

The Montague Reporter

Yet Another Tragic Death At Rock Dam

By REPORTER STAFF

TURNERS FALLS – A Worcester man was pronounced dead at Baystate Franklin on Saturday, July 25, after being recovered by first responders at an unsanctioned swim spot on the Connecticut River, according to the Northwestern District Attorney’s office. The office said there was no indication of foul play, and identified the victim as 21-year-old Hermes Mariano Almonte Villar.

Rock Dam, a short waterfall in the river’s “bypass stretch” that runs parallel to the Turners Falls power canal, has been the location of numerous drownings and near-drownings. Before last week, the most recent victim was 35-year-old Welman Hernandez-Diaz of Worcester, who died swimming there in August 2020.

Both tragedies occurred in the daytime, during group swimming excursions.

In 1998, local teenagers Christopher Gallagher and Winter Clark see **ROCK DAM** page A6

LEVERETT SELECTBOARD Reluctant Town Lets District Park Surplus Roof Dough

By GEORGE BRACE

At its most recent meeting on July 28, the Leverett selectboard held a ceremony to honor retired deputy fire chief Amy Rice and met with a candidate for state representative. During its regular business, the board came up with a deal to authorize additional contingency funding for the Amherst regional middle school roof and heard an update on a potential grant for the North Leverett Sawmill.

The room was filled with loud applause from members of the fire department and townspeople as Rice was presented with a glass sculpture as a token of the town’s appreciation for her 21 years of service in the department.

Selectboard chair Patricia Duffy said that Rice was one of the people “who answered the most calls,” and commended her for filling in as acting chief for an extended period at the end of her career.

Rice, who grew up in Leverett, said she loved the job, and that joining the department was “the best decision I ever made.” If not for her career as a nurse and administrator, she said, she would have been a full-time firefighter.

Rice said she came from a family of firefighters, including her father, her brother, her uncles, and now her son – currently a member of the see **LEVERETT** page A5

A ROYAL FLUSH



MIKE HENRY PHOTO

The Turners Falls water department typically flushes out all of its hydrants once a year in the summer. This operation was carried out last Tuesday in downtown Turners Falls, and last Wednesday (above) in downtown Millers Falls. Thanks to reader Mike Henry, who happened upon the action and was quick on the draw with his camera phone.

GILL SELECTBOARD Clamor for Gill to Keep Riverside Building

By KATE SAVAGE

Last Monday’s Gill selectboard meeting was held with a packed crowd in the Riverside Municipal Building. Most of the meeting was a public forum about the future of the 100-year-old building itself.

Around 50 attendees packed into the former school room to debate the questions that are familiar to small towns with deep histories: Should the town pay to repair and maintain an aging building, or sell it off? If the building stays public, what should it be used for, and how can it be repaired and maintained on a tight town budget?

Bob Perry spoke first, reading a prepared statement on behalf of the town’s historical commission. He described a wealth of historical objects and documents which the commission is not able to make publicly available. When the Four Winds School stopped using the building in 2024, the commission was allowed to expand to other rooms with its displays. But soon after, the roof started leaking.

“It has been very discouraging,” Perry read.

Lynn Stowe Tomb also spoke of the need for historical display space, citing her experience on the see **GILL** page A6



SAVAGE PHOTO

A crowd packed thickly into the municipal building last week to discuss its fate.

Loss of Regional Recycling Pioneer Derails Wendell’s Compost Program

By SARAH ROBERTSON

WENDELL – Town officials are looking for a new way to recycle residents’ food and yard waste after the owner of Clear View Composting passed away last month, a loss that has forced the transfer station to stop accepting compostable materials.

“We don’t have an outlet for compost at the moment, and people really like it, and sort of depend on it because of the bears and stuff,” Wendell Recycling and Transfer Station (WRATS) supervisor Asa de Roode told attendees at Tuesday night’s road commission meeting.

After consulting with the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District (FCSWMD), de Roode said he learned that the only other available option for compost pickup was the Compost Cooperative, a worker-owned business based in Greenfield which hauls waste to Martin’s Farm Compost and Mulch. The contract would cost the town about \$4,000 per year, and would require WRATS employees to install a new shed or fence-enclosed area to protect the new bins from animals.

The road commissioners discussed potential funding sources for the new structure, including a nearly \$9,300 grant from the state Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)’s recycling dividends program. De Roode said he would look into it.

Clear View Composting had picked up Wendell’s organic waste for free, periodically emptying three plastic trash cans locked in a large flip-top container constructed see **COMPOST** page A8

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD Town Looking Into Property Tax ‘Work-Off’ For Seniors

By JEFF SINGLETON

At its meeting on July 27, the Montague selectboard authorized town administrator Walter Ramsey to explore a state program that would allow qualified seniors to “work off” some of their property taxes, and learned that a new committee was exploring ways to reorganize the town’s separate and independent fire and water districts.

The board also approved new fees for building department permits and heard from public works superintendent Sam Urkiel about upcoming projects to pave roads, redesign the traffic signals on Avenue A, and install new street signs throughout the town. Urkiel also proposed a new staff position to deal with sewer issues, which he said would be “budget-neutral.”

Selectboard member Nate Card was not in attendance, so chair Rich Kuklewicz and vice chair Marina Goldman held down the fort.

Ramsey requested that the board direct him to investigate the program, enabled by state law, which allows a municipality to create a see **MONTAGUE** page A7

ERVING SELECTBOARD State Rolls Out Streamlined Permitting for Energy Projects

By KATIE NOLAN

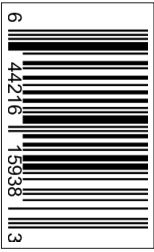
At the July 27 Erving selectboard meeting, town administrator Bryan Smith informed the board that the Clean Energy Infrastructure Siting regulations developed by the state Department of Energy Resources (DOER) require each town to identify a local government representative (LGR) for renewable energy infrastructure siting, and to start processing consolidated permits for energy infrastructure generating less than 100 megawatts of energy, by October 1.

Larger renewable infrastructure will be permitted by a state board.

Under the new regulations, permit applicants will use a single application available from DOER, instead of separate applications for each local commission, board, or department. Once all components have been reviewed and decided on by local permitting authorities, the LGR will issue a consolidated local permit representing the approval, or denial, of the application as a whole.

Towns have 12 months from the submittal of a complete application to make this decision. Applicants may appeal a town’s decision to the state Energy Facilities Siting Board.

Selectboard member Jacqueline Boyden recommended appointing town planner Glenn Johnson-Musad as the local energy siting official, see **ERVING** page A4



But an Old Broom Knows the Corners			
Quick on the Draw.....	A1	Get Poisoned In Turn.....	A8
Washing Down the Slope.....	A2	Part of a Cultural Push.....	B1
Among Blooming Sunflowers.....	A3	Holed Up in a Stream.....	B1
Ready to Release.....	A4	Faced Down and Conquered.....	B2
Difficult to Deal With.....	A6	To Give Out the Chunks.....	B3
Heard a Terrific Heresy.....	A6	Pulled Up and Thrown.....	B3
Need to Be Burned.....	A7	Wearing a Full Face Mask.....	B4
		Bedecked With Colorful Lights.....	B4
		Baked Into Every Piece.....	B5
		A Form of Human Taxidermy.....	B6
		La Sensación de Masificación.....	B7
		Silk Mill, Soft Jaws, Spinal Teeth.....	B8
		Acid Witch, Fugue State, Nice & Easy.....	B9
		After a Life of Horrors.....	B10

The Montague Reporter

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August 2002

CORRECTIONS

An article in our previous edition about special hands-on units built to train students at Greenfield Community College (GCC) in home weatherization (*New Training Containers ‘Culmination of a Dream,’* July 23, Page A1), contained two errors deserving of public correction.

First, we wrote that Oxbow Design Build, hired to design and build the units, “ended up outsourcing much of the metal fabrication to the Greenfield-based company Campbell Ironworks.” Oxbow worker-owner Carl Woodruff had specified when interviewed that the outsourced metal work was handled by B. Gorey Fabrication of South Deerfield. Campbell Ironworks provided the crane and crew that helped set the shipping containers on a pad at GCC on July 22.

Additionally, we mistakenly wrote that Samantha Wood “heads GCC’s workforce development department.” Wood is a mere Director of Strategic Innovation for Workforce Development. “Kristin Cole is Vice President of Workforce Development,” she writes. “[S]he is the head of our department, and my boss.”

We regret both errors.

Endless Whoas

Thanks for laying out how much Trump’s proposed Pentagon budget increase would cost (*Department of Whoa*, July 23, Page A2). But you only scratched the surface. The \$1,563 per capita increase pales when compared to the trillions the Pentagon has spent since the promise of a “peace dividend” at the end of the Cold War. Let’s do the math.

On second thought, let’s not. It takes AI to parse the many ways we pay for war – overseas bases, huge weapons systems, vets’ benefits, military foreign aid, etc. (Nearly \$6 trillion in Pentagon spending since 2020 alone, ChatGPT reports.) And any calculator can tell you the average household share of that – \$50,000 to \$70,000.

Sure, you might reap still more righteous fury by calculating how many schools, hospitals, and other

er benefits all those trillions could have bankrolled. But enough math.

When it came to putting a human price on our military madness, no one has ever topped Eisenhower. The five-star general, early in his first term, laid it out for all to know:

“Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children... This is not a way of life at all, in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron.”

Bruce Watson
Montague

Fire Management Has Its Opponents

The *Reporter* recently published an article titled, “Driving Biodiversity With Fire on the Plains” [May 28, Page A1]. The article featured the prescribed burning and other intensive management being done by MassWildlife in the Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area.

Although the article did not mention it, this practice is controversial. There are growing scientific questions regarding the need for such burning, its impacts on wildlife needing interior forest habitats, its potential to actually increase fire risk, and threats to public health from air and water pollution.

These issues will be discussed at an upcoming conference, “Forest Fires in Massachusetts: Myths and Reality.” The conference will include live and Zoom presentations, a panel discussion, and a walking tour of Montague Plains.

The conference, which is free and open to the public, will take place Saturday, September 12, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at The National Spiritual Alliance, 2 Montague Avenue in Lake Pleasant. See savemassforests.com for more information.

Michael Kellett
Concord
Executive Director,
RESTORE: The North Woods

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NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION



Ronny Sierra works on a client at the Five Star Barber Studio at 55 Avenue A in Turners Falls. Sierra opened his shop earlier this year and offers haircuts, shaves, and grooming Wednesdays through Mondays.

Letters to



the Editors

Minor Median Mauled

I am writing to protest the outrageous brush-hogging of a steeply-sloped median on L Street. This small parcel on the corner of L and Prospect appears to be an awkward, commercially valueless parcel owned by the “Rocky River Realty Company.” The street just beneath it is commonly used for parking, particularly during snow emergencies.

Until last month, this narrow, sharp slope was covered by a variety of beneficial native weedy species such as Pokeweed, Spreading Dogbane, Goldenrod, and Virginia Creeper, with a few invasives.

They weren’t the prettiest plants in the world, but hey, neither is any basic town infrastructure like sewer grates and power lines. They served a purpose. These plants were protecting the slope from erosion, and feeding pollinators, caterpillars, and birds. I enjoyed checking in on it whenever I parked there.

Now it has been cut to the ground for no apparent reason. The brown dirt is baking in the sun, washing down the slope into the street, and clogging the storm drains. It is hideous, counterintuitive, and totally wasted potential.

Marginal land is often maimed like this by contracted landscapers in the name of aesthetics, public safety, and accessibility. This is absolutely the wrong way to manage a tough, inaccessible area in the streetscape which sheds a lot of stormwater and sediment into the parking strip. The vegetation will likely grow back, but this cutting will benefit woody vines like poison ivy and invasive bittersweet. Mowing repeatedly to make a lawn is infeasible here, as is planting a pollinator garden.

The local vegetation had these problems solved already – we just needed to lean in. The best time to cut it would be once a year, or every other year, in mid-spring or late fall, with some selective removal of invasives. This would not be that much harder, or more expensive, than what was done here.

This is not the landscaper’s fault. This is the result of bad planning and poor understanding of the stewardship of marginal land by towns and private landowners. I call on the owners of strips of land like this – both private landowners and the town – to have more public conversation about stewardship values and the necessity of thoughtfully maintaining vegetation along roadways and under power lines, especially this near to the river.

I hope making some noise here will help start this conversation among my fellow residents. Thank you very much for your time!

Ben Silverstone
Turners Falls

Celebrate, Uphold US Constitution

On Sunday, September 13 from 2 to 4 p.m., Indivisible Montague will host an interactive educational event in celebration of the Constitution at the Great Falls Discovery Center. It will culminate with the construction of a large-scale “We the People” banner highlighting the core principles of our democracy.

At past events like this, participants have reflected on liberties guaranteed by the Constitution, and on the duty of the citizenry to uphold these ideals. This is a fun and creative way for young – and older – people to learn about the US Constitution and how our government was structured. It includes prizes, music, and more.

Indivisible Montague is a local chapter of Indivisible National. Our work focuses on countering authoritarian threats, protecting elections, and defending civil liberties, including those enshrined in the Constitution. Come join us at this family-centered event!

Want to learn more about how you can fight for democracy? Please join us! Come to our next meeting on Thursday, August 13 at Great Falls Harvest, 50 Third Street in Turners Falls, at 7 p.m. Arrive between 6 and 7 p.m. if you want to have a bite to eat or a drink before the meeting. We meet the second Thursday of every month. Or, for more information, email us at IndivisibleMontague@gmail.com.

Derek Birr, Laurie Davidson, Judith Lorei, Anne Moore, and Sally Prasch
Indivisible Montague Welcoming Group

WE WELCOME YOUR LETTERS!

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TURNERS FALLS AND VICINITY.

Compiled by MIKE JACKSON

This Friday is **First Friday here in downtown Turners**, and if you hate stuff like that skip ahead.

The special theme this month is apparently the **three record stores** we now have downtown: there'll be a DJ set at Breakdown Recs at 5:30 p.m., then karaoke at the Music Connection at 6 p.m., followed by a live set by pianist Dan Becker at 7 p.m., and then, "[a]t a time to be determined, Lou Barlow of Dinosaur Jr. will be at Two Ghosts Vinyl Café to sign autographs."

Autographs? In this economy? I guess it's a consolation prize for those of us who didn't get tickets to the Shea Theater, where Mr. Barlow is throwing a stacked 70th birthday party show that same night – it's conspicuously not mentioned anywhere in the extensive First Friday promo material, I guess because it's sold out, but that show starts at 7 p.m., so plan accordingly, vinyl-café autograph hounds.

Other stuff, though, I'm realizing didn't make it into our Events Calendar (Pp. B8-B9), which is actually already *at* the printer as I compose this, so here's an exclusive supplemental listing:

In the LOOT alley from 5 to 8 p.m., face painting with *Emma Rose*; at Waterway Arts from 5 to 7 p.m., a closing reception for the group exhibit *Please Touch*; at the Brick House starting at 6:30 p.m., *Care O'Leary*, *Corey Laitman*, *Grazer*, and *Dollflower*, all ages, substance free, donations optional; at the Voo from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., scene stalwart *Drew Paton* singing the hits from the 1930s to the 1980s; and everything culminating at Peskeompskut Park at 8 p.m. with a free screening of *Pee-wee's Big Adventure*.

I already plugged Wendell Old Home Day, this Saturday, August 8, in my last *Vicinity* column, but here's an added incentive. Ed Hines writes:

"At this year's Old Home Day, the Wendell Historical Society will present 'Fire: History, Tragedies & Heroes,' **a special exhibit on the impact of fire on the town** we all love. We started the project six months ago, collecting information on approximately 100 homes and businesses that have been lost since the early 19th century. Some of the stories and photographs were heartbreaking; beautiful buildings that vanished in a moment leaving nothing behind or leaving just a stone foundation frozen in time. We were moved by the stories of our own board members who lost their homes to fire and we were especially moved by the recent fire at the Robert Bowers home on Wickett Pond Road..."

The exhibit, which includes a slide show and a display of fire department artifacts, can be found from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 10 Center Street on the Wendell Common.

Another one from ye olde editor's inbox:

"As yet another war rages in west Asia, the Montague Apartheid-Free Communities organizers will present Abby Martin's new film, *Earth's Greatest Enemy*, at the Brick House, Sunday, August 9, with doors open at 2 p.m. The film highlights another dimension of war and destruction – **the impacts of the Pentagon on the planet** – and makes a case for peace, social justice, climate action and ecosystem protection. If you oppose genocide, wars of aggression, or even just oligarchic war-profiteering, you should see this film."



Pretty exciting to see equipment staging over on Tenth Street, where First Generation LLC will be building **eight two-bedroom apartments**. We need every housing unit we can get!

The League of Women Voters, Greenfield Community Television (GCTV), and our colleagues at the *Recorder* are sponsoring a debate next Tuesday, August 11 between Tara Jacobs, who holds the western Mass seat on the shadowy and consequential **Governor's Council**, and a primary challenger, Michael Fenton, whom she barely beat for said seat four years ago.

If you have some good debate questions, email them to lwvfranklincounty@gmail.com by noon on Monday. The debate itself will livestream at 5 p.m. Tuesday on GCTV's YouTube channel, which is pretty cool. After that I'm assuming it'll just be there on YouTube.

According to the state Office of Campaign and Political Finance (ocpf.us), Fenton has raised \$47,425 so far for this race and Jacobs \$10,685. If you go to that site you can see the contributions!

Ann Fisk writes:

"The **45th Montague Mug Race** will be held Saturday, August 15. The 5.5-mile road race starts off at 8:30 a.m. from the Village Common, 4 North Street. Pewter mugs are awarded to the top male and female finishers, and coffee mugs to the top three finishers in each division. T-shirts will be given to the first 70 runners.

"The 20th Mini-Mug run and walk kicks off at 8:35 a.m. This course is 2 miles. Both races finish on Station Street, one block from the start.

"All participants are entered in a drawing for local prizes. There will also be a sale of great, gently used clothing, with items for runners. Runners may register on runreg.com."

Oh, and this one:

"The Brick House is offering a **school backpack and school supply giveaway** event on Saturday, August 15, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. for kids in grades K through 12. This event is first come, first served. Lunch will be available, too. For more information, call (413) 800-2496."

This giveaway is in the Brick House's new annex space at 22 Third Street.

And Jenna Weld writes:

"The owner of Kindness Krafts, in partnership with Our Family Legacy Farm, warmly invites the community to come together for a heartfelt day of hope, kindness, and healing at a **Sunflower Maze Fundraiser** on Saturday, August 22, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Our Family Legacy Farm, 442 Turners Falls Road, Montague.

"Set among blooming sunflowers and peaceful lavender fields, this special event is more than a fundraiser – it is a gathering of neighbors, friends, and strangers coming together to surround one local family with love and support during an unimaginably difficult time. The event is being held to benefit the Veilleux family, whose lives were forever changed when Tim Veilleux, a veteran, devoted husband, and father of four young boys, was diagnosed with Stage 3 cancer on Father's Day. As Tim begins treatment, his wife Mikayla is caring for their four children..."

OK, I actually don't need to reprint the details of this family's challenges – it could be any of us next. Please go show your support and bring some cash. Vendors, raffles, ice cream, flower sales, direct donation, many ways to choose to kick in, but please do go kick in.

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

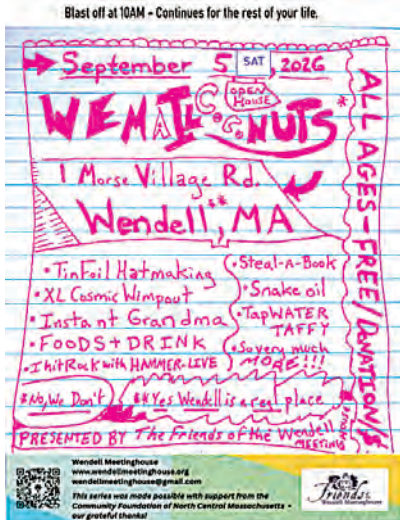
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FACES & PLACES



An omnibus swearing-in and pinning-in ceremony was held Saturday morning at the Turners Falls firehouse. At left: Fire chief Luke Hartnett (left), who himself was formally sworn in, takes a turn swearing in Nick Cogswell, who was promoted to the captain position Hartnett had vacated.

At right, left to right: Agustin Carra, Christopher Langley, and Christopher Allen were all sworn in as firefighters.

"These ceremonies represent more than changes in rank or title," captain Trisha Dana said in her opening remarks. "They represent a commitment to leadership, service, integrity, and the responsibility to protect lives, property, and the citizens of the Turners Falls Fire District."

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and JAMES C. SEVENE, JR. for incorrectly

naming them as the heirs of Barbara

L. Sevene, having an interest in Week

Number 10 in Villa Unit Number 225 in

Captain's Command at Bluebeard's Beach

Club, St. Thomas U.S. Virgin Islands.

Captain's Command has been informed

that the heirs are Rodney and Sheri

Demers, Russel and Joanne Demers, Paul

and Deborah Demers, of Turners Falls,

Massachusetts, Ed and Carol Demers of

Colrain, Massachusetts and Melissa and

Arthur Patenaude of Vermont.

Richard H. Dollison, Esq.

Attorney for Plaintiff,

Captain's Command at

Bluebeard's Beach Club

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By WALTER RAMSEY

MONTAGUE – If there has been one defining characteristic of the past several months, it has been transition. After years of planning, discussion, and community debate, many of Montague’s largest initiatives are moving from the drawing board into implementation.

That is exciting, but it also means the real work is just beginning.

New Library Moves Forward

Following the affirmative debt exclusion vote in June, the new Montague Public Library project has officially entered its next phase. Over the coming year, the project team will finalize the building design, complete permitting, and prepare the site for construction.

If all proceeds as anticipated, residents can expect to see construction begin next year, followed by approximately two years of building activity.

Large public construction projects require careful oversight, and that will remain a priority throughout the project.

The Town will continue working closely with the Library Trustees, project consultants, and state partners to deliver a facility that reflects the community’s vision while remaining focused on schedule, transparency, and responsible stewardship of public funds.

Important Steps Toward Housing

Housing continues to be one of the Town’s highest long-term priorities, and after considerable planning we are beginning to see tangible progress.

ERVING from page A1

saying that the planner already works with the planning board, zoning board of appeals, and conservation commission.

“If an application comes in,” Smith commented, “we’re all going to have to pitch in.”

The board voted to designate the town planner as the LGR.

North and Church

The board discussed proposed plans for Complete Streets work on North and Church Streets. According to the state Department of Transportation, a “complete street” is one that provides safe and accessible options for all travel modes – walking, biking, transit, and motor vehicles – and for people of all ages and abilities.

In its written proposal, Green International, Inc. provided two alternatives for traffic calming on the streets. The first is to reconstruct North Street as a one-way, northbound-only road from Route 2 to Church Street, with a five-foot-wide sidewalk along each side and two-foot-wide “chicanes,” S-curves along a road designed to slow traffic.

The second is to reconstruct North Street as a one-way street from Route 2 to Church Street, with four-foot-wide chicanes and a single eight-foot-wide sidewalk along its west side, and also to reconstruct Church Street to be one-way southbound and widen its sidewalk to 10 feet.

Boyden said some of these proposals would be a “huge change” for motorists, and could increase

FROM THE DESK OF THE MONTAGUE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

Building Momentum

An eight-unit private housing development in the Patch has received its building permits and is expected to begin construction in the coming months. At the former First Street parking lot, a six-unit affordable homeownership development is advancing through the permitting process this August.

Meanwhile, the Town continues working to unlock the redevelopment potential of the former Farren Care Center property. We have applied for state infrastructure funding to extend the utilities needed to support future housing and mixed-use development, and we are preparing a Request for Proposals that will invite qualified developers to partner with the Town on this important opportunity.

While none of these projects alone will solve our housing challenges, together they represent meaningful progress toward expanding housing opportunities for current and future residents.

Setting Priorities for the Year Ahead

In May the selectboard welcomed its newest member, Nate Card. Shortly thereafter, the board held its annual strategic planning retreat to identify several priority initiatives for the coming year.

Among those priorities are developing a Community Electricity Aggregation program to provide residents with additional electricity purchasing options; exploring a Senior Tax Work-Off Program that would allow qualifying seniors to offset a portion of their property taxes through volunteer service; and launching the Montague Villages Sustainability Initiative, a compre-

hensive effort to evaluate the long-term sustainability of the Town’s four independent village districts and identify opportunities for improved coordination and service delivery.

These initiatives will take time, thoughtful analysis, and significant public engagement. We look forward to working with residents and community partners as each moves forward.

Looking Toward Our Schools

This fall will also mark the beginning of another important conversation for our community.

The Town has established an Elementary School Building Committee to evaluate the long-term needs of our elementary school facilities through the Massachusetts School Building Authority process. This work is still in its early stages, but it will help determine what investments may be needed to serve Montague students for decades to come.

At the same time, voters will be asked to weigh in on the proposed Franklin County Technical School building project.

Together, these discussions represent some of the most significant

public investments our community will consider in the coming years.

Stay Engaged!

The months ahead promise to be busy. Beyond these major initiatives, residents will also participate in elections at the local, state, and national levels, each offering opportunities to help shape our community’s future.

Montague’s government works best when residents stay informed, ask questions, and participate in the process. Whether you attend a selectboard meeting, volunteer on a committee, or simply take the time to vote, your involvement helps strengthen Montague.

I hope to use this quarterly column to keep residents informed about the work underway at Town Hall, explain what’s coming next, and highlight opportunities for public engagement. Thank you for taking an interest in your local government, and I look forward to working with community members as these projects continue to move forward.

Walter Ramsey is
Montague’s town administrator.
He lives in Turners Falls.

Montague Community Television News

Untold Power Beckons

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – MCTV needs you! We are looking to fill one seat on our board of directors. No experience is necessary, the commitment is low – just one night a month – and food and drink are provided.

Reach out by emailing a letter of interest to infomontaguetelevision@gmail.com, calling us up at (413) 863-9200, or stopping by the station at 34 Second Street to talk with Dean or Deirdre, Mondays through Fridays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

All of MCTV’s videos are online on our Vimeo page, which can easily be found by clicking the “Videos” tab on our website, MontagueTV.org. You can also find folders there directing you to all of our Montague and Gill selectboard recordings. If there is a particular video you would like to find, locate the small black magnifying glass below the title “Montague Community Television’s Videos” and click there. If you use the search bar at the top of the screen, you will search “all of Vimeo,” and you will have a harder time. Hope this helps!

much affordable housing should be required to meet the standard of “advantageous” or “highly advantageous” in that goal, as well as the desirability of mixed commercial/industrial and residential use.

Smith assured the board it was possible to revise the document in time to release it in August, with developer submittals due in October.

Land Donation

Anne Jarvis of Winchester, New Hampshire, has offered the town a 2-acre parcel between Route 2 and the Millers River. According to Smith, the parcel is used for parking by fly fishers, and abuts land Jarvis donated to the state Department of Conservation and Recreation.

The board asked Smith to tell Jarvis that the town is interested in acquiring the parcel, to contact the conservation commission about the proposed donation, and to get a cost estimate for surveying it.

Other Business

Smith told the selectboard that, after reviewing 16 applications for the information technology director position, the screening committee had interviewed four candidates and selected two finalists.

Returning for another meeting on August 3, the board interviewed Jared Barney and voted to hire him after learning that the other finalist had withdrawn his application.

The board decided to wait until it can meet jointly with the capital planning committee to decide about hiring Tighe & Bond for \$65,600 in design work for replacing the clarifier at the POTW#2 wastewater plant in Erving Center.

At the August 3 meeting, the board voted to engage the firm, for an amount not to exceed \$345,000, to design a roof replacement and heat pump installation at Erving Elementary School.

The board ratified new employment agreements with fire chief Philip Wonkka and police chief Robert Holst through June 2029.

The board voted to sign memoranda of understanding with Franklin County Solid Waste Management District for household hazardous waste collection; the hauling and disposal of solid waste, recyclables, bulky waste, and scrap metal; and the hauling and disposal of sludge.

As part of its annual reorganization, the board voted to retain Jacob Smith as its chair.



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Retiring deputy fire chief Amy Rice was honored for her 21 years of service to the Leverett fire department and the town.

LEVERETT from page A1

Leverett department – but that she was “ready to not get up in the middle of the night anymore.” She closed her remarks by saying that she was also grateful to the selectboard, the community, and her fellow town employees.

Roof Compromise

The selectboard voted unanimously to allow the Amherst-Pelham regional school district to use extra funding the town has pledged for the Amherst middle school roof to cover contingencies, but only for specific expenses the board approves.

The four towns that make up the district, which includes Leverett and Shutesbury, had voted to cover their shares of an estimated \$9.8 million for the project, a large part of which will be paid for by a Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) grant and a \$1.6 million donation from the town of Amherst – but a bid for the work came in roughly \$1 million lower.

According to district finance director Shannon Bernacchia, the MSBA asked to reclaim its share of the savings, but the district wanted to hold on to the towns’ full commitments as a “cautionary” measure, adding those funds to the roughly \$465,000 originally set aside for contingencies. Some of that had already been spent on an unforeseen asbestos issue, she said, but she did not expect that all of the “extra” funding would be needed, and assured the board that any unused funds would return to the towns.

Resident Richard Nathhorst argued against the request, saying that the original contingency funding should be enough and warning, based on his 30 years of experience managing capital projects at UMass Amherst, that “if there’s extra money there, they will find things that would be nice to-do’s.”

Finance committee member Steve Weiss questioned the accuracy of the original estimate, given that the district was now asking for more money.

Selectboard member Tom Hankinson commented that the towns in the district “operate based on good faith,” and that “this is another instance where we should assume [the district] will do the best they can to achieve the lowest possible cost” and return funds left over when the work is completed.

Politician

Corinne Coryat, a candidate for state representative in the 1st Franklin District, introduced herself as the former chief of staff for recently-retired representative Natalie Blais and said she would like to carry on Blais’s work if elected to fill her seat.

Coryat said she is pursuing a law degree at Western New England Law School, and possesses a “good skill set” for the position. She listed rural school funding reform and regional equity among her priorities, and said that climate change was a “lens” through which infrastructure and every other policy should be viewed.

Selectboard member Jed Proujansky expressed concern over “disproportionate” charter school funding and rising healthcare costs, and asked for Coryat’s thoughts. She replied that the state is “being asked to make some very difficult choices,” but that more investment should be made in public schools over charter schools, and that in the long term, changes to the state’s Chapter 70 funding formula are needed.

On health insurance, she said she is “absolutely there” as a supporter of single-payer insurance at the

national level, and that she and the legislature intend to do what they can for Massachusetts in the meantime.

Duffy asked about privacy and surveillance concerns, citing the widespread use of Flock cameras. Coryat said this was another national issue that was difficult to deal with at the state level. AI and privacy-related technology are rapidly changing fields, she said, and she would welcome expert help in drafting bills.

Hankinson asked if Coryat expected elections in Massachusetts to be “free and fair.”

“I hope so,” she replied, adding that she does not have a connection to “federal partners” who may feel differently, but that she is planning to vote in the primary on September 1, and hopes everyone else does.

Coryat faces one opponent, Lora Wondolowski, in the Democratic primary, and the party’s nominee will go on to face an Independent candidate, Amy Lavallee, in the general election in November.

Travel and Tourism

Friends of the North Leverett Sawmill (FONLS) president Don Robinson and treasurer Susan Lynton sought a letter of support from the town for a \$400,000-plus grant from the state Office of Travel and Tourism to repair a dam across the Sawmill River which is attached to the private organization’s historic sawmill.

Robinson said the grant would be “intended” to cover the entire cost of the repair, but that the group would not know for sure until it receives bids for the work. He added that the dam repair would go “a long way” toward maintaining the mill pond, and that the group has received a letter of support from the fire department stating the “criticality” of maintaining the pond for firefighting purposes.

Lynton added that the group also has letters of support from the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce and Historic Deerfield.

Weiss asked for clarification as to the ownership of the dam. Lynton seemed to indicate that there were nuances to the question, but Robinson replied that the dam was specifically included in the deed to the property, and that the FONLS now owned it and was responsible for its upkeep.

“If we fix it, we will be responsible,” said Lynton. The board signed a letter of support.

Other Business

Proujansky announced that a statewide group advocating for single-payer healthcare has asked town officials to request that the topic be included at an upcoming meeting of the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA). He reported that many at a recent meeting of the campaign were doubtful that the legislature will act against the interests of insurance companies, and expected a referendum will be needed.

He added that in his opinion, the MMA was “in lockstep” with the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association and was unlikely to “put the MIIA out of business, so to speak,” but having the issue on the MMA’s agenda will help build support.

The selectboard awarded the Leverett Village Co-op a one-day liquor license for a benefit concert on its lawn scheduled for Friday, August 7.

The board tasked itself with setting up a committee to screen applicants to replace police sergeant Steve Gould, who is retiring on August 14.

MONTAGUE REPORTER
SUMMER SCHEDULE:
VOL. 24 #33: AUGUST 20
VOL. 24#34: SEPTEMBER 3

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Left and right: The Gill historical commission's collection of artifacts, many of which are covered with plastic sheeting and a tent to protect them from the elements.

GILL from page A1

battlefield grant advisory board during extensive research on the massacre of 1676.

“Those musket balls, and everything else that they found, are someplace in Connecticut,” she said. She called the Riverside building “an ideal place” to exhibit them.

Participants also envisaged public gathering space, a farmers market, and a venue for local musicians and cultural events. “Senior cybersecurity tech tutor” Anne Wiley said she would like to see the space used for senior education events.

Finance committee member Tupper Brown said he had heard a “terrific heresy” suggesting the offices in the town hall could move into the Riverside building, the library move into town hall, and the historical commission move to the Slate Library building.

Several attendees said that even if the building had to be sold, they would like the town to keep the adjacent land and turn it into a park for the young families in the neighborhood. Sam Hawkin, who lives in the Riverside neighborhood with his family, said, “Riverside is, in some ways, this great outdoor space. But also, what outdoor communal space do we have? It’s literally just the roads.”

Others expressed worry that the property would become commercial or residential space if it was sold.

When Beverly Demars, who serves on the historical commission and the Gill Montague Council on Aging, asked the room how many people wanted to keep the building as town-owned property, nearly everyone raised their hand.

“Gill doesn’t have that many historical places left,” said Tomb. “The center of town all burned down at one time. There are a couple of buildings left, and that’s it. This is one of them.”

Tomb concluded: “If we tear it down, we’re not going to replace it with anything. It’s going to be gone forever.”

Repairs Needed

The biggest obstacle to using the building is an old, leaking roof, with asphalt shingles Ray Steele described as “potato chips.”

In addition to the roof, the town would need to make several other repairs for safety and accessibility, including installing new railings and fixing crumbling cement stairs.

Steele complained that money has been allocated for these repairs for years. Around \$20,000 is sitting in an account for stair repair and \$43,000 for a solar feasibility study on the roof, which selectboard chair John Ward has suggested could be used for more basic roof repairs.

“And how long has that money been waiting for a solar feasibility study, while we get a hole in the roof?” asked Steele.

Town administrator Ray Purington estimated six to eight years.

“That’s \$63,000 that’s been just sitting there, and not being used,” said Steele. “And the property goes down a little bit more.”

Several attendees expressed a willingness to fix the roof themselves, working as volunteers.

“The roof can be done,” said Steele, who was part of a crew that patched the leak months ago. “It can be done by volunteers. I know nobody likes to hear that, but you would certainly save a huge amount of money.”

“Nobody’s putting a roof up this year if it’s not done by us. Because the state doesn’t move that fast,” said selectboard member Charles Garbiel, who offered to help hammer in shingles himself. “If you think this is getting done before winter – the way the state moves, you’d be lucky if it’s done by winter of ’29.”



Left: Town administrator Ray Purington leads a tour into the Riverside municipal building’s cluttered and dismal basement.
Right: A model of the municipal building, not to scale, sits deteriorating inside it. The building served as the Riverside School from 1926 to 1974. “Unfortunately,” then-historical commission chair Alan Aldie wrote in 1993, “this building has never realized its potential to be of great service to Gill.”

Others warned this would risk injury and open the town to liability claims.

Tim Batchelder said he had worked with the state’s Department of Industrial Accidents for nine years, where he enforced workers’ compensation laws. “With a project like this, it does not matter that they’re volunteers,” he said. “You still have liability.”

He said if a volunteer were injured on the project, the town would potentially be responsible for the medical bills and workers’ compensation claims for the rest of that volunteer’s life.

“I’m gonna be the bad guy here,” town treasurer and finance committee member Peter Turban warned. He said that the roof repair could cost half a million dollars. At the same time, taxpayers would be paying for a new roof on the elementary school – and potentially part of the new building proposed for Franklin County Tech School.

“If we can get grants for all this, it’s great,” he said. “But you’ve gotta consider the cost now, too. Your taxes are gonna go up.”

Builder and Gill resident Stephen Greenwald estimated that even with prevailing wage laws, the roof should cost less than half a million.

Next Steps

Architect and Gill resident Rob Marcalow argued that the bigger questions about the building’s future use should not get in the way of urgent repair needs. “It’s really important that we separate that out, and move as quickly as we can,” he said.

The selectboard voted to create a “Riverside roof committee” to take the immediate next steps to get the roof repaired. Steele, Marcalow, Greenwald, Perry, and Garbiel were appointed.

A second committee is being formed to discuss the future use

of the structure, and prepare for a town meeting vote on whether to keep the building.

Ward said that if town meeting votes to sell the building, the roof repair would be a “sunk cost.” But, he pointed out, if those who spoke up to keep the building attended town meeting, then “the room is probably stacked to the point where the people that decided to do this are going to win the day.”

Other Business

The selectboard formally accepted a \$246,000 Unpaved Roads Equipment grant from the state Department of Transportation. The money will pay for a new front-end loader for the highway department.

The board approved a request from the highway department to buy a GPS receiver bundle from Land Logics Group. Highway superintendent John Miner said the receiver would be much more accurate than an iPhone or iPad, allowing the department to identify specific trees or manholes relevant to their work, instead of guessing. The cost of \$3,325 will be equally divided between the highway, sewer, and tree budgets, since each will use the equipment for mapping and locating.

Miner announced the town’s new woodchipper has arrived. Town meeting had approved spending \$71,050 for the equipment, but Miner said the actual cost came in nearly \$3,000 less.

The board declared the old 1985 chipper to be surplus, authorizing it to be sold in an online auction.

The board approved a request from the Riverside Water District to install a payment dropbox at the Riverside Municipal Building.

Tim Little was appointed to the sewer commission through June 2029, and James Asbel to the planning board through June 2028.

ROCK DAM from page A1

were dragged into whirlpools at the same location. Their deaths eventually led the Town of Montague to appoint a commission in the early 2000s to develop a safe public swim spot, but it was unsuccessful.

FirstLight Power, which owns the Turners Falls dam and canal and river bank at Rock Dam, agreed under a 2023 settlement to install new stairs and interpretive cultural signage at the site, which it identified as the “Cabot Woods fishing area,” as well as a portage around the falls as terms of its proposed renewed federal license to generate electricity using the river.

Signs currently at the site prohibit swimming and warn the public of the possibility of rapidly rising waters.



Town of Montague And Fire, Water, And Light Districts To Hold Talks On ‘Governance’

By MIKE JACKSON

The baroque system that keeps Montague’s two fire departments and two water departments governed by entities independent from town hall is in for a fresh look this fall.

Town administrator Walter Ramsey told the selectboard last week that a letter to town staff from the Turners Falls fire district prudential committee – which oversees the Turners Falls fire and water departments – had “started the conversation” about ways the various bodies might at least collaborate more.

Under what he has branded the “Village Services Sustainability Initiative,” the town administrator said he is drafting a white paper and has scheduled a meeting in early September to “lay it all out on the table” with the prudential committees of the Turners Falls fire and the Montague Center fire, water, and light districts.

“I don’t want to call it *consolidation*,” Ramsey said, “because that word carries its own baggage, and it shows there’s a specific end in sight.”

After Peter Lapachinski, a Turners Falls police sergeant, ousted an incumbent from the Turners Falls fire district prudential committee in April, he told the *Reporter* that the recent hiring of Luke Hartnett as fire chief in both districts had renewed talk about the complex structures, and he would “try to start the conversation” about combining them.

The Turners Falls fire district charges its residents, about three-quarters of Montague’s households, a property tax of \$2.42 per \$1,000 in valuation and runs a large department with professional, full-time, unionized firefighters. The Montague Center district, which runs a much smaller, volunteer force, charges \$0.90 per thousand to households in that village and Lake Pleasant.

Complicating the issue, the Turners district oversees a water department that serves most of the town including Lake Pleasant, where it owns considerable tracts of land.

Any major change to the system – such as dissolving the special districts, or merging them into a single special district still separate from the town – would require an act of the state legislature.

Selectboard member Marina Goldman was nominated to represent the board at the talks.

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MONTAGUE from page A1

“senior property tax work-off program.” This, he explained, would “allow residents 60 and over to perform services for the town in exchange for reductions to their property tax liability.”

Ramsey proposed reviewing the options with local organizations such as the Council on Aging, and said he could prepare a motion for the next special town meeting, which will probably be held in October, to “accept the statute.”

Ramsey stressed this would not actually create the program, as there are a range of options to choose from in terms of eligibility, how much of a write-off the town wants to offer, and who would administer the program. “A lot goes into planning it,” he said, adding that those decisions would probably fall on the selectboard.

The board voted to direct Ramsey to start the process.

Ramsey also updated the board on an effort he has branded the “Village Services Sustainability Initiative,” which will focus on the governance of the town’s independent districts – the Turners Falls fire district and the Montague Center fire, water, and light districts. A “collaborative working group” with representatives of these districts and the town, he said, will meet in early September (*see article, Page A6*).

Patches and Buttons

Urkiel reviewed summer road construction plans, including paving peripheral roads such as Randall Wood Drive, Old Stage, Kells, and Ripley roads, and “some of the alleys” in downtown Turners Falls. He mentioned patching portions of Millers Falls Road, and work on its intersection with Industrial Boulevard in conjunction with the Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA).

“There’s quite a bit involved,” he said, in the redesign of the two downtown traffic lights, which is being funded by a \$110,000 state grant. “It’s not just put up new lights – they’ve got to do a new control box, and some pedestrian crossing buttons and panels.”

Ramsey said the project, once designed, is on the town’s capital plan, and that he and assistant town administrator Chris Nolan-Zeller plan to apply to the state for “implementation funding.”

The redesign of the two downtown traffic lights is being funded by a \$110,000 state grant....

Once designed, Ramsey said, he and assistant town administrator Chris Nolan-Zeller plan to apply to the state for ‘implementation funding.’

Urkiel discussed the project to fix the small bridge over Goddard Brook north of Montague Center, primarily funded by a grant from the state Department of Transportation. He said the cost of the project, which should begin next summer, has been reduced to \$900,000 by planning only for a partial renovation. Swamp Road will be closed to through traffic during construction, and FRTA buses will be rerouted through South Street.

Part of the \$272,892 the town received under the state Winter Recovery Assistance Program this year,

Urkiel said, will be used to purchase salt, because “our shed’s a lot lower than it was last year at this time.” The funds will also be used for the work on Millers Falls Road and to replace plows on the department’s trucks.

Waste Management

After discussing a plan to purchase new inventory software and receiving the board’s input on the color of new street signs his department plans to install, Urkiel brought up the issue of an increase in tonnage of curbside trash pickup. One cause, he said, could be that the town’s new hauler, Casella, is more reliable, and residents feel more confident their trash will be picked up.

Revenue from trash stickers, Urkiel noted, had also increased, “so we’re making sure that we’re in a good place.”

Ramsey reported that over the past year the town came up \$19,000 short in its “tipping fees” and filled the gap with a reserve fund transfer, and said the same thing is likely to happen this year, so it might be time to revisit the price of the stickers.

The board voted to renew three agreements with the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District to monitor the Sandy Lane transfer station, organize hazardous waste and bulky waste collections, and oversee the hauling contract with Casella. Urkiel said the district was “fantastic to work with,” and that their only concern at the transfer station was buildup of the brush pile, which will probably need to be burned.

Kuklewicz said that issue had come up recently when he had held “office hours” at the station.

Urkiel gave a “first presentation” of a proposal to reconfigure the DPW staff. If the town leaves its second building maintenance position permanently vacant, he said, it could add a second “collections system operator” to help clean the sewers and map out the town’s sewer and stormwater drainage infrastructure. Cleaning and taking pictures of the sewers was dangerous work which requires a second pair of hands, he said, while building maintenance can easily be handled by grounds staff and light equipment operators.

The board did not take a vote on the proposal. Ramsey said the next step would be to write a job description and a memorandum of agreement with the DPW staff union, the United Electrical Workers.

Laundry Week

Nolan-Zeller brought the board a “long laundry list” of business, in Kuklewicz’s words. First up were contracts with the project manager, Downes Construction, and the architect, Schwartz/Silver Architects, for the construction of a new main library in Turners Falls. Nolan-Zeller said that after the town’s share of the funding was approved by a referendum in June, the state’s share was granted by the Board of Library Commissioners.

The selectboard authorized paying \$179,170 to Nunes and Sons Construction for building an access ramp at 174 Avenue A, as well as three change orders for various other aspects of the ongoing Avenue A Streetscape project, which is funded by federal community development block grants.

Nolan-Zeller updated the board on plans to upgrade the bus stop at the corner of Industrial Boulevard and to implement traffic-calming

measures in Montague Center. Both projects are targeted for this year, with the bus stop work done before school starts and traffic hopefully calmed sometime this fall.

Kitchen Up

Building inspector Bill Ketchen came before the board with an updated fee schedule for inspections as well as plumbing, gas, and electrical permits. He said the fees had not been revised since 2020, and that his department needs them to increase in order to cover its budget.

Ketchen said a number of local contractors have told him that Montague’s fees are “a lot cheaper than all the other towns that they’ve been working in,” and that a quick review of neighboring municipalities confirmed this. The proposed fees, he said, were “more in line with what everybody else around us is charging right now.”

Ketchen said a number of local contractors have told him that Montague’s fees are “a lot cheaper than all the other towns that they’ve been working in.”

“In the past, we have tried to keep them affordable to encourage people to pull permits,” Kuklewicz, who once served as Montague’s electrical inspector, told Ketchen. He noted that for larger projects, “like say a library or something,” the town would negotiate a fee agreement with the public entity overseeing the work.

The board voted to approve the new fees.

Other Business

Acting as the personnel board, Kuklewicz and Goldman approved a temporary shift of police patrol officer Joshua Lemay to a detective role for up to 60 days and appointed Adam Kleeberg as a mechanic at the Clean Water Facility. An agreement was also approved with the sergeants’ union over staffing changes at the upper levels of the police department, a part of chief Jason Haskins’s reorganization plan previously accepted by the selectboard.

Ramsey called on the board to advocate for reform of the formula by which the state reimburses municipalities for land it has taken off the tax rolls, known as payment *in lieu* of taxes (PILOT). Governor Maura Healey has established a commission to revisit the program, which is widely viewed as inequitable.

Ramsey said Franklin County towns are receiving approximately \$59 per acre each year, while Suffolk County towns including Boston get \$4,885 an acre.

Ariel Elan, a frequent observer of selectboard meetings, said she had given Kuklewicz information about PILOT reform during his office hours at the transfer station, and that while she was not going to go over all the details at the meeting, she found it “delicious information to dig into” and hoped the board would develop recommendations based on the town’s experience.

The board did not take a vote on the matter, though Kuklewicz said he supported “sending a note” to the state commission.

The selectboard’s next meeting will be held Monday, August 10.



Tip of the week ...

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**PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE
MONTAGUE CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

In accordance with the Mass. Wetlands Protection Act, M.G.L. Ch. 131, Sec. 40, the Montague Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing at **6:30 p.m. on Thursday, August 13, 2026** to review the **Notice of Intent NOI #2026-06**, filed by **Gary Houle** for the proposed construction of a new garage on a single family lot at **31-33 Randall Road (Parcel #21-0-141)** within the Riverfront Area of an unnamed brook.

A hybrid meeting will be held at the Montague Town Hall Annex, 1 Avenue A in Turners Falls, MA. Remote meeting login information and the filing are available for review at www.montague-ma.gov/calendar.

MONTAGUE PLANNING BOARD

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Montague Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing at **6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, August 25, 2026** in the Second Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall, 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls and via Zoom to review a Special Permit request filed by **Finn Cross** to allow the proposed operation of a dog daycare and dog training facility, under Sections 8.4.2, 8.4.5 and 9.2 of the Zoning Bylaw, located at **40-44 Industrial Blvd (Parcel #17-0-033)** Industrial (ID) Zoning District.

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

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Montague Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing at **6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, August 25, 2026** in the Second Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall, 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls and via Zoom to review an Application for Plan Approval Under Smart Growth Overlay 40R Districts, filed by **Franklin Hampshire Habitat for Humanity** to allow the proposed construction of six single-family homes and public parking area, on an approximate 0.654-acre lot, to be split into seven separate lots, under Section 10 of the Zoning Bylaw, located at **0 First Street (Assessor’s Map/Parcel 04-0-0031)** Neighborhood Business (NB) Zoning District & Smart Growth Overlay Zoning Sub-District B.

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

**Request for Qualifications – Town of Montague
OWNER’S PROJECT MANAGER
STRATHMORE MILL SITE CLEANUP PROJECT**

The Town of Montague will receive Responses from qualified individuals, partnerships, or firms for Owner’s Project Manager (OPM) Services for the bidding and construction phases of the Strathmore Mill Site Cleanup project. OPM services will commence immediately after contract award. Bidding is expected to take place in Fall 2026, with construction beginning in early 2027 and anticipated to be completed in 1 to 2 years.

RFQ documents are available at www.montague-ma.gov/BIDS, or by sending an email to chrisn@montague-ma.gov.

A Briefing Session and Site Tour will **not** be conducted prior to the deadline for submitting qualifications. After this deadline has passed, the Town will negotiate a scope and fee with the top-ranked respondent, during which a site walk and project briefing will be held with said respondent. If unable to negotiate a contract with the first-ranked selection, the Town will then commence negotiation with the second-ranked selection, and so on, until a contract is successfully negotiated and approved by the Town.

Responses to this RFQ are to be submitted to the Montague Selectboard’s Office no later than Thursday, August 27, 2026, at 12:00 p.m.

The Town reserves the right to cancel this RFQ, to reject any and all responses, to waive informalities, and to make an award as it believes is in the best interest of the Town.

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NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Ancient Buried Vessel, Poisoned Traps, Overgrown Graves, Parking Shortage

By JOSH HEINEMANN

Town facilities engineer Jim Slavas used the public comment time at the Wendell selectboard’s July 29 meeting to alert board members of a potentially troublesome underground oil tank that serves the highway garage and fire station furnace.

Slavas said he had found no record of monitoring the tank, or of its size, but that the tank was likely installed when the garage was built sometime in the 1980s. If the building’s architect is still alive and practicing, he may know.

The first step for the town, Slavas said, is to check the tank for leaks. The simplest method is to dip a stick, marked in eighth-inch increments, into the tank, and then dip it again 36 hours later. Without knowing the tank’s size or shape, this could only confirm the tank’s integrity, or lack thereof. Another possibility would be to check the unused dug well 50 feet away for contamination.

Slavas said excavating the tank and remediation of a significant leak would be a major expense, likely hundreds of thousand dollars. He asked when the tank was last filled, information that can be found from the bill paying record.

Erving resident Chris Joseph, in the room for another topic, said that as a programmer he has a record of underground tanks in Massachusetts, and he found no reference to this tank.

“It’s not in the capital plan,” finance committee chair Meagan Sylvia said, but the tank “should be replaced with a double-wall above-ground tank.” Selectboard chair Laurie DiDonato said the town should start budgeting for that.

Official Poisoning

Allison Wight, also speaking during the public comment time, said that she had seen poisoned traps outside the town hall, and said that mice poisoned by traps like that wander around weakened and are often eaten by raptors and other predators, even potentially her own dogs, and that the predators get poisoned in turn.

Wight said it seemed odd to poison wildlife in a town with federally-protected forest, and asked why traps were not being used. She said Good Neighbors has taken measures to remedy mouse access to their food stored at the building, and that they have someone there every day who could empty traps.

Slavas said that there is reluctance to empty traps at the library, and that it is not open every day, and that he has had to rewire the office building generator because of mouse damage. He did not mention at the meeting that he and then-town project manager Phil Delorey had to fix the heater in the office building meeting room, another mouse-related project.

Citizen Gabrielle Freels said the Environmental Protection Agency forbids using poisons where children are present, and that if the town is to use such things the public should be notified.

Town coordinator Kelly Tyler said she had spoken with an employee of Minuteman Pest Control and was told that they can use more environmentally-friendly methods, but that these are less effective.

Center District

Parking for events at the town center has been an ongoing concern. There are several spots on Center Street next to the south common, but when occupied they make the street a tight one-way fit. Parking has been allowed on the north common for special events, but it damages already-stressed grass on the common, or tree roots on the east side of Center Street.

DiDonato said she would plan a public input night about parking concerns. The library has limited parking, and the town office building has more, but it is not obviously a part of the town center.

Erving artist Chris Joseph asked to use the common and the town hall kitchen for an extended immersive art event over Labor Day weekend based at the Wendell Meetinghouse. He said he had already spoken with kitchen coordinator Sarah Wilson. Answering Wight’s concern about noise, he said the events would end at 5 p.m.

Selectboard member Paul Doud had concerns about people crossing Morse Village Road, and DiDonato had concern about parking, but the board approved Joseph’s requests.

Court Dorsey, president of the Friends of the Meetinghouse, had three requests for one day beer and wine licenses: one for Old Home Day on Saturday, August 8; one for Joseph’s event, We Mail Coconuts, on Sunday, September 6; and one on Thursday, September 10 for the Live Edge Comedy Club, organized by citizen Joe Laur. Dorsey also asked that the \$25 fee for the Old Home Day license be waived as it is a community event.

The board approved his requests, including the waiver.

Brian Anderson, an abutter to the Meetinghouse, said that he is not in love with the liquor licenses being granted at the Meetinghouse. Anderson said that in general the one-day beer and wine licenses have not been egregious, but that when he bought his property 20 years ago it was next to an abandoned church.

Long Walk

David Detmold Zoomed into the meeting to say he was dropping his plan to open the discontinued section of Morse Village Road for walkers on their way to Boston to submit resolutions for changing the Massachusetts state flag. He said his group would take a longer route over maintained roads, and would hold a small gathering on the common on the evening of August 2, but would not need it overnight, as they were planning to camp on Jonathan von Ranson’s lawn.

At the board’s previous meeting Detmold had offered to cut and move trees that had fallen across Morse Village Road to make it a usable footpath. Since the road passes Wendell’s smallpox cemetery, he thought that at least a path to that cemetery

was required by Massachusetts law, and offered to open one up.

Cemetery commissioner Sylvia Wetherby and historian Jean Forward had differing understandings as to whether it was a town cemetery – which would be legally entitled to a footpath – or a family cemetery, protected by Ina Phelps’s will which gave the land to Mass Audubon and which said nothing may be done to change the land’s natural progression.

According to *Greenfield Recorder* reporter Dominic Poli, Mass Audubon told him the cemetery was an easement of town-owned land granted to Jabez Sawyer’s family to bury the family’s smallpox victims, and was therefore a town cemetery.

Detmold reiterated his offer to clear trees in the cemetery so they do not fall and knock over headstones, in consultation with Mass Audubon. He also offered other work in the town, such as in the community garden, as compensation for the town’s hospitality toward the walkers. He assured Wight they would not be noisy.

Other Business

Town facilities manager Stephen Broll said he was preparing a list, in conversation with department heads, of town properties and their relative need for attention. He said he could offer a condensed version at this meeting or a full version at the selectboard’s August 26 meeting.

Wetherby said she could be flexible meeting with him. Doud said he would prefer the full list, with priorities, on August 26.

Freels and Anderson both voiced their support for Chris Kranz, the only declared candidate thus far for the open seat on the selectboard, in contrast to a number of comments on the townwide email listserv that questioned him.

DiDonato reported that Good Neighbors did not receive a grant that would have paid for a replacement generator at the town hall, as they do not own the building. Other possible approaches to getting a generator grant could be to tie the town hall with the police station next door, or to consider designating it as an emergency shelter.

DiDonato said the conservation commission has renewed its request for the help of town counsel in their dealings with Wendell Solar LLC.

WENDELL CONSERVATION COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Wendell Conservation Commission will hold a virtual Public Hearing under MGL, Ch. 131 S. 40 of the Wetland Protection Act and the Wendell Wetlands Protection Bylaw to consider a Notice of Intent filed by Corey Schutzman of New England Power Company for reconstruction of Wendell Depot #705 substation at **431 Wendell Depot Road** and for underground distribution line construction within Wendell Depot Road and West Orange Road. The Hearing will commence at **6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 18, 2026**, on Zoom only.

To join the hearing, please use this link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6272628852?omn=83249983146>
Shorter URL: www.tinyurl.com/WendellSubstation

COMPOST from page A1

specially for compost. The commissioners said the town had paid the company a small fee at first, but the bills stopped arriving.

“That was very cool,” de Roode said. “It’s too bad for a town without a lot of resources.”

FCSWMD executive director Jan Ameen told the *Reporter* that the Orange and New Salem transfer stations switched from Clear View Composting to the Compost Cooperative last year. Wendell and Warwick were still relying on Clear View when the business’s proprietor, 70-year-old Richard Innes, passed away on July 6.

“Rick died recently, and it doesn’t appear that there is anyone taking over the compost operation or business,” Ameen said.

According to an obituary published by Witty’s Funeral Home, Innes graduated from Harvard University in the 1980s with a master’s degree in public policy, energy, and the environment. He went on to work for the city of Boston as a recycling coordinator and helped start the city’s first curbside recycling program. He moved to Orange in the mid-2000s to found Clear View, which he ran for about 20 years.

“Rick Innes was a pioneer in waste diversion in Massachusetts,” FCSWMD program director Amy Donovan told the *Reporter*. “Since 2008, Clear View Composting hauled and processed compostable material from Swift River Elementary School, helping the school reduce waste considerably. Clear View also hauled and processed the organic material from the Warwick Community School, the Town of Athol transfer station, Quabbin Harvest Coop, and the Garlic & Arts Festival.”

According to Donovan, 15 of the 19 municipal transfer stations in Franklin County now host composting programs, and almost all rely on the Compost Cooperative to haul food waste to Martin’s Farm in Greenfield for processing. (Though the *Montague Reporter* reported in early 2025 that the farm was for

sale, Donovan said the Martin family has moved back to the area and is committed to its operation.)

The FCSWMD assists towns in setting up these programs and compost hauling logistics. According to Ameen, Casella Waste declined to offer Wendell or Warwick compost collection dumpsters because the towns are outside the company’s coverage area.

In an email to the transfer station and highway departments, Ameen suggested WRATS purchase a large fenced dog kennel from Home Depot similar to the one the town of Gill uses for its municipal compost.

“A lot of people can’t compost at home because of the bears,” de Roode said. He added that one was seen inside the bulky waste container a few weeks ago, but WRATS has not had too many ursid issues since.

In November 2022, MassDEP instituted a ban on the disposal of “commercial organic material” in landfills. The new regulations make an exception for private residences, and only apply to entities disposing of more than one half-ton of food or vegetative waste per week. They also ban the landfilling of textiles, footwear, and mattresses.

The Salvation Army removed its clothing donation bin from WRATS last year, according to de Roode, leaving Wendell residents with no legal way to dispose of fabrics or shoes unfit for reuse.

Asked whether WRATS could set up an independent onsite composting operation, de Roode, Ameen, and Donovan said that state regulations and the infrastructure necessary for such a program would be prohibitive.

“It’s not feasible,” Ameen said. “This type of food waste requires a commercial operation with windrows, wood chips, and turning equipment.”

The phone number and email address associated with Clear View Composting were out of order as of press time. Innes’s obituary asks that donations in his memory be made to the Quabbin Harvest Food Coop in Orange.



The presence of bears around the Wendell Recycling and Transfer Station, such as this black bear spotted rooting through the bulky waste disposal bin on a Saturday afternoon in late June, poses a challenge to collecting compost at the station.

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Above: The view of Turners Falls, and both bridges into it, from the so-called “bypass stretch” of the Connecticut River.

BOOK REVIEW

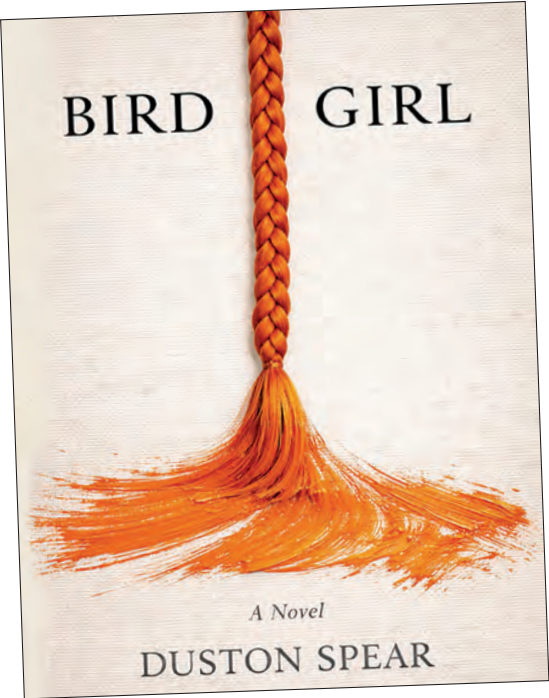
Duston Spear, *Bird Girl* (Black Rose Writing, 2026)

By LEE WICKS

MONTAGUE CENTER – When I read the last sentence of *Bird Girl* by Duston Spear, I immediately went back to the first page. Starting again, filled with feelings of goodwill, awe, and anger at some of the characters, I was ready to succumb to the “braided” story about a talented woman who becomes an assistant and muse to a well-known SoHo artist, sublimating her own ambitions to his whims until she allows him to cut off her signature red waist-length braid in service to his art.

If you are drawn to stories about talented women who sacrifice themselves to male egos and ultimately find exquisite revenge; if you are nostalgic about SoHo in the gritty Seventies, and the artists who dwelled in the old factory buildings behind black-painted windows so the police would not know they were living there; if you like a touch of Southern Gothic in your literature and don’t mind digressions into childhood stories of rivers, mud, and innocence, you will savor *Bird Girl*.

The novel is set in New York City and in western Massachusetts, with occasional stories from a child-



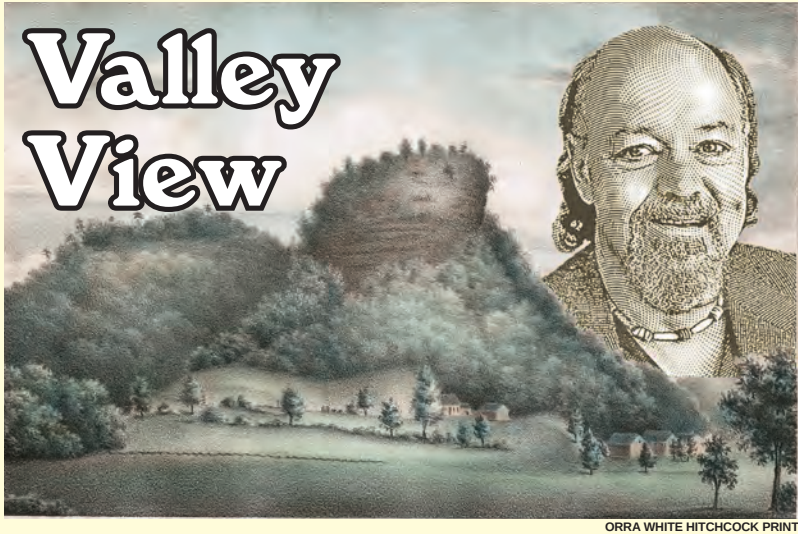
hood in rural Virginia. Though it’s fun for a person who lives locally to recognize all the references to place and culture, a reader from afar will get the contrast between the gray of the city and the green of farm fields in the spring and enjoy the layered descriptions that reveal the writer as a visual artist who now uses words to create a picture of a time, a place, an indomitable woman, and her sustaining friends.

Duston Spear, who lives in Montague Center, is a represented artist whose work has been shown at galleries and is part of museum collections. When she writes about the politics of gallery owners, critics, and artists vying for attention, she’s in familiar territory.

In *Bird Girl*, her first novel, Spear takes possession of each location, and her narrator Rebekah Hunnicut feels completely believable and trustworthy.

Rebekah, nicknamed “Bird Girl” by her grandmother, travels from Virginia to New York City to attend art school. With newly-conferred certificates, “as useless as the napkins our little glasses sat on,” she and her roommate Cornelia visit a performance art opening in SoHo for the cheap wine and free appetizers. They eat

see **BIRD GIRL** page B6



A Last Gasp Upstream

By GARY SANDERSON

GREENFIELD – A small, insignificant number listed in a thin column it was. Yet, it immediately captured my attention.

I spotted it while skimming through the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)’s last 2026 Connecticut River Basin Fishway Passage Counts that arrived in my inbox on July 10. There, in vertical column six, labeled “Atlantic Salmon,” it was revealed that 10 of our river’s doomed migratory fish had passed the Holyoke dam on upriver spring spawning runs aimed at cobble-bedded, nursery tributaries, many of which exist right here in Franklin County. Included among them are large rivers like the Deerfield and Green, smaller ones like the Sawmill and Fall, and too many cold, clear mountain feeder streams to name.

By that date, only one of those salmon had been spotted migrating past Turners Falls, and none had passed Vernon, Vermont. That doesn’t appear to have changed since.

So, do the simple math. That leaves nine salmon most likely holed up in a stream near you. Which doesn’t mean anglers should get out there, rod in hand, in pursuit of the king of North American freshwater gamefish. Salmon are still off limits to anglers wetting their lines in the Connecticut River Basin.

My immediate internal question was this: Where did those 10 salmon come from, and why did they choose the Connecticut River?

Could it possibly have been pure, laudatory, last-breath survival instinct in a pathetic struggle against what appears to be inevitable extinction on a warming, burning, melting, blistering planet? Or maybe just a case of the migrants carrying a faint homing instinct to the Connecticut River from distant ancestors? Then again, perhaps they just took a random, exploratory turn after encountering polluted or obstructed paths to the natal streams imprinted in their DNA.

All of the above were potentialities considered before I reached out for an expert answer.

Enter Corey Eddy, Ph.D., a fish biologist and field dive officer for FWS’s Connecticut River Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office at the Conte Lab in Sunderland. He has been my contact this year for everything anadromous in our Connecticut Valley, following the spring retirement of longtime Connecticut River Coordinator Ken Sprankle, who was succeeded by Cathy Bozek.

What I learned from our new man was news to me. I had known that the formal, coordinated, federal and state initiative to restore a self-sustaining Atlantic salmon run to the Connecticut River ended on all fronts in 2012. What I didn’t know, or had forgotten (more doubtful), was that one honorable holdout, the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (CT DEEP), still oversees a “scaled-down legacy program committed to genetic preservation of the Connecticut River salmon strain and limited tributary stocking.”

When queried about the 10 salmon through Holyoke this year, Eddy said his best guess was that they were CT DEEP fish which “missed their turn into the Farmington River” and ventured farther upstream.

Eddy went on to say that CT DEEP annually stocks 200,000 to 300,000 salmon into the mainstem and west branch of the Farmington, adding that the Kensington State Fish Hatchery is charged with raising fish in an effort to preserve the genetic integrity of the endangered Connecticut River strain created during the decades-long, defunct, federal Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program.

“With the low river flows we witnessed throughout the watershed this year,” Eddy wrote in response to my email query, “it’s possible there wasn’t enough water moving down the Farmington to entice these salmon back home.

see **VALLEY VIEW** page B4

Wordly Matters

The First Wordly Matters: Trivia Edition!

By CHARLOTTE MURTISHAW

FRANKLIN COUNTY – Test yourself or a friend on a little bit of history, a little grammar, a little trivia, and more with this week’s column. Answers follow below.

Without further ado...

1. Can you place the following adjectives in the “correct” order?

a) Young
b) Wonderful
c) Giant
d) Red

2. Which of the following was originally used as a term of endearment?

a) Bunion
b) Butter
c) Bun
d) Bully

3. Which of the following is a strange, but common, component of English?

a) Dummy pronoun
b) Idiot’s tittle
c) Imposter comma
d) The fool rule

4. Can you place the following popular word games and puzzles in order of their creation?

a) Boggle
b) Wordsearches
c) Scrabble
d) Crosswords

5. What event prompted the New York Times to begin publishing its iconic crossword puzzle?

a) The 1926 birth of NYT editor Arthur Hays Sulzberger’s son Arthur Ochs “Punch” Sulzberger – it was against policy to publish a per-

sonal announcement in the paper, so he found a clever workaround
b) The Cold War, in 1954, as part of a cultural push to encourage education and general knowledge among Americans
c) The American Library Association’s 50th anniversary conference in 1926, which led to a determinedly nerdy working group lobbying the paper for a crossword
d) The 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor, in order to provide a break between articles for stress relief

6. Which of the following did not appear among the top 10 Google search keywords in the past year?

a) world cup
b) weather
c) peace
d) facebook

see **WORDLY** page B10

Pets of the Week



‘BOOGIE BOY & DISCO DAVE’

Meet Boogie Boy and Disco Dave, a one-month-old bonded pair of guinea pigs. Guinea pigs are social animals and need to be kept in pairs or groups to thrive. These two are working on socialization with people. Though they are nervous, they are getting used to handling. They will require at least a 6.5-foot-square cage.

Boogie Boy and Disco Dave,

like most of our small animals, are in foster care, so if you’re ready to adopt and want to learn more about them, call the Dakin Humane Society at (413) 781-4000 ext. 1, or email springfield@dakinhumane.org. The adoption fee is \$35 for the pair, but expect to spend around \$100 on housing and supplies to prepare. If you already have a cage, please send a picture of it when you inquire.



By DOMINI LENZ

Visiting Springfield for a business trip, I decide during some of my down time to visit one of the area’s lesser known (or perhaps just less appreciated) attractions – the Westfield War Pagoda.

Constructed using federal funding in 1987 during the waning years of the Cold War, the War Pagoda was intended as a celebration of American greatness during a time when our country was still struggling with the particular brand of divisive politics popularized by the left during the Vietnam War. In the interest of avoiding losing another engagement due to such self-defeating sentiments among the general population, the Reagan administration funded the construction of a series of parks throughout the country aimed at cultivating a less subversive attitude toward future conflicts.

Nestled in a patch of previously disused woods just south of the Westfield-Barnes Regional Airport, the War Pagoda immediately impresses visitors with its enormous field of stone spikes, which jut from the ground at irregular angles. Visible over the treetops from the parking area, some of the spikes are as much as 100 feet tall.

Crossing through a stand of trees, I come to a scorched bowl-shaped clearing totally devoid of plant life. The gray, rocky earth is punctuated by the spikes and the Pagoda itself, a tight group of four Levittown-style houses at the bottom of the bowl which serve as living quarters for the five dozen or so Evangelical monks who maintain the grounds. In the center of the houses stands an enormous flagpole as tall as the spikes, the red, white, and blue waving steadfastly in the gentle breeze.

Since its construction the War Pagoda has relied on locals donating their meat scraps. These are dumped in a central collection bin by the parking lot, then distributed by the monks to various piles throughout the clearing. This produces a particular smell, referred to affectionately by nearby Westfield residents as “the smell of freedom.” Its purpose is to attract an unending procession of carrion-eating animals, which the monks are tasked with killing by hand and which, when not immediately needed for food, add to the piles.

The symbolism here is palpable: our military’s job is viewed by some as unpleasant, even barbaric, but it is their unwavering dedication which allows us to con-

LOCAL ATTRACTIONS

The Westfield War Pagoda



tinue to enjoy the fruits of their labor – and, indeed, the fruits of our own.

Wandering the grounds I cannot help but feel a renewed appreciation for the struggles our troops have faced down and conquered throughout our nation’s history. Watching one bleeding monk desperately struggle with three coyotes over a half-eaten coyote carcass stirs in me a deep, churning sense of patriotism. This young man looks about the age many would be starting college – more cosmopolitan types might even suggest that would have been better for him. But looking in his eyes and seeing the primal fear that drives us all to greatness reminded me that the most potent wisdom cannot be found in a book. It is only on the battlefield that a man can truly come to know himself, and to understand his place in the world.

A deep, piercing roar shakes the ground. The coyotes scatter. The young monk scrambles to his feet, turns to the north, and salutes. The trees sway violently and the flag cracks like a whip in a torrent of superheated air as the F-35A Lightning II blasts off into the Massachusetts sky.

Twice as powerful and twice as loud as its predecessor, the F-15 Strike Eagle, the F-35 is the most advanced aircraft in history, with a battle-tested kill ratio of 15:1. God help you if you make yourself its target. But for the loyal, law abiding Americans of Westfield, this angel of death is a protector and an ever-present reminder of the security of their place in the world.

A second and then a third jet take flight, barely audible over the ringing in my ears. Watching these beautiful craft ascend fills me with feelings I cannot begin to describe.

Apart from the casino one doesn’t often think of Springfield as a tourist destination, but this summer I will be driving the family out, renting a room at the MGM, and taking my children to see this monument to the freedoms so many now take for granted. I encourage my readers to visit, and to bring their families as well – it is the duty of every parent to ensure the light of patriotism burns on in the next generation. God bless this great nation, and a happy Fourth of July to all those who have served.

Domini Lenz (a writer of fiction) lives in Greenfield.

Senior Center Activities
AUGUST 10 THROUGH 21

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 8/10 9 a.m. Good for U 10 a.m. Seated Fitness 12 p.m. Pitch 1 p.m. Yoga Tuesday 8/11 9 a.m. Stretch and Balance 10 a.m. Line Dancing 11 a.m. Social Stringer Wednesday 8/12 9 a.m. Interval Training 10 a.m. Chair Aerobics 11:30 a.m. Bingo Thursday 8/13 9 a.m. Barre Fusion 10 a.m. Pilates Flow Friday 8/14 8:30 a.m. Quilting / Open Sew Monday 8/17 9 a.m. Good for U 10 a.m. Seated Fitness 12 p.m. Pitch 1 p.m. Yoga Tuesday 8/18 9 a.m. Stretch and Balance 10 a.m. Line Dancing 11 a.m. Social Stringer 12 p.m. Bill Nolan Painting Wednesday 8/19 9 a.m. Interval Training 10 a.m. Chair Aerobics 11:30 a.m. Bingo Thursday 8/20 9 a.m. Barre Fusion	10 a.m. Pilates Flow Friday 8/21 8:30 Quilting/Open Sew GILL and MONTAGUE The Gill-Montague Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls is open Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information, please call 863-9357. Monday 8/10 10:15 a.m. Aerobics 11 a.m. Chair Exercise 12 p.m. Pot Luck Lunch 1:15 p.m. Fire Safety w/ Geoff Ellis Tuesday 8/11 9 a.m. Chair Yoga 12:30 p.m. Tech Tuesday 3 p.m. Tai Chi Wednesday 8/12 Foot Clinic by Appointment 10 a.m. Outdoor Yoga at the Discovery Center 4 p.m. Mat Yoga Thursday 8/13 10:30 a.m. Senior Farm Share 1 p.m. Ice Cream Social 1 p.m. Pitch Friday 8/14 10:15 a.m. Aerobics 11:15 a.m. Chair Exercise 2 p.m. Chair Dance 4 p.m. Computer Class (pre-reg) Monday 8/17 10:15 a.m. Aerobics 11 a.m. Chair Exercise Tuesday 8/18 9 a.m. Chair Yoga 11 a.m. Money Matters
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12:30 p.m. Tech Tuesday 3 p.m. Tai Chi Wednesday 8/19 9 a.m. Veterans’ Agent 10 a.m. Outdoor Yoga at the Discovery Center 10:15 a.m. Aerobics 11 a.m. Chair Exercise 1 p.m. Parking Lot Food Pantry 4 p.m. Mat Yoga Thursday 8/20 10:30 a.m. Senior Farm Share 1 p.m. Pitch Friday 8/21 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 18. Luncheons are held on the fourth Friday of each month at town hall. For more information, contact coa@leverett.ma.us or (413) 548-1022, or check the town newsletter or the LeverettConnects listserv. WENDELL Foot care clinic is the first Wednesday of each month. The next clinic is September 2. Call Katie Nolan at (978) 544-2306 for info or appointments. For Senior Health Rides, contact Nancy Spitfle at (978) 544-6760.

TELEVISION
Strange New Worlds, Season 4

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI



GREENFIELD – I got really interested in seeing Season 4 of *Star Trek: Strange New Worlds* because of various things shown in the trailer. These include more interactions between Spock and Kirk, played by Ethan Peck and Paul Wesley, coming up. It’s like they are slowly and officially building the friendship between these two men.

It looked like more stuff would show up that might interest me, including a nice appearance of dinosaurs in the first episode. Scotty is still around, now officially part of the *Enterprise*’s crew, and an additional Vulcan is on the ship, which should not be boring to watch.

I found that the premiere on July 23, which turned out to be a time-travel episode, could have been better, but I am looking forward to other things that might come. The show has taken a step closer to things on the *Enterprise* looking more familiar to viewers. One interesting spoiler about the first episode is that Una, played by Rebecca Romijn, gets some career development.

A preview showcasing the rest of the season showed me what kind of adventures we are going to see next, and I searched online for hints about the show’s next storylines. I found one that suggests that one episode will be an *Enterprise* ghost story. A ghost story on a starship is a good fit.

Another kind of spoiler, which could be helpful with my desire to know what storylines are to come, is in the season’s episode titles. Some are quite interesting. One, “Tomorrow’s Enterprise,” sounds like it could be like the episode “Yesterday’s Enterprise” from *Star Trek: Next Generation*. Another called “The Griffin Incident” sounds like it could be the ghost story episode.

One other thing I discovered online is that Season 4 will have storylines focused on certain characters’ stories. Being focused on, for example, Una for one story, is one way to go. Or maybe the ship’s security officer, La’An will, be at the center of another story. It’s not like they haven’t done that before. It could be very enjoyable – it depends on who your favorites are in this show.

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LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here's the way it was on August 4, 2016: News from the Montague Reporter archive.

Help Wanted: Apply Within

At the July 25 Montague selectboard meeting, longtime town administrator Frank Abbondanzio announced he plans to retire December 6. Abbondanzio held the position from 1980 to 1992, worked in the town of Lee for five years, and then returned in 1998, for a total of 30 years in Montague.

“I have been fortunate to witness and play a role in the growth and transformation of our community,” he wrote. “Over the years many positive and dramatic events have taken place.”

Abbondanzio's retirement leaves Montague with a formidable number of positions to fill before the end of this year. Water Pollution Control Facility superintendent Robert Trombley's retire-

ment took place in June, and longtime treasurer/tax collector Patricia Dion will retire November 30.

Erving Dream Moves Toward Reality

The Erving Riverfront Park will break ground on August 20, with construction to start in September. The 14-acre park along the Millers River will serve Erving, as well as the entire region and state, for recreation and conservation.

The Usher Mill re-use committee was instrumental over the last five years in obtaining a highly competitive \$400,000 grant from the state Division of Conservation Services, with a required \$400,000 match from Erving residents.

The committee envisions the park hosting farmers markets and concerts, community garden space, and access to the river, as well as spurring community involvement and economic development.

20 YEARS AGO

Here's the way it was on July 27, 2006: News from the Montague Reporter archive.

Pipe Down

The Montague selectboard has scheduled a hearing to address allegations of chronic, excessive, and unnecessary noise in the downtown business district.

The hearing comes in response to a letter sent this week by Christopher Janke, an owner of Suzee's

Third Street Laundry. Janke voiced dismay over a number of downtown noise sources, and was especially critical of the volume of late-night noise generated by Yesterdays, also on Third Street.

Janke said he felt police noise measurements do not always reflect actual noise levels. “I don't want to be negative about the town,” Janke said late Wednesday. “I just really hope that town officials do the right thing. I've been frustrated with the pace of action on this.”

140 YEARS AGO

Here's the way it was on July 28 and August 4, 1886: News from the Turners Falls Reporter archive.

Turners Falls and Vicinity

Blueberries are very plentiful, of choice quality, and sell for eight cents a quart. There is also a good supply of raspberries, and the plains have yielded their full share of blackberries this summer.

The upper suspension bridge will be planked with 3½ inch spruce. The work will be under the superintendence of Selectman John Clark of Gill.

Fred Perry, who is a clerk on the drive, has arrived in town. The outdoor exercise has improved his health very much, and he is fat and jolly.

Lawyer McIlvene and wife are rustivating on the Cape.

The fact that there are five Sundays in August makes the ministers smile.

Charles Schneider, the K street bottler, is doing a thriving trade these days in the milder beverages. He not infrequently disposes of 225 cases a day of birch beer, soda and sarsaparilla, but averages 115 cases per day. He pays about \$500 a year

for bottles alone.

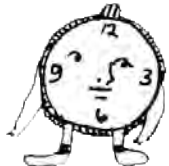
J.P. Felton recently killed four calves raised by O. & E. Bardwell, of Shelburne, whose total dressed weight was 2253 lbs. The oldest were a pair of twins 9½ months old, which dressed, one 628 pounds, the other 608.

We notice that in all the towns of the county copies of the Laws and Resolves of the last legislature are given out to the public, by the proper officials. This town always seems to be left out in the cold when the Laws, etc., are distributed, and in 14 years this office has been favored only once with a copy. Probably, because Montague has got along well enough without reference to laws, the powers that be, fancy that it would be a waste of material to give out the chunks of congealed wisdom promiscuously.

Western railroad rates have been reduced so that tickets can be bought to Minneapolis, Council Bluffs and Kansas City for \$25, and to points further west there is a corresponding reduction.

The small boy and the green apple have already begun to grow acquainted.

The summer is waning fast.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Bats, Cows, Pigeon, Skunk Rampage; Cat, Fox, Deer Do Not; Roads Flood; Juvenile Flees; Swimmer Dies at Rock Dam

Monday, 7/20

1:56 p.m. Officers waved down by a man on the side of Montague City Road. Party was asking for a ride to High Street. Advised party that he was already at a bus stop and the bus will come by in a few minutes.

8:14 p.m. 911 caller states that her husband works maintenance at the paper mill building and advised her that two people had broken into the facility and were looking around. Caller states her husband has video footage of this and that the involved parties are walking up the hill near the location. Officer located involved individuals on Canal Street. Both parties Mirandized. Report taken. Requesting trespassing charges be filed.

Tuesday, 7/21

9:14 a.m. Report of dead cat on the side of Millers Falls Road near Zack's Auto. Animal control officer (ACO) has taken the cat to the shelter, in case anyone calls. It is a black cat with a green collar and will be kept for seven days.

12:41 p.m. Report of a sick fox in the Industrial Loop Boulevard area. Info forwarded to ACO.

10:02 p.m. Caller reports she has locked herself and her dog in the basement because there is a bat upstairs. States she contacted her landlord, who told her to trap the bat. No ACO on duty. Advised caller to open doors and windows and let the bat outside. Caller advises she is nervous about being bitten, but if she is, she will go to the hospital. Advised caller that landlord can deal with issue once they return to the property and that the ACO will be on duty at 8 a.m tomorrow.

11:11 p.m. Caller states that there are three or four cows in the middle of Wendell Road; concerned that there could be an accident if someone is speeding down the road. Officer drove length of road and didn't locate any cows.

Wednesday, 7/22

8:47 a.m. Domesticated white pigeon blocking traffic in the crosswalk at Avenue A and First Street. Officer requesting ACO. No response; message left. Bird remains in grass near hedge on Discovery Center property; doesn't appear to be able to fly.

9:23 a.m. FRTA employee requesting to speak with an officer about a recently terminated employee who has been making threats. Advised of civil options, including a trespass order. Party just looking to have on record at this time.

6:11 p.m. Caller reports that a deer was hit by a car at Routes 47 and 63 last week; the carcass is still there and is starting

to smell, and there are vul- tures in the area landing on people's homes. Message left for DPW.

9:33 p.m. 911 caller reporting eight to ten cows in the roadway on Wendell Road; he almost hit them. Cows returned home. Contacted owner of cows to advise of past two complaints. Owner states he will attempt to fix the fence again.

10:30 p.m. 911 caller from Old Sunderland Road reporting an oil spill in her basement. Checked with TF fire department; they advise she will need to contact the oil company and that fire should be toned to make sure the rest of the house is unaffected. Transferred to Shelburne Control.

Thursday, 7/23

9:14 a.m. Officer flagged down by passerby stating male party was in people's backyards at Morris Avenue and Turners Falls Road. Officer spoke with male party; he stated he was looking for a friend's house and didn't know the area. Male reported injury to his finger and requested a courtesy transport to Baystate Franklin Medical Center (BFMC), which was provided.

9:42 a.m. Assisting with a bat in a house on Montague Street.

4:14 p.m. 911 call from FRTA dispatcher who advises that a driver advised him that someone is asleep in a vehicle on the General Pierce Bridge. Shelburne Control advising running vehicle located on Turners Falls-Gill Bridge with someone inside who appears to be passed out and unresponsive. Officer advises Narcan administered. Officer requesting Rau's for a tow and following ambulance to BFMC. A 42-year-old Turners Falls man was arrested and charged with possession of a Class B drug and possession/purchase of drug paraphernalia with intent to distribute.

Friday, 7/24

9:53 a.m. 911 report of brush fire on the railroad tracks near First Avenue. Transferred to Shelburne Control, who are reaching out to the railroad.

5:03 p.m. Caller reporting smoke coming from area of Lake Pleasant near where the FD was dealing with brush fires earlier. Transferred to Control.

9:04 p.m. 911 caller reporting a male party on East Main Street "freaking out" and "tweaking." Second caller reports someone approached him and complained about the male party having an open container. Officer providing courtesy transport to Avenue A. Male party is agitated, but no open container observed.

Saturday, 7/25

12:05 p.m. Caller from the farmers market reports that a male party came up to her booth and said that he wanted to recruit people to go to the Rod & Gun Club. When asked why, he stated "so he can murder people." Caller is very upset and wants the man to leave the area. Per director of market, male party has been verbally trespassed and moved along for the day.

4:02 p.m. Caller reporting homeless people in Peskeompskut Park; believes there is human excrement near the gazebo. Officers will check location in a bit. 4:44 p.m. Franklin County Regional Housing Authority advises water is leaking from an apartment in the Crocker Building. Caller requested to gain access to the involved apartment, but the tenant denied access. Caller states he can hear running water inside the apartment, which the tenant denied. Officer requesting ambulance to location for patient evaluation. Patient with AMR.

4:47 p.m. Agitated caller states he was at the gazebo in Peskeompskut Park and a female pushed him and punched him in the arm. Officer responding to female's residence to attempt to make contact. Officer advises they spoke to both parties about their harassment prevention order rights. Parties separated for the day. Nobody requesting to press charges at this time.

5:50 p.m. Frantic 911 caller with several individuals yelling and screaming in the background advises that an individual who is swimming in the river off Migratory Way is now missing. Caller states involved male is roughly 20 or 21 years old and did not appear injured when he vanished in the water. Shelburne Control updated and advised. Advised caller to head to the road, flag down officers, and lead them to the location. Caller stayed on line until PD arrived. Officer advises female on scene is having a panic attack. Control updated and advised. Officer advises male has been extracted from the water and is currently on the beach. Officer requesting additional ambulance for female with an asthma attack. Northfield Ambulance responding. Medical examiner's office advises male was pronounced deceased at 7:18 p.m.

Sunday, 7/26

3:02 a.m. Caller from Cumberland Farms states he is being harassed by a group of intoxicated teens for not letting them use the bathroom. White truck in parking lot. Officer states truck broken down at entrance

awaiting AAA.

6:28 a.m. Caller states there is smoke in a wooded area off Eleventh Street around a transformer blowing. TFFD responding.

11:29 a.m. Three 911 calls reporting accident at Avenue A and Seventh Street. Vermont operator has status of "not eligible" in Vermont. One patient refused transport and another was transported. Investigated. One driver charged with failure to stop/yield, negligent operation, and unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle.

3:03 p.m. Caller states that a vehicle was doing burnouts at Old Northfield Road and Turners Falls Road earlier; described as a black car, low to the ground. Referred to an officer.

6:05 p.m. Report of cows in roadway near South Prospect Street and Mormon Hollow Road. Units checked location; unable to locate any cows.

6:39 p.m. Upset and concerned caller advises a motorcycle/dirtbike has been going up and down the Turnpike Road and Sandy Lane area, making a startling amount of noise. Referred to an officer.

Monday, 7/27

4:38 a.m. Caller started yelling about her phone and how the company is not listening to her; she would like to speak to an officer. Called back stating she now wants an officer to come to her home to try and help her. Told caller we are not the phone company and we don't do that. Referred to an officer.

11:07 a.m. Caller states she was walking past the park and her dog defecated; she put it in a bag, threw the bag on the ground, and continued on to the store, planning to grab it on her way back. She was observed doing this by a male who confronted her and made her feel harassed. Officer asked caller if maybe carrying it to the plaza and disposing of it in a trash can outside the store would have been a better idea. Caller did not like that suggestion and walked away. Advised male party to just call the PD when he observes this and not create a scene by confronting the person.

11:24 a.m. Nouria employee reporting vandalism to gas pumps on July 24. Viewed video and obtained plate. Investigation open.

11:33 a.m. Gill-Montague senior center staff member reporting that the flower bed on the back side of the property was vandalized; flowers were pulled up and thrown into the parking lot. Referred to an officer.

1:54 p.m. DPW foreman requesting ACO respond to Industrial Boulevard to remove a skunk from a catch

see MPD next page

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MPD from prev page

basin. ACO notified. Animal safely removed.
9:11 p.m. Report of a vehicle revving its engine and screeching tires in front of Millers Pub. Second call reporting a motorcycle drag racing; third and fourth callers reporting same. First caller called back in stating she went outside and saw a vehicle doing donuts in the intersection. Officer spoke to someone doing laundry who states they didn't see or hear anything. Markings in roadway. Unable to locate.
Tuesday, 7/28
1:08 p.m. Assisting Greenfield PD with an investigation along the water off Migratory Way.
2:24 p.m. Report of two females physically fighting outside of an RV on Sixth Street. Not as reported. Parties were goofing around, not fighting.
Wednesday, 7/29
7:34 a.m. Caller reporting a moped on the side of the road near the Route 47/63 cross-

over for the past two days. Investigated. Multiple additional calls received reporting same; all callers advised PD was aware of it.
11:43 a.m. 911 caller reporting cows in roadway on Wendell Road. ACO spoke to homeowners.
11:53 a.m. First of several reports of downed trees, limbs, and wires, flooded streets, washouts, and loose manhole covers.
Thursday, 7/30
1:15 a.m. Officer out with male lying in walkway at Peskeompskut Park. Party moved along; was looking for somewhere to try to sleep.
10:07 a.m. Adams PD requesting assistance; they have a missing juvenile who ran away during a program outing last week and whose phone last pinged in the area of Great Falls Aquaculture. Juvenile may have access to a handgun and has a history of violence towards others. Businesses checked; no one has seen involved male in

area. Will keep an eye out. Juvenile's mother called in stating he has been missing since Saturday and may be wearing a full face mask if he was able to obtain one. Mother believes he's with someone older who is able to drive, and that he has friends in Greenfield. Mother also states that juvenile has a warrant. Adams PD updated.
Friday, 7/31
9:28 p.m. Report of a package with five items inside it stolen from an East Main Street address. Referred to an officer.
Saturday, 8/1
8:30 a.m. Caller from I Street states that her vehicle was broken into overnight and around \$70 in cash was taken. Investigated.
11:40 a.m. Caller states that a male party is consuming alcohol in Peskeompskut Park. Male party dumped out alcohol and was moved along.
9:02 p.m. Caller states that his car hit something in the middle of the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge; unsure if bridge

has an issue. Officer located a significant pothole in southbound travel lane. MassDOT advised of issue.
Sunday, 8/2
8:45 a.m. Walk-in from Fairway Avenue states that she was supposed to receive a laptop via FedEx that was purchased by her employer. When the package arrived, it had been ripped open and retaped. The laptop bag was inside the box, but the laptop was missing. Party needs a report for her employer. Report taken.
9:54 a.m. Caller reports that the past two nights, someone has broken into her unlocked vehicle on L Street. Nothing of value was taken; some quarters are missing, but other items like toilet paper were left behind. Investigated.
6:58 p.m. Multiple reports of male standing on the opposite side of the fencing on the Turners-Falls Gill Bridge. Area searched extensively; unable to locate.



VALLEY VIEW from page B1

So, instead, they continued upstream. At least, that's my guess.”
An educated guess for sure, and one that makes the most sense. Had I known CT DEEP was still in the salmon-stocking game, it would have been my obvious knee-jerk assessment as well.
The reason the 10 salmon listed on this year's anadromous migration report got a reaction out of me was that it seemed like it had been many years since I'd seen salmon listed on the weekly reports I have received for nearly 50 years. A quick review revealed it was a slight overreaction. Yes, the previous three years – 2023, 2024, and 2025 – had seen zero returns. But excluding 2020, all the rest – dating back to 2013, the year the federal and Massachusetts state plugs were pulled – show at least three returns, with a high of 92 in 2013 and single digits in all but one year since 2017 (20).
So, no, salmon-restoration true believers, it's not time to rekindle hopes for a Connecticut River salmon renaissance. A self-sustaining population is far out of reach, never to return to New England's largest river. Just the facts, ma'am.
Though I salute Connecticut's altruistic campaign as an honorable and unselfish undertaking – a last-gasp effort to save a doomed species – I don't expect it to last long. All the elements that matter, and especially the environment, are stacked against an Atlantic salmon comeback, not only in the Connecticut River, but everywhere on the warming North Atlantic.
I probably won't live to see this noblest of all freshwater gamefish go the way of the passenger pigeon, but I'm confident my grandsons, God willing, will.

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



SCENE REPORT
Summer's Continuous Whirlwind

By MATT ROBINSON

TURNERS FALLS – With summer school ending and the local softball and basketball leagues wrapping up, I decided to check out the activities, events and gatherings held in the town of Montague. I quickly discovered that I couldn't go to everything because of conflicts and my own energy level.
I also discovered that this town is full of fun and entertaining events, and that I knew many of the folks attending and running these gatherings.

On **Friday, July 24**, my first stop was the Great Falls Discovery Center, where I sat in on the Kidleidoscope Story Hour: “Bees & Flowers,” hosted by Ranger Janel. The kids were involved in crafts, activities, and storytime. After the story, the tykes explored outside, searching for mountain mints, collecting pollen, and looking for nectar. Back inside, they crafted cupcake flower holders and worked on paint-by-number projects.

Also in the Great Hall, Angela from the Carnegie Library allowed kids to borrow books on pollinating and bees.

Next I dropped in at the National Spiritual Alliance in Lake Pleasant. Kara gave me a tour and explained that they had canceled their usual Friday drop-in time because they were busy recording the second part of an album.

Back in Turners, I walked to the library and met with the kids working in the Lo-Fi Lab. The kids recognized me from school, and were more than happy to share their creative projects, graphic novels, Minecraft characters, and Dungeons and Dragons plans.

Then I got back in my car and drove to Millers Falls where the Element Brewery were running their Bingo America 250th Edition!

I was too exhausted after that to go to the Shea Theater for the Brian O'Connell Fellowship, so I called it a night.

That **Saturday**, I headed to the Great Falls Farmers Market at Peskeompskut Park to schmooze with the regulars while checking out the tables of fresh produce, flowers, and handmade products. Also at Peskeompskut, the Village Project was sponsoring a gathering and potluck which included free rock painting. Though I didn't paint a rock, several students and families buttonholed me, talking with me about the summer reading list and the upcoming school year.

I decided to skip the Psychic Medium Fair at the National Spiritual Alliance and the OPEN Food Pantry at the Brick House, and instead headed back to Element to listen to Lee Totten perform original songs and some covers. The crowd was small but enthusiastic. He took requests, and when he didn't know any Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young tunes, he sang Stephen Stills' “Love the One You're With.”

I skipped Adam Z. performing at the Millers Pub, and instead headed back to Turners where I viewed Hong Kong cult-classic films at the Shea. As people were finding their seats, conversations buzzed about 16th-century Japan and the rivalry between Chinese and Japanese martial arts, and before the movies played, a Kung Fu trivia contest was held where winners received boxes of candy.

After the first movie, I headed to Unity Park to watch the Christmas in July celebration. There, several more students greeted me as boats bedecked with colorful lights bellowed Christmas songs to the cheers of the crowd.

Again, it was getting a little late for me, so I didn't get to catch “A Different Thread” at the Rendezvous.

On **Sunday**, I returned to the Discovery Center to observe a mini-course called “Drop-in and Chill Out: SPLOOT! How Animals Keep Their Cool.” Ironically, a few days later, a squirrel lay motionless on my stoop. I called over a neigh-

bor to help, but as I approached, the squirrel scampered up a tree. It was merely Sploot-ing to keep cool.

I had to head out of town after that, so I missed the French/Breton jam session also held at the Discovery Center.

On **Monday the 27th**, I went to the final summer concert performed by the Montague Community Band, where they played fun familiar tunes under the theme “Young at Heart.” The band has been in existence since 1892, and one person has been with the band for 63 years. Another band vet – of 38 years – played a wonderful flute solo.

Because the Franklin County Softball league held games on Mondays, and because inclement weather canceled some performances, I missed several of their concerts this season, but to me Monday's concert was probably the best of the summer. Please note: The band will be back for their annual holiday concert in December.

On **Friday**, I sat in on another Kidleidoscope Story Hour. This time it was on dragonflies. From there I went to the Montague Center Library to check out “The Divine Lives in You: Paintings and Upcycled Works by Donna Eastbrooks.”

I returned to Peskeompskut to watch No Strings Marionettes, performed by Dan and Barbara and sponsored by the Friends of the Carnegie Library. One of the main marionettes was a dragonfly, but this one had a dragon's head. The kids were enthralled, and when it began to pour, they simply huddled under the hatch shell for a more intimate and fun experience.

On **Saturday, August 1** I brushed through the Farmers Market, skipped the book sale at the Carnegie, and walked down to the Pocumtuck Homelands Festival at Unity Park.

The festival was crowded and wonderful, with tables of Native American artwork and literature and multiple food trucks. I was privileged to sit in on a drum song,



Dawn Marvin Ward (left), vice president of the Friends of the Great Falls Discovery Center, teaches gyotaku, a Japanese fish-printing technique, to Kaithyn Flechsig of Montgomery during last Saturday's Pocumtuck Homelands Festival at Unity Park.

where I learned that the word “Indian” may have meant “people of God” and not a reference to India.

Because I went to a six-year-old's birthday party, I missed out on watching the Women's Pro Baseball League inaugural game at the Dreamhouse restaurant, and the clam bake at Millers Falls Rod & Gun.

When I returned to town, I spent the evening at Unnameable Books for “A Reading for Month 8, This Year” where Andrew Plimpton, Jhani Randhawa, Meagan Masterman, and Julian Delacruz all read from their poems and short stories.

I could have ended the night at the Shea for the DakhaBrakha performance or headed to the Rendezvous to listen to Robin Gaming, but instead I headed home.

On **Sunday** I went north to pick blueberries, thus missing the Lake Pleasant Village Association Com-

munity Potluck at Rutters Park, but I did make it back in time to sit in on “The Winter's Tale: Resolve You For Amazement” at the Shea, a reading of an original adaptation of Shakespeare's play with live music by Sam V. Perry. It was hilarious, with folks in the audience laughing along with the cast.

Again, it was getting late, so I opted out of the Lyle Hutchins and Eve Pierce performance at the Rendezvous and called it a weekend.

My takeaway from this two-week whirlwind is that there are so many things happening in town that one person cannot attend them all.

Coming up in August there are more celebrations, performances, workshops, and even another movie in the park. Each organization has their own website, and RiverCulture lists many upcoming events on their website, riverculture.org.

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FRONT OF THE LINE

Corinne Coryat:

I got into public service because I wanted to help people. For the past five years, I have had the privilege of serving the people of the 1st Franklin District as a member of former Representative Natalie Blais's staff. During that time, I developed a deep understanding of the responsibilities and realities of serving in the Massachusetts House. I learned from an exceptional mentor, worked directly with constituents, and built relationships with the people and organizations that keep Franklin County running.

That experience has prepared me to serve effectively on Day One. I understand the most pressing challenges facing our district, and I know the leaders, businesses, nonprofits, schools, farms, and families that make this region special.

When Representative Blais decided to step down, I felt a responsibility. I chose to run because I believe in the work we have done, the progress we have made, and the work that remains.

The reason I am running is straightforward: This is my home. The 18 communities that make up this district have shaped who I am, and I care deeply about their future. My commitment to public service is not new or temporary. It is grounded in years of work, relationships, and an investment in the people and places that define Western Massachusetts.

I became involved in advocacy at a young age, focusing on climate action, public health, and opportunities for young people. As a teenager, I traveled to Washington, DC, to meet with members of Congress and advocate for action to protect young people from climate change, substance use, and mental illness.

Since then, I have pursued every opportunity to become an effective advocate. While working full-time as a legislative staffer, I enrolled in law school at night to deepen my understanding of lawmaking and public policy. In December, I will graduate with a law degree focused on public interest law, and a passion for justice.

I have worked at all three levels of government. During college, I assisted constituents through casework in Congressman Jim McGovern's office in Worcester. I later served on my local planning board and have now spent five years serving this district at the state level. These experiences have given me an understanding of legislation, advocacy, constituent services, and the ways government can improve people's lives.

If elected, I will work tirelessly to ensure that our constituents are fully heard on Beacon Hill and that our communities are represented, actively supported, and positioned to thrive.

We've rejected the status quo and helped deliver meaningful change for rural Massachusetts. We reformed the Chapter 90 transportation funding formula so that roadway mileage, and not only population, is considered when distributing aid to municipalities. This better



recognizes the costs faced by small towns responsible for extensive road networks.

We helped create the nation's first natural disaster relief fund and secured more than \$20 million for farms and municipalities devastated by the July 2023 storms. We convened the Special Commission on the Fiscal Health of Rural Schools, worked with leaders across Massachusetts to identify solutions, and developed the final report, legislation, and budget advocacy that followed.

We also created the Unpaved Roads Program to help municipalities maintain dirt and gravel roads. We established the Office of Rural Affairs and the Office of Outdoor Recreation, and we brought millions of dollars in state funding back to the district, investments at a level Franklin County had not previously seen.

I am proud that this is a grassroots campaign supported by people who live and work here. Our campaign has earned endorsements from the Planned Parenthood Advocacy Fund of Massachusetts, District Attorney David Sullivan, Franklin County Sheriff Lori Streeter, more than 20 local unions affiliated with the Western Massachusetts and Pioneer Valley Building Trades, and countless local business and nonprofit leaders.

This campaign is about building a future where young people can afford to stay in Franklin County, older adults can age in place, families can thrive, farms and forests are protected, healthcare is accessible, and public education remains strong.

I am a product of my village in Western Massachusetts. I was raised to care for my neighbors, serve my community, and step forward when there is an opportunity to make a difference. Those values guide me, especially in this difficult moment, and they will guide my service as the next state representative for the 1st Franklin District.

Learn more at www.corinneforma.org, follow the campaign at @corinneforma, or contact me at info@corinneforma.org.

State Rep Race: Primary Sources...

By MPRESS BENNU

GREENFIELD – In this month's *Front of the Line* column we will get to know more about Corinne Coryat and Lora Wondolowski, and their reasons for running for state

representative in the 1st Franklin District. (I sent questions to each of them to write articles; however, they both sent back these written statements.)

Lora and Corinne are running in the Democratic primary on September 1.

Whoever wins will then face a third candidate, Amy Lavallee, in the November 3 general election.

Next month I'll be speaking with Benjamin Simanski, the duly elected clerk of the Franklin County Superior Court in Greenfield!

Lora Wondolowski:

I'm running for State Representative in the 1st Franklin District because the status quo is not working for Franklin County families. When I first moved here 23 years ago, I was looking for an affordable community where I could raise a family. I also wanted a welcoming place with a walkable downtown center that retained its rural character.

Two decades ago, many Franklin County towns met those three criteria. That is no longer the case. Available housing is extremely limited, and housing available at prices that teachers, firefighters, police officers, and new families can afford is almost nonexistent.

Talking with people across this district, I continually hear stories about spiraling costs of health care, worries about school budgets and educational opportunities for our kids, and upward pressure on residential real estate taxes as industry continues to decline. The scarcity of housing at prices working people can afford is always part of the conversation.

As a municipal leader, I've struggled with tough choices on budgets – often because the one-size-fits-all state funding formulas designed in Boston don't address the unique infrastructure challenges and financial needs our rural communities face daily in the 450-square-mile 1st Franklin District.

I am running because Franklin County towns deserve a representative on Beacon Hill who understands these challenges firsthand, someone who will work to make sure rural funding factors are baked into every piece of legislation. I will do this by leading with creativity and collaboration to get results.

Experience matters, but so does courage, and I'm running to build what comes next. Our district deserves leaders who listen to today's challenges and build tomorrow's opportunities. These times call for leaders who are unifiers.

I am that leader.

As a single parent with two children in the Greenfield public schools, when budget cuts were proposed that would have hollowed out local educational opportunities, I knew I had to act. I stepped forward to fight for public schools, which I view as the heart and future of our Commonwealth. Through advocacy, rallies and community outreach, we were able to fully fund the school budget.

On the heels of that effort, I secured a seat on the Greenfield City Council two and a half years ago, and this is my second year as President. In addition to protecting educational opportunities in public schools, on the Council I've pushed to create more housing, expand protections for LGBTQ rights, and champion climate resiliency efforts.

I've spent the past two decades promoting public policy initiatives, largely from outside the halls of power. Working for statewide and national advocacy organizations, I've had the opportunity to understand the inner workings of our state government in-



stitutions. My work for groups such as the Massachusetts League of Environmental Voters, League of Conservation Voters and the National Audubon Society has focused on delivering results around civic engagement, environmental protection and voting rights. I have navigated complex budgets, built diverse coalitions, and wrestled with complex issues like education funding, housing and the environment.

This work has always required bringing together leaders with differing viewpoints to collaborate on solutions to the challenges facing Franklin, Hampshire and Hampden Counties.

As the founding Executive Director of Leadership Pioneer Valley, I spent over 10 years helping program participants develop the skills they needed to advance in their careers and put those skills to work for the betterment of their communities. We organized field experience days throughout Franklin County and the wider region, with the aim of better understanding the region's challenges and opportunities through the lens of organizations like the Franklin County CDC or business owners like Mike McCusker.

We all learned a lot in the process, and I built lasting relationships with leaders from Springfield to Buckland. Graduates include Holyoke Mayor Joshua Garcia, West Springfield Mayor Will Reichelt and State Senator Adam Gomez, D-Springfield.

My lived experience as a mother and a public policy advocate who has spent decades fighting for conservation and environmental issues has prepared me for this vital job. At a time when more than 80% of the state's school districts are in the "hold harmless" category, I pledge to bring community-grounded leadership and teamwork to Beacon Hill to revise and improve outdated state funding formulas so they actually address the needs of our rural communities.

Working together, we will make this vision a reality!

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Amanda Gorman, *The Hill We Climb*

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BIRD GIRL from page B1
pepperoni “sliced thin enough to read through” and congratulate themselves for finding their way through the dark, smelly downtown streets.

Spear accomplishes a little magic here: she made this reader miss that time, before pricey condos and boutiques, when the stench of rotting garbage and gasoline fumes filled the fetid air.

Maybe that’s why Spear chose a magician’s name for Bird Girl’s abusive lover, Prospero Brown, a mediocre, narcissistic artist who conjures images of his own greatness and controls the people around him, like Shakespeare’s Prospero who creates a tempest to serve his whims. Young Rebekah falls under his spell and moves into his loft, where she cleans his brushes, buys his art supplies, and inspires him with stories of her childhood.

She brings moldy old books from her childhood home to Prospero’s loft, and her own art is confined to drawings she imposes over illustrations and text on their damp pages – an early harbinger of the enormous paintings she’ll eventually complete by layering paint and text from Melville’s *Moby Dick* onto canvasses that become as bloated as dead whales.

Obsession is a big part of this

novel. Rebekah is obsessed initially by Prospero, and later by her own art. Her best friend Cornelia creates a lifetime obsessing about Annie Edison Taylor, the woman who went over Niagara Falls in a barrel on her 63rd birthday and survived. After a podcast comes out about SoHo in the ’70s, the art world becomes obsessed with the story of Prospero Brown and Bird Girl, the muse who sacrificed her hair for his art.

The New York artists are consumed by envy and competition, but the western Massachusetts academic community has its own intricate social dance. When Rebekah marries an English professor and attends a dinner as a faculty wife, she attempts to join a conversation about Melville. I encountered one of my favorite asides in this dinner party scene, when Rebekah compares being a faculty wife to a form of human taxidermy. This is a serious novel, but Spear is not lacking in humor and wit.

From the first sentence the reader knows that Rebekah will surrender her hair to Prospero, but that doesn’t stop you from wishing it won’t happen. It’s not a shock when you come to the scene, but it’s delightful to learn that this shearing does not bring Prospero the acclaim he thinks he deserves.

With the surrender of her signa-

ture braid, Bird Girl finds a more substantive identity, and her journey is engaging. When she finally gets the recognition she deserves, her paintings are shown in a gallery in SoHo, not far from where she lived with Prospero – who makes his way to her opening. The scene of the encounter between them and her final revenge is entirely satisfying, and it would not be right to reveal the details.

Read *Bird Girl*. Be patient; the story often reveals itself through digressions that are enjoyable in themselves. Learn about hair fetishes, savor descriptions as layered as collages, and maybe, like me, you will finish and want to start the adventure all over again.

Spear has a Facebook page where she announces readings. The book is available for pre-order at blackrosewriting.com and will be for sale locally at Amherst Books, Unnameable Books in Turners Falls, and Broadside Bookshop in Northampton, as well as on Amazon and via Kindle and Audible.

The western Massachusetts launch for *Bird Girl* – at which Spear will appear in conversation with Nerissa Nields – will take place Thursday, September 24 at 6 p.m. at the Coolidge Museum at Northampton’s Forbes Library.



EVENT ANNOUNCEMENT

‘Franklin County Stories’ at The Wendell Meetinghouse

WENDELL – Next Saturday and Sunday, the Wendell Meetinghouse will host Story Preserves and local community members sharing “Franklin County Stories,” based on their work with Nisse Greenberg during a Community Arts & Conversations workshop held at the meetinghouse in early August.

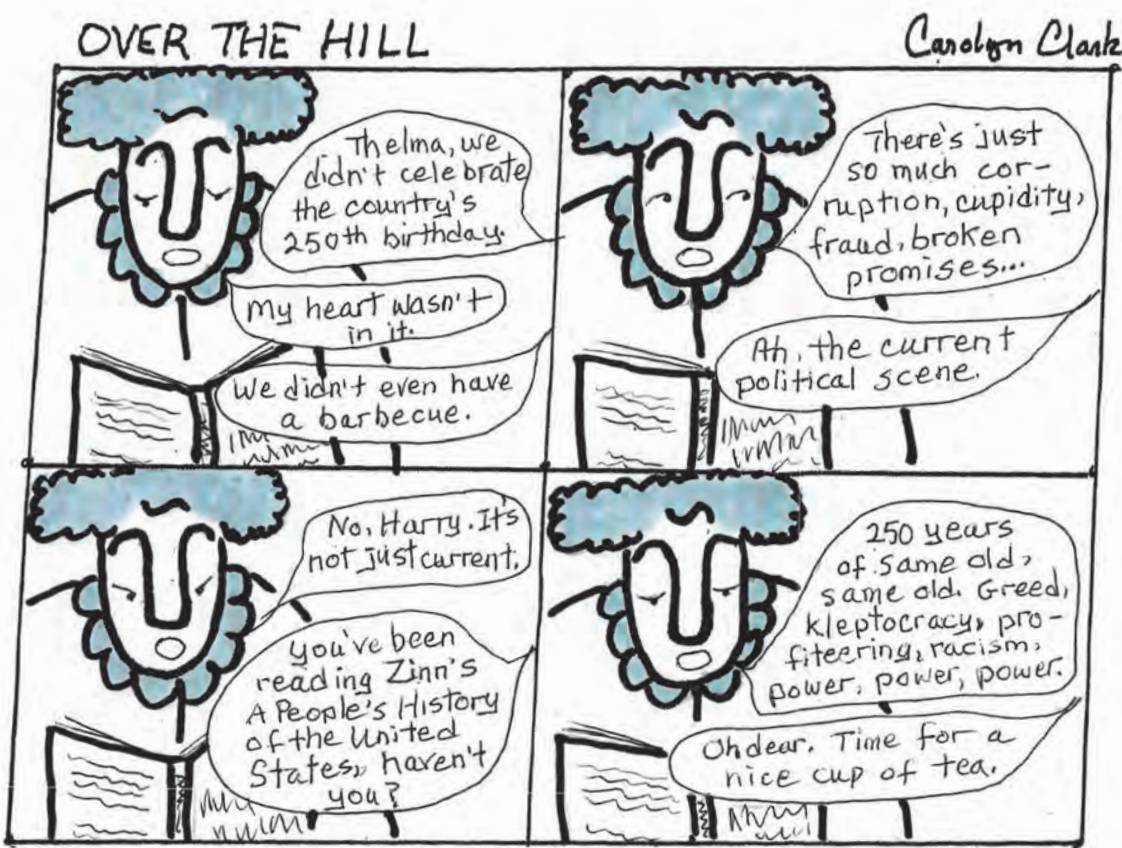
“Franklin County Stories” will be performed twice at the Meetinghouse Saturday, August 15 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, August 16 at 3 p.m. Advance tickets are available for \$10 via wendellmeetinghouse.org. Tickets at the door will be \$15 or \$5 for Card to Culture members.

The show will run about 75 minutes and involves a yet-to-be-finalized lineup of local legends including Steve the Hippie, Trouble Mandeson, and Danny Botkin. Using personal stories to tell the history of Franklin County, Story Preserves works with individuals to share experiences that capture the way in which this community has shifted, along with the people who have lived in it. Performers will

share stories of what it feels like to be alone on a hill in Gill, in a commune in Wendell, or the last one on your family farm in Montague. Braiding these narratives with music and images of the community, this show hopes to transport participants through aspects of our community life that have helped create our current world.

Sponsored by the Friends of the Wendell Meetinghouse, the Community Arts & Conversations series is supported in part by funding from the Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts. Through the series the Meetinghouse hopes to broaden perspectives, build community connections, celebrate and support local performers, and promote creative use of the Meetinghouse space.

For more information on Story Preserves, contact founder Nisse Greenberg at storypreserves@proton.me. For information on the Wendell Meetinghouse and its programming, contact Court Dorsey at courtdorsey@gmail.com or visit www.wendellmeetinghouse.org.



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Aquí se habla español

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

De los fiordos a los Grandes Lagos:
Dos semanas descubriendo los parques naturales de Canadá.

Por VICTORIA MAÍLLO DE AGUILERA

MONTAGUE – Cada verano, millones de viajeros buscan escapar del calor, del tráfico y de las playas abarrotadas. Mientras muchos ponen rumbo a los grandes destinos turísticos como Florida o Cape Cod, existe una alternativa mucho más tranquila, cercana y sorprendente para quienes vivimos en Nueva Inglaterra: recorrer los parques nacionales y provinciales de Canadá.

Apenas unas horas al norte de Massachusetts comienza un país donde la naturaleza sigue marcando el ritmo de la vida. Bosques infinitos, lagos cristalinos, montañas cubiertas de abetos, ríos salvajes y una red de parques públicos extraordinariamente bien gestionada convierten a Canadá en uno de los mejores destinos del mundo para quienes disfrutan del senderismo, de la pesca, de la fotografía o simplemente del silencio.

Durante dos semanas hemos recorrido algunos de los parques más representativos de Québec y Ontario, desde el Parc national de Frontenac, cerca de la frontera con Estados Unidos, hasta Sault Ste. Marie, a orillas de los Grandes Lagos. El viaje confirmó algo que muchos canadienses saben desde hace tiempo: no hace falta ir muy lejos para encontrar algunos de los paisajes más espectaculares de Norteamérica.

Uno de los mayores aciertos del viaje fue descubrir el sistema de parques de Québec, administrado por la *Société des établissements de plein air du Québec* (SEPAQ). Para el visitante, resulta sorprendente el equilibrio entre conservación de la naturaleza y acceso público. Los campings están perfectamente integrados en el entorno, los senderos están cuidadosamente señalizados y las instalaciones y servicios mantienen un alto nivel de calidad sin alterar el paisaje.

Los Parques de Québec

Nuestra primera parada fue el **Parc national de Frontenac**, un parque todavía poco conocido fuera de Québec. Situado junto al Grand Lac Saint-François, ofrece un primer contacto con el inmenso bosque canadiense. Las aguas tranquilas, las pequeñas playas y los embarcaderos invitan a comenzar el viaje reduciendo el ritmo. Aquí uno entiende enseguida que el verdadero lujo no es encontrar grandes infraestructuras, sino escuchar únicamente el viento entre los árboles y el canto de las aves.

Después llegamos al **Parc national de la Jacques-Cartier**, probablemente uno de los lugares más impresionantes de toda la provincia. El profundo valle excavado por el río Jacques-Cartier recuerda, por momentos, algunos paisajes alpinos europeos, aunque con un carácter completamente norteamericano. Las montañas, cubiertas por densos bosques boreales, descienden hasta un río de aguas transparentes donde es frecuente ver canoas y kayaks deslizándose lentamente entre las corrientes.

Los senderos ofrecen distintos niveles de dificultad y permiten contemplar el valle desde miradores espectaculares. Aunque se encuentra a menos de una hora de la ciudad de Québec, la sensación de aislamiento es absoluta. Resulta difícil creer que una naturaleza tan intacta pueda encontrarse tan cerca de un importante centro urbano.

La siguiente etapa nos llevó al **Parc**

national des Hautes-Gorges-de-la-Rivière-Malbaie, situado en la región de Charlevoix. Su nombre describe perfectamente el paisaje: gargantas profundas excavadas entre algunas de las montañas más altas del este de Canadá. El río Malbaie serpentea entre paredes rocosas que alcanzan varios cientos de metros de altura, creando uno de los escenarios más fotogénicos del país.

Uno de los aspectos más interesantes de este parque es la posibilidad de recorrer parte del valle mediante un servicio de autobuses que reduce significativamente el impacto ambiental. La circulación de autos está prohibida dentro del camping, las carreteras se pueden transitar en bicicleta o usando el transporte gratuito del parque.

Desde allí parten numerosos senderos, algunos de ellos muy exigentes, pero todos recompensan el esfuerzo con vistas extraordinarias.



Parque Natural de los Fiordos, Canadá.

Pocos lugares, sin embargo, impresionan tanto como el **Parc national du Fjord-du-Saguenay**. Para muchos viajeros europeos, la idea de encontrar un fiordo en Canadá puede resultar inesperada. Sin embargo, el fiordo del Saguenay constituye uno de los accidentes geográficos más espectaculares de América del Norte.

Las inmensas paredes de roca caen directamente sobre aguas oscuras y profundas que conectan con el río San Lorenzo. Dependiendo de la época del año, incluso es posible observar distintas especies de ballenas en la desembocadura del fiordo. Nosotros no tuvimos esa suerte, pero es suficiente con caminar por los miradores y recorrer parte de los senderos para comprender por qué este lugar figura entre los grandes tesoros naturales de Québec.

Otro paisaje completamente diferente apareció en el **Parc national de la Pointe-Taillon**, situado junto al inmenso lago Saint-Jean. Aquí desaparecen las montañas para dar paso a kilómetros de playas de arena, pinares y suaves senderos ideales para recorrer en bicicleta. Es un parque pensado para disfrutar sin prisas, especialmente en familia.

La última parada en Québec fue el **Parque Nacional de La Mauricie**, donde cientos de lagos salpican un inmenso bosque protegido. La Mauricie resume muchas de las imágenes que asociamos con Canadá: pequeñas cabañas junto al agua, embarcaciones de recreo, rutas de senderismo, piraguas y una extraordinaria sensación de tranquilidad.

Es también uno de los mejores lugares para

observar fauna salvaje, aunque, como ocurre casi siempre, los animales aparecen únicamente cuando ellos lo deciden.

Hacia Ontario!

Al cruzar la frontera hacia Ontario también cambió el tipo de parques. Mientras Québec apuesta por un sistema centralizado bajo SEPAQ, Ontario cuenta con una amplia red de parques provinciales gestionados por Ontario Parks. La filosofía es similar: proteger el patrimonio natural facilitando al mismo tiempo el acceso responsable de los visitantes.

Nuestra primera parada fue **Bonnechere Provincial Park**, un lugar especialmente agradable para quienes viajan en autocaravana o con tienda de campaña. El río Bonnechere ofrece excelentes oportunidades para practicar kayak, y los bosques circundantes invitan a largos paseos donde el silencio solo se rompe por el canto de los pájaros.

Naturalmente, también hay desafíos. Las distancias son enormes, tienes que pagar precios más altos que en Estados Unidos y conviene reservar con mucha antelación durante el verano. Este año, además, los incendios forestales afectaron a distintas regiones de Canadá, recordándonos la creciente vulnerabilidad de estos ecosistemas frente al cambio climático.

Aun así, el balance no puede ser más positivo. Después de más de dos semanas recorriendo Québec y Ontario, la impresión que permanece no es la de un viaje lleno de actividades, sino la de haber recuperado algo que cada vez resulta más escaso: el silencio. El silencio de los bosques al amanecer, el reflejo de las montañas sobre un lago sin viento, o el murmullo de un río que lleva miles de años abriéndose paso entre las rocas.

El Resultado es Evidente

Quizá esa sea la mayor riqueza de los parques canadienses. Su mayor atractivo consiste en permitir que la naturaleza siga siendo la protagonista. Para quienes vivimos en Massachusetts, además, representan un destino sorprendentemente cercano. Basta cruzar la frontera para descubrir uno de los sistemas de espacios naturales mejor conservados del continente y recordar que, en ocasiones, las mejores vacaciones no consisten en hacer más cosas, sino en detenerse, respirar y escuchar el bosque.

Uno de los aspectos que más sorprende al recorrer estos parques es la extraordinaria accesibilidad de la naturaleza. En muchos países, disfrutar de paisajes de este nivel suele implicar largas caminatas o una buena condición física. En Canadá, en cambio, la oferta está pensada para todo tipo de visitantes.

Hay rutas sencillas para familias con niños pequeños, senderos adaptados para personas con movilidad reducida, áreas de picnic perfectamente equipadas y centros de interpretación donde se explica la historia geológica, la fauna y la flora de cada parque. Quien desee vivir una aventura exigente también encontrará ascensiones de varias horas y recorridos de gran desnivel, pero siempre existe la posibilidad de adaptar la experiencia al tiempo disponible y a la preparación de cada uno.

También llama la atención la convivencia entre el turismo y la conservación. En ningún momento se percibe la sensación de masificación en otros destinos naturales durante el verano. Los aforos están controlados, las reservas limitan el número de campistas y las actividades se organizan para minimizar el impacto en el entorno.

Ese modelo requiere planificación por parte del visitante, pero el resultado es evidente: senderos bien conservados, aguas limpias, fauna protegida y una experiencia mucho más tranquila y respetuosa. Quizá esa sea una de las lecciones más valiosas que deja este viaje: es posible disfrutar de la naturaleza sin convertirla en un parque temático, siempre que la conservación ocupe el primer lugar.

Regresamos a Massachusetts con cientos de fotografías, pero también con una realidad: aún existen lugares donde el tiempo parece avanzar más despacio y donde la naturaleza sigue marcando el ritmo. Quizá por eso tantos canadienses consideran estos parques parte de su identidad nacional. Después de recorrerlos, resulta fácil entender por qué.

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Brewster Court, Northampton: *The Fawns, Gentle Hen*. 6 p.m. Free.

Tree House Brewing, Deerfield: *Oteil & Friends*. 7 p.m. \$.

Asbestos Farm, Hadley: *Frank Hurricane, LUCY, Mark Cone, Ruby Lou, Fugga Wugga*. 7 p.m. \$.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 7

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Kidleidoscope Story Hour: Bobcats*. For ages 3 to 6. 10:30 a.m. Free.

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *McLane Silk Mill Walk*. Walk to the site of the former McLane Silk Company, near today's Swanson's Fabrics, and hear stories of the two businesses and what they have in common. Departs from the Great Hall. 4 p.m. Free.

Mystery Train, Amherst: *Julie Beth Napolin & Bobb Bannister, id m theftable, Karen Zanes, Anna Claire*. 5 p.m. By donation.

Emily Dickinson Museum, Amherst: *Kimaya Diggs*. 5:30 p.m. Free.

Element Brewing, Millers Falls: *David Brule & His Irish Band*. 6 p.m. No cover.

Leverett Village Co-op, Leverett: *On the Lam*. Fundraiser for the co-op. 6 p.m. \$.

Buoyant Heart, Brattleboro: *Erica Dawn Lyle, Jetties, Casia Levine, Jack Alboher, Magick Lantern*. Fundraiser for Norma Jean Haynes. 6 p.m. \$.

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

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Lou Barlow's 60th Birthday and Variety Show*, with *Jeffrey Lewis, Adam Green, Bobby Bare Jr., Black Francis, Aleksa Atkinson, Sunburned Hand of the Man, Sick of Fun: A Tribute to Deep Wound*, more. 7 p.m. \$.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *Writers Read*, featuring Nicole Young-Martin, Doug Selwyn, and Dahlia Riddington; open mic. 7 p.m. By donation.

Incandescent Brewing, Bernardston: *Seth Adam*. 7 p.m. \$.

Shutesbury Athletic Club, Shutesbury: *Man-Made Tragedies, Couchboy*. 7 p.m. No cover.

Darling's, Easthampton: *Grocer, Rhubarb Duo, NoThankYou*. 7 p.m. \$.

Peskeompskut Park, Turners Falls: *Movie, Pee-wee's Big Adventure* (1985). 8 p.m. Free.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Flames of Shiva*. 8 p.m. No cover.

Lupinewood, Greenfield: *Sky Creature, Fading Not Receding, Snowglobe Almanac*. 8 p.m. \$

Last Ditch, Greenfield: *Virgo's Moon, Mibble, Merry Brigade*. 8 p.m. \$.

Dream Away Lodge, Becket: *Frank Hurricane, Ruby Lou*. 8 p.m. Free.

118 Elliot, Brattleboro: *Milestone Negro Spirituals Until The Civil War: When Folksongs Bring Freedom*, with jazz bassist and storyteller Hilliard Greene. 8:30 p.m. By donation.

Living Room, Florence: *Snowbeasts, DJ Soft Jaws, Bxtcrushr, Llama Mop, Solid State Entity*. 9 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 8

Peskeompskut Park, Turners Falls: *Great Falls Farmers Market*. SNAP accepted. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. \$.

Northfield Mountain, Northfield: *Yoga and Hiking*, all skill levels, ages 13 and up. Bring water, dress in layers. Register at bookeo.com/northfield. 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Free.

Wendell Town Common, Wendell: *Old Home Day* with parade, food, vendors, more; live music by the *Wendell Choir, Warner Hill, Perry Howarth & The Bear Mountain Boys, Can Collectors*. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Free.

Charlemont Fairgrounds, Charlemont: *Prince Negasi, Ras Iba & the Riddim Warriorz, Ras Moon, Shanti Starr & the Afro Reggae All Stars, Root Fiyah, Gaia Roots, The Equalites*, more. Details at charlemontreggae festival.com. 12 p.m. \$.

104 Fourth, Turners Falls: *Great Falls Books Through Bars Volunteer Day*. Respond to letters from prisoners, pack books for mailing. Masks req'd. 1 to 5 p.m. Free.

Dickinson Library, Northfield: *Learn to Play Dungeons & Dragons*, intro session for ages 10 to 18. Register at northfieldrec.com. 1 p.m. Free.

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Celebrate Smokey Bear's Birthday*. Hear Smokey's story and learn about campfire safety with wildland firefighters. 3 p.m. Free.

Revered bassist Hilliard Greene will present his famed project "Milestone Negro Spirituals Until The Civil War: When Folksongs Bring Freedom" at 118 Elliot in Brattleboro this Friday, the opening night of the fifth annual Nu Mu Music and Art Festival.

Element Brewing, Millers Falls: *Becka Dowland*. 3 p.m. No cover.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *2 Car Garage, Phux Yeah Sway*. 6 p.m. No cover.

Divine Theater, Holyoke: *Muda!, Teen Driver, Saliba, Hello, Glasss*. 6:30 p.m. \$.

Looky Here, Greenfield: *Osprey, Clancy Conlin, Jake McKelvie*. 7 p.m. \$.

THCC, Easthampton: *Astrophage, Perennial Quest, Void the Nobody*. 7 p.m. \$.

Cold Spring Hollow, Belchertown: *Rhubarb Duo, Taurus Judge, Kettle, Pearl Sugar*. 7 p.m. \$.

Palladium, Worcester: *Dimmu Borgir, Suffocation, Hulder*. 7 p.m. \$\$.

Midnight's, Brattleboro: *Woundlicker, No More Sun, Spinal Teeth*. 8 p.m. \$.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

EXHIBITS

Waterway Arts, Turners Falls: *Please Touch*, participatory works by 15 artists, through this week with a closing reception during First Friday, tomorrow, August 7.

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Ways of My Ancestors*, photographs of New England Native Americans by Scott Strong Hawk Foster, through August 26.

Sawmill River Arts, Montague: *Vivian Gay*, ceramics, and *Jey Weisgerber*, block-printed and tie-dyed wares, through August.

Leverett Crafts & Arts, Leverett: *LCA Artists*, group show by artists with studios at the building, through August.

Leverett Library, Leverett: *Community Mini Art Show*, 186 mini-canvases, all created by townspeople, displayed in the community room during August.

Artspace Gallery, Greenfield: *Unmasking the Monstrous*, ceramic and mixed-media sculpture by Wade Boswell. Through August 28.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *Marlboro Reminders*, group exhibit of ceramics, painting, photography, and printmaking by Marlboro College alumni. Opening reception this Saturday, August 8 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.; through August.

Looky Here, Greenfield: *Minor Cosmologies* by Eva Lin Fahey, through September with a reception Friday, August 28 at 5 p.m.

Fiddleheads Gallery, Bernardston: *Members Summer Show and Grand Opening*, first exhibit at the gallery's new location, 1 Brattleboro Road. Through August.

Gallery A3, Amherst: *Everyday Sublime*, annual juried show. Through August, with a reception this Friday, August 7, at 5 p.m.

Shelburne Arts Coop, Shelburne Falls: *Celebrating the Year of the Horse*, equine paintings by Sara and Fabio Deponte, through August.

Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne: *Illustrator Margot Apple and fiber artist Kate McClelland* show their work throughout August.

Black Birch Vineyard, Hatfield: *Big Impressions*, large-scale artworks by members of the Quabbin Art Association, through August.

Gallery in the Woods, Brattleboro: *William Hays and Nina Rossi*, featured artists for the month of August showing linocut prints and mixed-media artworks. Meet the artists during Gallery Walk this Friday, August 7 from 5:30 to 8 p.m.

CALLS FOR ART

The LAVA Center in Greenfield is accepting submissions until September 11 of short films for the 6th Annual LAVA Film Festival, which will be held November 12 to 14. Details at filmfreeway.com/LAVAFilmFestival.

Fiddleheads Gallery, Bernardston: *A Touch of Whimsy: Art that Makes You Smile*. Submit naive, fanciful, humorous, and curious art for an exhibit at the gallery opening on September 5. Contact margedvaa@gmail.com by August 28 to register.

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WORDLY from page B1

7. **Pick the word that does not belong:**

a) Chopped
b) Split
c) Busted
d) Cracked

The answers...

1: **B, C, A, D.** E.g., “Clifford, the wonderful giant young red dog.” Did that feel strange, and not just because it’s a lot of words in a row? Think about saying “the old German artist” versus “the German old artist.” Many native English speakers aren’t consciously aware that descriptive adjectives tend to follow a certain fixed pattern.

Due to space constraints, to parse the particularities I recommend searching online for “order of adjectives” – there are a lot of resources made by our nation’s invaluable corps of English teachers. Of course, as with all rules, language can be more fun if this order is shaken up.

2: **D.** 16th century, possibly of Dutch or German origin. Per Etymonline: “The meaning deteriorated 17c. through ‘fine fellow’ and ‘blusterer’ to ‘harasser of the weak.’”

And if you got this right, well, bully for you.

3: **A.** Dummy pronouns are parts of speech which serve to make sentences work even if they lack a strong identity of their own: e.g., most famously, the “it” in “It’s raining men.”

Naturally, some linguists contest that characterization of “it,” as well as of the hazy “there” which sometimes lands in the same bucket: “There is lots of milk in the fridge.”

4: **D, C, B, A.** Boggle is likely your lead contender – and correct answer – for the most recent invention (1973), but you might be shocked to find out that it arrived only five years after any claim to the first modern wordsearch, in 1968.

(Can any readers of the Boomer generation verify that these weren’t omnipresent in your childhood?)

Crosswords, meanwhile, first surfaced in 1862, and their modern format became widely popularized in 1913. Architect Alfred Butts (yes really) invented Scrabble while out of work in 1931. He remains better remembered for that than any buildings.

5: **D.** Strange, but true: Despite having run a few op-eds in the 1920s decrying crosswords as sinful engagements for simpletons, the *Times* adopted the already-popular crossword game on February 15, 1942, two months after the bombing. According to the official *NYT* history, Margaret Farrer, the first crossword section editor, promised superiors: “You can’t think of your troubles while solving a crossword.”

While I’d stop short of comparing the two directly, it does feel like there are parallels with the *Times*’s acquisition of Wordle – which my memory wants to place in 2020, but was first released in October 2021 and purchased in January 2022.

6: **C.** The top 10, in order of prevalence: weather, google, youtube, amazon, news, ai, reddit, world cup, walmart, facebook. Really makes you think...

7: **B.** Sorry, but the column has been under pressure to discuss the words *chopped*, *cracked*, and *busted*. This one is pretty generational. Basically, they all mean “washed.” Another acceptable rationale for *split* would be that it’s the only one of the four with an irregular past-tense conjugation.

Reminder that you can write in to the highly suggestible author with tips and suggestions, as well as feedback both positive or negative. Bored? Hungry for more? Take it to email: wordly@montaguereporter.org.

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A Journey Down Memory Lane

Un Sandwich Aux Tomates

By JOAN MOREL

SUNDERLAND – My father-in-law Ralph (*né* Rosario Emil Morel) had a garden along the side of his house on Silver Street in Greenfield where he and his wife Bernice (Margarite Bernadette Morel) lived during the last years of their lives. It was small, featuring tomatoes and sometimes peppers. But mostly tomatoes.

Ralph loved plain old, thick, fresh tomato sandwiches, and, like a true French-Canadian, the *gorton* (or *grotton*, or *cretons*: ground pork, pork fat, onions, water, and spices slow-cooked into a scoopable mass, shaped into a loaf and chilled for slicing). Let’s not forget his dates stuffed with walnuts and rolled in sugar. Such simple pleasures, enjoyed after a life of horrors, then successes, and then peaceful retirement.

Born in Canada in 1896, Ralph completed basic schooling, then received certification from an Engineering Technologies program. This program provided both classroom and practical experience to students.

The First World War started about this time and, standing on Québec’s Plains of Abraham, Ralph decided this was worth fighting for.

The First World War was hell on Earth, from all accounts I have read. During those four years, 1914 to 1918, eight million horses, mules, and donkeys were killed in service. About 20 million soldiers and civilians died.

For Ralph, though, it was also hell *under* earth. He was assigned to one of Canada’s four tunnelling companies as a “sapper,” because an engineering or mining background was essential for this brutal job. Sappers worked underground for weeks at a time. They dug dark, claustrophobic tunnels under enemy lines to plant explosive charges to be used in conjunction with above-ground offensive strikes.

Both sides in the war had sappers, who sometimes tunnelled into each other and fought underground. Winston Churchill is rumored to have said that with Canadian fighters, British generals, and American ingenuity, he could rule the Earth. At one point, Ralph and other sappers had to witness a deserter be executed by firing squad. An indelible deterrent.

After completing his service, Ralph, the strong silent type who never said much about his past experiences, returned home to marry his sweetheart to whom he had been sending postcards from the front. They were together for decades, into their 90s. He was an excellent carpenter by nature, and his engineering schooling stood him in good stead through a long, successful career building many homes in the area of Wakefield and Reading, Massachusetts. He planned, blueprinted, and orchestrated it all.

A good man. An intelligent man. A good husband, father, and grandfather.

Ralph’s tranquil retirement growing tomatoes in Greenfield was hard-earned. May both he and Bernice, their ashes now scattered on the Plains of Abraham, rest in peace.

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