineyard, North Hatfield: *Darlingside*. 7 p.m. \$.

looking forward...

FRIDAY, AUGUST 8

Peskeompskut Park, Turners Falls: Puppet show by *No Strings Marionettes*. 10:30 a.m. Free.

Look Park, Northampton: *Hazmat Modine, The ECCE Ensemble*. 7 p.m. \$.

Marigold, Brattleboro: *Ruby Lou, Jack Alboher, Elie McAfee-Hahn, The Whip Appeal*. 8 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 9

Wendell: *Old Home Day*. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Free.

Antenna Cloud Farm, Gill: *Duo Yumeno*. 2 and 6 p.m. \$.

Mount Toby Friends Meetinghouse, Leverett: *Sam Gleaves*. 7 p.m. \$.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 13

Tourists, North Adams: *Thor & Friends, More Eaze*. 7 p.m. Free.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 16

Dream Away Lodge, Becket: *Home Body*. 8 p.m. No cover.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20

Hutghi's, Westfield: *Science Man, Ballers, Feminine Aggression, Fugue State*. 8 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 23

Greenfield Town Common: *Harvest Supper*, hosted by Stone Soup Café. 4 to 7:30 p.m. By donation.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 31

Feeding Tube Records, Florence: *Chris Corsano/ Paul Flaherty duo, Marcia Bassett*. 4 p.m. No cover.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

Belltower Records, North Adams: *A.P.I.E., Gay Mayor, Demented FX, Hurry Scurry*. 5 p.m. \$.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

Tourists, North Adams: *Julie Doiron*. 8 p.m. \$.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

Big E Arena, West Springfield: *Big Boi, TLC*. 7:30 p.m. \$\$.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

Palladium, Worcester: *Dark Angel, Sacred Reich, Hirax, Void*. 6 p.m. \$\$.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Jens Lekman*. \$. 7 p.m.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20

The Drake, Amherst: *Florry, John Andrews & The Yawns*. 8 p.m. \$.

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CHICAGO from page B1

on West 46th Street and was all legs and lyrics. Audiences came in droves and the show was nominated for ten Tony Awards. The revival is the longest-running show on Broadway. You can see it at the Ambassador Theatre on West 49th Street for \$74.50, and you could’ve seen it at JaDuke for \$16.

“JaDuke is one of the best-kept secrets in Franklin County,” said Nick Waynelovich. A lifelong resident of Turners Falls and retired high school music teacher, he is JaDuke’s co-owner, producer, director, and stagehand.

He bought the property from the town in 2007, constructed the building himself, and named the 550-seat playhouse after John Wayne, a.k.a. The Duke.

“Our stage is larger than most Broadway stages and our lighting is state of the art,” he said. “We have 20 moving lights that can do everything. They can zoom, they can fade, there’s color, and it’s all brand new with the latest technology.”

Rights owner Concord Theatricals charged \$3,500 to do seven performances. Moreover, Waynelovich had to wait until May to begin advertising, and ticket sales were limited to 300 per show.

After auditions, the cast had only four weeks to rehearse. “Ninety-nine percent of our shows we take anybody, but *Chicago* you have to sing, act, and dance. It was the first show in 20 to 25 years where we actually cut people.”

“Billy Flynn walked in from nowhere,” he said of Briggs Doxzen, who bore a resemblance to actor Steve Buscemi. “He’s an assistant manager at my bank and we got to chatting.

“Nobody gets paid. I don’t even pay myself, and I have a \$2.5 million mortgage.”

JaDuke looks more like a warehouse than a theater until you get inside and smell fresh popcorn and see the cast selling tickets, opening doors, and handing out playbills.

The seats were comfortable and the lower half of the theater was nearly full for the July 13 matinee. The performance reminded me of what a reviewer wrote of the film version: “It’s rare to find a picture as exuberant, as shallow, and as exuberant about its shallowness.”

The set was dark, the stage was stark, and the mood was imbued by the sensual vibe of long-legged actresses in tight leotards and chiseled men in mesh tops.

Ruthie Cogswell as Roxie Hart and Sara Paige as Matron “Mama” Morton sang with such clarity and vocal range I wondered if they were lip-syncing.

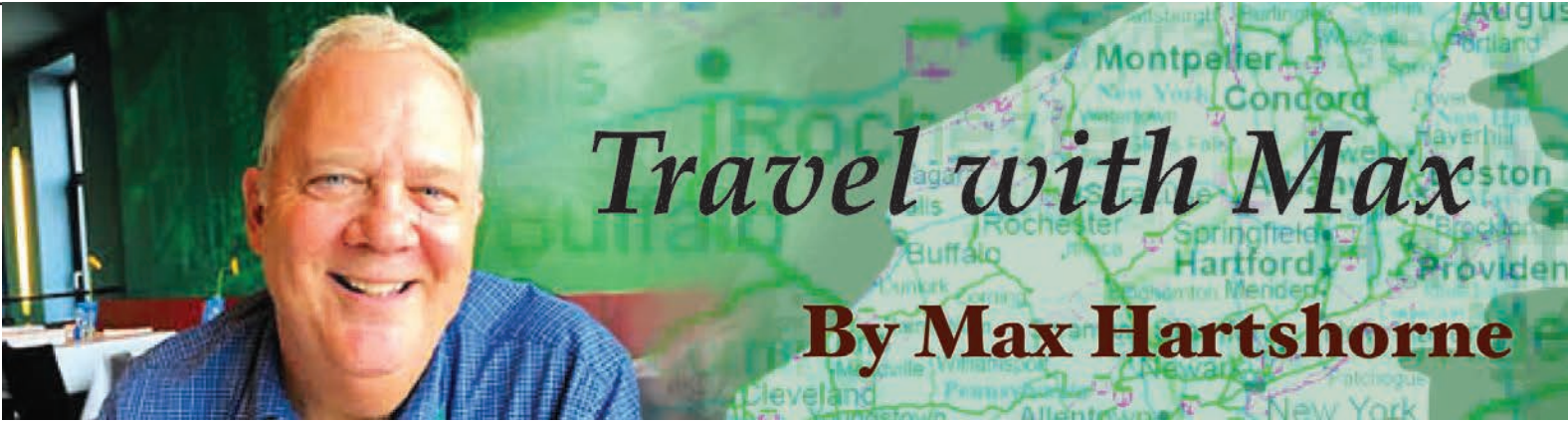
“There were no recordings other than the orchestra track,” laughed Waynelovich. “Every person on stage was wearing a wireless microphone.”

Samantha Myburgh was sassy, sexy, and charming as Velma doing “All That Jazz.” William LaPlante was boffo singing “Mr. Cellophane,” his ode to self-pity as Roxie’s cuckolded husband Amos, and Velma and the ensemble sang “Cell Block Tango” with appropriate verve and defiance – “He had it coming!”

“What I liked about doing *Chicago* is we were able to use all the elements,” said Waynelovich. “What you saw was a really slick production.”

Other shows on this year’s marquee include *Clue*, starting September 26; *Noises Off*, on October 11; and *Annie* on November 7.

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



The train to Maine: New England sees rail growth in 2025.

SOUTH DEERFIELD – We had a grand plan, which involved heading into Boston and taking the 11:25 a.m. Amtrak Downeaster train up to Old Orchard Beach, Maine. It was a great idea, and all the times worked until track improvements meant that the 11:25 a.m. train from Boston was canceled, with the next train not arriving until 5:40 p.m.

Nope, couldn’t do it. We decided to do the sensible yet less sexy thing – drive. Sadly, it seems it’s just not that easy to take the train up to Maine instead of driving. These disruptions were part of a massive tie replacement project: over 130,000 railroad ties along 124 miles of track are being swapped out to keep the Downeaster running for many more decades.

Our cheap hotel, the Beach Motel and Suites, was a seven-minute walk from the Amtrak station. We could have walked there ready for a beach day, and we even brought our big beach chairs.

The location is the only thing we’d recommend about this small hotel. Small rooms, and no side tables, but an inexpensive way to enjoy the town of Old Orchard Beach, which is always a hoot.

And train service in New England is increasing, even in the Trump era – so far, anyway. Plans are underway for an overnight train with sleeping cars from Boston to New York, similar to the sleepers that are becoming popular in Europe.

In fall 2026, Maine will add a new station building to its proud Downeaster service to the small coastal village of Wells. Wells is undergoing an \$11.8 million transformation at its Amtrak station, part of a broader \$31.9 million Wells Area Improvement Project.

The blueprint includes a second, high-level boarding platform across the tracks from the existing one; an elevated pedestrian bridge that connects both platforms; upgrades to track capacity, including a six-mile passing track extension completed last year; and a temporary platform to keep passengers moving during construction.

The goal? To allow simultaneous boarding and deboarding. This will expand the scope of an already impressive Maine train service, which has served 10 million passengers since its debut in 2005. Today, the trains travel 145 miles to Brunswick from Boston’s North Station. There are eight daily trains on the route,



The Amtrak Downeaster crosses the road at Old Orchard Beach, Maine.

and Wells is the first town in Maine after you cross the border from Dover, New Hampshire. In 2026 they are adding more trains, including one that arrives in Portland before 8 a.m.! Now that’s a game-changer.

Massachusetts and Connecticut

In the coastal cities of New Bedford and Fall River, Massachusetts, train fans are thrilled with the new daily commuter rail service to Boston’s South Station. It took 20 years and \$1.1 billion, but it’s here.

This extension was planned to open in 1997, but actually opened on March 24, 2025. It had been 65 years since these towns were served by train service.

The double-decker trains now travel the 37-mile route three times a day, and there are frequent weekend trains. The trip from Boston to either New Bedford or Fall River takes about 90 minutes and the fare is \$12.25, with seniors riding for just \$6. If you are in the military, a police officer, or blind, you can even ride for free, with proper ID.

A few months ago, the line was forced to use buses for some of the route due to employee issues, but so far this summer the French operator, Keolis, has been able to

fully staff the trains on weekends.

Further south, Connecticut’s Hartford Line is getting a \$25 million boost, and here’s what is expected. On weekdays they are adding an extra round trip between New Haven and Hartford to fill in a pesky three-hour midday gap, and train 4401 will now stretch from the Windsor Locks station to Springfield. On weekends, trains 6456, 6457, 6458, and 6459 will extend to Windsor Locks.

They are also ramping up customer service hours at Hartford’s Union Station by a solid 75%. Finally, they are building on funding from 2020 by tossing in two extra weekday trains between New Haven and Springfield.

This has been a complete success, with ridership numbers increasing each year. It bodes well for keeping these and the above-mentioned rail routes running for decades, as we slowly try to catch up to the rest of the world, which has lapped the US in rail transportation.

Sleeping Car Trains

Now let’s take a big, big step forward to consider an audacious idea from Philadelphia entrepreneur Mike Avena: the “Lunatrain.” Mr. Avena has ambitious plans for fancy train travel. He’s starting off by looking at routes between Boston and Washington, where Amtrak is already up and running, with an eye on building a brand-new fleet of sleeping cars with horizontal full beds in small compartments.

According to Mr. Avena, Dreamstar, the European sleeping car service that crosses the Chunnel between England and France, is “all about a luxury experience – really top-notch stuff. We want [the Lunatrain] to have a wide appeal but still be affordable for folks. And it’s gotta be new, no old retrofits.”

Avena is also borrowing a page from Europe’s Nightjet mini-cabins, which he calls a solid example of a budget-friendly option. He’s keen on these mini-cabins, which are perfect for solo travelers at a fair price – a bit like the Budd Slumbercoaches back in the day. Travelers are not stuck paying for two beds, which they would be in an Amtrak roomette.

For families or groups, he’s cooking up bigger compartments, which would be private – unlike in Europe, no sharing with strangers. Until 1991, you could take the Amtrak Executive sleeper trains from New York City and sleep all the way to Boston.



Left: Old Orchard Beach’s long beach at low tide.



Right: An advertising mockup of the Lunatrain, a proposed sleeper train with service along the East Coast.

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