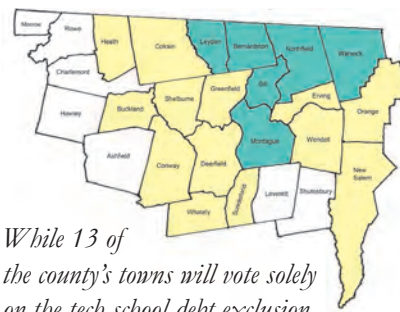


The Montague Reporter

Voters in Six Towns Face Two October 6 Elections

By JEFF SINGLETON

FRANKLIN COUNTY – When voters in Gill, Montague, and four other towns reach the polls on October 6, they will face two different check-ins to fill out two separate ballots concerning the future of education in our region. “They’re almost totally differ-



While 13 of the county’s towns will vote solely on the tech school debt exclusion (yellow), six will vote both on that and on whether to form a new school district (green).

ent,” Rich Kuklewicz told the *Reporter*, referring to the two special elections, which will run in parallel from 12 to 8 p.m. One asks voters in the 19 towns that comprise the Franklin County Regional Technical School District to support an override – a measure to allow property taxes to exceed the state’s legal limit for a specific project – in order to borrow \$237 million to fund the reconstruction of the tech school.

The other asks voters in six towns in the region – Gill, Montague, Northfield, Leyden, Bernardston, and Warwick – whether they endorse an agreement effectively consolidating the Pioneer Valley and Gill-Montague school districts, and possibly the town of Warwick, into a new “Great River

see **ELECTIONS** page A8

GILL SELECTBOARD

Board Authorizes Purchase Of 26-Foot Rescue Boat

By KATE SAVAGE

At their meeting on Monday, the Gill selectboard moved forward on trying to procure a new rescue boat, despite objections from the town’s former fire chief.

“Our boat is aging out,” said fire chief William Kimball. “It’s starting to fail. It’s also not designed for the rapidly-evolving currents and weather changes of the river – it’s designed for lakes and ponds.” Kimball said

the boat, which is 14 feet long, doesn’t have space for providing emergency care to injured people.

“We have 12 miles of shoreline in Gill,” said Kimball. He said that the area of the river is being used more “as they enforce more down-river in Northampton.”

“We’ve been lucky that there haven’t been more major incidents,” he said, estimating that the department received 16 calls for incidents

see **GILL** page A5

G-M SCHOOL COMMITTEE

School Staff To Committee: Opening Day Address Was ‘Disheartening’

By MIKE JACKSON

GILL-MONTAGUE – The regional school committee’s first meeting of the year began with highly charged public comments from a number of employees, accusing interim superintendent Tari Thomas of setting a “hostile” and “disrespectful” tone in her staff convocation speech on August 24.

“Our membership would like their voices to be heard by all school committee members, and the public, so that district stakeholders have a better understanding of the impact that the opening-day remarks have had on our climate and culture districtwide,” Heidi Schmidt, a high school art teacher and president of the Gill Montague Education Association (GMEA) union, said before she and several other union members read from a long series of comments by their coworkers.

Speech pathologist Jasmine Smith explained that many comments came from a “climate survey” GMEA had already planned to circulate that day.

Thomas is beginning her second year as interim superintendent, a search for a permanent hire having failed last spring. At the end of her first year, facing a \$1.2 million budget deficit and poor and declining standardized test results, she presided over a round of layoffs and

see **GMRSD** page A4

Fabric and Fiber Hub Expands Into Greenfield



Swanson’s Fabrics executives Alex McGuigan (left) and Kathryn Swanson (right) say the facility will free up much-needed space at the Stash House in Turners Falls.

By MIKE JACKSON

GREENFIELD – “It’s funny to call it Little Shop,” Kathryn Swanson says of her company’s recently-acquired building on Mill Street, “because it probably won’t be a shop – but that’s what we’ve been calling it.”

Swanson, Franklin County’s most famous living fabric magnate, delivers a nonstop patter that feels part TED Talk, part carnival barker, and part guerrilla leader, pushing effortlessly from one well-honed phrase to the next.

“Because we have a thing for *Little Shop of Horrors*,” she adds. “And it feels like it can be our own little florist boutique that alien beauties grow from.”

Swanson’s Fabrics, a secondhand shop now at its second rented location in Turners Falls, is not moving to Greenfield but it needs the space. With a dozen part-time staff members, a larger

pool of regular volunteers, about 100 card-carrying club members, 74.5K followers on Instagram, and 201.5K on TikTok, the company has evolved into a hub of craft education and camaraderie as much as of material.

The store at 320 Avenue A, the Stash House, is a hive of workshops and piles and piles of donated yarns and fabrics to sort. Fans sometimes “stop by” on their drive from New York to Boston, and the local contingent is thriving. The institution has a momentum of its own, connecting the material economy of the past with some kind of impulse to steer toward a different future.

But the “no-kill shelter for your fabric stash,” as Swanson’s tagline goes, is bursting at the seams.

“Swanson’s consumes space,” Swanson explains. “We just never have enough, and we have so many ideas for things we could do

see **HUB** page A4

High School Sports: Fall’s Upon Us



Franklin Tech’s Jackson Feury sprints down an open lane as the Eagles hosted the Gardner High Wildcats and Monument Mountain Spartans last Saturday for an early-season scrimmage.

By MATT ROBINSON

TURNERS FALLS – The fall sports season began last Tuesday, September 1 with several squads from Franklin County Tech and Turners Falls High School girding themselves up for another year of competition.

Both schools will have volleyball, cross country, and field hockey teams this season, while the Franklin girls’ soccer team and cheer squad will include athletes from both schools. Tech will also have a boys’ soccer team, but Turners will not field a varsity soccer team this year. And the Tech Eagles football team, of course, will return this season.

Boys’ Golf

Frontier 173 – TFHS 174
FCTS 164 – Westfield 175
TFHS 183 – Pioneer 184
FCTS 146 – Mohawk 200

As the season officially teed off last Tuesday, the Turners Falls boys’ golf team hosted the Frontier Red Hawks at Thomas Memorial.

The match almost didn’t happen. It rained most of the day, but

see **SPORTS** page A6

ANALYSIS

Nine Questions Are On the State Ballot This November... What Happens If One Passes?

By CHRIS LISINSKI,
COMMONWEALTH BEACON

BOSTON – Massachusetts voters are on track to decide the most statewide ballot questions in a single cycle in 32 years. That will create a series of follow-up decisions for Beacon Hill.

Nine measures are in the mix for the November ballot, tying the record last set in 1994. They range in topics from recreational cannabis to a state tax cap to unionization rights for public defenders to voter registration.

So what happens if any or all of the proposals win at the polls? The answer is less straightforward than you might think.

Most of the questions this cycle, once approved, would have the same status as any other law put on the books through more traditional channels. But that also means the Legislature and governor have the

same power to change or repeal entirely a ballot law after it passes as they do any other law enacted five or 50 years ago.

Legislative leaders have done just that in the past.

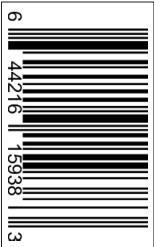
The most likely outcome is that if voters approve a question, it takes effect with little or no legislative interference. But just because lawmakers are unlikely to tinker with the will of the populace does not mean they can’t or won’t.

Q: Are there limits on what Beacon Hill can do in response to a ballot question’s passage?

A: If the question proposes a new law instead of a constitutional amendment, not really.

Almost all of the measures in the mix this cycle are indeed proposed laws, so if they succeed, they would enter the codex known as the Massachusetts General Laws with

see **QUESTIONS** page A7



The Loading Has Begun

Girding Themselves Up.....	A1	Always Roll Into a Ball.....	B1
In This Present Reality.....	A2	Cranked Up to High.....	B2
Between Conviction and Contempt.....	A3	Blowing Dirt and Debris Around.....	B3
Used As Stuffing.....	A4	Woke Up Out of a Deep Sleep.....	B4
Stuck Clinging on the Line.....	A5	Vainly Crave the Light.....	B5
Seemed to Be Getting Frustrated.....	A6	Goblin Wizard, Sleeping Giant.....	B6
Received a Death Blow.....	A7	Monkey Wrench, Daisy Chain, Crowbar.....	B7
Getting It All Together.....	A8	Exposing People to Depravity.....	B8

The Montague Reporter

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August 2002

OP ED

Before the Barrens

By BABETTE WILS

MONTAGUE – It was with interest that I read the recent letter from Bart Bouricius about converting mature forest into pine barrens. Bart writes – among other things – that Massachusetts is losing valuable dense-cover mature forest that is habitat to valuable birds such as the wood thrush and species of warblers; that logging this dense cover with heavy machinery is destructive; and that maintaining the resulting open barrens with fire is health-damaging. I do not want to argue with those points, but would like to provide a perspective on the role of open forest landscapes.

I am a regenerative farmer in Montague, and spend a lot of time thinking about and reading about the role of humans in the landscape. I am particularly interested in traditional ways humans managed land in the millennia prior to the arrival of plows, and in efforts such as re-wilding, popular in Europe.

In school, I was taught – as we all were – about forest succession, with the most mature stage being the dense forest cover that Bart talks about. I believed that prior to human intervention, most of the world was covered in such tall, dense forest. But, as is often the case, it turns out the story was more nuanced.

Natural landscape succession is not just a story about trees, but about eons of interaction between trees and... large animals. In the times before humans, huge megafauna roamed the Americas and Eurasia, and most of them ate plants. Huge amounts of plants. So many plants, in fact, that they created their own landscapes – the open forest, or savannah.

On these savannahs a mixture of trees and grasses provided much more forage than dense forests, and so the megafauna created a landscape beneficial not only for themselves, but for a huge menagerie of smaller grazers and predators as well. The density of animals in these open forests or savannahs was approximately 10 times higher than

in dense forest. As long as there were enough megafauna, they were able to maintain these savannahs. In sub-Saharan Africa, the elephants are still doing it today.

Concurrent with the arrival of humans in the Americas, northern Eurasia, and Australia, the megafauna disappeared – likely, but not conclusively, through over-hunting by us. All might have become dense end-succession forest, to the detriment of the remaining grazers and predators, and dense forest did grow in many places. But humans brought with them their own land-management tool: fire.

With fire, humans in the Americas, Eurasia, and Australia maintained open forests and savannahs. In New England, this forest consisted of enormous age-old trees with a fairly cleared forest floor – one that the indigenous caretakers of this place maintained with regular burns. In fact, at the time of the arrival of the settlers on this continent, yes, there were some fully wild, mature forests, but much of the land was touched and managed by humans. With the use of fire the indigenous people created more open, light-filled space for forbs, grasses, and berries – food for the huge numbers of wild animals that the settlers were so amazed to find here. Had the indigenous people not done this fire work, the place would have been much emptier of animal life.

All of this is not to say there is no place for dense forests. Of course there is, and should be. And, while I would argue there is also a place for fire and open forest, as a natural farmer, I would definitely argue we should avoid destructive logging, and the use of poisons such as pesticide and fungicide.

I would like to see a conversation where we talk about how we can best use our talents – other than just to stay out of the way. We are a keystone species and as such, we can intervene in many beneficial ways.

Babette Wils is a regenerative farmer. She manages Big Foot Food Forest in Montague.

CORRECTION

In our September 3 coverage of the Montague selectboard’s hearing on a German Shepherd in Turners Falls named Scoot (*Downtown Dog Deemed Dangerous...*, Page A1), we erroneously wrote that Scoot “reportedly escaped from his halter” and that the board ultimately mandated “a muzzle whenever he is being walked...” We have been made aware that Scoot is female! This was reflected seven times in the meeting materials and 46 times during the hearing. Our apologies.

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NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION



Streeter Elliott is still accepting new beginner and intermediate piano students at his Fourth Street studio in Turners Falls. Elliott says age and experience matter less for learning piano than whether or not the student has passion for the instrument, and the first lesson is free of charge. Find out more at elliottpiano.com.

Letters to

the Editors

Giving Our Children the Tools to Succeed

On October 6, voters across Bernardston, Leyden, Northfield, Gill, Montague, and Warwick face a decisive choice about the future of our public schools and the vitality of our region.

As a local parent, teacher, and neighbor, I urge you to vote “Yes” to create the Great River Regional School District and secure the strong educational opportunities our children deserve.

Demographics don’t lie: national birth rates have declined, and local school enrollment has dropped by more than 50% since 1996. Running programs for fewer students drives up cost per child. Our schools are at a breaking point, facing cuts that could leave behind only the bare-minimum core subjects required by law.

Regionalizing the middle and high schools while keeping elementary schools in our home towns pools our resources so we can maximize every dollar. It restores the clubs, sports, arts, vocational programs, and support staff our children need to discover their talents and explore their passions.

As a local educator, I see the reality of “doing more with less” every day. Throughout western Massachusetts, cutbacks to staff are like Band-Aids for broken

bones. Educators are stretched thin everywhere, trying to maintain strong programs with shrinking support.

Forming the Great River Regional School District isn’t about saving money, it’s about saving opportunities. As a parent, I want my child to have access to music, art, electives, sports, and comprehensive support services so she can explore the world and figure out who she wants to be.

Regionalization doesn’t need to be a contentious issue – it’s an educational and community investment. When a student steps into a science lab or joins an after-school program, what matters is whether we gave them the tools to succeed.

A strong, vibrant school district benefits our entire community, not just families with school-aged children. Strong schools strengthen property values, attract healthcare workers, and draw professionals who help our small towns thrive.

On October 6, let’s vote to strengthen our communities and expand our children’s horizons, not narrow them.

Meghan Lena
Bernardston

To My Fellow Citizens...

We have elected leaders born in the 1940s to be US President for the last two election cycles. Both have been disasters.

Our grown children, who we have spent time and treasure to raise, are not able to function in this present reality. They have been insisting for change. Yet, for both political parties it’s still business as usual. Wages are stagnant, and the cost of living continues to soar.

We cling to our collective older and wiser ways of doing things.

But that system isn’t working. Why not change course?

“Our kids” have become more receptive to a more fair and balanced way of conducting our lives. It’s called socialism. Not the communism that our fake news media keeps naming it to raise our suspicions. The “powers that be” – with plenty of money and power – promote the status quo, and promote fear-mongering to maintain control.

How stupid must we be to keep falling for this tired old horse? Our leaders of both parties keep trotting it out and insisting that we ride. The countries with the happiest populations on Earth are Social Democratic

ones. Yes, the wealthy have to share.

Ask yourself: if given the choice, would you rather live in Hungary, or Denmark?

A couple of weeks ago, after we celebrated our national Independence Day, I woke up in the middle of the night and wrote this down: my anthem for a new America.*

Your 83-year-young
Friend and Neighbor,

Dick Hall
Greenfield

* See our Poetry Page on B5!

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TURNERS FALLS AND VICINITY.

Compiled by MIKE JACKSON

How are our readers doing with the **1895 special section**? Feedback is welcome... There's one more of those in the pipeline.

It's the **Franklin County Fair** weekend! This edition goes to press on Thursday morning and will arrive at most destinations either during, after, or well after the parade.

The \$10 tickets that let you cut the line for the demolition derby in front of those scrubs who only paid \$5 were all sold out when we checked. See you over there... Have fun, everyone!

Diemand Farm's 90th anniversary party is this Saturday, September 12 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Bands, farm tours, kids' activities, good food and drink, and a hell of a view... Congrats to the Diemands, I can't wait to see the party in 2036.



Next Monday, September 14, Greenfield Garden Cinemas is showing *Unless Something Goes Terribly Wrong*, the **wastewater treatment plant documentary** that came out last year. I haven't seen it but everyone says it's amazing. (I'll be in a meeting.) Greenfield is also offering tours of their poop plant as a cross-promotion, so there's that.

On Tuesday, September 15 the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Western Mass is kicking off "Family-to-Family," a training series for **"family, significant others, and friends of people with mental health conditions."**

That's everyone, by the way. The program lasts eight weeks, from 6 to 8:30 p.m. each Tuesday through November 3, and is free, but registration is required. Call Patti at (413) 824-9283 or sign up at namiwm.org/support.

If you're at all considering this, do it – it can't hurt to be around other people in the same boat.

The Leverett historical commission has invited all properties in town that date back to 1800 or earlier to put lawn signs out front, which the commission will provide, that say **"Witness To History."**

"[T]he Witness To History project aspires to find ways... to enrich our shared appreciation for the families who came before," the commissioners explain, "and to inspire those who will come after to make their unique contribution."

Next Saturday, September 19 from 4 to 9 p.m. Peskeompskut Park will be given over to a **One Love Reggae Fest**, with live music from Ras Iba & Amandla, Shanti Starr & the Afro-Reggae All Stars, Abdul Baki & Root Fiyah, a crew from Boston, and Mbo Lette, formerly known as the Wendell Warriors. Turners's own Richie Richardson will emcee, and there'll be family activities and I'm hoping some food trucks.

It's free, and the rain date is September 20. People close to me know I've been listening to basically nothing except reggae since April. I can't really explain why. It seems like I should probably check this one out though.

A kindly reminder to anyone who might want to promote an event, or idea, in this paper:

We're a tiny crew, working on a shoestring, and hundreds of people are pushing promotional communications in our direction always through a number of orifices. We're sorting it as fast as we can, and printing an awful lot of it for free. We absolutely will not manage to get 100% of it in.

If you ever need to guarantee a spot in the paper, therefore, a win-win is available, because the *Reporter* needs **a certain amount of advertising revenue** to crawl along another week. Email ads@montaguereporter.org to get started – the ad deadline is Monday. We only very rarely screw up the stuff that comes in through the ads department. Our rates are unrivaled.

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OP ED

Making Room for One Another

By ADAM SOLENDER

SPRINGFIELD – As the calendar turns toward autumn and the evening temperatures become a little crisp, Jewish communities across the Upper Valley and throughout Western Massachusetts enter a season that asks something increasingly difficult of all of us: to slow down, look honestly at ourselves, and consider how we treat the people around us.

Rosh Hashanah, which begins at sundown Friday, September 11, marks the beginning of the Jewish New Year and the Days of Awe – a ten-day period culminating in Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

For those who observe, these days are about much more than religious ritual. They are an annual invitation to examine our behavior, acknowledge where we have fallen short, and try to do better.

That message feels particularly relevant in our communities right now.

We live in a moment when disagreement has become personal. A difference of opinion can quickly become a judgment about someone's character. People are reduced to a political position, a social-media post, or a single sentence. We have become remarkably skilled at deciding who is worthy of our respect, and who isn't.

The Jewish tradition offers a

different challenge.

The Hebrew word for repentance, *teshuvah*, literally means "returning." It suggests that human beings are a work in progress. We can make mistakes. We can recognize them. And, importantly, we can change.

That change begins close to home. Here in Western Mass, we pride ourselves on being communities where people care about one another. We support local businesses, volunteer at our schools and nonprofits, show up for neighbors, and come together for community celebrations.

But being a community means more than agreeing with one another.

Consider the recent discussion surrounding the scheduling of the Taste of Northampton during Rosh Hashanah. For most people, a local festival is simply what it appears to be: a chance to enjoy food, music, friends, and the vitality of downtown Northampton.

For Jewish residents who observe Rosh Hashanah, however, those same days are among the most important of the year. They involve synagogue services, family gatherings, and religious obligations that make participation in a public festival impossible.

No one suggests that a community festival was scheduled with the intention of excluding Jews. That is precisely why this is an opportunity for something more constructive than accusation.

It is an opportunity to listen.

A community calendar that takes into account the major religious observances of its residents sends a simple but powerful message: you belong here, too.

That principle extends far beyond Rosh Hashanah. Our communities include people who observe different faiths, follow different traditions, speak different languages, hold different political views, and come from very different backgrounds. We will never agree on everything. Nor should we.

The test of a healthy community is not whether everyone agrees. It is whether we can disagree without treating one another as enemies.

That requires lowering the temperature of our rhetoric. It means resisting the temptation to label everyone who disagrees with us as hateful, ignorant, or morally deficient. It means leaving room for the possibility that someone we disagree with may nevertheless care deeply about the same community we do.

There is an important distinction between conviction and contempt.

We should be passionate about the issues that matter to us. We should advocate for justice, challenge institutions, and hold our elected officials accountable. But none of that requires abandoning civility or curiosity.

The prophet Micah offered an enduring prescription: *"to do justice,*

love mercy and walk humbly."

Notice that justice and mercy appear together.

As the shofar sounds this Rosh Hashanah, perhaps the challenge for all of us in Western Mass is to hear something beyond a religious call. Perhaps it can be a civic one as well.

Can we make room for our neighbors, even when their traditions are unfamiliar to us? Can we disagree passionately without dismissing one another? Can we remember that a vibrant community is not one in which everyone thinks alike, but one in which everyone has a place?

We cannot legislate kindness. No festival schedule, city ordinance, or public statement will suddenly make our communities more understanding.

Culture changes differently. It changes one conversation, one gesture, and one decision at a time.

If we want a better year, perhaps it starts with something simple: being a little less certain that we have all the answers, a little more willing to listen, and a little more attentive to the people who share these communities with us.

That seems like a New Year's resolution worth keeping.

Adam Solender is the interim CEO of the Jewish Federation of Western Massachusetts. The views expressed here are his own.

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GMRSD from page A1

restructuring that has raised sustained criticism from the union.

“Fear evokes mistrust,” Schmidt read from one member’s comments. “Can you wonder why we felt the way we did after hearing the words, ‘If you are not at all prepared to embrace this mission, step aside. If this does not work for you, I invite you to resign?’”

“Superintendent Thomas’s words were disheartening and discouraging,” Schmidt read from another comment, “with little to no recognition that many people in the district are already doing extraordinary work...”

“During the first hour,” another employee wrote in comments read aloud by school librarian Ramona Latronica, “she also repeatedly accused some teachers of choosing comfort and convenience over student needs.... The membership was shocked, angered, and saddened at the virulence of her words.”

“I work incredibly hard, and I was just invited to quit in a district that can’t keep people,” Smith read.

All in all, the union members read excerpts of over 30 statements, all painting a similar picture.

“Can we take a break?” Montague member Heather Katsoulis asked when the public comment period had ended.

“Yeah,” said committee chair Jane Oakes. “A few minutes would be good.” She followed Katsoulis into the hallway meeting room, and the rest of the school committee and audience sat in silence for three minutes before they returned and the meeting’s business began.

District Review

Thomas ran through a number of items in her September “update,” a public document that serves as both her monthly report to the committee and a newsletter for families and

the wider community.

Gill-Montague’s enrollment stands at 794, she reported, down about 25 from last year.

This fall the district plans to roll out ParentSquare, an app that streamlines family communication with schools. “The interface is so simple, it’s remarkable,” Thomas said.

Katsoulis said that as an employee in the Greenfield district, which uses ParentSquare, “so far it’s pretty promising.”

Thomas commented on two pieces of state legislation, the PROTECT Act and the act known as the “K-3 Literacy Law.”

The limits on federal civil enforcement set statewide by the PROTECT Act match Gill-Montague’s existing policies, she said, while the literacy law mandates more reading assessments and dyslexia screenings and requires that only approved “evidence-based” teaching methods be used.

Thomas ran through other programs by

which the state was supporting or directing the district, which has been measured as low-performing by standardized testing, in overhauling its practices.

From October 19 to 23, she said, officials from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education would be in town for a district review, something a “small number of districts” are targeted for each year. She said she would learn more details at an upcoming meeting.

The district is hiring instructional assistants and substitute teachers.

Special Services

Pupil services director Kristen Dietz gave a presentation on her department’s work. Summer school – the “extended school year” – had 72 enrollees this year, she said, up from 56, and overall 253 students in the

see GMRSD next page



REPORTER FILE PHOTO BY ANNE JEMAS



JACKSON PHOTO

Above: “Swanson’s Fabric Rescue & Mobile Mending Unit,” the Stash House’s freight unit and equivalent of the Scooby Doo crew’s Mystery Machine.

Above right: Kathryn Swanson demonstrates the already-chaotic possibilities of the back room at the Little Shop, the new facility in Greenfield. The space includes the remnants of a dance floor and black box theater. It is now the staging area for a large pile of yarn Swanson’s is storing for its collaboration with the Loose Ends Project, a non-profit that connects friends and families of makers who have died with volunteers capable of finishing their final projects.

Below: Swanson (left) and “right hand” Alex McGuigan. “Kathryn throws out all the ideas, whether or not they’re based in reality – that’s where the energy comes from,” McGuigan says. “And I’m not the world’s most organized person, but I do like to have a strategy, or plan. We work well together, in that sense.”



JACKSON PHOTO

HUB from page A1

under the umbrella of our ‘fiber and fabric arts center.’”

“The initial idea was upholstery, and that kind of thing,” says Alex McGuigan. “It’s a very natural offshoot – Kathryn has experience in reupholstering furniture, and it’s a service that is needed around here.”

McGuigan reluctantly threw in the towel at her own Avenue A vintage shop, Buckingham Rabbits, at the end of 2023, and is now running with Swanson, who calls her her “right hand” though she hasn’t been given an official job title.

“It would be lovely to expand into the building we’re in already – there’s 16,000 square feet of empty space behind us with which we could do a number of things, up to and including full textile recycling machines,” Swanson continues. “Even just machines that would chew and grind it down to shoddy, which can be used as stuffing inside of furniture.... The back part of that building was historically a furniture factory. But it doesn’t make sense for us to pay more rent.”

A hunt for a second building brought her, fortuitously, to 9 Mill Street in Greenfield, just two doors down from Artspace and around the corner from the Textile Company, a beloved, long-running traditional fabric store. The single-story building, easy to overlook, was built as part of the memorial stone company across the street, Negus & Taylor Monuments – a garage door on the side and an I-beam above it hark back to its days as a warehouse for heavy slabs of granite and marble.

“This was the first property I’ve seen come to market that was priced in any anyone’s reach,” McGuigan marvels. “It looked aban-

doned, but when I saw the photos from the inside, I was shocked. There was a black box theater in the back room, and the front room was a gallery!”

The seller, it turned out, was Jack Golden, a pedigreed mime and clown who toured schools and festivals around the country for decades as Dr. Trash, America’s favorite garbologist, using comedy to spread the message of conservation and recycling.

Swanson, hearing that another bid was in, immediately wrote Golden a letter explaining her company’s aligned mission – the salvage and reuse of materials, the revival of material skills, and so on – and clinched the purchase.

“It felt like the whole process was divinely guided,” she says. “It turned out the other bid was from [major tax preparation franchise redacted], and he was not very excited about having to drive by his creative studio of 20 years and see that – he’d been hoping it would go to someone in the arts.”

Swanson closed on the building in June.

Many Evolutions

The plan, however, is no longer to set up a reupholstery.

“We’ve sort of been getting to know it, and trying to think through how we want to use it,” Swanson tells the Reporter. “I’m sure there are plenty of rumors around town.

“We were thinking we might put the yarn over here... In our store we accept anything and everything to do with fiber arts, so we are also a needlepoint store and a rug-making store, and those are often specialty shops.... But, between the shipping department and the inventory, the website takes up as much space as

the physical store. And the website part of the business is the most easily moved thing – it’s all in bins.”

The new building is made up mostly of two large rooms, a well-lit front room and then, down a few steps, a larger back room. There is no basement or attic, and the ventilation could be improved.

The current plan, as Swanson and McGuigan outline it, is to replace the flooring in the front space and perhaps upgrade the HVAC system, then move the non-public-facing retail and shipping component of the business, which Swanson calls “the website,” over from Turners Falls and set it up in the back room.

Being able to move the online retail to the new building, she says, will then allow the Stash House donation intake room to move into the online retail space, opening up the donation room in turn for “some seating and final sorting and space for the measuring and tagging...”

And for the front room at the Greenfield building: “It’s a beautiful space to be in, and that was the most exciting thing about it,” Swanson explains. “We don’t have space at 320 Avenue A for large community gatherings....”

The company is also starting a Patreon subscription service, which will require it to produce educational video content more regularly, so the front room will be set up as a studio space, as well as a site hosting events where crafters can sit and work together.

An initial public event, a rug-braiding workshop and reading with the novelist Madeline Ffitch, is planned for September 25.

“The one thing I know about this space,” Swanson predicts, “is that it will have many evolutions.”



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GMRSD from previous page

district – or 34% of the total – have individualized education programs (IEPs).

“That’s a high percentage,” she observed.

To attempt to meet their educational needs, Dietz said, the district has 19 special ed teachers, six adjustment counselors, three speech pathologists and two assistants, an audiologist, a physical therapist, two occupational therapists, a teacher of the visually impaired and a teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing, and one board-certified behavior analyst (BCBA).

Every district is required to maintain a Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC), and GMRSD calls its SEPAC the Friends of Special Education. Participation has been low in the past, Dietz said, but this year the district is affiliating with the Massachusetts Parent Advisory Councils (MassPAC) network, which administrators are hoping will attract more parents.

Finally, Dietz told the committee that the district is contracting with the Center for Human Development to provide behavioral health support via videoconferrence for students who might need it.

Quality Control

The new facilities manager, Fred Mogilka, Jr., introduced himself to the committee, who told him that the floors look wonderful.

“I would like to recognize and thank my crew for the tremendous work they’ve done getting our buildings ready, and preparing for kiddos and staff to be in a safe, warm, and healthy environment,” Mogilka said. “One of my primary focuses has been establishing some quality control measures...”

Mogilka said he is still trying to fill vacancies, but is hoping to provide his staff with the training and equipment necessary to do a good job. He said he brought “17 years of experience doing some of this work with my own hands,” which helps him supervise custodial and maintenance staff.

He added that he was getting up to speed on building

projects, including meeting with building committees, and that the Gill Elementary roof project is approaching its “60%” threshold for completing documents.

Back to the Well

The committee got the ball rolling on a second attempt to hire a superintendent. The first search failed after the screening committee recommended only two finalists and one withdrew, having accepted another job.

Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) field director Tracy Novick, who managed the first hiring process, attended Tuesday’s meeting to outline a timeline and ask if any substantive changes should be made in the job posting brochure.

A new screening committee would need to be appointed and then trained, then interview applicants and recommend finalists. Novick suggested posting the job for six weeks, with applications closing October 23, putting the process on track to interview finalists in December and potentially hire a superintendent before winter break.

After extensive attempts to identify a time for an extra meeting, the committee decided to vote to approve a lightly edited version of the posting. “We’re decisive this evening,” Novick told them. “Good job!”

Other Business

At Latronica’s request, the committee declared 1,428 books from the Sheffield, Hillcrest, and Gill elementary school libraries as surplus.

“Is that done annually?” Montague member Sue Richardson asked her.

“It should be,” Latronica replied. “It had not been done since I started, which was five years ago.”

“It’s good to be catching up,” said Oakes.

Oakes announced that Gill member Bill Tomb, who was not at Tuesday’s meeting, will be awarded a Life Membership by the MASC. It was agreed that this would be discussed again when Tomb is present.

The committee’s next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 13.



GILL from page A1

on the river last year, and “seven or eight” so far this year.

After investigating his options for a year and a half, Kimball settled on a 26-foot “bull nose” aluminum boat. The boat has a fire pump and an enclosed cabin, so rescue equipment could be stored directly inside. Kimball said the best offer he received was \$365,000, with others as high as \$600,000.

Rather than ask the town to buy the equipment, Kimball wants to see if FirstLight Power will pay for it. Kimball noted that the company owns the shoreline along the entirety of the river in Gill, causes water level fluctuations as it generates power, and runs a 32-passenger vessel which could require serious rescue work if an accident were to happen.

Last year, when a man was stuck clinging on the line of buoys above the dam during fast-moving floods, Kimball and others were able to rescue him by commandeering a boat belonging to the environmental police. “They’ve made it very clear that was a one-off, and that we are not to do that again,” said Kimball.

But Kimball’s former boss brought a different perspective.

“I’m 100% against it,” said former fire chief Gene Beaubien. “It’s too big of a boat. It’s too much money. Even though it’s a donation, we could use that donation someplace else.”

Baubien said the bigger boat was too dangerous and would require too much training. He also questioned Kimball’s statistics on the number of calls coming from the river, “unless you’re counting Christmas in July – those don’t count.”

Kimball responded that bigger boats were currently docked at the river, and that the boat needed to be at least that big if it were to include a water pump to fight fires on vessels or structures along the river.

He conceded that the training would require time, but said that time “is worth it to ensure that we protect the equipment, and the operators, and everyone else on the lot.”

The selectboard voted unanimously to support Kimball’s initiative to ask FirstLight to buy the boat for the town.

Baubien asked whether it was a conflict of interest for selectboard member Jenn Waldron to vote on the issue, as her son is a firefighter and deputy chief for the town. Waldron said neither she nor her son would financially benefit from the vote.

“There’s no reason to recuse myself,” she said. “If that was the truth, I wouldn’t be able to talk about either police or fire business at all.”

Kimball said he would approach FirstLight as soon as possible, as it was nearing the end of the company’s fiscal year and it might have remaining funds in its budget.

Baubien asked Kimball if they were still friends. Kimball responded that they were.

Peace and Wolves

The board voted to join Mayors for Peace, an international organization founded in Japan after the atomic bombings there, with the goal of abolishing nuclear weapons.

“It sounds like a next-to-impossible cause,” said selectboard member Charles Garbiel, before teaming up with the others in a unanimous vote to join the network. The organization offers its members seeds from trees that survived the Nagasaki and Hiroshima bombings. Garbiel requested that the town pursue that initiative, and care for the seedlings at Gill Elementary School if possible, rather than enlisting the help of local universities.

“I think it would be a good teachable thing for the kids,” said Garbiel. “You could also teach a little bit of Japanese culture, a little bit of World War II history, and where this

tree comes from.”

The elementary school will also be receiving a mosaic art piece portraying its mascot, the gray wolf. The board accepted an offer of the three-foot-by-two-foot mosaic from artist Robert Markey, who also volunteered to install it on a wall near the entrance.

Markey’s mosaic work can be seen around Springfield as well as in Chile, Brazil, Germany, and Sri Lanka.

Other Business

Chief Kimball informed the board that a 14-year-old resident, the daughter of a town firefighter, wants to join the Junior Firefighter program. Town administrator Ray Purington said he would get more information from the town’s lawyer about the legality of having someone that young in the program.

“We love the fact that there’s interest,” said Kimball, “and we want to make sure that we give everyone an opportunity. But we just need to make sure we’re doing it the right way.”

Ray Steele, who frequently donates handyman work for the town, told the board that volunteers worked for hours at the Riverside municipal building to prepare for new, sturdier railings on the building’s ramp.

The board voted to establish an *ad hoc* committee to plan for farmland protection in town. The municipal farmland protection planning process study committee aims to inventory farmland and help the town “better position itself to support land protection projects.” Its members include Zoe Fox, Dan Flagg, and Tom Chalmers from the agriculture commission; Brian Donahue from the conservation commission; Tim Storrow from the planning board; and local farmers Sam French and Keith Lilly.

The board granted a one-day

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MONTAGUE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the Montague Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, September 16, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. VIA ZOOM and IN PERSON at the Montague Town Hall upstairs conference room, One Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA at the request of Current Energy for an amendment to Special Permit #15-14 to expand the previously approved ground-mounted solar array by adding a 15.8 kW array consisting of 36 panels, for a total of 52 panels. Under Sections 8.9.4 and 9.2, located at 504 Turners Falls Road (Parcel 39-0-056), in the AGRICULTURAL FORESTRY (AF) District.

The filing is available for review at Town Hall. In-person meeting details and remote meeting login information can be found at www.montague-ma.gov/calendar.

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beer, wine, and cider license to Holly Grosvenor for an acoustic music concert on September 26.

Daniela Jacobson was appointed to the local cultural council through September 2029.

Purington announced that the Franklin County Technical School would be hosting a public information session about its proposed new building on Wednesday, September 16 at 7 p.m. The districtwide vote on the issue will be held Tuesday, October 6, from noon to 8 p.m. (See article, Page A1).

Other upcoming events include the Gill Fall Festival Square Dance on Saturday, September 26, from 7 to 9:20 p.m., and the Gill Harvest Festival from noon to 3 p.m. the following day on the town common.

The next Gillbilly Paddle down the river will take place Sunday, October 4, beginning at 10 a.m. at the Northfield Mount Hermon dock.



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SPORTS from page A1

at 1:30 p.m. it was announced that the match would go on as scheduled. The Franklin Tech golfers were not so lucky – their away match was scratched.

In the Frontier battle, the Thunder lost by a single-stroke tiebreaker. I actually thought at first that Turners had won, but it was too close to call. After tallying up the top four players from each team, the score was 174-all.

William “Billy” Fitzpatrick, Turners’s new golf coach, explained that in case of a tie, they tally the fifth golfer’s score from each squad. Unfortunately for the Thunder, Red’s fifth man did better, and so a single stroke was removed, giving them the victory.

Cam Cogswell beat everybody with a 36, followed by Jameson Betters (42), Liam Kerivan (48), and Julian Kaiser (48).

Last Thursday, Turners evened

their ship with a single-stroke home victory over the Pioneer Black Panthers. As Coach Fitzpatrick walked the course, I asked him how his team was doing. He said he didn’t know, because he never asks the boys during the match, but he said he noticed some of his players seemed to be getting frustrated. Then he excused himself to speak to them.

Betters (43), Kerivan (45), Cogswell (47), and William Tyler (48) contributed for the win, with Trevor Lyons also shooting a 48.

That same day, the Tech boys’ team traveled to Shaker Farms Country Club in Westfield, where they beat the Westfield Tech Tigers by eleven strokes. Brady Wood (40), Braeden Talbot (41), Jack Day (41), and Grady Deery (42) led the Eagles.

On Friday the swinging Eagles played their first home match at Thomas’s, against Mohawk. As his team was warming up, I asked

Coach Mike Duclos who was going to start, given that all four leaders from the previous match were within two strokes. He reviewed his score sheet and appointed Day as the lead-off golfer.

The Eagles won going away, improving their previous score by 18 strokes, with Wood (34), Day (37), Deery (37), and Talbot (38) all shooting under 40.

But the best part of Friday’s match was the free food that Thomas’s provided for the players.

Cross Country

On Wednesday, Turners Falls High School hosted a “quad” cross-country meet with teams from Southwick, Westfield Tech, and Franklin Tech. The results were not available as of press time.

Girls’ Soccer

Smith Voc 5 – FCTS 1

The Franklin Tech girls’ soccer team played their opening game down in Northampton last Wednesday against the Smith Vocational Vikings.

I couldn’t go, but I saw the team off, and both the players and coach Jason Butynski predicted it was going to be a tough game. Last season, the Vikings only suffered two losses, while Tech finished .500.

The Eagles’ lone goal in Tuesday’s battle came in the second half, scored by Faythe Sobieski with an assist by Layla Hammond.

Boys’ Soccer

FCTS 4 – Athol 3

The Turners boys, who finished their last season 17–1–3 and won



Franklin County Tech running back Jayden Baez accelerates past a Monument Mountain Spartan defender during the Eagles’ scrimmage against the Spartans and Gardner High Wildcats last Saturday. The Tech team kicks off the regular season this Friday, September 11, hosting the McCann Tech Hornets at 7 p.m.



Franklin Tech golf coach Mike Duclos gives instructions before last Friday’s match against Mohawk at Thomas Memorial Golf Course.

NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Culture Scheme Gains Momentum, Backing of Interest Groups

By GEORGE BRACE

At its meeting on Tuesday, the Leverett selectboard heard a progress report on work to create a cultural district in the center of town and discussed speed limits and improving safety for seniors, among other business.

David Henion, president of Leverett Crafts and Arts (LCA), reported that he has received wide support for an initiative to create a state-designated cultural district, and that, working with selectboard member Jed Proujansky, he has learned more about the process for receiving the designation. Proujansky was not present at the meeting.

According to the Mass Cultural Council, cultural districts “attract tourists and entrepreneurs, which in turn help communities foster their cultural sector and expand their tax base.” Henion said the state will provide \$15,000 in “seed money” if the district is approved.

“At this stage,” Henion said, he and Proujansky have “visualized” a contiguous area for the district, as required, which would encompass Leverett Pond, Rattlesnake Gutter, the library, the First Congregational Church, the Peace Pagoda, the North Leverett Sawmill, the Leverett Village Co-op, Moore’s Corner Schoolhouse, and LCA.

The Friends of the North Leverett Sawmill, the coop, and LCA had already voted to support the application, he said, and a representative of the Peace Pagoda had told him they were “all in.” He also listed 10 artists who had expressed support in an individual capacity.

Henion said that his pitch, “all boats float higher when we work together,” has been received positively, and that he is scheduled to meet with the library trustees, planning board, historical commission, conservation commission, Rattlesnake Gutter trustees, and local

cultural council – of which he is also a member – this month. He said he also planned to meet with the Friends of Leverett Pond and the Congregational church, and intends to contact the North Leverett Baptist Church, the Mount Toby Friends Meeting, and those involved in rehabilitating the Field building.

He and Proujansky were still researching the state’s requirements for the designation, he said, but an act of the selectboard and two public meetings would be necessary. Further research was needed on a requirement that the district include a paid staff member, though he said the cultural council may have money available to hire one.

Town administrator Marjorie McGinnis reported that state senator Jo Comerford may submit an earmark for \$5,000 in additional startup costs.

Selectboard member Tom Hankinson said that a “clear objective, with clear goals, in an easy-to-read document” would be helpful to those wanting to take part in the effort.

Henion said he and Proujansky are hoping to get an announcement into the town’s October newsletter, and would publicize the initiative on the LeverettConnects listserv and elsewhere.

Aging In Places

Council on Aging (COA) chair Judi Fonsh noted that Leverett does not have any formal “cooling centers” for seniors and others to seek relief from extreme heat, as many neighboring towns do, and suggested that they should be created.

Multiple attendees suggested that the public safety complex and library could serve the purpose. Hankinson commented that staffing a center with volunteers should not be a problem.

Selectboard chair Patricia Duffy suggested that fire chief Mike Visniewski, who is also the town’s emergency management director, could create parameters for issuing alerts and notifying residents when the centers were open.

Visniewski also brought up “warming centers,” which he said were a more “demanding” proposition. Hankinson said that he, Visniewski, and McGinnis were on the emergency management team and have worked on warming centers, but that perhaps developing a policy was a good idea.

Fonsh also brought up the subject of emergency communication, saying that some parts of Leverett have no cell phone service and that she had recently spoken with a senior citizen in one of those areas who had fallen down and had no way to contact help.

Visniewski, who studied civil engineering and built cell towers for 10 years, McGinnis, and resident Richard Nathhorst all said there was little the town could do to increase cell coverage, and suggested WiFi phone connections with battery or generator backup as an alternative. Landlines were also mentioned, but it was noted that they are more expensive.

Duffy said it was a “struggle” for many residents to learn how to set up and use WiFi phone connections, and suggested that developing educational materials about it should be on a “to-do” list.

Slowing Down

The selectboard took no action on a proposal to post 25 m.p.h. speed limit signs in the center of North Leverett. Duffy said she favored waiting to see how the town’s Complete Streets grant, which addresses traffic in the area, pans out, and in the meantime having the highway department repaint lines to narrow the roads and slow traffic.

Hankinson requested that the department produce a plan the selectboard could vote on.

A related idea from Hankinson to install a “Don’t Use Jake Brakes” sign at the bottom of Shutesbury Road, to quell loud truck braking, was also passed over.

Other Business

The selectboard decided to advertise a request for proposals to transform the town-owned Field building into a “vibrant/dynamic, multi-use community asset” in the town newsletter, on LeverettConnects, and elsewhere. A two-page document outlining the request has been created, and proposals are due November 1.

Hankinson announced that Brian Emond was stepping down as the town’s representative to the Upper Pioneer Valley Veterans’ Service District, and that the board was contacting potential replacements. Though not present, Emond received a round of applause for his “marvelous” work.

Hankinson said he plans to attend a conservation commission meeting on September 14 to discuss the Woodard’s Corner driveable trail project.

The board declared a number of pieces of equipment to be surplus. McGinnis said she would look into selling a 2015 Ford Explorer, but that the other items, including a police chief’s desk, a printer, and a laminator, would be brought to the transfer station.

The board appointed Proujansky, *in absentia*, as its representative to the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG). A representative to its cooperative inspection program is still needed. Town clerk Lisa Stratford said that Visniewski had completed the paperwork to be recognized by FRCOG as the town’s emergency management director.

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QUESTIONS from page A1

the exact same legal standing as the myriad bills that move through the Legislature and are signed by the governor.

Mechanically, there’s no real obstacle to the Legislature voting to alter the ballot law or spike it after it wins approval. The barrier is instead a political one: Do lawmakers want to take on the public-image risks of interfering with what voters say they want?

Q: *What if a constitutional amendment were on the ballot instead?*

A: Those questions are different. Changing the state Constitution is a multi-year process requiring support from both lawmakers and voters, so once an amendment takes effect, like the surtax on wealthy households approved in 2022, Beacon Hill cannot alter it without going back to the ballot box.

No constitutional amendments are on track to go before voters this year. The only question that is not a traditional “initiative petition” this time around is an attempt to repeal the state’s 2024 gun control law. That measure directly asks voters whether the language the House, Senate, and governor approved two years ago should stand or be gotten rid of.

Q: *If a ballot question passes, how many different ways can it go from there?*

A: There are three main routes Beacon Hill can pursue after a ballot question passes:

Option 1: Take no action, allowing the voter-approved measure to become law. This is the most common outcome.

Option 2: Come in afterward and change what voters approved.

Ballot questions are blunt instruments, and legislators often have thoughts on modifying what the proponents – or their lawyers – drafted.

The shape of that action can vary. Sometimes, lawmakers pursue significant changes that don’t entirely alter the core idea. That’s what happened in 2017, when the House and Senate rewrote a ballot law approved the prior year that legalized recreational cannabis. The Legislature made significant alterations to tax rates and regulatory structures, and it drew heavy blowback from the question’s proponents, but at the end of the day, marijuana was still legal.

Other times, policymakers are more heavy-handed. In 2000,

nearly 60% of voters approved a proposal to lower the statewide income tax rate from 5.95% to 5% over a three-year period.

But in 2002, two years into the transition and with the state in a financial pinch, Beacon Hill Democrats voted to freeze the tax rate at 5.3% and condition the remaining reduction on achieving a series of economic milestones. Massachusetts did not hit the last of those targets – meaning the income tax rate did not fall all the way to 5% – until 2019, nearly two decades after voters had their say.

Option 3: Repeal, or just ignore, the new law.

It’s the most politically risky, but because an approved ballot question simply becomes a law, there’s no explicit barrier preventing the Legislature from approving a follow-up measure undoing it.

Just ask any veteran good-government reformer about the “clean elections” debacle. In 1998, two-thirds of voters supported a ballot question designed to make public funding available for electoral candidates if they agreed to significant limits on spending. Legislators recoiled at the idea, spent years refusing to fund the voter-approved system or fighting it in court, and then in 2003 tacked language into the annual state budget repealing the measure.

For a more recent example of the broad reach of legislative power, look only as far back as 2024, when 72% of voters decided the state auditor’s office should have the explicit authority to examine the Legislature. Top Democrats in both branches argue that the measure violates constitutional separation of powers, refusing to comply with it and simultaneously declining to ask the state’s highest court to intervene. Heading into another election season, the matter is about as unresolved – and as toxic – as ever.

Q: *Wouldn’t lawmakers face consequences if they didn’t follow what voters want?*

A: To a degree, probably.

But it also depends on how significant their intervention is. Changing an effective date by a year or raising a particular threshold will land differently than, say, altogether undermining a law capping how much state government can collect in taxes.

If lawmakers wanted to make changes, they might not sweat the electoral consequences given the dis-

mal competition in Massachusetts. Most House and Senate races have only a single candidate on the ballot, so frustrated voters often don’t have any real ability to toss an incumbent.

Q: *Does the margin of the vote on a ballot question change how lawmakers think about it?*

A: Not all that much. Rent control has been banned since a 1994 ballot question that passed with 51.3% support and 48.7% opposition. Despite that narrow margin, reviving the idea has been more or less dead on arrival among legislative leaders for three-plus decades, even after organizers launched an ill-fated ballot campaign to revive it this year.

Contrast that with something like a tax deduction for charitable giving. Seventy-two percent of voters backed that idea in 2000, but that didn’t stop Beacon Hill from pausing the deduction in 2002 and keeping it on ice until 2023.

Q: *What’s different this time around?*

A: Top Democrats added a new wrinkle affecting two measures on the ballot: Question 1, which would expand the public records law to the Legislature and governor’s office, and Question 5, which would change the formula for calculating the cap on state tax collections.

Instead of brokering a compromise with campaigns before they locked in their spot on the ballot, or waiting until the 2027-28 law-making session to respond to what voters decide, legislators put bills into play this summer that could supersede the public records question or take the wind out of the proposal to trigger more frequent rebates to taxpayers. Both of those bills are tied up in private House-Senate negotiations, and there’s no way to know whether the final compromises will retain language affecting the ballot questions nor when they will emerge for approval.

Lawmakers could surface those bills and send them to Governor Maura Healey’s desk before voters start casting ballots, or after, injecting significant uncertainty into what’s actually at stake for Question 1 and Question 5 and just how much power the people have.

This article first appeared on Commonwealth Beacon (commonwealthbeacon.com). It is republished here with permission.



LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here’s the way it was on September 8, 2016: News from the Montague Reporter archive.

Tight-Lipped Officials Deny Wrongdoing

Officials remain tight-lipped this week after revelations that, due to an ongoing investigation by the state attorney general, the Northwestern district attorney has temporarily suspended Montague’s police department from both its prescription drug drop-box program and a regional anti-crime task force.

The Northwestern District Anti-Crime Task Force was

launched in 2013 in an effort to coordinate area law enforcement agencies.

Montague police chief Charles “Chip” Dodge was placed on paid administrative leave for four days in late June, but after meeting with the chief in a closed-door session, the town selectboard returned him to duty and announced he had their “full support.”

“Nobody’s been disciplined, nobody’s in trouble, and nobody’s done anything wrong,” Dodge said. Adding that he was under instruction not to discuss the attorney general’s probe, he expressed frustration with his department’s exclusion from the task force.

20 YEARS AGO

Here’s the way it was on September 7, 2006: News from the Montague Reporter archive.

Yesterdays Throws in the Towel

The day after a hearing on noise ordinance violations before the Montague selectboard resulted in a one-month suspension of her entertainment license, Yesterdays bar owner Linda Morrow put a “For Sale by Owner” sign on the front of her Third Street establishment.

“I’ve done my best to insulate the place and make it as quiet as we could,” she told the board on Monday. “There’s nothing more we can do.”

Laundromat co-owner Emily Brewster said the noise complaints are a larger concern than the ability of neighbors to enjoy peace in their homes. “This sets a

tone in the town,” she said.

RiverCulture coordinator Lisa Davol said, “I’m very affected by noise, but I think it’s good to have entertainment downtown.”

New Life for an Old Building

Restoration of the Universalist Meeting House in Moore’s Corner, Leverett, built nearly 200 years ago, when Universalism had not yet been swallowed by Unitarianism, is now in full swing. Long used by the town as a village school, it is now owned by the Leverett Historical Society, a tax-exempt charity.

The final and most ambitious part of the restoration will be the bell tower, following plans drawn by Forrest Briggs, who years earlier was instrumental in saving the Meeting House from demolition by the town.

140 YEARS AGO

Here’s the way it was on September 8, 1886: News from the Turners Falls Reporter archive.

Turners Falls and Vicinity

Light frosts were reported in the vicinity last week, but no damage caused.

The Lumber Co. was compelled to shut down a day and a half last week, on account of low water in the river.

The greater portion of the population of Lake Pleasant have packed up and departed, a few cottagers alone remaining.

The Millers Falls Co’s shops are now thoroughly repaired and the addition completed, making the building two stories throughout. A new tower is being erected, and a new bell will take the place of the one that has done service for so many years.

The Rev. Thos. H. Jones, who was a slave for 43 years in the South, will relate his experience

as such on Sunday evening in the M.E. church.

The many friends of E.E. Barnard, upon learning of his loss in the recent fire, issued a subscription paper, and about \$100 was subscribed, collected and presented to him within a day after the paper was first circulated.

A peach festival is announced to take place at Town hall, Montague, next Friday evening, September 10th, for the benefit of the Unitarian and Episcopal societies.

Abbey’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin Co. played to an average house last Saturday night.

There are now but 26 prisoners in the county jail, less than the usual number. Two are still at the Northampton jail, where they will remain until their time is out.

The matter of starting a creamery association here has received a death blow. A new project is now under consideration, that of sending cream to an association at Springfield, to be made into butter.



What Questions Are On the Ballot?

As a large number of questions will be on the November 3 statewide ballot, here is the Montague Reporter’s attempt to paraphrase succinctly what each would do.

Our main source is www.ballotpedia.org, which readers are encouraged to access for more in-depth information and discussion on all of these questions.

– Eds.

Question 1: Make documents held by the legislature and the governor’s office public records, with certain exceptions.

Question 2: Permit employees of the Committee for Public Counsel Services, i.e. public defenders, to participate in collective bargaining, i.e. organize a union.

Question 3: Eliminate party primaries for state elections and replace them with a single, “top two” primary system like the ones used in Washington, California, and Nebraska.

Question 4: Allow same-day voter registration at polling stations, as is offered in 21 states. Voters must currently register 10 days before an election.

Question 5: Calculate the limit on tax revenue the state may collect in a given year using the actual revenue collected the previous year, rather than the previous year’s limit, as a starting point.

Question 6: Divert state tax revenue from sporting goods, RVs, and golf courses into a “Nature for All Fund” earmarked for conservation.

Question 7: Allow single-family home construction, by right, on any lot in a residential zone that is at least 5,000 square feet and has at least 50 feet of frontage and sewer and water access.

Question 8: Ban the sale of recreational cannabis and home cannabis cultivation, while still allowing adults to possess up to an ounce without penalty.

Question 9: Uphold *An Act Modernizing Firearm Laws* (H. 4885), a law passed in 2024 that mandates serial numbers on guns, safety certificates to purchase guns, and electronic registration of owners; allows courts to require the surrender of guns as part of a restraining order; and broadens the state’s ban on “assault” weapons to include a range of “assault-style” weapons.

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ELECTIONS from page A1
Regional School District.”

Kuklewicz, who serves as the chair of both the Montague select-board and the school committee of Franklin County Technical School (FCTS), has a point. For example, the tech school debt exclusion must only be endorsed by a majority of the total number of voters who turn out in all 19 member towns. A loss in one or two municipalities will not kill it, in other words, or even in a majority of them, though a large loss in the city of Greenfield and one of the larger towns would likely put the proposal at risk.

The creation of the new Great River district, on the other hand, although requiring support from fewer towns, would need to clear a higher bar. All five towns in the current Pioneer and Gill-Montague districts would need majority “Yes” votes. The proposal could withstand a “No” from Warwick – which broke from Pioneer in 2023 to form its own elementary school district – and would then become a five-town consolidation.

A Double Special

That said, there are a number of similarities. Both the tech school rebuild and the creation of a new regional school district are heavily regulated by state law, with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) playing a major role in shaping the proposals, and both have been in the planning process for a long time.

The tech school building committee was formed in mid-2024 in response to rising maintenance costs and deteriorating conditions, including the roof and wiring, at the school building in Montague’s industrial park, which first opened in 1976. It seriously reviewed as many as eight different options, ranging from addressing only the building’s most serious needs to making various renovations to three plans to construct a new building.

The Six Town Regionalization Planning Board (STRPB), which is proposing the new school region, has been around for seven years and voted in early 2024 to endorse the idea. Last week, after “months, if not years, of halting coordination with [DESE] and the legislature” in the words of this newspaper, the STRPB sent its member towns a regional agreement to be presented to voters on October 6.

STRPB chair Alan Genovese

said he invited the town clerks from the member towns to a meeting, and that there was a consensus that it would be best to try to schedule the regionalization vote for the same day as the FCTS debt exclusion. The special election required special legislation, which ended up being signed by Governor Maura Healey on August 25, so getting it all together on time was a “nail-biter,” he said.

“People need to know that when they go into the polls, if they want both ballots, there’s going to be two check-ins,” Genovese added.

Big Decisions

Both ballot questions have had their public critics. When the details of the proposal for a new tech school were unveiled at a meeting at Greenfield Community College last February, many local officials in attendance expressed dismay at the price tag, which after a reimbursement from the Massachusetts School Building Authority would leave a \$123 million burden on the member towns.

The state Department of Local Services has projected the impact of the debt exclusion on residential taxes in each of the 19 towns. This ranges from 3.1% in Erving to a 5.6% increase in Sunderland.

Since then the FCTS administration and school committee members have engaged in a public campaign arguing that a more minimal renovation approach would create significant risks in the long run, and would not conform to the state’s standards for an up-to-date technical school.

The state Department of Local Services has projected the impact of the debt exclusion on residential taxes in each of the 19 towns. This ranges from 3.1% in Erving to a 5.6% increase in Sunderland. Increases in municipalities with larger populations, and therefore more votes, include Greenfield (4.2%), Montague (4.2%), Orange (4.9%), and Deerfield (4.5%).

Opposition to the six-town region, meanwhile, has been strident within the Pioneer Valley Regional School District, whose superintendent and school committee have

publicly opposed the plan, under which the Pioneer Valley Regional School building in Northfield would house the middle school grades for all the towns, and Turners Falls High School would become the regional high school. None of the elementary schools would be closed.

Devil in the Details

The critics have argued that any monetary savings from administrative staff reduction could be wiped out by the need to raise unionized staff salaries from each district to whichever value is higher at any given step. STRPB member Greg Snedeker told the *Reporter* this week that he believed this would not necessarily be the outcome of the consolidation followed by collective bargaining.

Snedeker also argued that the proposed agreement would protect the towns’ elementary schools by setting a high bar for closing them, often a major point of contention in regional districts.

The agreement presents two lengthy and complex procedures for closing an elementary school. The first requires two-thirds of the 13-member regional school committee to implement a detailed feasibility study, followed by a three-quarters majority vote of the committee, and then majority votes at the town meetings of two-thirds of the member towns.

However, if enrollment at a school drops to 20 students or fewer for two years in a row, the school committee could skip the feasibility study and close the school by only a two-thirds vote of the committee, plus the majorities of two-thirds of the town meetings.

The tech school has scheduled a public information forum on the construction proposal for next Wednesday, September 16 at 7 p.m. at FCTS.

Forums on a new regional school district will take place in the potential member towns: at the Leyden Town Offices next Thursday, September 17; at the Dickinson Library in Northfield on Monday, September 21; in the Turners Falls High School auditorium on Tuesday, September 22; at the Bernardston Senior Center on Wednesday, September 23; and at the Warwick Town Hall on Thursday, September 24. Each begins at 6 p.m.

Mike Jackson provided additional reporting.





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Tip of the week ...

As the fall season approaches, do a fire safety check. Make sure your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are working properly, your chimney is clean, and that the area around your furnace, fireplace, or wood stove is clear of debris.



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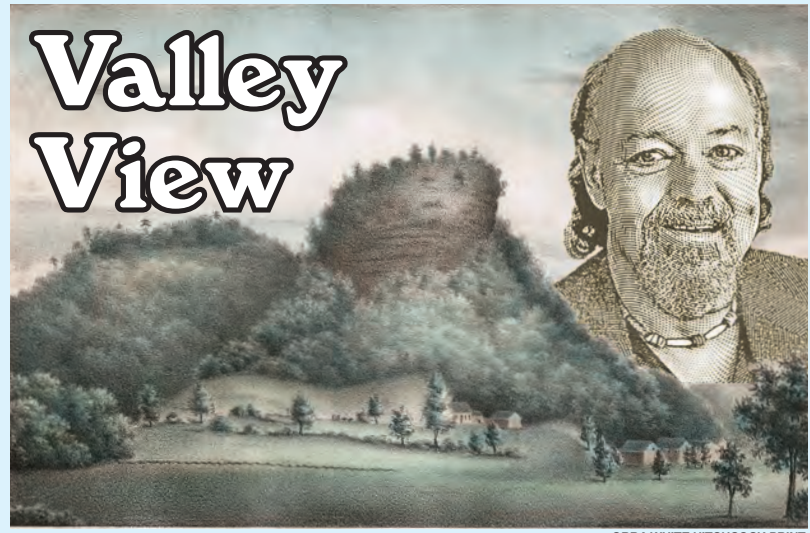
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A Tragedy... And a Mystery

By GARY SANDERSON

GREENFIELD – Though it happened about a month ago, on a Thursday evening a mile down the road, I can’t seem to shake my mental images of the pathetic carcass, my first suspicion that something was amiss, the many subsequent, related observations, or the stench that eventually rose.

I wasn’t alone in curiosity. Neighborhood questions swirled: Why did the carcass linger for five days? How did it move from its side to its back, legs pointing to the heavens? Why not a word about it anywhere in the local press, given the circumstances?

Why would the press be interested, you ask? We’ll get to that. Bear with me.

What we are discussing is a road-killed doe who met her maker at a game-crossing spot on Colrain Road. Left behind were her twin orphaned fawns, spots faded from the naked eye, who lurked for days on the margins of death. Why, they must have wondered, would their mother not spring to her feet and continue showing them the way?

Although we often hear and speak of nature’s incredible beauty and majesty, let us not forget there’s another side of it as well. Call it ugly nature, or tragic nature – in this case, the poignant reality of sudden, violent death on a rural roadway through Greenfield. Though I’ve seen hundreds of deer in my daily travels up and down this road on which I’ve lived for 30 years, this was only the second roadkill. The first, a large doe in the 130-pound range, had lain long and warm on an early-morning lawn a stone’s throw from our most recent kill.

I happened upon the recent roadkill on my daily 7 a.m. trip to the neighborhood variety store. There I typically pour myself the first cup of coffee sold and pay for it at the till while engaging in playful banter with owner Bill. Though it went unmentioned to Bill, less than a mile up the road my attention had been drawn to

a compact silver Chevy SUV pulled over with its emergency lights flashing. In front of the vehicle stood a balding man, looking at something across a shallow, scalped hayfield between the road and a woodlot.

With my view blocked by his vehicle and a thin line of tall, opaque roadside brush, I couldn’t see the object of his fascination until I had passed him. Then I could see he was observing two small deer standing skittishly some 50 yards away, along the edge of a small marsh curling into the woods. Though there was nothing unusual about the sighting, I did suspect something odd about the deer’s behavior. To my eye, what they displayed was confusion.

Then immediate questions. Two fawns? A small young doe and one fawn? Hard to decipher from what I had seen. Maybe I could better assess it if they were still there on my way back through. Thus, my hurry at the till. No time for small talk.

In recent weeks, driving past the same site, cornfield on the other side of the road, I had been seeing a doe with two fawns and another doe with one fawn. Separated family groups. Then, more recently, I’d seen them feeding together in a group of five. But what about this fresh sighting? Same deer?

On my way home, the SUV was gone but, sure enough, the two deer were still standing in virtually the same spot, looking like they were nervous about coming toward the road. No sooner had I passed them than I noticed a large bloodstain on the east edge of the road and, go figure, a deer carcass lying dead on its side a pace or two from a utility pole.

Aha! Now I understand. Twin fawns had seen their mother killed in the road, and didn’t want to leave her.

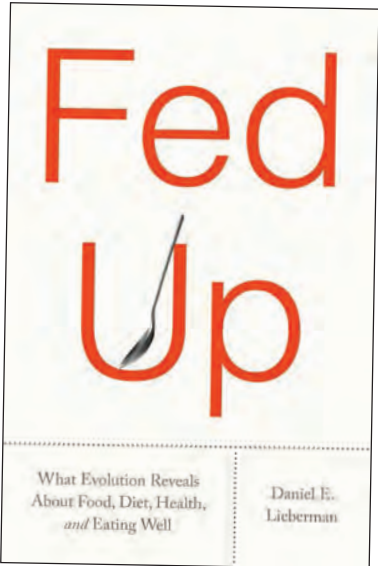
“They’ll stay close to the mother until her carcass is removed,” my naturalist brother-in-law told my wife on the phone when told of the situation. Retired on an idyllic, 150-acre, Maine gentleman’s farm

see **VALLEY VIEW** page B3

BOOK REVIEWS

Claire’s Fall Reads: Non-Stodgy Non-Fiction

- Daniel E. Lieberman**, *Fed Up: What Evolution Reveals About Food, Diet, Health and Eating Well* (Knopf, 2026)
- Lea Korsgaard**, *The Butterfly Season: What 64 Butterflies Taught Me About Nature’s Great Mysteries and the Meaning of Life* (Knopf, 2026)
- Daisy Dixon**, *Depraved: The Story of Dangerous Art* (Knopf, 2026)



By CLAIRE HOPLEY

LEVERETT – “What shall we have for dinner?” seems a modest question, but evolutionary biologist Daniel E. Lieberman notes that our ancestors could never have asked it. Our hunter-gatherer predecessors dined on “whatever edible plants and animals were available,” he writes in his new book, *Fed Up*. “Until recently no one ever, or hardly ever, asked themselves ‘What should I eat?’”

Little changed when farming, rather than hunting, became the norm: people ate what they could grow. For most of history people ate the same things every day with only seasonal variations. And that’s still true for many people.

But, living in a rich country in the 21st century, we have virtually limitless options. Typical supermarkets carry 40,000 items, and the

food industry is forever dreaming up more. We pack the results onto our waists. “The percentage of Americans with obesity increased 25 percent between 1990 and 2021,” Lieberman notes, and “currently 75 percent of Americans are classified as overweight or obese.”

But because our ancestors lacked a variety of foods, our cornucopia presents choices that we have not evolved to make. Many of us are therefore “fed up”: literally, we pile on distressing pounds feasting on our abundance; metaphorically, we are fed up with the hanging bellies, big behinds, and the diets supposed to reduce them.

Using evolutionary biology and physiology Lieberman explains how this situation arose, and then explores various methods, most of them diets, proposed as antidotes to the effects of noshing foods engineered to tempt. He and his wife

ate different diets for two weeks each, working through low-fat, low-carb, raw food, Paleo, vegetarian – you name it. He describes their eating experiences, adding his professional commentary.

Finally, he recommends what we should do. Spoiler alert: he thinks we should act like foxes, who try any tactic to avoid capture, and not like hedgehogs, who always roll into a ball when threatened. In other words, have many dietary ideas rather than one Big Idea.

This book is as enlightening as one would hope from a Harvard professor. It’s entertaining, too,

see **BOOKS** page B8

MONTV / MUSIK / MOUNTAIN

By J. BURKETT and TROY CURRY

TURNERS FALLS – This week we have another special interview... It’s with Richard Burkett, Josh’s uncle, who has been a bluegrass musician and pottery artist most of his life, beginning in Indiana in the ’70s and continuing to this day, in San Diego.

His newest band, another cool bluegrass band, is called *Gone Tomorrow*. Check them out on YouTube or on their website, gonetomorrowbluegrass.com, where you can buy their CD.

MMM: Do you have any fun early music memories?
RB: Sure, listening to my mother play piano in the basement was an early memory. In kindergarten they gave us all aptitude tests, and mine came back recommending playing drums or piano, and I took piano lessons. (I’m sure my mother was happy that I didn’t want to play drums!)

My brother David used to tape-record folk music on the radio when we lived in Seattle, and he played banjo. My mom suggested that I might like to play guitar, so my parents rented a really cheap Harmony arch top and I took lessons. It was painful, terrible action. Then I was loaned a nylon string classical guitar.

MMM: Did you have fave bands or recordings?
RB: I had a few records in high school, not a lot or a collection. A Beatles record or two, several blues



Richard Burkett

albums, and Neil Young, CSNY, etc. Stuff my friends were into.

MMM: How did you get into bluegrass?
RB: Like everyone in my generation, I had a copy of *Will the Circle Be Unbroken* in college. I actually started playing mandolin after hearing a Ry Cooder record, then connected with some folks who would play bluegrass and got hooked.

see **MUSIK** page B2

VALLEY VIEW from page B1

he’s massaged into a nature preserve, he has *beaucoup* experience with deer and knows them well.

Sure enough, just as he said, the carcass remained for five long days and the fawns never wandered far from it until it was finally removed on a Tuesday morning.

It seemed the whole neighborhood knew about the dead deer and the pathetic fawns, and everyone was talking, especially worried the three-month-olds could not survive without their mother, or would themselves get picked off in the road.

I tried to gather information about the roadkill for a day or two before finally connecting with an eyewitness to the immediate aftermath. On his way home on a Thursday evening, he reported, he happened upon quite a gathering of law-enforcement, fire and rescue teams, neighbors, and passerby gawkers who pulled over to investigate. What he learned on the scene was that the deer had been killed, not by a car or truck, but by a motorcycle.

Bystanders told my source the operator appeared to be seriously injured, complaining that he could not move when being attended by rescue teams. I hope the apparent paralysis was temporary. Maybe the immediate result of a head injury. But how would I know? I’m no doctor.

Wild stuff, huh? Motorcycle kills

deer. Emergency responders rush to the scene. Twin orphaned fawns disoriented. Biker on the road, conscious but unable to move.

I don’t know if it’s true, but I suspect it is. My source, a retired cop who’s intimately familiar with such accident scenes, likely knew a member or two of the responding rescue crew. So, I trust his report.

I asked around for days and no one, including the retired cop, had seen, read, or heard a word about the accident in the news. It surprised me. I spent 40 years of my life working in the local newsroom, where the scanner was always squawking, photographers and scribes tuned in, on the ready. Such a daytime event would have never been missed.

What happened? Was someone asleep at the wheel? Out to lunch? In a meeting? Did the accident make the Police Report?

Hmmm? Maybe someone reading this has answers. Not breaking news by now. More like ancient history.

So, that’s all I’ve got. Comfortably retired, I’m done with the chase. Just thought I’d toss it out there, into the local-news tangle.

I guess you could call it trolling, in outdoor-writing parlance.

No. Better still, chumming.

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



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PAST FAIRS

The Keystone Rodeo

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – Keystone Rodeo is a mechanical bull I saw at 2025’s Franklin County Fair in Greenfield. Heath and Jasmine Fischer are the father and daughter owners of the bull. They take it to fairs. They call it Fu Manchu.

At that time, Heath told me they had been operating it for three months. “I ordered it from a little company out of California,” he said. I learned from the company’s Facebook page that the bull had made its debut at Jasmine’s birthday on May 31, 2025.

They do private parties, and they also do ax-throwing. I was also told by Heath that it was their first season when it comes to doing the Franklin County Fair. I asked what other fairs he has been to. “I’ve been to North Haverhill, New Hampshire, and Bondville in Vermont,” he told me. They said they had a lot of fun

running the bull.

They sell a t-shirt with an image of someone riding a bull on it that says “I went 2.7 seconds on a bull named Fu Manchu.” If you beat the bull, I believe you are given that t-shirt for free.

The bull itself looked almost real. It had glowing red eyes, and it was surrounded by an inflatable black fence. One part of the fence has the name “Fu Manchu” on it. The whole thing has a real-life timer to it, like you would expect with someone riding a real-life bull.

People showed up in fair numbers to ride the bull. One was even a guy in a cowboy hat. That cowboy stayed on the bull for a minute.

People seem to enjoy doing it, and I found the whole thing to be cool – it was a very unique sight to behold at the fair. To personally book Fu Manchu for your party or fair, their official website is at KeystoneRodeo.com.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Needles Big Again; Beer Cans & Ski Masks; Tents Cleared; Driver Slandered; Raccoons Close In; Shorts Rectified

Monday, 8/17

8:01 a.m. Caller reports the back window of his work van was smashed overnight on L Street near Nouria. Officer advises window appears previously compromised. Report taken.

8:58 a.m. Caller from Turnpike Road reports people are riding dirtbikes in the area, disturbing her peace. Officer advises he just passed the area and nothing was seen.

9:11 p.m. 911 caller states that a group of kids were harassing him on his nightly run. Caller states group yelled profanities at him and made him uncomfortable. Advised to call if this occurs again.

Tuesday, 8/18

12:51 p.m. Caller states that a male with dark hair and no shoes is talking to small children at the playground on Montague Avenue. He told them he is homeless and was asking them a lot of questions. Investigated. 11:05 p.m. Attempting to serve a warrant on Avenue A. A 66-year-old Turners Falls man was arrested on a straight warrant.

Wednesday, 8/19

6:09 a.m. Officer reports a tan sedan going 100 m.p.h. in Millers Falls. Shelburne Control notified.

12:38 p.m. Anonymous caller states that a female resident of East Chestnut Hill Road has been putting debris in the road to force vehicles to slow down, has placed her own “speed limit” signs, and has been parking a vehicle near the bridge by her house, preventing cars from moving over to allow other cars over it. Referred to an officer.

5:12 p.m. Caller reports he located an oxygen tank in the area of the bike path on Canal Street; states it was near a kids’ playground. Officer unable to locate tank; however, located and disposed of three needles while canvassing the area. 6:59 p.m. Caller reporting nine or ten hypodermic needles under a bench at Spinner Park. Officers located 13 needles under the bench and disposed of them; will check area for additional needles.

7:41 p.m. Caller reports hearing a child scream “bloody murder” from a building on Fifth Street. Officer spoke with female party who advised her child was having issues going to bed. No further problems.

Thursday, 8/20

4 p.m. A 56-year-old Turners Falls woman was arrested in Lake Pleasant and charged with breaking and entering for a misdemeanor.

Friday, 8/21

8:33 a.m. Caller would like the police to check on a tent sitting in a wooded area on their property for a

few months. Tent located, but no owner around. Will check back later.

10:08 a.m. Caller from East Main Street states that overnight on August 18 to 19, someone pushed in both air conditioners from the windows of the apartment, and they were damaged when they hit the floor. Observed window AC unit in said apartment functioning, but not properly secured in the window. Property management advised the unit was in a different window a few days ago, as if the resident was moving it around. Damage appears to be cosmetic.

Saturday, 8/22

7:10 a.m. State police requesting assistance making contact with a female on High Street. Vehicle was located on Route 116 in Conway, involved in an accident with airbag deployment; empty beer cans and ski masks found in the vehicle. Requesting officers speak with registered owner to see who had the vehicle. Son not at address. Mother spoke to him around 2 a.m. after the accident; he appeared to be OK. Involved male believed to be in background in living room. Mother will reach out to state police. Spoke to state police at 8:10 a.m.; mother stated that she had last heard from her son at 2:34 a.m., that he had crashed the car and was walking to a friend’s house, and that she had not heard from him since. Stated she will drive around the area to try and locate him.

8:58 a.m. 911 caller reports he saw a cow on the side of Federal Street. It was not in the roadway, but he feels it was too close to the roadway. Referred to an officer. 3:19 p.m. Caller reports a fire in the playground on Seventh Avenue; can see flames and heavy smoke. Call sent to Control. Fire is small, a stick and twigs, and contained within a grill. Male is grilling food. Control contacted to cancel fire call.

3:24 p.m. Caller reports that an injured porcupine, possibly with a head injury, has been wandering in and out of the roadway on North Leverett Road. Animal control officer (ACO) advised; states she received a call from the female already and is responding. Caller called back in stating she was able to pick up the porcupine herself and will bring it to Tufts Animal Hospital in the morning.

4:14 p.m. Caller from Dell Street reports sewer pipes are draining back into his basement. DPW contacted; will see if it’s a town issue or within the household.

5:07 p.m. Walk-in requesting to speak with an officer regarding credit cards

stolen out of her mailbox. Report taken.

9:08 p.m. Caller reports that a truck is in the alleyway at Stevens and High streets near an abandoned house whose owner passed away. Occupants are on the property with flashlights, and had backed it up like they were attempting to take something. Attempting to reach next of kin to see if they were aware of anyone removing things from the property. All parties clear from area; trailer disconnected and left at property.

Sunday, 8/23

1:31 a.m. 911 caller from Millers Pub states that people were taking pictures of his girlfriend while she was closing up the bar. Caller states that a female was taking pictures of him while he was on the phone. Advised caller that people are allowed to record video in public areas.

10:32 a.m. Caller requesting to speak to an officer; he was at the First Congregational Church this morning and had a service animal with him with the pastor’s approval. Caller states that when he was leaving, someone tried petting his service animal; he asked them not to and was told “I’ll pet the animal whenever I want; if I see you again, I won’t be nice.” Advised caller the complaint was logged, but that was not a direct specific threat. Advised caller to speak with the pastor to get their input, and that if the behavior persists for more than three events, court options are possible.

Monday, 8/24

9:43 a.m. FirstLight Power requests removal of tents and people on various properties they own. Officer tried, but cannot make contact with the affected individuals.

Tuesday, 8/25

3:44 p.m. Caller believes an Amazon package was stolen from her East Main Street address. Investigated; possible video footage available.

4:15 p.m. Fight in progress, reported by caller from Keith Street. Believed to be over parking issues. Officer advised, situation mediated. 10:07 p.m. Caller states that there is broken glass in the road by El Nopalito restaurant, and it is a hazard. Officer moved a couple hundred bottles from the roadway, left DPW a message to pick them up.

Wednesday, 8/26

7:56 a.m. Caller states she hit a deer on Federal Street and believes it is dead. MassDOT notified.

8:38 p.m. Report of breaking and entering in progress on Juggler Meadow Road. Assisted Control.

9:37 p.m. Caller requests his father be removed from mother’s residence as he

believes he is being abusive. Male left for the evening.

Thursday, 8/27

6:29 a.m. Caller reports his apartment is “a dust storm” due to a construction crew outside blowing dirt and debris around.

8:52 a.m. Report of an erratic driver in a blue Mercedes at the high school, driving around buses and almost running over the principal. The officer spoke with the driver, who said she would not be slandered and will speak to the school about it.

2:15 p.m. Caller concerned about where people in a camper at Peskeompskut Park might be going to the bathroom. Referred to an officer.

3:06 p.m. Report of a cat in a water drain on Davis Street. ACO advises the cat does this often, going down the drain and coming out the other side.

Friday, 8/28

12:03 a.m. Cat stuck in a tree on Franklin Street for 48 hours; caller is concerned that two raccoons are closing in on it. Advised of options.

4:13 p.m. Caller believes his roommate is mentally unstable and needs to be calmed down. Roommate dispute; parties advised of options.

6:42 p.m. Raccoon walking in circles at Unity Park. ACO not available.

7:29 p.m. Rabid raccoon reported at Unity Park dog park. Raccoon dispatched.

Saturday, 8/29

1:45 a.m. Complaint about noise next door from construction causing a disturbance. Neighbors doing renovations were advised of the complaint and will keep it down.

12:58 p.m. Call from Family Dollar about an employee freaking out about being fired. Verbally trespassed from location, manager to seek civil order.

7:30 p.m. Caller states he came across a couple drinking and having intercourse on the rocks at Rock Dam. Officer located parties matching the description walking on Migratory Way. Parties denied being involved in lewd or lascivious behavior. Moved along.

Sunday, 8/30

12:34 a.m. Caller states his daughter is being cyberbullied and would like to know what to do. Officer called back; reporting party had figured out the situation by blocking some kids in the group chat.

12:42 p.m. Leaf blower reported stolen on Park Street. Investigated. Waiting for neighbor to check video.

9:48 p.m. Suspicious bag spotted at the bus stop across from Scotty’s Convenience Store. Officer found laundry inside.

see MPD next page

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MPD from prev page

Monday, 8/31

1:13 a.m. Walk-in reports son missing, gave his description. Son found at Unity Park and given a courtesy ride home.

12:25 p.m. Caller reports people drinking in Peskompskut Park, advised that a female hides it in her purse. Investigated; found people smoking cigarettes only; no sign of drinking.

4:24 p.m. Third-party caller states a female told him that a man in a truck in the Bookmill parking lot looked like he was pleasuring himself. Officer located the individual; situation not as described.

Tuesday, 9/1

7:29 a.m. Report of a male knocking on doors on Chestnut Street since 6 a.m. Area checked, all quiet.

10:07 p.m. Report of a male looking for drugs and pestering people on Avenue A. Unable to locate.

Wednesday, 9/2

7:21 a.m. Car vs. pole near Dell Street, no injuries. Rau's to tow.

2:53 p.m. Walk-in reports suspicious activity involving someone on the sex offender registry. Counseled about options. Party does not want

to make a formal complaint.

6:44 p.m. 911 call reporting a domestic fight on Mormon Hollow Road; caller says her friend was punched in the stomach. Officer saw the female drive away. Involved male and witnesses denied violence was involved.

7:20 p.m. Report of a dog biting a child in the face on Randall Road; child and parents en route to hospital. Officer advised; forwarded report to ACO.

Thursday, 9/3

3:12 a.m. Loose horses reported on North Leverett and Ripley roads. Unable to locate.

5:49 a.m. 911 call about loose horses on South Street. Owner showed up while caller was on the phone; no services needed.

7:41 p.m. Caller reports a male in long white shorts shouting racial slurs, accompanied by a female trying to calm him down. Unable to locate.

9:06 p.m. Caller states he is missing \$2,200 in an envelope that was in his car to pay rent. Believes a female he was hanging out with took it. Female located, voluntarily showed officer her purse with the money in it,

which she said was from her job. Female stated male had threatened to call the PD and claim she stole the money if she did not sleep with him. Officer spoke with male; no admission of guilt.

10:19 p.m. Caller heard a male voice talking in the bushes, states it is odd. Officer found Verizon employees outside talking.

Friday, 9/4

12:37 a.m. Call about a barefoot female stumbling around on Millers Falls Road. Unable to locate.

11:11 a.m. Caller reports hearing a fight in progress inside a camper in the First Street parking lot. Mediated; peace restored.

Saturday, 9/5

1:54 p.m. Officer flagged down and told that two street bikes were racing on Millers Falls Road at 100 to 120 m.p.h., passing cars in the breakdown lane and swerving. Unable to locate.

3:05 p.m. Report of a dog inside a truck in front of the Millers Falls Pub for three hours, caller concerned for its welfare. Unable to locate.

skunk. ACO contacted.

Sunday, 9/6

11:41 a.m. Call taken about the elevator not working in the Crocker Building, stranding several disabled residents. FCRHA contacted, they are aware, and state that the elevator company cannot get to the problem until Tuesday. Caller reassured that emergency services can reach her if the need arises.

5:42 p.m. Report of a car parked with its hazards flashing on the Eleventh Street bridge, and several people fishing in the area. Unable to locate.

5:52 p.m. Report of mailboxes damaged by an out-of-control black truck on Wendell Road. Out of district. Call back from Leverett PD reporting several mailboxes also down on nearby roads in Montague.

6:35 p.m. Loose pig reported on North Leverett Road. Caller to check with neighbors, no damage done by pig. 10:17 p.m. Assistance requested with 911 call in Sunderland, possible intruder in residence. Call canceled; resident states she was confused when she woke up out of a deep sleep, and that the

noise was actually created by her husband.

11:57 p.m. Vehicle took off after being stopped by an officer. Pursued. Three occupants detained at gunpoint. Driver arrested for speeding and failure to stop. Released on personal recognizance.

Monday, 9/7

6:45 a.m. Greenfield PD advising a caller reported a blue heron dangling a fishing line near the General Pierce Bridge. MassWildlife contacted.

11:11 a.m. Report of a male walking with his private parts exposed near George Avenue. Located; shorts rectified. Male usually has PCA assistance, but the agency is short-staffed. Family to pursue hiring more PCAs to ensure 24-hour supervision.

6:22 p.m. Complaint about a tractor-trailer truck left running on L Street since 8 a.m., creating a disturbance. Officers out on another call. Truck owner located at 7:45 p.m. and moved the truck to another location.

10:10 p.m. Officer conducting a motor vehicle stop found the driver under the influence. Rau's to tow vehicle; male under arrest.



MCTV News

Power and Monthly Pizza Await

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – Looking for more to do? Montague Community Television is looking to fill one board seat! The commitment is low – just one meeting a month – and food and drink are provided. No experience is necessary.

Please reach out by emailing a letter of interest to infomontaguetv@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.

And if you see us out there filming, say hi! And let us know if there is any performance, meeting, or other event we can film, or any movie project that we can help with. MCTV is stocked with cameras, microphones, and everything else you need to make a video, and we can even help edit it!

Check out all we do, including all recent recordings of town committee meetings, at our Vimeo page, which can be found linked on the “Videos” tab at montaguetv.org.



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

– William Carlos Williams

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

Our September Poetry Page

Homage to Baystate Franklin Medical Center ER

I arrive soon after the wood thrush complete their morning songs by the river. I can't walk. A wheel chair rolls my way.

Hollow chaos of waiting rooms/ wounded/ bleeding/ stroking “acute”
“acute” crying/ wailing/ silent depthless pain.

It's all in my mind. The room is empty/ bar compassion.

In between/ small miracles called nurses/ called triage/ called transporters/
called medics/ called doctors/ all employees of Baystate Franklin
Medical Center ER.

Hard to believe. When you enter this continent at an International
Airport/ visitors are greeted as *aliens*

How swift the fall/ millions collapse into healthcare bankruptcy and death

But our community of misfits/ blossoms/ trunks/ wrecks and dreamers/
bikers and cancers and bullet wounds

holds the small kindnesses that make us human.

Oh Baystate Franklin remain healthy and strong in the coming brutal times.

We do not shelter from bombs.

We do not watch life-saving machines machine gunned.

We do not watch dust falling before the concrete crashes into baby
monitors.

You are a gift.

You are a miracle.

And yes it is the shining edifice but in the end it is the light in the hearts
and eyes of all who work there.

Apart from thank you

I can gift you this poem.

– Reihana Robinson
New Zealand / Montague

Contributors’ Notes:

NZ/Montague poet/artist **Reihana Robinson** (Arawa/Scot) has published three volumes of poetry and held two artist residencies, a Churchill Fellowship, and the inaugural Te Atairangikāhu poetry award. Why is she a poet? Her friend Chris Kraus once sent her a draft of her first novel, and upon gazing at her extraordinary words she instantly chose poetry as her medium. See reihanarobinson.co.nz.

Marco Albergo lives in Virginia. This untitled poem was submitted, with his permission, by Richard Andersen of Montague Center.

Dick Hall worked in the US military on over-the-horizon radar and other clandestine technology during the Vietnam era, worked for NASA during the Apollo program, and spent much of his career with Verizon before becoming a technical support manager for the Big Dig in Boston. He lived in Morgantown, West Virginia, and then in Springfield, before moving to Greenfield in 1994.

Untitled

My Country...
This land of 'tis of thee
This land of anarchy
Please hear my plea
Land where black fathers died
Land where black mothers cried
Land where black children hide
We've come to this...

Led by a rotting corpse
With hate and no remorse
I pray we change the course from:
“What’s in it for me”

Let liberty break forth
And stand erect
With leaders we elect
This is my charge.
Sing loud and long
This freedom song
From dusk till Dawn
We'll write this wrong
And live forever, free!

– Dick Hall
Greenfield

Untitled

Oh Me! Oh Life! of the questions of these
recurring;
Of the endless trains of the faithless — of cities
fill'd with the foolish;
Of myself forever reproaching myself, (for who
more foolish than I, and who more faithless?)

Of eyes that vainly crave the light — of the
objects mean — of the struggle ever renew'd;
Of the poor results of all — of the plodding and
sordid crowds I see around me;
Of the empty and useless years of the rest
with the rest me intertwined;

The Question...
Oh Me! so sad, recurring — What good
amid these, Oh Me, Oh Life?

The Answer...
That YOU are here — that life exists,
and identity;
That the powerful play goes on, and YOU
will contribute a verse.

– Marco Albergo
Alexandria, Virginia



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EVENTS

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

Downtown Greenfield: *Franklin County Fair Parade*. 5 p.m. Free.

Gill-Montague Senior Center, Turners Falls: *Protecting Your Digital Legacy*, with digital navigator Rich Vaden. Registration encouraged. 6 p.m. Free.

Four Phantoms Brewing, Greenfield: *A New Blue Jazz Ensemble*, with open jam. 6 p.m. No cover.

Forbes Library Lawn, Northampton: *Mal Devisa, Jetties*. 6 p.m. Free.

Wendell Meetinghouse, Wendell: *Live Edge Comedy Club* with Darren Rivera and Joe Laur. Discussion follows. 7 p.m. \$.

Ethel Barn, Southampton: *Layaali Arabic Music Trio*. To reserve seats, RSVP to perlsteinj@protonmail.com. 7 p.m. \$.

Parlor Room, Northampton: *Alela Diane, Alex Rose*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Sludge Inc., The Maladaptive, Kim Chin-Gibbons*. 9 p.m. No cover.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

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

Franklin County Fairgrounds, Greenfield: *Franklin County Fair*. 3 p.m. \$.

Great Falls Harvest, Turners Falls: *Dredd Foole, Karen Schoemer, Kryssi Battalene, Connect 4, Ben George 7*, more. 6 p.m. By donation.

Leverett Village Co-op, Leverett: *Rattlesnake Gutter Guttersnipes*. 6 p.m. Free.

Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: *Square Dance with the Ida Mae Specker Band; Sarah Gibson* calling. Jammers welcome. 6:30 p.m. By donation.

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Jenny Burtis Duo*. 7 p.m. By donation.

St. Kaz, Turners Falls: *Three Women Karaoke*. 7 p.m. No cover.

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

THCC, Easthampton: *Vacant Eyes, Into the Maw of Charybdis*. 7 p.m. \$.

Brick House, Turners Falls: *A Day Without Love, Olivia Nied, Carly Lara*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Peskeompskut Park, Turners Falls: *How to Train Your Dragon* (2025). Reptile Nook live animal presentation at 7 p.m.; movie at 8 p.m. Free.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Recent History, Weezer* tribute; *Saliba*. 8 p.m. \$.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Carol Devine & The Mighty Fine*. 8 p.m. \$.

Marigold, Brattleboro: *David Liebe Hart, McAsh, Piss Sipper Lvl 6 Goblin Wizard*. 8:30 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

Franklin County Fairgrounds, Greenfield: *Franklin County Fair*. 8 a.m. \$.

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

Diemand Farm, Wendell: *90th Anniversary Celebration*. Tours, demos, food, crafts; music by *The Can Collectors, Rikter Scale, 2 Car Garage*; activities “designed to reflect both the farm’s history and its present-day operations.” 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free.



Left to right: Tessa White-Diemand, Faith Diemand, Peter Diemand, and Anne Diemand Bucci invite the public up to Wendell this Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., to help celebrate the 90th anniversary of Diemand Farm! Farm tours, crafts, food, live music, and family-friendly activities are promised.

Nova Motorcycles, Turners Falls: *Soapbox Build Party*. Build for the September 27 race day! Details at tinyurl.com/boxrace. 10 a.m. Free.

Thompson Temple, Lake Pleasant: *Forest Fires in Massachusetts: Myths and Reality*. Experts discuss the role wildfires and prescribed fires have had in New England. A walk through the Montague Plains follows the panel and discussion. Light refreshments. 11 a.m. Free.

Peskeompskut Park, Turners Falls: *Karla Borecky, Slowpoke Records, Old Pam, Olivia Kennett, Nora Borealis, Washatorium, Moons of Goom, Shea Mowat, J. Burkett*, many more. 12 p.m. By donation.

104 Fourth, Turners Falls: *Books Through Bars Volunteer Day*. Read and respond to letter requests from incarcerated people, and pack books. 12 p.m. Free.

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *It's Weird Duck Season: Waterfowl of the Connecticut River*. Learn from ornithologist Chad Witko how to identify migrating ducks, geese, and swans. 2 p.m. Free.

Thompson Temple, Lake Pleasant: *Elaheh Roya, Olivia Kennett / David Russell duo*. 6 p.m. By donation.

Leverett Village Co-op, Leverett: *Rattlesnake Gutter Guttersnipes*. 6 p.m. Free.

Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: *Open Mic*; featured performer Craig Cornet. 6:15 p.m. By donation.

THCC, Easthampton: *Rival Galaxies, Gloons, Punk Flamungo*. 7 p.m. \$.

Colonial Theater, Keene: *Slavic Soul Party*. 7 p.m. \$.

Northampton Center for the Arts, Northampton: *Terry Jenoure Septet*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Cold Spring Hollow, Belchertown: *Psychos, Gen/Loss, Small Head Big Torso Vicious Grip, Yellowbelly*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *The Reverend Horton Heat, Messer Chups*. 8 p.m. \$.

Midnight's, Brattleboro: *Sludge Inc., Deerest, Kim Chin-Gibbons*. 8 p.m. \$.

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Graham Nash*. 8 p.m. \$\$.

MASS MoCA, North Adams: *Son Lux*. 8 p.m. \$\$.

EXHIBITS

Waterway Arts, Turners Falls: *Sleeping Giant*, new work by Jae Southerland, through September.

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Stitched Through the Seven Sisters*. Kerry St. Laurent layers matte hot press photo prints with gouache, ink, and colored pencil stitching. Through September.

Leverett Library, Leverett: *Falling in Love with Rainbow Valley*, art by Ezra Wilde, through October.

Leverett Crafts & Arts, Leverett: *Susan Valentine*, paintings; *David Pozar*, woodworking; *The Perennials*, oil painting group exhibit. Through September.

Looky Here, Greenfield: *Minor Cosmologies* by Eva Lin Fahey, through September.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *Christine Mirabal: Escape!* Abstract, nature-inspired paintings. Through September.

Artspace, Greenfield: *Carnival Studies*, Polaroid instant photos of carnival scenes. Opens this Friday, September 11 with a reception at 5 p.m.; through October 18.

GCTV, Greenfield: *slow, down river*, photographs of the Connecticut River by Alix Kaplan, through September.

Fiddleheads Gallery, Bernardston: *A Touch of Whimsy*, fanciful and humorous art, through September.

Sunderland Library, Sunderland: *Embrace the Wrinkles*, collages by Sarah Gately, through October.

Gallery A3, Amherst: *Common Threads*, abstract art in multiple media by Martha Braun and Matthew Simons, through September 26.

Shelburne Arts Coop, Shelburne Falls: *Small Works*, member art show, through September.

New England Visionary Art Museum, Northampton: *Unleashed: Following Imaginings*, textile hangings and soft sculpture by Jacqueline Strauss. Through September with a reception this Friday, September 11 at 6 p.m.

Oxbow Gallery, Easthampton: *Flower Show*, paintings of wildflowers and gardens found in Montague by Kate Spencer. *Captured in Felt*, scenes created with wool rovings by Eileen Travis. Through September.

50 Arrow Gallery, Easthampton: *Life 'n' Death 'n' Stuff*, the humorous work of Ken Brown. Sales benefit Home Sweet Home, providing home accessibility modifications for people who need them. Through September.

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SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

Unity Park, Turners Falls: *Northeast Unity Car Show*. 10 a.m. Free.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

Turners Falls High School, Turners Falls: *Public Information Session* on the proposed Great River Regional School District. 7 p.m. Free.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *Tom Dill, Connect Four*, Aaron Russell. 7 p.m. \$.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

The Egg, Albany: *Liz Phair, Frankie Cosmos*. Tickets still available as of press time. 7 p.m. \$\$.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

Trolley Museum, Shelburne Falls: *Trolleyfest*. "Ride the historic Trolley No. 10, the pump car, and the restored Central Vermont caboose, and enjoy speeder and velocipede rides." See sftm.org for details. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. \$.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

Montague Center Library, Montague Center: Reading and talk by local author *Lee Wicks*. 5:30 p.m. Free.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2

The Drake, Amherst: *Iron Lung, Dropdead, The Eye*. *Innumerable Forms*, 8 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10

Big River Chestnuts, Sunderland: *Chestnut Festival*. Roasting, music, food demos, vendors. SNAP accepted for chestnuts, flour, fruits. 10 a.m. Free.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14

Hutghi's, Westfield: *D.O.D., Atomic Prey, Corrode, Demented FX*. 8 p.m. \$.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21

Parlor Room, Northampton: *Told Slant, H. Pruz, Sable Island Pony*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24

Downtown Brattleboro: *Circuits In The Woods 2*, featuring *Dälek, Jeffrey Alexander & the Heavy Lidders, Burial Woods, Wet Tuna, Dave Seidel*, many more. 12 p.m. \$.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30

Palladium, Worcester: *Disco Biscuits*. 8 p.m. \$\$.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21

Tourists, North Adams: *Hammydown*. 8 p.m. Free.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

Franklin County Fairgrounds, Greenfield: *Franklin County Fair*. 8 a.m. \$.

Leverett Village Co-op, Leverett: *Annual Harvest Festival*. Live music and animals, apple and wine tasting, fairy hair implantation, vendors, tool-sharpening, and more. 1 to 4 p.m. Free.

Unity Park, Turners Falls: *Good Trouble Street Theatre* gathers to plan October No Kings action during fall midterms. All are welcome. Roles for actors, musicians, costume and prop designers, social media and promoters. Colorful/clown costumes optional. 2 p.m. Free.

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Get Ready For Constitution Day*. Help create a "We the People" banner with phrases from the US Constitution and handprints. Sponsored by Indivisible Montague. Materials provided. 2 to 4 p.m. Free.

Feeding Tube Records, Florence: *Mark Cetilia, E. Jason Gibbs & Matt Wellins, Vic Rawlings & Stella Silbert*. 4 p.m. By donation.

Parlor Room, Northampton: *Dilemastronauta y la Tripulación Cosmica*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Midnight's, Brattleboro: *Bellringer, Slow Pony, DiTrani Brothers*. 8 p.m. \$.

Tourists, North Adams: *Thor and Friends*. 8 p.m. Free.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

Erving Public Library, Erving: *Mucho Gusto Spanish with Laurie*. All ages. 10 a.m. Free.

Greenfield Garden Cinemas, Greenfield: Documentary, *Unless Something Goes Terribly Wrong* (2025). "As America's aging wastewater system begins to fail, one plant does all it can to stay afloat." Sponsored by the City of Greenfield. 6:30 p.m. \$.

Rockridge Community Room, Northampton: Open rehearsals for *Valley Jazz Voices*. 7 p.m. Free.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

Leverett Library, Leverett: *Reptile Petting Zoo*, no sign-up necessary; *Tech Help for Seniors*, sign up at leverettlibrary@gmail.com. Both at 3 p.m. Free.

Wendell Meetinghouse, Wendell: *Honoring Elders: Sylvia and Tom Wetherby*. 6:30 p.m. Free.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: Movie, *Singin' in the Rain* (1952). 4 p.m. Free.

Our Lady of Peace Church, Turners Falls: *Navigating an AI World*, presentation by College of the Holy Cross professor Jeffrey C. Dixon. 7 p.m. Free.

Franklin County Technical School, Turners Falls: *Public Information Session* on the proposed new FCTS building. 7 p.m. Free.

HOPE Center, Springfield: *Celtic Thunder*. 7 p.m. \$.

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

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Rivers of Nihil, Pathogenic, Rotting in the Chapel*. 8 p.m. \$.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

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

Brick House Community Resource Center, Turners Falls: *Behavioral Health Help Line Info Session*. 10 a.m. Free.

Northfield Mountain, Northfield: *Hike*. Moderate level difficulty. Register at www.bookeo.com/northfield. 1 p.m. Free.

Millers Falls Library, Millers Falls: Book discussion, *The Monkey Wrench Gang* by Edward Abbey. 5:30 p.m. Free.

Gill-Montague Senior Center, Turners Falls: *Local Podcasting for Seniors* by Seniors, with podcaster Henry Balzarini. Registration encouraged. 6 p.m. Free.

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: Book discussion, *Nothing More of this Land* by Joseph Lee. 6:30 p.m. Free.

Camp Keewanee, Greenfield: *Terrafunk, Moosejuice, Future Joy*, more. 7 p.m. \$\$

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Damien Jurado, St. Yuma*. 8 p.m. \$.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: *Library Learning Lab*. A librarian will demonstrate Transparent Language resources. 10 a.m. Free.

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

Camp Keewanee, Greenfield: *Dirtwire, Minka, The Broken Hearts, Honeycomb*, many more. 12 p.m. \$\$.

Greenfield Community College, Greenfield: *Open Chorus Rehearsal*. New members welcome; register at engage.gcc.mass.edu. 12:30 p.m. Free.

Smith Academy Park, Hatfield: *Hofbrauhaus Bavarians*. 6 p.m. Free.

Last Ditch, Greenfield: *Scott Hsu*. 7 p.m. \$.

Ashfield Town Hall, Ashfield: Documentary, *Girl Climber* (2025), with panel discussion. More details at ashfieldfilmfest.org. 7 p.m. \$.

THCC, Easthampton: *Witching, Ecliptor, Oxen*. 7 p.m. \$.

CitySpace, Easthampton: *Letters of Marque, Tree, Trophy Hunt, Daisy Chain*, more. Masks req'd. Benefit for Palestinian Children's Relief Fund. 7 p.m. \$.

Big E Arena, West Springfield: *Jessie Murph*. 7:30 p.m. \$\$.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Space Bar*. 8 p.m. No cover.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Lyle Hutchins, Eve Pierce*. 9:30 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Source to Sea Cleanup*. 10 a.m. Free.

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: *1,000 Books Before Kindergarten Kick-Off Party*. Activities and free books for young children. 10 a.m. Free.

The National Spiritual Alliance, Lake Pleasant: *Camp Weekend Workshops*. Mediumship, kirtan, history, tarot, pizza, etc. 10 a.m. \$.

Camp Keewanee, Greenfield: *Max Creek, Leftover Salmon, Consider the Source*, many more. 10:15 a.m. \$\$.

Riverview Picnic Area, Northfield: *Geology Cruise* with Professor Richard Little. Register at www.bookeo.com/northfield. 11 a.m. \$.

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: *Mindful Origami Boxes*. Sign up at wendell@cwmmars.org. 1 p.m. Free.

Riverview Picnic Area, Northfield: *Geology Cruise* with Professor Richard Little. Register at www.bookeo.com/northfield. 1:15 p.m. \$.

Guiding Star Grange, Greenfield: *Swedish Dance*. Intro workshop, yummy snacks, open dancing. Live music on five-string fiddle and nyckelharpa. All welcome. 1:30 p.m. \$

Peskeompskut Park, Turners Falls: *Abdul Baki & Root Fiyah, Shanti Starr & the Afro-Reggae All Stars, Mbo Lette, Ras Iba & Amandla Band, The Boston JA Crew*, family activities, more. 4 p.m. Free.

Mount Toby Friends Meeting, Leverett: *Emma's Revolution*. 4 p.m. \$.

Downtown Florence: *Flo Fest*, featuring *The Kill Phill, Little House Blues, bobbie, Gabby St. John, Olivia Nied*, many more; dance, games, pie-eating contest, art booths, etc. 4 p.m. Free.

CitySpace, Easthampton: *Damag3, Film & Gender, K.O. Queen, Sapien Joyride, Abbatia*, more. Masks req'd. Benefit for Palestinian Children's Relief Fund. 4 p.m. \$.

Ashfield Town Hall, Ashfield: Short films, *Ashfield Community Band*, awards presentation. Tickets, details at ashfieldfilmfest.org. 5:30 p.m. \$.

Unnameable Books, Turners Falls: *Edite Cunhã, Robin Lippincott, Pamela Mandell, P.J. Melton*. Readings. 6 p.m. Free.

Hutghi's, Westfield: *Tree, Stalag 13, Urban Waste, Lost Generation, Burn Kit, Grip Bite*. 6:30 p.m. \$.

Palladium, Worcester: *Dying Fetus, Left to Suffer, Sanguisugabogg, Crowbar, Deterioration*. 6:30 p.m. \$\$.

Wendell Meetinghouse, Wendell: *We Are the People in the Room*. Play with optional audience participation, discussion and reception follow. 7 p.m. \$.

Institute for Musical Arts, Goshen: *Isle of Klezbos*. 7 p.m. \$.

Full Moon Coffeehouse, Wendell: *Highway 91*. Benefit for Old Home Day. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Vermont Jazz Center, Brattleboro: *Gonzalo Rubalcaba & Trio d'Été*. 7:30 p.m. \$.



Cuban-born jazz pianist Gonzalo Rubalcaba, who has been nominated for 11 Grammys and won four, will give a concert with his Trio d'Été next Saturday, September 19 at the Vermont Jazz Center in Brattleboro. Sliding-scale tickets begin at \$25 and are still available at vtjazz.org.

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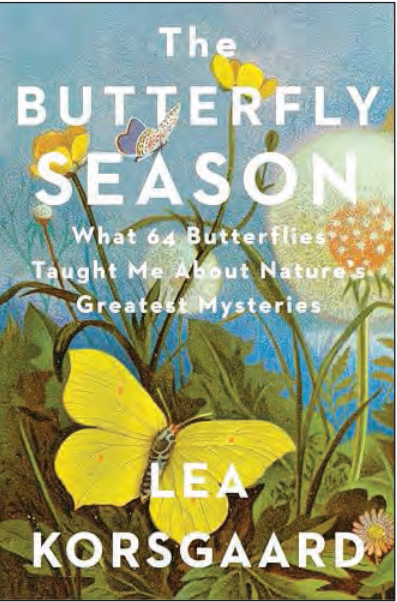
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BOOKS from page B1

because Lieberman is a talented writer, moving easily from recalling personal experience to dramatizing difficult physiological information and weighing competing ideas.



Danish journalist Lea Korsgaard is equally adept. As the title of her book notes – *The Butterfly Season: What 64 Butterflies Taught Me about Nature’s Great Mysteries and the Meaning of Life* – her topic is her butterfly quest.

Why 64 butterflies? Why not 65, or 100? It’s because, having decided “to see all the butterfly species in Denmark in a single season,” Korsgaard learned that the country has about 64 butterflies, depending on how you count them.

The idea of seeing them all had been nudging her for a while, and she had consulted the author of an authoritative butterfly guide who assured her it was possible: “But it wouldn’t be easy.”

“They are on the wing at different times in different places,” another expert explained. “The northern chequered skipper is on the wing for just three weeks, maybe four.... If you don’t catch it then, it’s gone.”

Evidently she would have to plan carefully to get to the right butterfly habitats at the right time. She would need to travel all over her country, so seeing them within one season would be a big task.

Where did the inspiration for that mission come from? She is rather vague about this. Indeed, where does any inspiration come from?

Korsgaard notes her mom’s special connection to the tortoiseshell butterfly. It began when she was a young woman grieving her mother’s early death, “struck in darkness that seemed boundless, with no end in sight.” While she was crying inconsolably on her bed a butterfly flew in. “Brick red with black and cream-colored spots on its wings and along the edges ran spots of bright blue, it circled around her.”

She knew it was a message from her mother: “That sign,” she said, “gave me comfort.” Tortoiseshells visited repeatedly in later years, regularly flitting into family events such as baptisms and funerals.

While Korsgaard says this family history did not prompt her butterfly quest, it did help her see that the butterfly “has been associated with eternal life and the hope of rebirth” from ancient times. Graves from Bronze-Age Greece have butterfly decorations, and ancient Egyptian paintings show butterflies flying around warriors. Pre-Columbian Mexicans believed that fallen warriors would turn into butterflies, who would return to this life after resting with the Sun god.

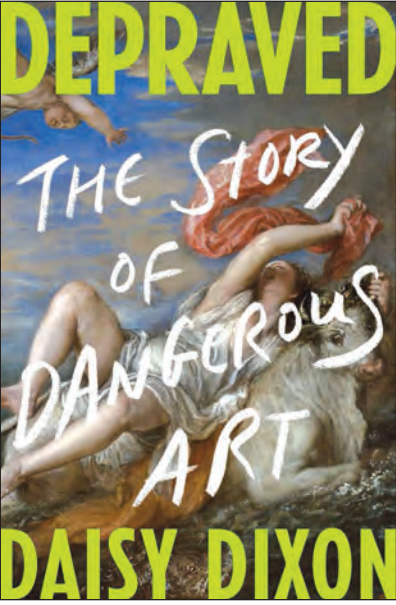
Linking these myths is not the only connection that Korsgaard pursues. She ties novelist Vladimir Nabokov’s expertise as a butterfly taxonomist to his hatred of overarching literary explanations – Freudian analyses, for example – as crassly reductive. As a taxonomist and as a writer, he was devoted to precision: the exact details of a butterfly’s physiology, and the exact words on the page, not an interpretation of them.

Korsgaard also writes about Vincent Van Gogh, Hermann Hesse, Aristotle, and a host of other luminaries who saw the butterfly’s metamorphoses from an egg to a caterpillar to a chrysalis, and finally to a vivid, fluttering creature, as emblematic of the soul and its rebirth – and hence of hope.

With all these commentaries her book is equally about her daily life as a working journalist and mother of three. We see her packing school lunchboxes, walking the dog, going to a family vacation home, talking to butterfly experts who tell her where and when to look. Her quest takes her to distant bogs and shores, often with her sons or husband, sometimes taking bikes to speed the search along.

She suffers frustrations as well as successes, but she doesn’t give up hope: hope for spotting a particular butterfly, hope that we can reverse the catastrophic decline in butterfly populations, hope that we will address the global, as well as local, problems that have caused it.

Hers is an inspiring story. Amazingly readable, too. No surprise that it was a best-seller in Denmark – and no surprise if it were to become one here too.



Like the two foregoing books, Daisy Dixon’s *Depraved: The Story*

MONTAGUE REPORTER



Above: “Bike paths along the St. Lawrence River in Montreal lead through Rapids Park to a rapid called Vague à Guy (‘Guy’s Wave’),” frequent Reporter reporter Sarah Robertson reported after taking this spring trip with our April 16 edition. “There were three people in full wetsuits taking turns surfing the wave on this particular Wednesday afternoon in April.”

Top right: Laurie Davidson (left) and Will Quale (right) were both in Philadelphia for the wedding of former fellow Montague Center resident Ben Fink (center) later in the spring, and so were our April 30 and May 28 editions. The wedding was at the German Society of Pennsylvania, which hosts this piece of the former Berlin Wall.

Right: While our May 21 edition only made it down the street to the Shea Theater, it found its way into the hands of someone who has gone much further: former NASA astronaut Cady Coleman, visiting as part of the Earth Music Theater Live show.



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ROAD

of *Dangerous Art* is about a striking real-world phenomenon: the multiplicity of books, music, films and other artifacts that many people would consider depraved.

As Dixon notes, “Since the mid-twentieth century societies around the world have undergone a collective revolution in standards and attitudes towards obscenity and immorality.... words and images that once would have been considered indecent, offensive or immoral are now commonplace, especially in the West.”

Some might argue that times have changed in other ways too, and we should accept that attitudes move on. Dixon rejects such moral relativism. “There are moral facts that do not reduce to varying opinions,” she writes. She particularly condemns oppressive systems such as racism and sexism as immoral, “especially in cases where this wickedness is shrouded in dazzling beauty.”

This reference to racism and sexism might give us pause. Sexism and racism are not themselves art, though art forms can promote them. If so, Dixon, like many others, would argue that they can influence readers and viewers and thus are dangerous. She also spends considerable time writing about video games, which few art historians would class as art, though her arguments about the power of such artifacts to influence behavior are well-grounded and cogently presented.

A common response to threatening or repulsive expressions of artistic freedom is to demand that they be banned or forbidden. Certainly, many parents would try to prevent such materials from reaching their children. On these grounds, some American states have banned certain classic novels and plays from public libraries and schools.

Dixon argues art deemed im-

moral should not be censored, but instead placed in a context where its immorality can be examined. This, she hopes, would lead to art that is not dangerous.

Dixon teaches philosophy at Cardiff University in the United Kingdom. This may suggest that her book is an abstruse tome addressed to other academic philosophers rather than the general public. This is definitely not the case. She is an approachable writer with a sharp eye on the contemporary world, and an energetic conviction of the harms that may be done by exposing people to depravity.

Non-fiction can seem stodgy – of specialist interest only. But Dixon, Lieberman, and Korsgaard all write lucidly, making their expertise interesting and even enticing. Indeed, each of these books is something of a page-turner in its own way.



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