

The Montague Reporter

MORE ORIGINS

Who Made Our Current Regional School Districts? Why Were They Needed?



Residents listen on Wednesday as Franklin County Technical School administrators present their proposal for an entirely new tech school building.

By WILL QUALE

FRANKLIN COUNTY – It’s fitting that the future of three area school districts – Gill-Montague, Pioneer Valley, and Franklin County Technical – will be determined by voters on the same day, October 6: the districts’ origin stories are intertwined.

This might not be obvious from the years they were voted into being. Northfield, Bernardston, and Warwick voted to create a district in 1954, with Leyden joining in 1960; Gill and Montague cast their fates together in 1967; and in 1972, seventeen towns voted to form the district now called Franklin County Regional Technical.

But all three districts were born in the same crucible of the late 1940s. Both Pioneer Valley and Franklin County Tech failed in their first votes, only for their towns to face increased pressures that compelled further attempts to regionalize. Local voters might find some valuable lessons in this see **DISTRICTS** page A6

Village Blaze Averted After Charging Battery Ignites



Neighbors helped extinguish the Lake Pleasant basement fire, believed to have started by a remote control car battery, before the professionals arrived.

By WILL QUALE

LAKE PLEASANT – The village’s volunteer fire department officially folded in 1993, but Lake Pleasant volunteers saved the day on Monday after a fire, believed to be the result of a battery explosion, started in a Montague Avenue basement.

“We race every weekend – we travel down to Connecticut, up to New Hampshire. Radio-controlled cars, so you can charge them right after you’re done racing.... He’s got a lot of cars over there. He’s a fanatic.”

The fire started in Scott Beck’s basement workshop, where he stores and repairs his model race-cars. A battery left on its charger likely overheated.

The brothers live nearly across the street from each other in the Bluffs neighborhood where they grew up. Scott wasn’t home – on weekdays he repairs life-sized cars at Beck’s Automotive in Greenfield – but around noon, his partner Jody Bagdonas was jolted awake from a nap.

“It woke me up, and I went ‘What the hell?,” she told neighbors as they gathered near Rutter Park to check in on one another. “I looked down [the] cellar, and all of a sudden black smoke started coming up.”

“Jody came running across the see **IGNITES** page A8

G-M SCHOOL COMMITTEE GMRSD Pushes Forward With New Search for Superintendent

By REPORTER STAFF

GILL and MONTAGUE – The Gill-Montague regional school committee held a special, remote meeting Wednesday evening, officially posted on Monday but not widely announced, to keep its re-launch of the district’s superintendent search on the fast track.

Reviewing the brochure the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) had used last winter to advertise the job, committee members noted that the district’s stated enrollment needed to be reduced from 850 to 794, its annual budget needed to increase from \$24.95 million to \$25.81 million, and – given a major staff restructuring that is still shaking out – the way its employees are listed could be changed.

“We’re going to add the [total] amount of approximately 230 employees,” chair Jane Oakes recommended. “We’re thinking we will leave off how many of each for some of these categories, because it’s still being established, in some cases.”

Positions to be added to the list include a food service director, a director of teaching and learning, and an assistant director of business and operations.

Two big projects on the horizon – the replacement of the Gill Elementary roof and a consolidation of the two Turners Falls elementary schools – were added as “upcoming endeavors,” a new heading.

The superintendent’s salary was previously advertised at \$170,000 to \$190,000. Business manager Joanne Blier suggested raising this to \$180,000 to \$200,000.

see **GMRSD** page A10

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD Town Hall Moves to Oust RVs

By JEFF SINGLETON

At its Monday meeting the Montague selectboard took the unusual step of banning all parking at two public parking lots due to concerns that the lots were being used as semi-permanent residences by campers in RVs. The board also approved a pilot program for community policing, embarked on what may be the final chapter of the old burn dump, and authorized two “end-of-summer” music events.

Town administrator Walter Ramsey introduced the camper issue by noting that the town had been “fielding complaints over the past few weeks about the storage of vehicles” in a town-owned lot on Montague City Road which formerly provided parking for the now demolished Farren Care Center.

Coincidentally, he explained, a similar issue had emerged on First Street, in a lot across from town hall that will soon be the site of six Habitat for Humanity homes.

The public health department has see **MONTAGUE** page A9

With Quabbin at Historic Low, East Grows Thirsty for More



At the Windsor Dam in Belchertown, the Quabbin’s depleted state is visible.

By SARAH ROBERTSON

BELCHERTOWN – As the state slowly emerges from a two-year drought, the water in the Quabbin Reservoir dropped this month to the lowest level seen in decades.

At the same time, the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) is seeking permission to draw up to 20 million more gallons per day from the reservoir and other connected bodies of water, deepening concern among the western Massachusetts communities that work to protect the water supply, but cannot tap into it.

“These are conversations that have become front and center, and not just for us in western Massachusetts,” said state representative see **LOW** page A5

High School Sports: Tech Successes

By MATT ROBINSON

TURNERS FALLS – This week Franklin Tech’s golf team broke a school record, and one of their players will be immortalized with a plaque at Thomas Memorial Golf Course.

The Turners Falls High School golfers also pulled off a win, but the school’s volleyball and field hockey teams lost to Tech. The Turners cross-country teams hosted two races, but they did not have enough runners to score, and the Franklin Tech Football Eagles stung the visiting Green Hornets of McCann Tech.

Volleyball
FCTS 3 – TFHS 0
Mahar 3 – TFHS 1

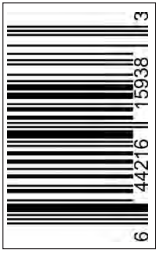
Last Friday, the Franklin Tech Volleyball Eagles defeated the Turners Falls Thunder 3-0. I checked out the ninth-grade and JV games before going to the soccer game, and again during soccer’s halftime. I then watched the first varsity match before heading over to the football rumble.

Tech had an amazing game, but Turners had difficulty gaining their footing. Unlike the underclass games, there were very few fault serves, and the majority went see **SPORTS** page A8



Franklin Tech’s Sarah Beckwith starts her serve against the visting Turners Falls Thunder on September 11.

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Retains a Little Crunch.....	B8



The Montague Reporter

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August 2002

Originals Only, Please

With just two more editions to go between now and October 6’s potentially consequential special election – for some of our towns a *double* special election – our opinion pages are once again gathering steam. Some quick tips are in order: Monday afternoon is the dead-

line. Email ahead if you’re writing a long one! Under 500 words is a Letter, and over 600 is an Op/Ed; we do our best to run all Letters.

And, please don’t send the same thing in to us and our Greenfield colleagues. As a weekly, we can’t afford to do reruns. Write another!

Letters
the



to
Editors

Make an Informed Vote

Residents of Bernardston, Gill, Leyden, Montague, Northfield, and Warwick are being asked to consider a proposal that could significantly shape the future of public education in our communities: the creation of the Great River Regional School District.

The proposal is the result of seven years of study by the Six Town Regionalization Planning Board, which was formed in response to challenges facing local schools, including declining enrollment, rising costs, and increasing difficulty sustaining programs and services.

The proposal points to several potential benefits. A larger district could support a broader range of academic courses, extracurricular activities, athletics, and student services. Combining middle and high school enrollments would create greater scheduling flexibility and allow programs to operate with more consistent participation. It is argued that a larger district may provide greater financial stability by spreading costs across a broader tax base.

Critics and skeptics raise important questions as well. Some residents are concerned about potential changes to local control and community identity.

Others question whether projected financial efficiencies will materialize as anticipated, or worry about longer transportation times for some students. There are also questions about governance, future facility decisions, and how the transition would affect students, staff, and taxpayers over time.

These are reasonable issues for the public to examine carefully. The Six Town Regionalization Planning Board has taken all of these issues into consideration in making its recommendation. The decision involves balancing educational opportunities, financial considerations, community values, and long-term sustainability.

Regardless of where residents ultimately stand, the most important step is to become informed by reviewing the proposal and materials on the www.6towns.org website and by attending the informational sessions.

The future of our schools is an important community decision. Please become informed before you vote on October 6. Polling hours are from 12 noon to 8 p.m.

Sincerely,

William Tomb
Member of the STRPB
Gill

Operation Epstein Fury

The Iran war succeeded in its main goal. It pushed the Epstein files from the forefront of the news almost all summer.

Sure, Americans were killed, American bases destroyed, American stature among nations diminished, Iranian schoolgirls killed on the first day (outdated intelligence), at a cost of a mere billion a day for the first month, and more since then.

Now Epstein is coming back and the national debt is over \$100,000 per person in the country, growing bigger every day.

The most recent administration to have a surplus was Bill Clinton’s. Before that, the last administration to have a balanced budget was Lyndon Johnson’s.

Josh Heinemann
Wendell

Published weekly on Thursdays.
Every other week in July and August. No paper the fourth week of November, or the final week of December.

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NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION



Downpours this past Sunday meant the Leverett Village Co-op Fall Festival was postponed until September 27, but one vendor, “Fairy Melissa,” still took care of her scheduled fairy-hair appointments inside the coop. Robin Spitko is pictured above getting dozens of sparkling extensions installed in her hair by Melissa Hudasko, whose “Wildflower Fairy Hair” services are offered at popup events throughout the region. Her monthly schedule can be found on her Facebook page.

Burning Debate Continues: Many Creatures Need Barrens

A recent Letter to the Editor by Bart Bouricius opposing active management at the Montague Plains raises important questions about conservation, wildlife habitat, and public health. However, his one-sided argument dismisses the ecological importance of the Plains and characterizes any management there as harmful and unnecessary, which couldn’t be further from the truth. Active management, especially prescribed burning, is paramount to ensuring that this globally rare and imperiled ecosystem continues to provide a place where barrens-dependent plants, insects, and animals can thrive.

Mr. Bouricius seems to believe that mature forests are inherently more valuable than other habitat types, and that we should seek to preserve this specific habitat type above all others. It’s true that the Wood Thrush, Blackburnian Warbler, and Cerulean Warbler need mature forest, but what of the Whip-poor-will, Eastern Towhee, and Prairie Warbler? Are these birds less worthy than mature forest birds?

If we are to enhance biodiversity across the Commonwealth, then we must preserve *all* habitat types for *all* species, not just the ones we like best. This requires maintaining a diversity of habitats across the landscape rather than maximizing one habitat condition everywhere.

Another thing to address is his negative portrayal of prescribed fire. Prescribed burning is one of the most widely accepted habitat-management tools used by conservation organizations, state agencies, universities, and land trusts throughout the United States. MassAudubon lists “ecological succession” as a serious threat to this ecosystem.

Without periodic fire, succession would gradually convert much of the Plains into denser forest, resulting in the loss of the very ecological features and species that make this site unique.

Land managers are not creating an artificial ecosystem from scratch, but are instead restoring and maintaining the processes that historically shaped this site.

The concern regarding smoke deserves serious consideration, but it should be viewed in context. Prescribed burns are conducted under carefully controlled conditions to minimize risks to nearby communities. Out-of-control wildfires, on the other hand, produce higher quantities of more harmful smoke that pose greater risks to public health.

One benefit of prescribed burning is that by reducing fuel loads, it can also reduce the risk of these larger, unplanned fires while accomplishing ecological objectives. This is especially poignant for a community that has experienced destructive fire before.

Finally, Mr. Bouricius frames the discussion as a choice between “nature” and “industrial management.” Let’s not fool ourselves into believing this dichotomy, which removes all nuance from the situation.

This isn’t a choice between mature forests and barrens ecosystems, either. A balanced conservation strategy recognizes that both are valuable and necessary. MassWildlife works to maintain ecological diversity across the landscape so that species requiring old and young forests, shrublands, and fire-adapted barrens all have places to thrive.

From that perspective, the management at Montague Plains is not an attack on nature, and it is certainly not “industrial management.” Rather, it is an evidence-based approach to conserve one of Massachusetts’ rarest and most threatened ecosystems.

Mary Kay Mattiace
Turners Falls

Gabrielle Hardyn
Shelburne

A Controllable Factor

Please consider voting “Yes” on Question 9 in the November election.

Perhaps one can be angry, impulsive, outraged and/or out of control while “hunting” non-two-legged creatures, but when acted upon towards children and adults, such dispositions can result in agonizingly horrific, lifelong consequences in human lives, families, and communities.

AI, nuclear war, and/or economic inequality may destroy us before we destroy ourselves with guns, though at least with gun usage we have more agency, and nearly everyone can participate in advocating for the protection of our self, our family, our friends, our neighbors, and our relatives.

Vote “Yes.”

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editor@montaguereporter.org

TURNERS FALLS AND VICINITY.

Compiled by MIKE JACKSON

It’s one of the hardest things about publishing a weekly paper.

Two Wednesday afternoons ago, while we were chipping away at the September 3 edition, a press release landed in my inbox. “Please keep this information embargoed until the official announcement is made on Thursday,” it read. The big, 29-unit **housing project long planned in Erving**, including 18 one-bedroom apartments for seniors, had been awarded funding by the state Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities. “The event is on Thursday, September 3... We are pleased to welcome Governor Healey, Secretary Matias, and other award recipients for 12:00PM. I know that this is short notice...”

I honored the request to “embargo” the news until after our deadline, figuring we’d miss the big party but get plenty more bites at the apple before the final ribbon-cutting. The state grant, I later read, was for \$14.7 million.

But then it happened again! And in Erving, again. The invitation came early last Thursday: “Please be advised, our office will be holding a press conference today at 4:00 p.m. at the Erving Police Department regarding last night’s **officer-involved shooting...**”

Again, I found myself passively consuming other people’s reporting: A New York man named Brandon William Hampson, a suspect in the death of his girlfriend, was tracked to the French King Motel by state troopers and Erving police, who say they shot him after he came at them with a knife; he was pronounced dead at Baystate Franklin. The Worcester County DA’s office is investigating the shooting, as the involved officers were part of the taskforce operated by the Northwestern DA’s office.

Here’s some actual advance news for you: from this Sunday, September 20 to next Saturday, September 26, the stretch of the canalside bike path in Turners Falls between the Patch and Montague City will be closed.

This corresponds with the annual **draw-down of the power canal for maintenance.**

There’s been some confusion, as the Department of Conservation and Recreation announced on Tuesday that the segment would also be closed during the daytime, effective **immediately.** Claire Belanger, a spokesperson

for canal owner FirstLight Power, told us the closure this week was “considered” but “determined to be unnecessary by onsite personnel.”

On Wednesday the state Department of Transportation (MassDOT) announced that the White Bridge – the one across the river from Canal Road to Greenfield – will also be closed from next Monday morning to Friday evening.

“As in years past, we will use this outage to perform our **annual inspections on the Fifth Street bridge** over the canal and will be mobilizing our contractor to perform any necessary repairs,” they wrote, encouraging drivers to take the “Gill-Montague bridge” (excuse me, that’s the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge!) instead if they need to get to Greenfield.

That’s not even the most exciting part! Multiple readers sent us photos of these **scary new signs on the bike path.** “Mechanical devices (traps, snares or other restraining devices) have been placed in this area to capture animals causing damage or harm,” they say, urging the reader not to let their children or pets to get in the traps, especially given that “These devices and the animals captured in them are property of the United States Government.”

The sign gives a phone number at the USDA to call for more information, but if you dial it and attempt to reach the Massachusetts division, you’re routed instead to the office covering “Alabama and the Caribbean.”

It hadn’t been on my radar, but after a little burrowing I found that for several months FirstLight has been in communication with the Montague conservation commission about a plan to humanely trap beavers, who have constructed an entire lodge in the canal.



The King, spotted recently in Lake Pleasant.

“FirstLight has been working with the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service’s Wildlife Services team to remove **beavers and other burrowing animals** from the bank of the Turners Falls Power Canal to preserve the integrity of our dam infrastructure,” Belanger confirmed. Don’t get trapped!

I was sad to see news of the passing of **Donald Girard**, TFHS ’48, at age 95. He led quite an accomplished life as a prominent civic leader, local historian, and great-grandfather of a large family. I knew him mostly as the guy who closed out memorial events with the most soulful rendition of “Taps” you’ll ever hear.

The **Montague Soapbox Races** committee reports that their recent build party added four new carts to the roster, and the number of racers registered is cracking 30. That’s very good to hear – I encourage our readers to hit the races next Sunday the 27th at Unity Park.

Nurses at Baystate Franklin are *still* negotiating with management over their contract! The **Massachusetts Nurses Association** writes that since the spring, “nurses and

Baystate have narrowed their differences and reached tentative agreements on important issues,” but the nurses are continuing to push for fuller shift coverage, affordable health insurance, and better pay for mandatory on-call time. Let’s hope they settle up soon.

Flu vaccine clinics will be held next month in Montague, courtesy of the Valley Health Regional Collaborative and Walgreens: Thursday morning, October 15 at the senior center; Tuesday afternoon, October 20 at town hall; Friday morning, October 23 at Food City; and Wednesday afternoon, October 28 at Sheffield Elementary.

“Walk-ins Welcome. Bring your insurance card if you have one. Covid and Pneumonia vaccines will also be available.” We’ll remind you again when the clinics get closer.

I don’t know if you read any news besides the *Reporter*, but man, **the world** is having a really rough time right now. I’m a little surprised so many of us are still alive.

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

OP ED

What Franklin Tech Means to Our Region

By RICH KUKLEWICZ

FRANKLIN COUNTY – I have been a believer in vocational-technical education for most of my life. I graduated from Smith Vocational High School in 1975, and the education I received there gave me not only a trade, but a foundation for a career and a lifetime of opportunities.

My experience at Smith Voc also went beyond the classroom and shop. Through the Future Farmers of America (FFA), I had opportunities to develop leadership skills and ultimately served as Massachusetts State FFA President in 1975-76. Those experiences helped shape me personally and professionally and reinforced how much vocational education can offer a young person.

Vocational education became the foundation for a career in the electrical and controls fields that has spanned more than four decades. That experience is one reason I have been proud to serve on the Franklin County Technical School Committee for the past 31 years.

Vocational education has

changed dramatically since I was a student. What has not changed is its value. Franklin Tech students graduate with practical skills, hands-on experience, and a pathway into a career. Some continue their education, some enter apprenticeships, and many go directly into the workforce.

Over the years, Franklin Tech graduates have become electricians, auto technicians, carpenters, welders, restaurant owners, and professionals in many other fields. Many remain in Franklin County, working for local businesses, raising families and, in some cases, starting businesses of their own. They become part of the economic backbone of our communities.

For me, that is why this decision is about much more than a building.

I understand the concern over cost. A \$236.6 million project is a very large number, and taxpayers have every right to question it and expect those of us involved to justify the expense. But the choice before us is not between spending \$236.6 million and spending nothing.

The current school is now 50

years old. Major mechanical and electrical systems are aging, the roof and other infrastructure require attention, classrooms and shops are overcrowded, and the building no longer adequately meets the educational, safety, and space requirements of a modern technical school.

A renovation-only option was studied through the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) process and is estimated at approximately \$125 million. Even after that investment, overcrowding and undersized spaces would remain, educational programs would continue to be constrained, and students and staff would face years of phased construction and disruption.

The proposed new school has a total project cost of approximately \$236.6 million. The MSBA would reimburse up to \$113.8 million, or nearly half the project cost, leaving an estimated local district share of \$122.8 million among our 19 member communities. Local taxpayers are not being asked to fund the full \$236.6 million project cost.

One point I believe taxpayers

should keep in mind is this: A “no” vote does not make the cost of our aging building disappear.

According to project estimates, if the new school is not approved, Franklin Tech would lose the opportunity for approximately \$113.8 million in MSBA reimbursement while still facing roughly \$125 million in major repairs and infrastructure work simply to keep the existing building operating.

I understand these are not identical projects, but the comparison still makes one thing clear: doing nothing is not a cost-free option.

We also need to remember what Franklin Tech provides to this region. Local employers need skilled workers. Our communities need electricians, technicians, mechanics, builders, health professionals, and other skilled people who keep our businesses and communities functioning.

Vocational education gives young people an opportunity to build a successful life while also developing the workforce Franklin County needs to remain economically strong.

Our present building has served Franklin County well for 50 years, and we should be proud of everything accomplished inside those walls. But honoring our past also means preparing for the future.

On October 6, voters in Franklin Tech’s 19 member communities will decide whether to move this project forward. I believe this is our opportunity to build on 50 years of success and provide the next generation of students with the facilities they need to learn, work and succeed.

For me, this is not simply a vote for a new school. It is a vote for our students, our workforce, our communities and the future of our region.

To voters in all 19 member communities, please join me on October 6 in voting yes for Franklin Tech and help move us forward for the next 50 years and beyond.

Rich Kuklewicz is a Montague resident and a member of the Franklin County Technical School Committee, the Montague selectboard, and Montague town meeting.

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OP ED

Why Should We Move Forward with the Great River Regional School District?

By ALAN GENOVESE

FRANKLIN COUNTY – Those of us who have lived in this area for 30 or more years have witnessed our school districts change dramatically, including enrollment declines, increased costs, and elimination or reductions in programs and services, while communities in the Pioneer Valley (PVRSD) and Gill-Montague Regional School Districts (GMRSD) continue to face increasing financial pressures.

The question of how to provide our students with the opportunities they seek, while creating a sustainable school district for our communities, became the focus of the Honest Education And Retaining Trust (HEART) committee in Bernardston, Leyden, Northfield, and Warwick, and civic leaders in Gill and Montague.

This led to the creation of a Six Town Regionalization Planning Board (STRPB). Its charge was to explore whether a new regional district could provide stronger educational opportunities for students while creating greater long-term financial sustainability for the six communities.

For seven years, 18 members – three from each town – worked with consultants, educators, students, community members, and the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). We studied the data and considered both the educational and financial implications. Deliberations resulted in the STRPB recommending the creation of the Great River Regional School District (GRRSD).

A stronger future for students: This is key to the proposed GRRSD. Declining enrollment is particularly challenging at the middle and high school levels. Smaller student populations make it increasingly difficult for schools to sustain a broad range of courses, electives, programs, and extracurricular opportunities. Combining students and staff will create more opportunities that individual districts cannot provide on their own.

Students from both districts, including those who attend through tuition agreements, met and worked in small groups to discuss their desires: restoring courses; adding more content courses and electives; and providing more sports.

Watching them identify challenges and offer creative solutions is exactly the kind of rich exchange of ideas regionalization can create. By combining staff and increasing the number of students served at the secondary level, departments with three or four teachers in a particular content area will have greater capacity to share expertise, develop courses, and offer students more choices.

Protecting our elementary schools: The STRPB and DESE worked together to develop a Long-Range Plan that supports students in their transition into GRRSD. The plan focuses on maintaining strong elementary schools as the foundation for our children's education.

With community support and engagement, the present elementary grade configurations can remain in place. Having teachers, staff, and support systems for students to succeed is essential for their growth and development. And a major benefit of increasing enrollment and opportunities at middle and high school levels is that it will reduce some of the pressure that otherwise falls on elementary schools when districts face financial challenges.

All of this is contingent on communities being able to afford, and sustain, a school district. The proposed GRRSD creates economies of scale that the individual districts cannot achieve alone. For example, reducing the functions of three central offices to one.

The Regional Agreement also uses a five-year rolling average of foundation enrollment in determining town assessments. The purpose is to reduce any sharp year-to-year enrollment changes and provide greater predictability in budgeting.

Most importantly, the costs of operating the district will be shared across six communities – or five, if Warwick residents vote “No” – rather than two or three towns.

This does not mean regionalization guarantees lower taxes. It does mean we would have a district designed to mitigate tax increases over time, providing

greater efficiency, stability, and additional opportunities for our students.

School choice is not a long-term solution. It can provide valuable opportunities for students, but it is not reliable revenue, and can change from year to year. It is not a substitute for addressing declining resident enrollment and the underlying costs. A sustainable budget should not depend on uncertain revenue which could result in taxpayers paying the difference between the \$5,000 received from the sending district and the actual per-pupil cost until students graduate.

Transition funding: The Commonwealth has committed \$16.5 million to fund school regionalization efforts and shared-service, with priority given to districts experiencing sustained enrollment decline and seeking greater educational resources through economies of scale. We have the necessary funding to move from planning to implementation.

More students, more opportunities: The goal is not to create a huge school district with enormous classes. The proposed GRRSD would remain a small school district. The term “super-regionalization” simply describes bringing together two or more existing regional districts and a municipal district to form a new regional district. Its purpose is to create greater economies of scale, particularly at the middle and high school levels, where a larger student population will support more educational opportunities.

The Long Range Plan shows many commonalities in the educational visions, and goals, of our existing districts. That provides a strong foundation to build upon. This is an opportunity to take the best of what already exists and create something stronger. The energy and creativity of people who see what is possible can add tremendous value to the GRRSD.

What about transportation? This is a legitimate concern. Bus routes, developed by the bus company and reviewed by the district, are updated each year. The district examines ridership, travel times, and pick-up and drop-off schedules, considers anomalies, and suggests changes. Transportation will need to be carefully managed as part of the transition. The goal should always be minimizing travel times while generating efficient routes.

It is true that change creates questions and uncertainty. The proposed GRRSD is not the result of a quick decision. For seven years, representatives of all six communities have studied the issue deeply. The STRPB has proposed a Regional Agreement and Long Range Plan to guide the transition.

What exactly are we voting on? A “Yes” vote is a vote to create the Great River Regional School District – a district designed to provide greater educational opportunities for students and, in the long term, more sustainability and affordability for our towns.

If it is approved, the PVRSD and GMRSD will transition into the new regional district; Warwick will become a member of the GRRSD as a non-operating district. The existing districts will continue to operate until the GRRSD becomes fully operational on July 1, 2028.

The goal is to create a stronger school district, while giving our communities a more sustainable way to support it.

For over 50 years, our communities have successfully supported our current school districts – one regionalized in grades 7 through 12, and one regionalized pre-K through 12. But circumstances have changed. We now have fewer students, many more residents living on fixed incomes, and rising costs. What worked in the past will not work for the future.

The GRRSD gives our students, and our communities, a more suitable path forward. Every vote matters. Please make yours count.

Alan Genovese is retired from a career as a teacher, principal, business administrator, and regional school superintendent. He is a former member of the Pioneer Valley regional school committee, a former chair and present member of the Warwick municipal school committee, and the current chair of the Warwick selectboard. He served as the chair of the STRPB.

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Big State Grant for Senior Housing

By KEITH WATERS

The Erving selectboard’s meeting on Monday began with the swearing in of two new police officers, Christian Lowell and Pete Krejmas. Police chief Robert Holst was present, and informed the board that there are two new recruits in training and another in the academy now.

Holst also reported that though Erving recently lost an officer to the sheriff’s department, the sheriff has another officer-in-training they would be willing to place in Erving to take his place. Holst said he had worked a few shifts with this new trainee, and was confident that this would work out. If it does, the timing of that addition to the force would be October 1.

The chief also gave the board a general update on his progress staffing the department, and was very optimistic.

Town administrator Bryan Smith shared the big news that Rural Development, Inc. (RDI), the development arm of the Franklin County housing authority, had won a \$14.7 million state grant for its planned Evergreen Circle project, a senior and affordable housing development off Northfield Road with 26 apartments and a total of 36 bedrooms.

Smith said the town had celebrated the occasion with RDI and Juana Matias, secretary of the state Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, as well as state representative Suzanne Whipps, people from the office of state senator Jo Comerford, and many people from Erving.

Smith called the event “a great opportunity to celebrate... two decades of work on this effort.”

Selectboard member Jacquie Boyden and chair Jacob Smith were very excited. Bryan Smith further explained that 2027 should be a busy year of construction, and that tentatively there would be some ribbon cutting in 2028.

The selectboard interviewed Michele Turner, a final candidate for the position of town treasurer. Turner currently serves as treasurer of the town of Northfield, a position she has held since 2021, in addition to being the tax collector in Erving since 2011. The interview was friendly, and the board members generally appeared impressed by her knowledge and practice.

The role is not small. Bryan Smith pointed out that in addition to being a department head, the treasurer “would also be someone that we’d be consulting with in terms of financial forecasting.”

“I am happy to do all those things,” Turner replied. “I enjoy navigating new projects... I don’t like to do things under pressure... last minute. I like to have time to make sure that I can really be thorough.”

The board deliberated in public after Turner left. Boyden said Turner’s customer service skills are great, noting that they have worked closely together for the last 15 years.

Bryan Smith delivered a message from board member Bill Bembury, who was absent, saying he was in full support of appointing Turner to the position. The board voted to offer her the job. They plan to discuss further whether the position will be salaried or contract.

At the end of the meeting the board went into an executive session to discuss strategy in contract negotiations.

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LOW from page A1

Aaron Saunders, whose district includes the Quabbin towns of Petersham, New Salem, Wendell, Shutesbury, Pelham, and Belchertown.

The MWRA was established in 1984 to manage water resources for the Boston metropolitan area. The quasi-public authority now employs about 1,200 people, and its 11-member board oversees the Quabbin, other smaller water sources, treatment plants, and more than 100 miles of aqueducts.

The Quabbin and its connected water systems can maintain a “safe yield” of about 300 million gallons per day, according to the MWRA, and the authority is allowed to withdraw a maximum of 312 million per day. Earlier this year it applied to the state Water Resources Commission (WRC) for permission to withdraw up to 20 million more.

Under the Interbasin Transfer Act (ITA) of 1984, the commission is required to assess the environmental impacts of a proposed withdrawal both on the source and on the receiving communities, as well as their need for the water, before making a decision.

When a new community wants to connect to the system it must also apply to the WRC, as the freshly formed North Sherborn Water and Sewer District did this month. Located about 18 miles southwest of Boston, Sherborn has a population of about 4,500 – and a PFAS contamination problem that has left its groundwater unsafe to drink in the town hall, library, police station and community center.

Sherborn’s town administrator did not respond to a request for comment from the *Reporter*, and the MWRA did not confirm whether any other communities are seeking to connect to the system.

In Saunders’s view, the MWRA’s application is incomplete because it does not explain why the additional water is needed. “We shouldn’t even be at the point of the Water Resources Commission considering the application, because the MWRA has failed to

meet the basic initial threshold,” he told the *Reporter*. “It is an experimental, untested regulatory process for the largest and most consequential water transfer in the history of the ITA.”

According to an MWRA spokesperson, the authority believes that only one environmental study – the impact on its system of withdrawing 20 million gallons more per day – is needed for the WRC’s approval. Though the commission initially required the filing of both a “donor basin” and “receiving basin” study for each new MWRA customer, the process has recently been streamlined.

“Instead of repeating the same donor basin analysis for each new community,” the MWRA wrote on Wednesday, it had “evaluated the cumulative impact of transferring up to an additional 20 MGD.... [T]his level of additional demand would have minimal impacts on reservoir levels and storage, stream-flow and flood flows while maintaining the reliability of the MWRA water system.”

If the WRC approves the withdrawal, the authority stated, it will be

able to “support multiple communities seeking admission,” though they will each still need to review the impact of receiving the water.

The WRC is scheduled to hold a public hearing on the proposed increase at the Belchertown town hall auditorium on Wednesday, September 30.

The commission did not respond to a request for comment as of press time, and it is unclear whether it voted at its September 10 meeting to accept the MWRA’s application as complete.

Grass has begun to grow between the loose rocks and mud on the Quabbin’s exposed banks in Shutesbury and New Salem. The water level was so low on Wednesday that a small island near the shoreline off Gate 16 is no longer an island.

On September 1 water in the reservoir dropped to 79.1% of its total capacity of 412 billion gallons – the lowest level recorded in the last two decades, according to MWRA data, matching the level recorded in January 2017 after a

summer of severe drought.

Below-normal reservoir levels could persist for the next several months and rebound slowly as long as drought conditions continue to improve, Matthew Romero, executive director of the MWRA Advisory Board, told the *Reporter*.

“Quabbin’s vast scale allows it to store several years’ worth of water,” Romero wrote in an email, “so its level does not necessarily respond immediately to a short period of improved rainfall; winter and early spring are ordinarily the principal replenishment period.”

Last week, conditions in the Connecticut River Valley were downgraded from Level 2, “significant drought” to Level 1 “mild drought,” as defined by the Massachusetts Drought Management Plan. For our neighbors in the central and western regions, conditions have returned to Level 0 – “normal.”

The receiving communities used an average of about 250 million gallons per day in June, July and August, and tend to average about 200 million gallons per day throughout the year. The MWRA’s request

would allow it to withdraw 332 million per day from the system.

At least 15 receiving communities have implemented mandatory water use restrictions this year, according to the authority, which does not impose these restrictions itself.

The Quabbin was formed in the 1930s by damming the Swift River, part of the Chicopee River basin. It has fallen below 79% capacity before, according to the MWRA: during droughts in 1989 and 2000, but most notably in 1967, when the reservoir was reduced to 44% capacity. That exceptionally low level raised serious questions about the reservoir’s sustainability, and spurred efforts to find more water.

The legislature authorized a proposal that year to use the Northfield Mountain pumped-storage hydroelectric plant to divert water from the Connecticut River into the Quabbin. Additional capacity was added to the mountaintop reservoir, but a planned aqueduct running from the mountain to the reservoir was never constructed.

Instead, conservation efforts since that time have reduced demand on the system, from about 330 million gallons per day in the 1980s to about 200 million today, according to Romero. The MWRA’s efforts to fix leaking pipes, install more efficient fixtures, improve metering, and educate the public about conservation have contributed to the dramatic decrease.

In the 1990s the authority installed about 1.3 million water-saving fixtures in approximately 350,000 households, according to a 2025 presentation by MWRA planning and sustainability director Stephen Estes-Smargiassi. It also located and repaired leaking pipes, accounting for about 30 million gallons per day of the savings.

“That does not mean water is unlimited, or that today’s conditions should be dismissed,” Romero said. “Conservation is not only a response to drought; it is what created much of the capacity and resilience the system relies on today.”



On Wednesday, this island near Gate 16 in Shutesbury was no longer an island.

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DISTRICTS from page A1
history as they prepare to face similar questions this fall.

From 1931 to 1945, the United States averaged 2.59 million births per year, a slight downtick from the previous decades. Then 1946 saw 3.41 million births, and 1947 it rose to 3.81 million.

A 1953 *Greenfield Recorder-Gazette* editorial described the local impact as the baby boom continued: “The schools of Franklin County are bulging with 400 more kids than they had a year ago. And the foreseeable future will be a year-by-year repeat of this. Even at a rate of 40 youngsters to a room, this means 10 new classes every year.

“Repeated for a half-dozen years or more, it will not take long to fill beyond capacity the schools of the county.”

“Without question,” another editorial added in 1954, “the biggest (in terms of money) single issue ever to face Franklin County citizens is before us now in the form of new school planning.”

Anticipating this crunch, in 1948 local state senator Ralph C. Mahar authored legislation pledging state aid for school construction, including retroactive support for recent projects such as the new Montague Center elementary school. He then championed 1949’s Regional Schools Act, which created a mechanism for towns to build shared facilities.

Valley Pioneers

In 1949, each school district was the size of its town. And even that had not always been the case. Prior to the 1880s most Massachusetts towns contained multiple school districts, with little or no municipal or state oversight. Tiny Warwick alone had 10 districts.

Consolidation began with a stick, and then a carrot, approach. In 1882 the state required that schoolhouses be maintained by towns and administered by town-employed superintendents. It then encouraged towns to form superintendency unions by offering a sweetener in 1888: towns which shared a superintendent would get more money towards school operation.



F. Sumner Turner

This led Northfield, Bernardston, Gill, Leyden, and Warwick to form a union in 1895. After a half century of stability, but seeing the coming demographic upheaval, in 1948 the five towns hired superintendent F. Sumner Turner.

Turner, educated at Dartmouth and Harvard but with decades of small-town teaching experience, expressed keen interest in Mahar’s legislation, and immediately set the gears of regionalization in motion. Two months before the Regional Schools Act became law, he led 31 residents of the five towns on a field trip to Canaan, Connecticut



MAGGIE SADOWAY PHOTO

By the time the Franklin County Tech building opened in 1976, efforts to offer coed vocational schooling to children in the county had been underway for decades — or, by one count, for nearly 70 years.

to tour what was then the only regional high school in New England, Housatonic Valley Regional High School. By the time the bill was signed he had led public meetings in Northfield, Bernardston, and Gill with the aim of winning support for a five-town high school.

Initially, this looked like smooth sailing. A regional planning committee completed a draft agreement in May 1950, and it was approved by state authorities that summer. The agreement was to be voted on at simultaneous special town meetings on November 16.

In October, the *Recorder-Gazette* ran a 10-part series reassuring voters that the towns would retain rights under regionalization, and that the planners were doing the right thing. Their work was so highly regarded that the draft agreement became the blueprint for other planning committees in the state.

Then, suddenly, chaos broke out. With 10 days to go, Northfield’s selectboard refused to call a special town meeting for the vote, citing advice from town counsel that it ought to happen at an annual town meeting — despite a Worcester-area district having been approved by special meetings earlier that month. Bernardston followed Northfield’s lead. Without the larger towns, which were essential to the plan, Gill, Leyden, and Warwick each voted “No” on the 16th.

“Officials were stunned last night when informed of the overwhelming defeat of the proposed million-dollar school building project,” read the news. “Supt. F. Sumner Turner had nothing to say.”

Each town still faced a building crunch on its own, though, as the booming babies were becoming kindergartners. Leyden was already building an elementary school, which would open in 1951.

Gill, where several one-to-three-room schoolhouses were in particularly rough shape, voted in 1951 to construct a six-room, six-grade school, which appeared to meet its needs — for the moment. “No definite action was being recommended concerning the seventh and eighth grades,” the *Recorder-Gazette* foreshadowed. It would open in 1956.

Northfield and Bernardston, meanwhile, formed new regionalization study committees. By the summer of 1953 eight regional schools were in operation in the state, the newest being Hawlemont, proving the concept worked. That fall the two groups asked their towns to create a joint committee.

Explaining that the state offered 65% reimbursement for construction of a regional school but only

50% for town schools, the joint committee recommended building a new 600-pupil junior and senior high school — large enough to entice other towns to join. Warwick signed on that December, and a spring campaign in the three towns culminated in special town meetings on May 25, 1954.

By a landslide in Warwick, a slim majority in Northfield, and a single-vote margin in Bernardston — 103 to 102 — the district was approved, though it still needed a name.

The term “Pioneer Valley” had been coined in 1939 by a real estate association to promote sales and tourism in the region. It was beginning to catch on with the public: by 1954 there was a Pioneer Valley Symphony, Junior League, bowling league, Crafts Club, Dude Ranch, Camera Club, Poodle Club, Motel, and Sheep Breeders’ Association. The name was suggested by multiple entrants in a naming contest for the school district that summer. Its selection would mark its first use by a government agency.

Opponents of the new region forced special town meetings that fall in Bernardston and Northfield in an attempt to block the borrowing, but the voters supported the plan by greater margins than they had six months before. Momentum — and possibly a trendy new name — carried the day.

The Voke Agenda

Montague, which opened a new high school on the Hill in Turners Falls in 1905, closed the one in Montague Center two years later. That building was just 32 years old, and agricultural families of the village realized it could be put to use for their children and others who might want a balance of scholarly and hands-on education. Trustees were named, and the town appropriated funding to open a hybrid academic-agricultural high school starting that fall.

It was the first school of its kind in the state, and it would operate for just four years. Town meeting argued each year over whether it should be funded, and in 1911 a new state regulation required that a high school teach either academic or agricultural subjects, but not both. That July, the trustees voted to close the school.

Montague Agricultural School was ahead of its time. The Smith-Hughes National Vocational Education Act of 1917 established a national plan for vocational education, and Woodlawn High School in Virginia, which opened that year, is widely considered the country’s first vocational-agricultural high school.

school,” though it was “too soon to venture a prognosis” as to where between Greenfield and Leominster one might fit.

Vocational school advocates in Franklin County were advised to ask that their town meetings study the creation of a regional district, “though the idea may appear to them remote at this time.”

By February 1964, Buckland, Colrain, Charlemont, Conway, Leverett, New Salem, Shelburne, Shutesbury, and Sunderland had appointed study committees, and that spring many more towns in Franklin County and the north Quabbin area discussed the matter at their annual town meetings. The outcome was a regional planning board, chaired by Mary Warner of Sunderland, with representatives from 20 Franklin County towns plus Athol, Royalston, and Petersham.

A district agreement was drawn up that summer, and with the state’s approval, special town meetings were scheduled across the region in late October. Montague, Greenfield, and Athol, which had representative town meetings, required special elections. Montague’s was scheduled for October 26.

In the weeks before the vote, the Montague selectboard endorsed the plan, but the town’s school committee offered a “cool reception.” Then, on the morning of the election, a surprise statement by selectman Daniel J. Kelleher ran in the newspaper: “I have changed my mind... and urge Montague voters to vote No on the proposal today.”

Kelleher explained he was concerned by a recent tax abatement granted to the Western Mass. Electric Company, and was wary of pledging money for a new school building while Montague’s own high school was in need of more space.

Montague voted “No” that day, 343 to 568, with only Montague Center voting in favor. Orange and Conway also declined, leaving the potential district with 25% fewer students and awkward geography. Warner put a positive spin on the vote, but an advisor from the state urged the committee not to “oversimplify the results” — a new agreement would be needed.

Tech, Take Two

A second vote was scheduled for the following April in the 20 towns that had voted “Yes.”

Royalston dropped out before the decision date and Gill voted “No,” but the remaining towns all voted in favor. An 18-town district — 16 in Franklin County, plus Athol and Petersham — was signed into law in June 1965 as the Athol-Franklin

see **DISTRICTS** next page



ANNA HENDRICKS PHOTO

The district now known as Pioneer Valley Regional failed as a five-town effort in 1950, but was approved as a three-town region in 1954.

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DISTRICTS from previous pg
County Regional Vocational School District. The committee changed the name later that year to French King Regional Vocational.

In October 1966, however, just a month before a districtwide vote on borrowing \$2.5 million to build the school, Leverett held a special town meeting and voted to withdraw.

This forced a recalculation of every town’s share, opening the door for a lengthy delay. As the recalculation dragged on, Greenfield’s school committee offered a competing plan: a less costly “part-time vocational training center” in Greenfield, which any student could attend.

Any boy, that is.
The regionalization committee ran an all-out campaign for its co-ed vo-ed vision, with the *Recorder-Gazette* as a strong ally. A June 1967 editorial argued that a “comprehensive vocational training secondary school is necessary to Franklin County’s full development as a manufacturing and service region.” Another in September, titled “Give Girls a Break,” directly attacked Greenfield’s superintendent.

In early October, the new votes came in: the borrowing had been rejected by Athol, Ashfield, and Charlemont. The three towns petitioned to withdraw from the district, and in December Warner threw in the sponge. “Franklin County is not really ready for a vocational school,” she lamented, proposing to the committee that it dissolve.

The *Recorder-Gazette* editors, though, argued that there was still a path forward, though it would “require a change of heart in the towns of Orange and Montague.”

In the three years since Montague voters had declined to join the vocational district, after all, the town’s educational situation had changed completely.

The Courtship of Gill

Gill’s lack of “definite action” in 1951 toward providing classroom space for grades 7 and 8 would ultimately affect Montague’s future as much as its own. By the early 1960s the small town was squeezing its junior high students into classrooms at several elementary schools, including at Riverside. The town couldn’t afford a new building project, and needed to find another town that could take them.

Due to a quirk of state law, this was a decision for the town.

In towns with no high school, families could choose where their children attended grades 9 through 12. Most Gill teenagers had attended high school in Montague for years. But in a town unable to offer grades 7 and 8, families had no choice: the school committee would determine where students would attend junior high.

Hearing of Gill’s plight, in 1963 Pioneer Valley offered the town a very low tuition rate. Montague made a counter-offer, allowing Gill to send its junior high students. By that time about 80 Gill youth were already attending the high school, and their tuition amounted to \$30,000 a year in free cash.

“The money is clear,” said Montague school committee chair Robert A. Cade. “If the junior high pupils go to Pioneer Valley, they would continue their high school education there... It is to our advantage financially to keep the

high school students here.”
Coincidentally, Montague sent a proposal for a 15-classroom addition to its high school to the state school building assistance commission in 1964. The commission concluded it would be foolish to fund this project if all of Gill’s students might switch to Pioneer.
“Montague Must Study Gill Regionalization, State Orders” read the top headline of September 28, 1965. State officials informed the town that no proposal would be approved until Montague and Gill voted on regionalization, “one way or the other.” Special town meetings in the two towns had already authorized a committee to study its feasibility, but until that point both towns preferred the simpler tuition arrangement. The state order instilled greater enthusiasm, and the committee crafted an agreement which was submitted for approval in January 1967.

By that spring it was clear that Gill would have to regionalize with somebody, and it was in the catbird seat, approved for a May 23 vote on a regional district with Montague but still receiving overtures from Pioneer.

A week before the election, Gill Elementary School hosted a debate between proponents of the pact with Montague and of a petition to join Pioneer.

On May 22 the Pioneer school committee chair released an emotional plea to Gill voters. “This is no second hand ‘baby of the family’ representation,” he promised: Gill would “become a full partner with the other four towns” if it joined his district.



Nevertheless, Gill residents voted to regionalize with Montague by a healthy 5 – 3 ratio. They never had the chance to vote on regionalization with Pioneer.

There was never any question how Montague would vote, but the election was one of the most lopsided in town history, with a 563-33 result.

And so, with their own school drama concluded in the spring of 1967, Montague residents were watching from the sidelines that October as the French King Vocational effort collapsed.

“The story has not ended,” a December editorial about vocational education read, “and the responsibility for preparing boys and girls for skilled trades has not vanished as some persons would prefer.”

Third Time’s the Charm

The story picked up again in December 1970, when the Millers Falls Company donated its tool plant in Ervingside, closed a year earlier, to Greenfield Community

College hoping it could be used for vocational education. The state Department of Education suggested it would permit this when superintendents from Greenfield, Montague, Orange, and Athol asked about the idea in March 1971.

A month later, when state officials toured the Ervingside site, they immediately cooled on repurposing the derelict factory – but the dream had been reawakened.

The Franklin County commissioners requested that eight key towns – Greenfield, Montague, Northfield, Orange, Athol, Deerfield, Shelburne, and Buckland – form a planning committee to streamline the creation of a vocational district. The smaller towns, they reasoned, could send students on a tuition basis.

The committee was quickly formed, and county commissioner Thomas Merrigan handed it full control in July. The eight-town committee immediately voted to invite every other interested town to appoint members.

By July 1972 the committee, now representing 21 towns, had determined it would cost either \$2.5 million to renovate the Millers Falls plant into a school, or \$5 million to build a brand new facility – and that with 65% state reimbursement and an additional 10% from a federal program, the new school’s cost to the towns would drop to just \$1.25 million. The choice was clear.

The state approved a district agreement, and the date set for most town meetings and elections was November 28, though Athol, Orange, and Wendell were allowed to vote in early December.

The plan was widely endorsed by town bodies, and in early November, 16-page booklets explaining the district agreement were mailed to 25,000 homes in Franklin County and Athol. Platemaking, typesetting, inking, printing, binding, and transportation were provided in kind by Greenfield, Montague, and Bernardston businesses.

Sixteen towns supported the district on November 28, including Montague by a vote of 269 to 43; only Leverett and Shutesbury declined that day. A week later, Wendell approved while Orange and Athol again demurred. With the loss of its only Worcester County participant, the new 17-town entity renamed itself the Franklin County Regional Technical School District. The district legislation was passed on April 26, 1973, and in November voters in every town approved the bond issue for school construction.

A new Turners Falls High School opened that same year, funded by state aid secured through Montague’s regionalization with Gill. The Franklin County Technical School opened in 1976.

Since that time the makeup of the three regional districts has been stable, aside from a few towns joining or leaving the tech school. But the demographics have shifted again, with the school-aged population in the county declining by nearly 50% since a peak in the mid-1990s, and change is in the air.

A new Six Town Regional Planning Board was appointed in 2019, and last year the tech school district unveiled a major proposal for a new building. As voters prepare for both votes on October 6, they may wish to look to the birth of the existing districts for guidance.





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SPORTS from page A1

long instead of into the net. While there were some pretty long volleys in the varsity game, Tech always seemed to hit the sweet spot. I saw the Eagles win the first match 25-13 before heading to the football field.

Autumn Thornton led Turners in aces, Jakhia Williams led in kills, and Abigail Moffatt had the most digs.

On Tuesday the Thunder traveled to Orange, where they lost 3-1 to the Senators. Maddie Haight gave 11 assists, Moffatt made 20 digs, and Thornton, Williams, and Aiyanna Simmons made four kill shots each.

Boys' Soccer

FCTS 2 – Pioneer 1

In Friday's soccer game, Tech nosed out the Black Panthers of Pioneer, 2-1.

The Eagles led early, courtesy of Kaden Price, who scored an unassisted goal in the first half. The Panthers were driving toward Tech's goal at the end of the half, but the whistle blew and the Eagles went into the second leading by a goal.

This game got pretty heated at times, with coaches and fans voicing their displeasure with the calls and non-calls on the field. At 33:07 of the second half, Pioneer tied it up. But at 10:52, Nathan Gheorghita was awarded a penalty kick; the ball sailed past the goalie and Tech took back the single-goal lead.

When five minutes was left, time on the scoreboard froze, and the official time was kept on the field. After another Panther attack deep into Franklin's territory, the ball was kicked down the field. This gave time for Coach Dan Prasol to ask for the official time. "One minute, 20 seconds," the officials responded.

"One hard minute," Prasol called to his players. They played keep-away until the whistle finally blew, giving them the victory.

Field Hockey

FCTS 7 – TFHS 0

The visiting Franklin Tech Sticking Eagles shut out the Turners Falls Thunder last Thursday, 7 to 0.

I came to this game directly from the Franklin County Fair parade. When I arrived, it was already in the third quarter, and Tech was leading by 5. For the rest of the game most of the play was in Turners's end, and Tech was given multiple corner shots.

Tech scored one more goal in the third and another in the fourth. A two-minute power play was called against the Eagles, but Turners couldn't take advantage.

At the end of the game, the Thunder had one final shot to prevent the shutout on a fast break, but the ball was intercepted and the horn sounded.

Cross-Country

Turners and Tech participated in the opening cross-country meet last Wednesday, September 9, at the Bob Avery Memorial Course.

In the boys' varsity race, Leo McDonald of Franklin Tech finished third, while Lucian Carlo of Turners finished tenth. Three other Tech players – Wyatt Dejnak (12), James Edson (17), and Maxwell Kenfield (18) – finished the course. Two Turners runners finished the JV course, Lucas Edson (7) and Gus Marstall (10).

Olivia Wolbach of Turners placed sixth in the girls' varsity division, while teammate Eleanor McAndrews won the JV race.

On Tuesday Turners hosted their last home meet of the season against Veritas, but they didn't have enough runners to score points. Carlo finished second for the varsity boys, and McAndrews first again for the JV girls.

For the rest of the season, the Turners teams will be running on the road.

Golf

FCTS 156 – Frontier 185

TFHS 162 – Athol 192

FCTS 148 – Pioneer 194

The Franklin Tech golfers defeated the Frontier Red Hawks last Friday at Thomas Memorial. As they were warming up, I met with Jack Day. A few days earlier, Day had done something no other golfer had done: he shot a hole-in-one on the third hole.

Because the course has been renovated, he was the very first golfer to hit that mark on the updated hole, which means a plaque with his name will be displayed at Thomas's.

Tech took all four top spots in the Frontier battle: Day with 36, Grady Deery 38, Wayne Bardwell 40, and Braeden Talbot 42.

The Turners vs. Athol match was pushed back to 3:20 p.m. to allow the Tech/Frontier game to finish. Cam Cogswell (37) and Jameson Betters (40) finished first and second, and Liam Kerivan (42) and William Tyler (43) fourth and fifth.

Tech continued their unbeaten streak on Monday, breaking a record in the process. They beat Pioneer up at Northfield Country Club, finishing with the lowest stroke count in school history. Talbot (34), Deery (35), Brady Wood (39), and Day (40) swept the top four.

Football

FCTS 38 – McCann 0

The last event on 9/11 was the Franklin Tech vs. McCann football game. There were a few new faces in the crowd, and a couple new dogs on the sidelines. Three girls were draped in the American flag, and the cheer team kept the crowd roaring.

The game was a complete blowout. Tech scored their first touchdown just 29 seconds



DAVID HOITT PHOTO

Turners Falls libero Abby Moffatt sends the ball to a setter as the visiting Thunder played their season opener against Franklin County Tech last Friday. Turners will have home court advantage on October 5, when the two schools meet next.

in, and then continued to score and to dominate on both sides of the ball.

With the score 32-0 at halftime, I asked the referees about the mercy rule. "If the point spread is 42 in the third or 30 in the fourth, the clock runs continuously," one told me.

Tech scored their 38th point in the third period, and mercy kicked in in the fourth, the rule limiting the damage and preserving the health of the players.

Mason Bassett completed five passes for 95 yards and a touchdown, Brady Gancarz had 72 rushing yards and two touchdowns, and Hunter Donahue caught three passes for 52 yards and a touchdown.

Franklin Tech will host Frontier this Saturday September 19, along with their field hockey, volleyball, and boys' and girls' soccer teams, in celebration of the tech school's Golden Jubilee.

Old Teammates

A celebration of Jenna Putala's life was held at Schuetzen Verein on Saturday afternoon.

The event began on a comical note as it took 10 of us to unfold a wheelchair. Throughout the afternoon, hundreds of Jenna's friends, family members, classmates, and former teachers conversed while viewing pictures, displays

and a slide show. But the conversations were not entirely about Jenna – she wouldn't have wanted that. Folks who hadn't seen each other for years caught up, exchanged emails, and shared memories. There were so many people that many had to stand outside the pavilion.

I had the privilege of meeting Dave Canan, the winningest softball coach in Babson College history. He said Jenna was his assistant coach, then corrected himself: "I was Jenna's assistant."

Canan asked to meet Gary Mullins, and I had the honor of introducing them. Then he called over several Babson softball players.

The heaviest part of the afternoon came when Jenna's brother Jack, her fiancé Brendan Lortie, and her grandmother spoke to the crowd. But then Jack lightened it up when he called "Let's eat."

I ate with three of Jenna's Turners Falls softball teammates, Payton Emery, Eliza Johnson and Cassidhe Wozniak. I must admit, I didn't recognize them. Those high school kids I knew a decade ago are all young ladies now. They updated me on what they've done since graduating and relived war stories, reminiscing about the time they and Jenna were just teenagers, trying to succeed on the field and in life.



IGNITES from page A1

street," said Bob. "She said, 'I need your help! I think a battery blew up downstairs.' I ran over there, and sure enough, I ran down the cellar stairs and I turned around because

I couldn't see anything – it was so smoky. So I went around outside and I smashed the basement window out."

Lisa Beck, Bob's wife, added: "He smashed his hand through the

window."

Bob sprayed a home fire extinguisher through the broken window, and when it was exhausted his neighbor Matt Atwood supplied two more from his nearby home.



DEBORAH FRENKEL PHOTO

Apparatus from the Wendell and Sunderland fire departments lined up along Montague Avenue in front of Rutter Park.

"That just about put everything out," said Bob. "But there was so much smoke!"

"How's your breathing?" Jody asked Bob. "I'd give you my inhaler, but it's probably melted."

"Oh, I'm fine," Bob replied. "I only got a couple breathfuls of smoke, and I got the hell out of there."

The Lake Pleasant volunteers acted before the apparatus of a half dozen local fire departments entered the village to finish the job. By 12:45 p.m. a parade of fire engines, bearing the names of Montague Center, Greenfield, Erving, Wendell, and Sunderland, lined Montague Avenue. The Montague police department and Eversource were also at the scene.

The Turners Falls Ladder 1 truck was planted between Scott Beck's house and the neighboring house, barely 20 feet away.

"They thought the whole town was gonna go up," said one neighbor, appreciating the hefty response.

"Well, you know, it could have happened!" another replied. In 1907 one of Montague's worst-ever fires razed 112 buildings in that very neighborhood. The fire led to the creation of a water supply district and a volunteer hose company in the village the next year.

With the scene fully secured by town and district firefighters, tragedy was averted on Monday: this time villagers may only have to deal with destroyed or smoke-damaged possessions. "I think most of his cars are gone," Bob Beck said of his brother's collection.

Then, his thoughts turning to the radio-controlled cars in his own basement, he sighed and added: "I think I'll be getting rid of most of those batteries..."

Perhaps it was time for a new hobby, like model trains, this reporter suggested.

"I've got model trains already!" Bob Beck said. "They're sitting down there with the cars."



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MONTAGUE from page A1

been informed of the presence of the two large recreational vehicles, Ramsey said, and has met with their occupants, but can only cite them for health code violations. If the lots were posted as areas where parking was prohibited entirely, he said, the police could enforce the ban.

Selectboard member Marina Goldman asked whether people were actually living in the vehicles in question. When Ramsey hesitated to respond, saying the town would deal with it “appropriately,” board member Nate Card asked if that meant sending the occupants “somewhere else.”

Ramsey told Card that the health department would alert a social service agency to “line them up with options for services – that is always the first step.”

Montague Center resident Ariel Elan suggested that there should be some way of connecting residents living in campers with “a private property owner who might be willing to welcome them.” She also asked if there was a public bus stop in the lot across from the former Farren property. Ramsey responded that there was.

In the end the board voted, in two separate motions, to prohibit all parking in both lots, with Card voting against the restriction on Montague City Road but in favor of the restriction at First Street. Both bans may be temporary, as the Montague City lot could be part of a redevelopment project in a few years and the First Street lot is expected to be torn up this winter.

Later in the meeting the board approved an agreement with the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority to allow residents of Second Street who have historically parked in the First Street alley to use a small lot the housing authority owns next to the Shady Glen during the construction of the Habitat for Humanity homes.

Getting Involved

Card was also the odd member out as he voted against a request by police chief Jason Haskins to allocate \$5,000 for a “community policing pilot program.” Haskins argued that it is “super important, in policing today, that we’re involved in our community,” and noted that his department does not have “any funds earmarked that allow us to attend events, do recruitment, [or] any sort of community policing initiatives whatsoever.”

He said the pilot would help “track... what these types of initiatives would cost,” and told the

board that currently the department does not have a “tent or a table or a tablecloth” to set up for events.

Card said he supported efforts by the department to increase engagement with residents, but wanted to see “more detail” about what the money, which would come from a pot called the “community development unallocated account,” would be funding. He also asked “how exactly would success be measured” in order for community policing to be added as a regular part of the department’s budget.

Goldman said she thought Haskins had provided a “good explanation – it’s only a pilot program.”

Selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz said he thought the proposal was a “good start,” but said community policing could encompass a “broad range” of activities, ranging from attending events to hiring a full-time officer. The board voted, 2 to 1, to fund the pilot.

In other policing news the board appointed Jacob Dlugosz, who currently serves in the Montague department but is moving on to serve as a sergeant in Bernardston, to remain on the force as a reserve officer, and Ludmila Sherstyukova, who currently works in the Greenfield dispatch department but wants more hours, as a *per diem* dispatcher in Montague.

Town Employees

Other personnel changes approved by the board included a change in the job description for the administrative assistant at the Gill-Montague senior center to include cleaning responsibilities, as well as an increase in hours and pay; the appointment of Kathleen Lacey as a substitute librarian; and the appointments of Sage Winter and Kristi Bodin to the planning board.

After a very brief discussion the selectboard approved a major revision of town policy under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act which it had reviewed at an earlier meeting.

“I reached out to you guys and didn’t receive any feedback, so my assumption is it looks good to you all,” said administrative assistant Fern Smith, who had developed the document. Kuklewicz said he had read through it, but “didn’t make it quite to the end.”

Toxic Runoff

The long story of the town’s efforts to stabilize the former burn dump at the end of Sandy Lane, behind Judd Wire, the regional dog shelter, and the town transfer station, continues. The dump was

capped in 2019 as part of a project to install a large solar array, but the state Department of Environmental Protection has modified its initial permit a number of times to address toxic runoff into local streams.

“After many years of construction on the burn dump,” Ramsey told the board, “we are finally at the point where we’re getting final closure certification from the state DEP, which is great.” But, he noted, there were “a lot of conditions attached.” These include monitoring the groundwater, including for PFAS; constructing a new well near the “southernmost outlet” by December 31; and developing a long-term plan to monitor a pipe “that we were hoping to be able to discontinue.”

“I’m still in the phase where I’m trying to figure out what these things will cost us,” Ramsey said. In response to a question from Kuklewicz, he said the town’s revenue from leasing the land for the solar array is “set – we can’t use that.”

The board did not take any votes on the matter.

Other Business

RiverCulture director Suzanne LoManto requested permission to use Peskeompskut Park for a “small, independent music festival” from noon until 8 p.m. on Sunday, October 4. The event is being organized by LoManto and local musician Brian Dickens.

“This area is a real good space for singer-songwriters,” Dickens told the selectboard, which approved the request.

The board also approved the use of public property and an entertainment license for a “First Friday Market” on the lot at the south end of Second Street owned by Nova Motorcycles. The event will take place from 3 to 9:30 p.m. on Friday, October 2.

After a required public hearing, the board approved a change in officers named on the liquor license held by the North Village Smokehouse in Millers Falls.

The board renewed an agreement with the state to serve as the town’s “sealer of weights and measures,” which tests the readings on everything from gas pumps to cash registers. Once a town department, the function has been handled by the state in the modern era.

At the end of the meeting the board retired into an executive session to discuss litigation and collective bargaining strategy. Its next scheduled meeting will be held Monday, September 21.



LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here’s the way it was on September 15, 2016: News from the Montague Reporter archive.

Into the Fray

The Gill-Montague Regional School Committee’s first meeting of the new school year, Tuesday night, was a busy one.

The board endorsed a statement opposing a November ballot question that would add more charter schools, noting that 78 district students are enrolled in charter schools, a loss to the district of over \$800,000, “with no discernible benefit from the improved educational practice that charter schools were expected to provide to the community,” according to chair Michael Langknecht.

After more than two hours, the board turned to discussing a plan to lead the community through a reconsider of the high school’s “Indian” mascot. In May, citizens asked the committee to consider a new mascot, a recurring controversy in the district.

Superintendent Michael Sullivan presented a proposal seeking to “lead to the selection of a high school mascot that best suits the aspirations and values of our school community today.”

Part of an email from Gill-Montague Community School Partnership coordinator Jen Audley was read into the minutes in which she wrote, “A community conversation that results in people feeling like winners and losers will likely do more harm than good.”

20 YEARS AGO

Here’s the way it was on September 14, 2006: News from the Montague Reporter archive.

Preserving Poplar Mountain

A regional conservation collaborative awarded \$4,000 to the Town of Erving on September 12 to support the permanent protection of the 167-acre property on Old State Road formerly owned by the Giniusz family. The land is the town’s first purchase of conservation land.

“We’re excited,” said town administrator Tom Sharp, “that Poplar Mountain and the surrounding

landscape will remain undeveloped and open to residents for recreation now and in the future.”

Retiring at 58 Years Old

Ludlow Construction began their \$1.2 million combined sewer overflow abatement project on September 11, at Seventh Street and Avenue A.

The job is to install 700 feet of 21-inch PVC pipe up Seventh Street to L Street, replacing a concrete 15-inch line laid by Mackin Construction in 1948. The purpose is to prevent sewer overflow into the Connecticut River.

140 YEARS AGO

Here’s the way it was on September 15, 1886: News from the Turners Falls Reporter archive.

Turners Falls and Vicinity

Yesterday the water was the lowest in the river ever known, and several of the manufacturers suffered for the want of power. The village pump could not be run for two days.

The work of erecting the poles for electric lights is progressing rapidly, and the wires and lamps will soon be in readiness for service.

Five per cent. discount will be allowed on all taxes paid at once. Call on Treasurer Collins at any time but Saturday afternoons.

Wm. E. Merriam has two acres of cucumbers. A good crop.

Miss Carrie Koonz has closed her millinery rooms and gone back to her home in Shelburne Falls.

Amory Davidson, who buys stock in Vermont annually and takes it South, stopped in Montague on Thursday night with 280 head, and passed on Friday morning. The

herd damaged considerable corn on Millers plain on their way here.

The Keith Mill base ball nine have left a purse of \$25 at this office to be covered by an equal sum from the Montague Mill team, and challenge the latter to play for the purse of \$50 on Saturday next on Goddard’s grounds. The Keith nine expect their opponents to “put up or shut up” at once.

The Unitarian Social union will meet with Mr. and Mrs. Henry Barton, at Riverside, this evening. Teams will be provided to take the people home, through the kindness of Mr. Barton.

A Fitchburg railroad engineer says, All engineers dread moonlight nights. They try the nerves to their utmost. On a moonlight night, an engineer, looking out from his engine sees all manner of shadows. He is sure that the dark shadow across the track is a man or a rock. He doesn’t know, and he is kept in a state of nervous excitement all the time.

Mrs. Wm. O. Crocker died on Friday last, after a brief illness of consumption.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Board’s Full Power Restored

By JOSH HEINEMANN

At its September 9 meeting the Wendell selectboard met with a full complement of members for the first time this summer. The agenda was short. The board ended its meeting in record time, at 7:32 p.m.

Chair Laurie DiDonato welcomed newly-elected member Marina Apostol to the board, but cautioned her that meetings were seldom this short.

The board postponed discussion of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with New Salem con-

cerning the shared fire chief. The New Salem selectboard had not yet considered the MOU. Wendell board members went to the New Salem selectboard meeting on Monday, September 14. DiDonato scheduled an off-week Wendell selectboard meeting for September 16, assuming the two boards agree on details of the MOU.

National Grid representative Steve Soucie, along with a project engineer, came for a pole hearing. The project in question is an upgrade to electric transmission from the Wendell Depot substation in-

volving poles and underground conduits extending north and east from the substation, and along West Orange Road.

Abutters were notified, but none came. Board members approved the pole and conduit work.

With its full membership the board was able to appoint Ray DiDonato to the planning board, Phyllis Lawrence to the cultural council, and Phil Delorey to the zoning board of appeals. Anticipating volunteer painters for the town hall interior, they approved a “volunteer waiver of liability” form.

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GMRSD from page A1

“Where are we getting the extra money?” Montague member Wendy Thompson asked. “I thought we were kind of strapped for cash.... Every time we go through this process, we’re upping it and upping it, and we’ve got less than 800 kids in the district – I’m concerned that we’re going to hit a wall pretty soon.”

The line item for the superintendent’s salary in the approved budget stood at \$130,560 in FY’24, \$138,000 in FY’25, and \$161,000 in FY’26, and is \$180,000 in the current year.

“We might have to be in a position where we hire a crackerjack person who’s been an assistant superintendent,” said Montague member Carol Jacobs, herself a former regional school superintendent. “That range is not a bad starting salary for somebody who has no superintendent experience.”

“In the past, has money been the main talking point with candidates, or are there other issues?” the committee’s newest member, Sue Richardson of Montague, asked.

Oakes said that MASC field director Tracy Novick “and other sources” have consistently advised

the district that “to be competitive, we need to keep increasing it.”

Blier offered local comparisons: \$178,000 at Mohawk Regional; \$179,000 at Pioneer Valley Regional; \$185,000 in Greenfield, and \$201,000 at the Franklin County Regional Technical school.

Jacobs said she would “hate” to pay a candidate with no prior experience as a superintendent \$200,000.

Thompson said she didn’t want to have to cut teaching positions in order to negotiate a superintendent’s contract.

The range was left at \$170,000 to \$190,000. Applications will be due October 23.

To winnow them down, the school committee plans to appoint a screening committee with the same composition as last winter’s – two students, three parents or guardians of district students, three community members at large, three teachers, a principal, and three other staff members. Interested volunteers should contact Novick, who is again overseeing the search on behalf of the district.

The school committee’s next regularly scheduled meeting is on Tuesday, October 13.



Planning Board Vents Over Pioneer Opposition To Six-Town District

By **MIKE JACKSON**

FRANKLIN COUNTY – The Six-Town Regionalization Planning Board (STRPB) met Wednesday with near-perfect attendance – 11 of the 12 members logged on to the Zoom – though Cliff Spatcher of Montague and Bill Tomb of Gill both came and went, explaining that their presence was needed at a Gill-Montague school committee meeting (see article, Page A1).

The focus, the culmination of years of effort by the board, was the October 6 special election on a regional agreement to form a new school district. The board plans to meet once more before that election, on September 30, and the main topic of discussion was the campaign for a “Yes” vote.

Five public information sessions are scheduled over the next week, all at 6 p.m.: this Thursday at the Leyden town offices; next Monday at the Dickinson Library in Northfield; Tuesday at Turners Falls High School, Wednesday at the Bernardston Senior Center, and next Thursday, September 24 at the Warwick town hall.

In the meantime, debate over the proposal is spreading on social media platforms, in traditional news outlets – and, in the towns of the Pioneer Valley regional district, in the form of lawn signs that command

the reader to keep their “Hands Off” the existing school setup.

“I am outraged by those signs when I see them,” said Northfield member Deb Potee. “They’re so off-putting.... People need to recognize that they need to be informed about the facts, and not just rely on the school committee – because not everything the school committee is presenting in Pioneer has all the actual facts, or the nuances, that someone else might have.”

Unlike the Gill-Montague school committee, which has maintained a neutral stance, the Pioneer Valley committee has voted to oppose forming the new region.

“They’re not looking out for their schools,” said Gill member Deb Loomer. “They’re looking out for themselves.”

“I think they are looking out after their schools,” replied STRPB chair Alan Genovese, “more than they’re looking out after their students.”

The meeting agenda focused on the board’s outreach plan, and members screened a newly produced nine-minute video making the case for the new district, but talk repeatedly turned back to what members called “misinformation” circulating in the public.

Genovese said he had watched a video of a recent Pioneer school committee meeting and was “disappointed” to hear what he said were

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Montague Community TV News

TV Station’s Quest for Directors Rages On

By **HANNAH BROOKMAN**

TURNERS FALLS – Montague Community Television is a non-profit organization that relies on a volunteer board of community members. The board of a non-profit guides the way the organization runs, how it spend its money, and what sorts of projects it can do.

There are so many exciting opportunities for MCTV board members to get creative in our community, while providing support to the important tasks of keeping a public access station running. MCTV is looking for one person to fill an empty seat on our board, and if you are reading this, we hope that you will consider it! 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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Above: The night scene on the midway of this year's Franklin County Fair.

SCENE REPORT:
What We Saw At the Fair

By MATT ROBINSON

GREENFIELD – The 177th Franklin County Fair ran from Thursday, September 10 to Sunday the 13th. I had the privilege of going four times in the first three days.

While there, I ran into several students, teachers, parents, grandparents, old friends, and even a bus driver. It was a little melancholy, because all four or five 9th graders who fist-bumped me are now going to schools outside the Gill-Montague district.

I arrived on Thursday just as they were opening the gates. The first thing I noticed was the aroma of delicious fair food, but nothing was ready yet, so I walked around,

taking in the sights before filling up. On that first day, it was so windy that everything was toppling. Even displays that were anchored had to be held in place. I stayed for the parade before heading to the Turners/Tech field hockey game.

On Friday, the Franklin County Agricultural Society dedicated the new pavilion, which was the first structure built from the ground up in 41 years. Inside the pavilion was a stagecoach from the 1800s.

Agricultural Society president Mike Nelson introduced speakers who gave a comprehensive history of the stagecoach and of the fairgrounds itself. The stagecoach had been stored at the trolley depot, where it was damaged by ice floes in the storm of 1936. The Society



Pirate Man Dan (right), a roving entertainer, wandered the fairgrounds.

plans to renovate it completely, and will home it under the new pavilion. The history of the fairgrounds was also interesting. Originally a Native American hunting ground, it was converted to a Civil War fort, and after that war, the fair was relocated from the center of Greenfield to its current spot. Before the ribbon-cutting, Nelson spoke about the future: “Planning for the upcoming decades, and generations.”

see AT THE FAIR page B2



The Franklin County Agricultural Society dedicated a new pavilion on Friday.

RECIPES
THE VEGETABLE PIES:
CIVILIZATION’S OTHER PIES

By CLAIRE HOPLEY

LEVERETT – The Oxford dictionary defines *pie* as “a dish composed of meat, fowl, fish, fruit or vegetables etc. enclosed in or covered with a layer of



This “lattice-top” pie bearing leeks, and bacon if you want, is capped with an easy-to-make short-crust pastry. Recipes within!

paste.” This distinguishes a two-crust pie from a one-crust *tart*, without a lid.

But we don’t speak like the dictionary. As pumpkin pie shows, some tarts go by the name of “pie.” Despite this example, the common element of anything called a “pie” is a lid of *some* kind. Lemon meringue pie has meringue on top. A crumbly streusel is another sweet topping for fruit pies. And shepherd’s pie has nothing on the bottom, but mashed potatoes on top.

These alternate toppings are lightweights compared to a pastry lid. Pies were originally conceived – in the centuries before restaurants made eating on the road easy – as a handy way for travelers away from home for many days to take food on trips.

The earliest American cookbook, Amelia Simmons’s *American Cookery* (1796), has a recipe for this sort of pie. Called Sea Pie, it was meant for ocean voyages.

The recipe makes clear what a giant thing it was. A pot was lined with pastry made from four pounds of flour and a half pound of butter. Next the cook was directed to add “split pigeons, turkey pies,” – yes! – “veal, mutton or birds with slices of pork, salt, pepper, and dust on flour, doing thus till the pot is full or your ingredients expended, add three pints of water, cover tight with [pastry] and stew moderately two and a half hours.”

see RECIPES page B8



By DAVID BRULE

Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever... it requires a strong moral principle to prevent me from deliberately stepping into the street, and methodically knocking people’s hats off — then, I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can.

– Ishmael, from *Moby-Dick*, by Herman Melville

THE FLAT, ERVINGSIDE – Well, I don’t quite reach the point of knocking people’s hats off, but it did come to me the other day that it was high time for me to head down to the North Shore, to the sea.

It’s all been fine of course for me to sit under the old apple tree all summer, surrounded by the green growth of high summer in this Valley.

But it can be repetitious. I’ve written time and again about the cherry tree crop, picked and ready for vodka-drenched Christmas season desserts. I’ve written about the catbirds flouncing from birdbath to ripening choke cherries and back again.

Not to forget the lazy dog lounging all summer long in the cool, dew-drenched morning grass.

Oftentimes have I evoked the peace of mind brought by the quiet garden beings, by the scarlet raindrops on the summer red, red roses, by the nighthawks knifing through the evening air as late summer dusk deepens.

All that is fine and good, but there’s a time when the urge for going to the coast takes over, and you have no choice but to get up and go there.

So off we headed one fine morning, with little planning, off on our annual pilgrimage to Plum Island.

Within two hours, you can already smell the salt sea air, the ripening salt marsh hay, the high tide

WEST ALONG THE RIVER
SUMMER AT
HIGH TIDE

even as you glide along the roadway to the Parker River Refuge.

I first discovered Plum Island when out on a birding trek with legendary birders Al Richards and Mark Fairbrother in a long-ago February, before the turn of the last century.

And ever since, our little family has been back, often in all kinds of seasons.

This day we find ourselves on the short trek along a lilting and meandering boardwalk through the sand dunes, past the reddening leaves of the poison ivy, fall beach plum, and bayberry, reaching their own high-tide mark of summer growth.

Tree swallows ride the waves of warming air over the undulating dunes. They’ll soon be off to southern climes, but not just yet.

When you reach the end of the boardwalk, suddenly there it is – the ocean.

From the near shore to the horizon, where the sea drops off the edge of the world, there are rolling waves, fishing boats, occasional white sails in the distance.

We set up camp at the high-tide mark. Beach chairs, cooler, binoculars and telescope, towels, sunscreen. A far cry from my Adirondack chair office under the apple tree!

Within a short time, I retreat further from the encroaching high tide and the strong onshore breeze. I move up to the sloping, rising foot of the nearest dune. There I settle in, comfortable among the waving leaves of sharp beachgrass, the sea wrack of stranded seaweed, driftwood, and two dozen sandpipers and plovers dozing in the warming sun.

The birds don’t mind me, a fairly quiet human clearly posing no danger.

Sure of their plumage that blends in with the high-tide debris, they don’t move when I weave

see WEST ALONG page B4



Semipalmated plovers (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) on Plum Island.

Pet of the Week



CARMODY COLLAGE

‘GOOSE’

Say hello to Goose, a young male silver tabby cuddlebug, known to be confident and athletic. Goose is neutered and litter-box-trained. His favorite spot is on his owner’s shoulders, or the highest point of a cat tower. He loves chasing the laser pointer and rolling around in catnip. Goose’s family is moving, and they feel he would do better in a house with no other animals – he

has been fighting with his brother and competes for the attention of humans, and his behavior changed for the worse in February when his owners got a service dog. To begin the adoption process, visit the Dakin Humane Society website, www.dakinhumane.org, and find the “Available Community Animals” link. (Dakin offers these listings as a courtesy.) There is no adoption fee.

Senior Center Activities SEPTEMBER 21 THROUGH 25

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

Monday 9/21
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise

Tuesday 9/22
9 a.m. Chair Yoga
10:15 a.m. Therapy Balls
12:30 p.m. Tech Tuesday
3 p.m. Tai Chi

Wednesday 9/23
10 a.m. Outdoor Yoga at the Discovery Center
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
12 p.m. Bring Your Lunch Bingo
4 p.m. Mat Yoga
5:30 p.m. Quilling Workshop

Thursday 9/24
1 p.m. Pitch
6 p.m. Tech Talk: Internet Safety

Friday 9/25
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
12 p.m. Pizza Party
2 p.m. Chair Dance

WENDELL
Foot care clinic is the first Wednesday of each month. The next clinic is October 7. Call Katie Nolan at (978) 544-2306 for information or appointments. For Senior Health Rides, contact Nancy Spittle at (978) 544-6760.

ERVING
Open Mondays through Fridays from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 1 Care Drive. Daily snacks and coffee. Fitness room and pool table open. *The senior center is closed this week for new floor installation.*

LEVERETT
Chair Yoga classes are held Wednesdays at 10 a.m., hybrid, at the town hall and on Zoom. Foot care clinics are the third Tuesday of each month. The next clinic is October 20. Luncheons are held on the fourth Friday of each month at town hall. For more information, contact (413) 548-1022 or coa@leverett.ma.us, or check the town newsletter or the LeverettConnects listserv.

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The Montague Reporter Podcast

AT THE FAIR from page B1

By then the fair was rocking as the shuttle buses brought in more and more folks. I left shortly after the ceremony to catch volleyball and football games. On Saturday morning I went to the 4-H Dairy Cow and Sheep competitions before heading to Schuetzen Verein for a celebration of life. Returning at 4:30 p.m., I found myself stuck in a long line of cars heading to the fairgrounds. I spent the evening greeting people, and viewed several shows. The shows were staggered so people could watch an entire performance before heading to the next one. And everyone seemed to be eating fried dough while enjoying the shows. Roaming the grounds were the Dinosaur Experience, Pirate Man Dan, the Moving Mermaid, and the Xpogo Stunt Team. When wrist bands were accepted, the midway was so swarmed with kids and adults that



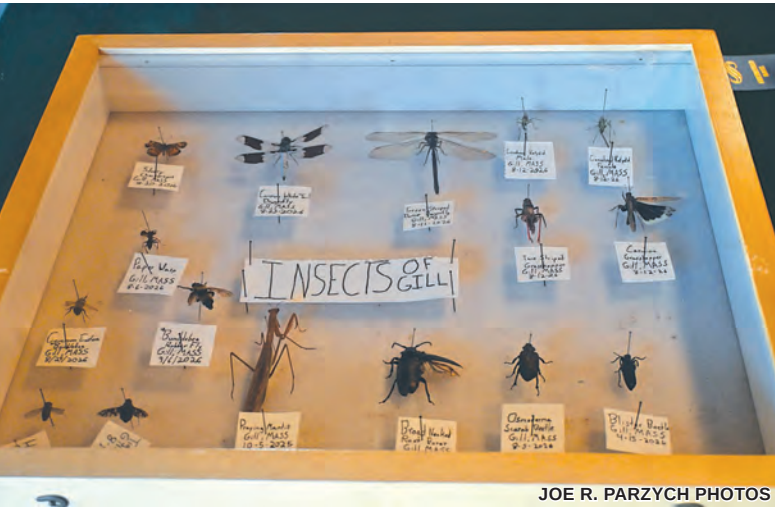
The Moving Mermaid zoomed around the grounds on a scalloped-seashell electric vehicle of some sort.

you had to walk sideways just to pass. It poured on Sunday, so I decided to stay in and watch some football.



PHOTO BEAT: Sunday at the Fair

GREENFIELD – Photo beat guy Joe R. Parzych reported on the scene of the Franklin County Fair on Sunday. Joe writes: “I got to meet Amy Lavallee out of Whately, a town clerk who is running for state representative of the 1st Franklin District. She set up a table at the fair. She was responsible for advocating, along with law enforcement and other officials, the United Arc, etc., for the Blue Envelope Program getting started. It was passed by the Massachusetts legislature on June 15, 2026, and signed by the governor into law. “She is an awesome advocate for individuals in our community with intellectual and developmental disabilities. She also has a son with a form of autism... It’s awesome to know that I am not the only one who is out there in the community who has a form of autism. Amy is a jack of all trades, and has many jobs in her background.... “After that I was at the Roundhouse, where I got a picture of this display of apples from Clarkdale Fruit Farms out of Deerfield. They have awesome fruit, and are one of my many favorite places. “I checked in on Pirate Man Dan while he was walking around the fairgrounds on stilts, and I got to eat some food. I had favorite food trucks I checked out again. Everyone had a good time, and there was lots of music and other things to do.”



JOE R. PARZYCH PHOTOS

Top: State representative candidate Amy Lavallee.

Middle: Clarkdale’s prize-winning apple display in the Roundhouse.

Bottom: An entry in the “Insects – mounted and named” category at the Youth Hall.

MORE SIGHTS: The ‘Thrill Extravaganza’

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – The Franklin County Fair always has such interesting acts to see. What drew my attention this year was something called the Thrill Extravaganza. I interviewed one of three stuntmen who are part of this. Saturn Garcia said he has been doing this work for 25 years. He called the act a live stunt show. “We perform in a motorcycle cage,” he explained. “It was our first time at the fair.” His brothers Jonathan and Medina are in the show too. They named the show that “because it’s thrilling and extravagant.” Garcia described the show as traveling “all over the United States. We toured all 50 states. We’ve been overseas.” They have performed at Six Flags in Texas, King Island in Cincinnati, and Wonderland in Canada. The three stuntmen are seventh-generation performers. “We learned at a very early age,” he said. It was not the first stunt show I saw at the fair this

year. Another show had involved a couple of people doing stunts with a trampoline. But a huge crowd gathered to see this motorcycle stunt show. Someone in the crowd told me people really like the show. One of the stuntmen introduced the show. One of the stunts was called the High Dive. One of the stuntmen jumped onto an airbag from a very high vantage point. Another involved something called the Space Wheel. It involved one stuntman walking around in it as it moved while another also balanced on it. That was more of a sight than the High Dive one, because he walked all over the wheel. Then the motorcycle riding came, with two of the Garcia brothers riding in a rounded steel cage. They rode really fast in that cage. The two of them did that at the same time. They did it on the sides of the ball-shaped cage. It was an insanely cool sight. After seeing the show myself, I could see why someone told me people really liked the show.

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Left to right: Orangutan, chimpanzee, gorilla, and human skeletons, from Thomas Huxley's 1863 book Evidence as to Man's Place in Nature.



By JAMIE SIMPSON

TURNERS FALLS – When was the last time you thought about your feet?

Although numerous animal species, including some birds, primates, and others, can walk around on two legs, most prefer to ambulate on all fours. Humans are one of the few mammals that stand, walk, run, and jump exclusively upright by design.

The above image shows how and why: we evolved to have a lordotic lumbar curve, a fancy way of saying an “inward” curve in the low back, which pulls the upper body backward, changing our center of gravity so that walking upright is the natural result. Unless, that is, we continue to spend hours hunched in front of our many screens. This will actually re-form our skeleton and soft tissue to look more and more like our primate ancestors.

As the Wikipedia entry on bipedalism points out, moving about on two limbs allows us to see further to spot both dangers and resources. It also leaves our “upper limbs” – our arms – free to do other stuff, since we only need the lower limbs to walk.

However, there are downsides, notably lower back pain. And... foot pain.

Most of us stuff our feet into socks and shoes, and expect them to carry us – our entire body weight, minus the feet themselves – around all day, day after day, without complaining. We usually only pay attention to them when they hurt: aches, plantar fasciitis, bunions, bone spurs, ingrown toenails, etc.

We can do better. Let's start by appreciating the engineering marvel that is the human foot (*below*). Each foot contains 26 bones, 14 of which form the toes, with five metatarsals connecting the toes with the arch and heel. This gives us an astonishing array of movement possibilities, rivaling that of our

hands: running, skipping, standing, jumping, playing hacky-sack and soccer, standing on tiptoe on one leg like a prima ballerina, shifting side to side like a boxer, playing tennis....

Our feet are magic. How can we show them the love they deserve?

1. Let them breathe: Whenever you can, shed your socks and shoes to let your “dogs” get some fresh air.

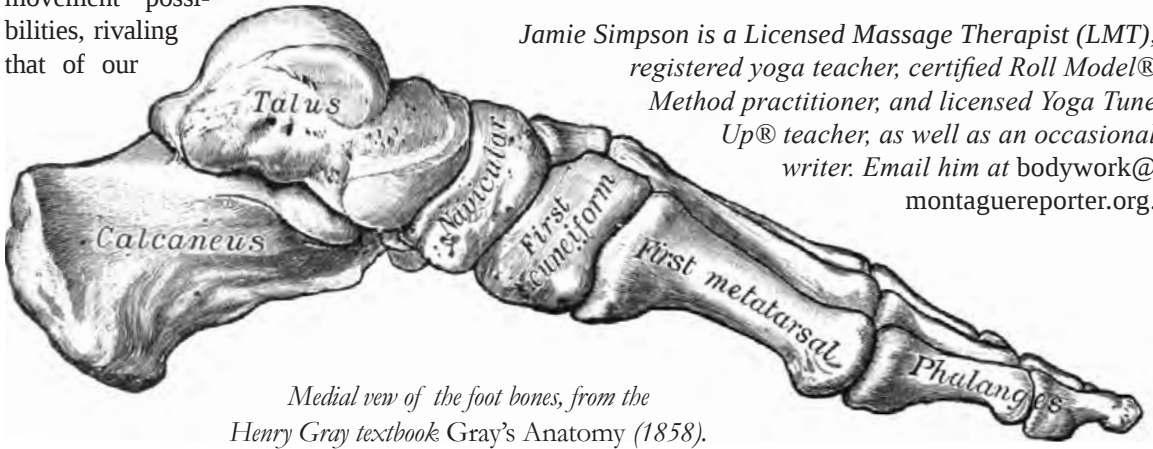
2. Soak them: Soaking your feet in warm water doesn't just feel amazing, it also offers numerous health benefits. Search “foot soak” on WebMD for a long list of them, including making smelly feet smell better, boosting circulation, and soothing sore muscles.

3. Give yourself a pedicure, or splurge and have a professional do it for you. It helps keep your nails healthy, and gives you a chance to moisturize and massage the toes, feet, and lower legs while you're at it. Do it with your partner or a good friend. It feels good for everyone, including men.

4. If you have plantar fasciitis or other chronic foot pain not related to an injury such as a bone break or muscle tear, the problem is likely less about the plantar fascia and more related to a lack of mobility or strength, or excess tension, in the muscles or joints around and above the foot. Examples are limited foot plantar flexion and dorsiflexion capacity, tight calves, pelvic instability, and limited back mobility.

Talk with a knowledgeable health professional, such as a physical therapist or personal trainer, about exercises that can correct those deficits and bring relief to your aching feet. Left untended, problems with the feet can create problems that stack all the way up to the top of your head!

I hope you find something new and useful in today's column. Please email any comments, questions, or suggestions for future topics. Be well.



Medial view of the foot bones, from the Henry Gray textbook Gray's Anatomy (1858).

Jamie Simpson is a Licensed Massage Therapist (LMT), registered yoga teacher, certified Roll Model® Method practitioner, and licensed Yoga Tune Up® teacher, as well as an occasional writer. Email him at bodywork@montaguereporter.org.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Tree On House; Halloween Already Causing Arguments; Grumpy Accused of Smashing Christmas Ornaments

Monday, 9/7

10:45 p.m. Officer conducting a vehicle stop at Millers Falls Road and Cross Street. Officer advises vehicle almost hit detail officers on Millers Falls Road and Industrial Boulevard. Operator doesn't have license on him. Attempting to find information. Citation issued.

Tuesday, 9/8

6:48 a.m. Caller from Avenue A wants it on record that work at the Verizon substation started at 6:40 a.m. and it shouldn't have started until 7 a.m.; it was very loud. Report taken.

6:23 p.m. Walk-in report of a disturbance at a Prospect Street address. No trespass or orders on file. Officers spoke to all parties; all verbal.

8:23 p.m. Caller reports that a car is in a ditch and a male is yelling in a field off Route 63 near Gunn Road. No other details at this time. Operator states no injuries. Car undrivable; tow requested.

8:38 p.m. 911 report of unwanted person on Meadow Road. Courtesy transport provided.

Wednesday, 9/9

12:35 a.m. 911 caller states he just got home from work and the neighbor's music is really loud; states this is an ongoing issue. Officers advised. A 33-year-old Springfield man was arrested on a straight warrant.

7:38 a.m. Report of disabled vehicle on Greenfield side of the White Bridge. Call relayed to Greenfield PD. GPD requesting Turners side of bridge be shut down for a tow truck. Officer advised. GPD advises bridge OK to be reopened.

8:58 a.m. Caller looking to speak to an officer; states that a female has a 209a order against him and she keeps driving by when he is walking. Would like the event documented; has also contacted his lawyer, his caseworker, and a private detective. Report taken.

11:17 a.m. Walk-in requesting to speak to an officer regarding drug activity at a rental property he owns. Officer advised party to call and document future situations.

9:28 p.m. Caller reports that her debit card was taken last night and has transactions that she did not make. Caller reported it to her bank but would like to speak to an officer for further assistance. Party states card was used three times at the Greenfield Cooperative Bank ATM in Turners Falls. Caller advised to cancel the card, which she reports she has done. Officer will attempt to get in touch with bank and see if he can get footage of who may have used the card.

9:58 p.m. Caller states his mother hit him in the forearm earlier tonight. Does not want to press any charges, but would like to make a report. Officer advises situation mediated.

10:05 p.m. E-911 caller reports hearing a male party shout profanities near her house on Swamp Road. Caller states she then heard a loud banging noise, like someone hitting something with force, not believed to be a car. Officers checked the length of the roadway and did not see anyone or hear anyone yelling.

Thursday, 9/10

7:55 a.m. Burglar alarm at Carnegie Library; staff door entry. DPW on scene; accidental alarm.

10:01 a.m. GPD requesting officers attempt to locate a female on Fifth Street. Vehicle not at residence; no answer at door. 11:30 a.m. Caller reporting truck parked with cones around it on the bend between South Street and Swamp Road is causing a hazard. Lawn truck doing landscaping; moved into driveway prior to officer's arrival.

12:13 p.m. 911 report of brush fire in front yard on Federal Street. Transferred to Shelburne Control. Officer advising water placed on fire; mostly out at this time. FD to continue.

1:01 p.m. Caller requesting to speak to an officer regarding fraud charges on her bank card. Referred to an officer.

1:53 p.m. 911 caller reporting purple smoke in the air and a strong chemical smell at Strathmore/Indeck. Transferred to Shelburne Control; officer advised.

2:20 p.m. Caller from Federal Street reports that a big tree fell on and crushed the house. No one was inside the residence. No sparks or flames; no wires involved. Shelburne Control advised to start fire response. Officer requesting town building inspector be contacted. Message left. FD on scene; damage to garage

and outside room. Home-owners will contact their insurance company. Building inspector *en route*.

7:57 p.m. Walk-in requesting to speak to an officer to report a larceny that occurred in New Jersey. Officer advised party to contact New Jersey PD again, as this occurred out of MPD's jurisdiction. Officer observed email chain from New Jersey PD, who provided her a case number.

9:25 p.m. Caller reports what appears to be a disabled tractor trailer at Millers Falls Road and Carlisle Avenue. Caller states vehicle is in east-bound travel lane. Officer located TT unit in the area of Jamrog. Officer advises driver was lost and looking for Hillside Plastic. Officer providing courtesy escort to location.

Friday, 9/11

2:19 a.m. 911 call reporting aggressive and threatening behavior on Keith Street. Officers out with caller. Advised of options. 5:18 a.m. Caller states that a large tree is entirely blocking Old Northfield Road about halfway from Turners Falls. No wires noted. DPW notified; cleared tree; road reopened.

9:15 a.m. 911 call from Franklin County Housing Authority requesting FD to assist with a person stuck in an elevator in the Crocker Building. Transferred to Shelburne Control.

12:10 p.m. Report of a few people arguing in Peskeompskut Park. Verbal argument; peace restored. All parties advised of civil options.

3:57 p.m. 911 caller states that a female is pacing up and down the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge and looking at the water. Caller concerned for her welfare. Officer advises female located in front of town hall. Courtesy transport provided. Female states she and another party had been driving and got in an argument regarding purchasing Halloween supplies at Family Dollar; female decided she wanted to walk home and just wanted space.

4:25 p.m. DCF in lobby to meet with officers for a removal of two children from a location. Children located; they are with DCF.

4:33 p.m. Officer states that a crosswalk sign at Montague and Griswold streets was struck and knocked over. Officer advises sign placed back up. Call logged.

5:51 p.m. Officer out on James Avenue to serve a summons to a male who was observed operating a vehicle while his license

was revoked. Summons and citation issued in hand.

Saturday, 9/12

9:41 a.m. Caller states that they were just in a minor motor vehicle accident at Avenue A and Third Street. No injuries; no tow needed. Report taken.

11:11 a.m. Walk-in looking to speak to an officer regarding a male standing in his yard on Millers Falls Road last night. Party unable to provide description or time frame. Advised to call PD immediately for suspicious activity moving forward. Wants on record at this time.

3:21 p.m. Walk-in looking to report a UPS theft on Walcott Street. Report taken.

3:49 p.m. Caller from Montague City Road reports that a neighbor's dog just attacked her dog. They are separated at this time. Animal control officer contacted; advising she will not be responding since the dogs are separated. She will follow up with both dog owners later tonight. Fur missing and ear bleeding on smaller dog. Owner of injured dog bringing dog to vet clinic.

Sunday, 9/13

12:27 a.m. Caller states people are shooting guns and revving vehicles in the wildlife management area on Meadow Road. Officers checked area; no vehicles located; no shots heard.

10:34 a.m. 911 caller reporting a fire on power lines on Adams Street. Transferred to Shelburne Control. Eversource on scene. Power should be restored soon.

4:33 p.m. Walk-in looking to speak to an officer regarding a male posting disparaging remarks on Facebook regarding the Mohawk Ramblers club and one of its members. Report taken.

4:51 p.m. Caller from Seventh Street states she had a tag sale yesterday and gave a box of Christmas bulbs and ornaments to a man named “Grumpy.” Today, the box and items were smashed on her front steps and porch. Wants on record at this time.

5:31 p.m. Multiple reports of dog on Millers Falls Road barking for extended periods of time; becoming a nuisance in the neighborhood. Message left for ACO.

7:55 p.m. Caller from K Street reports neighbor's dog has been barking all day; attempted to contact neighbor and didn't get through. Worried about the dog at this time. Both registered vehicles in driveway. No answer on attempted phone call. Male located across the street at a friend's house. He is back with the dog.

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MONTAGUE REPORTER



DONNA PETERSEN PHOTO



ON THE ROAD

Left: Reader and contributing writer Donna Petersen brought our May 7 edition on a whale watch off the coast of Provincetown this spring. Right: Whales were also seen.

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

WEST ALONG from page B1

past them and choose my perfect spot on the edge of their flock, five yards away.

So there we are, birds and solitary man, among the seaweed and driftwood, all of us enjoying the sun and the seclusion, sheltered from the sea-borne wind passing just overhead.

Out of the wind, in the warming sun, at last all is quiet, the monkey-mind of my jumbled thoughts calms down, the reverie that is only inspired by the ocean waves and sea salt sets in. Sitting there and musing, memories of past beaches floating in and out of my daydreams here among the sandpiper, plovers, and beachgrass.

Mental images of the dunes on the outer Cape, carefree days of summers spent at odd jobs between Wellfleet and Provincetown, the endless beach that stretches from Tangiers to Azilah and beyond, the silver strands of Donegal and the Great Basket, summers at the Irish B & B above the beach of Coumeemoole.

All those scenes gone with the years, along with many of the companions who shared those sands.

Looking out at the sea in such a place, the seascape lends itself to a certain wistfulness. Just then a swirling cloud of sanderling sandpipers flashes by, drawing me away from any forbidden melancholy thoughts. The flock swirls past, twisting and turning in unison, showing flashes

of white under-wings. Just as suddenly as they flew by, they alight and settle in with their kinfolk just a few yards away.

Down the beach, son Kevin waves to me from the breaking waves to join him.

Yeah, well, I'm not going to do that.

I'm enjoying too much the comforting warmth of the dunes and my sandpiper companions.

Soon enough, I'll stand up and leave my thoughts behind here in this sheltered spot.

We'll be pointing the nose of the car homeward, after a traditional splurge of platters of fried scallops – you wouldn't believe the price these days! – on the open deck of the restaurant at the mouth of the Merrimack.

We'll head west into the sun that leads us back past Wachusett, back to our green Valley.

We'll arrive at dusk just as the last fall nighthawks cut through the air, as the early flighty bats zig-zag over the backyard.

Nothing has changed in the garden since we left early this morning. But we've changed a bit, we've come back with our heads full of the sound of the sea, the sound of waves on shore. Skin a little bit pleasantly sunburned, sand still in our shoes, the sensation of a little unexpected time-travel, and the full tide of summer washing over all.



COMICS and PUZZLE

JOEL PAXTON ILLUSTRATION



SUZETTE SNOW-COBB ILLUSTRATION



Carolyn Clark



JOEL PAXTON ILLUSTRATION

MONTAGUE CRYPTOJAM !!!
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The Children's Page

YONDERNOD ILLUSTRATION

MR. HARBINGER'S TURKEY



WORDS BY BEVERLY KETCH &
PICTURES BY HANNAH BROOKMAN



MR. HARBINGER DOES THINK A LOT ABOUT WHAT MIGHT GO WRONG, BUT ON THIS DAY HE WAS UNUSUALLY WORRIED. HIS TURKEY, WHO HE LIKES TO TAKE ON WALKS, HAD NO GET-UP-AND-GO.

ANXIOUSLY, HE GAVE THE TURKEY SOME EXTRA FOOD AND WATER. HE ADDED EXTRA HAY TO HIS TURKEY'S LITTLE BED, AND THEN WALKED INTO TOWN ALONE, HIS MIND BUZZING WITH FEARS FOR HIS BELOVED TURKEY.



AS HE WALKED ALONG, HE SAW ELDA PICKING CRAB APPLES. "HELLO MR HARBINGER" SHE SAID, HER EYES SOFTENING WITH A SWEET COMPASSIONATE LOOK. "YOU LOOK AS THOUGH SOMETHING'S WEIGHING ON YOUR MIND. IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO?"



"WELL, YOU CAN WATCH OUT FOR WORMS IN THOSE CRAB APPLES," HE SAID SADLY. ELDA COULD SENSE HE WAS NOT HIS USUAL SELF. "I WILL SHARE MY CRAB APPLE JELLY WITH YOU. I'LL BRING IT OVER THIS AFTERNOON." "OH GEE, WELL THANKS ELDA." HE FELT A LITTLE BETTER.

MR. HARBINGER HEADED OFF TO DO HIS ERRANDS. AT THE POST OFFICE HE SAW VIOLA WITH A TOWER OF PACKAGES TOTTERING PRECARIOUSLY. HE SPED OVER TO CATCH ONE JUST AS IT FELL. THE WORD "FRAGILE" WAS WRITTEN ACROSS IT ON RED TAPE.



"OH MR. HARBINGER, YOU ARE MY HERO!" SHE EXCLAIMED. "THAT IS COUSIN VERANDAH'S CHANDELIER!" MR. HARBINGER BLUSHED PROUDLY. "AW, THAT WAS NOTHING", HE SAID, BUT HE FELT A LITTLE BETTER. "YOU BETTER MAKE TWO TRIPS AND NOT CARRY ALL OF THOSE AT ONCE," HE SAID. "YOU ARE RIGHT!" VIOLA SAID WITH GREAT SERIOUSNESS.



MR. HARBINGER HEADED OFF DOWN AVENUE A WITH A BIT MORE SPRING IN HIS STEP. HE STOPPED INTO THE MARKET AND GOT OAT MILK AND APPLES FOR HIS TURKEY. ON THE WAY OUT HE SAW CHELLA. "HOW ARE YOU TODAY MR. HARBINGER?" "I DON'T KNOW." HE ANSWERED FLATLY. "WOULD YOU LIKE A HUG?" ASKED CHELLA. SHE GAVE HIM A FRIENDLY AND CHEERFUL EMBRACE. "THANKS CHELLA."

OFF HE WENT, FEELING VERY HOPEFUL THAT EVERYTHING WOULD BE ALL RIGHT. AND RIGHT HE WAS! WHEN HE GOT BACK HE SAW THAT HIS TURKEY HAD LAID AN EGG! WHAT A SURPRISE! AND SHE WAS FIT AS A FIDDLE AGAIN!



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EVENTS

submissions:
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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

Gill-Montague Senior Center, Turners Falls: *Local Podcasting for Seniors by Seniors*, with 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. \$\$.

Living Room, Florence: bobbie, Augustine's Vélo Club, The Mops. 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*. 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 a 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 the 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.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Mibble, Fandango, Oddball Song Creation*. 8 p.m. Free.

Big E Court of Honor Stage, West Springfield: *Uncle Kracker*. 8 p.m. \$\$.

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

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

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

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, The Floozies, 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.

New Salem Library, New Salem: *Let's Talk Ticks*. Learn about ticks, tickborne illness, and bite prevention from public health nurse Samantha Piragis. Permethrin spray for footwear provided. 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. 1:30 p.m. \$

Peskeompskut Park, Turners Falls: Abdul Baki & Root Fiyah, Mbo Lette, Shanti Starr & the Afro-Reggae All Stars, 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, more; dance, games, pie-eating contest, art, etc. 4 p.m. Free.



The Friday night feature at this weekend's Ashfield Film Fest is *Girl Climber*, a 2025 documentary featuring professional climber Emily Harrington. After the viewing a panel of female athletes will speak about "what it's like to excel in the male-dominated arena of adventure sports." Advance tickets are \$7 at ashfieldfilmfest.org.

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

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

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

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

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

Montague Center Library, Montague:

Jon-Marc Seimon and John Rae present photographs of local protest events over the last two years. Opening reception Monday, September 21 at 5 p.m.

Rhodes Art Center at NMH, Gill:

Out of the Frame, reduction linocuts by printmaker and faculty member Stephen Allison. Through October 23, by appointment: mseno@nmhschool.org.

Leverett Crafts & Arts, Leverett:

Susan Valentine, paintings; David Pozar, woodworking; *The Perennials*, oil painting group exhibit. Through September.

Leverett Library, Leverett:

Falling in Love with Rainbow Valley, art by Ezra Wilde, through October.

Artspace, Greenfield: Carnival Studies,

Polaroid instant photos of carnival scenes, through October 18.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: Christine Mirabal: Escape!

Abstract, nature-inspired paintings. Through September.

Looky Here, Greenfield: Minor Cosmologies

by Eva Lin Fahey, through September.

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.

Stage on Main, Orange: Michelle Andrews,

oil paintings. Proceeds benefit the Orange Revitalization Partnership. Through December.

New England Visionary Art Museum, Northampton: Unleashed: Following

Imaginings, textile hangings and soft sculpture by Jacqueline Strauss. Through September.

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.

Oxbow Gallery, Easthampton: Flower Show,

paintings of Montague wildflowers and gardens 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.

CALL FOR ART

The **Montague Libraries** are taking submissions of fiber art from artists living across all five Montague villages for shows in December and January. Artist must be a resident of Montague. Email kmartineau@cwmmars.org for details. Deadline is October 19.

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

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

Floodwater Brewing, Shelburne Falls: *Seven Mile Line*. 7 p.m. Free.

THCC, Easthampton: *Deceptions, Burn Channel, Wishender*. 7 p.m. \$.

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

Big E Arena, West Springfield: *Alice Cooper*. 7:30 p.m. \$\$.

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

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *GCB, Muda!, Fleafriends, Sully Barnes*. 9:30 p.m. \$.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

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

Camp Keewanee, Greenfield: *Prince/Bowie, Rev Tor Band, The Alchemystics*, many more. 10:15 a.m. \$\$.

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Leaf Prints for Leaf Peepers*. Art workshop; materials provided. Ages 4 and up. 10:30 a.m. Free.

Wendell Meetinghouse, Wendell: *We Are the People in the Room*. Play staging with optional audience participation, discussion and reception follow. 2 p.m. \$.

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *French/Breton Jam Session*. 2:30 p.m. Free.

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: *Cookbook Club*, reading *Turtle Island: Foods and Traditions of the Indigenous Peoples of North America*. 4 p.m. Free.

Brewery at Four Star Farms, Northfield: *The Brookside Project*. 4 p.m. No cover.

Feeding Tube Records, Florence: *Secret Places of the Lion, Gravity Games*. 5 p.m. By donation.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *John Andrews and the Yawns, Ruby of Thanks, Magick Lantern*. 7 p.m. \$.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *NRBQ, Jake Manzi*. 7 p.m. \$.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Beth Orton, Kenny Stahl*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Big E Arena, West Springfield: *Roger Daltrey*. 7:30 p.m. \$\$.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

New Salem Library, New Salem: *Creative Writing Group*. 3:30 p.m. Free.

Montague Center Library, Montague Center: Book club, *The Pearl* by John Steinbeck. 4 p.m. Free.

Montague Center Library, Montague Center: Reception for *Pioneer Protests*, exhibit of photography by Jon-Marc Seimon and John Rae. 5 p.m. Free.

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: *Fiber Stories: Keeper of the Quilt*. 6:30 p.m. Free.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: Book group, *Demon Copperhead* by Barbara Kingsolver. 11 a.m. Free.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

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

Various venues, Northampton: *William Hill III, Sarah Hanahan Quartet, Johnny O'Neal Trio, Hot Club of New England, Expandable Brass Band*, more. See northamptonjazzfest.org. 11 a.m. Free.

THCC, Easthampton: *Signs And Symptoms, Little Pond, Shazbot*. 7 p.m. \$.

Deep Thoughts, Northampton: *Jerry's Gotta Eat, Grateful Dead* tribute. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Big E Arena, West Springfield: *Brad Paisley*. 7:30 p.m. \$\$.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Simon White & Rhythm Inc*. 8 p.m. \$.

MASS MoCA, North Adams: *Madison Cunningham*. 8 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

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

Leverett Congregational Church, Leverett: *Tag Sale*. Baked goods, raffle. Benefits the Community Network for Children. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Free.

Garlic & Arts Festival, Orange: *Brookside Project, frost heaves and hales, Moon Hollow, Josh Levangie*, more. Food, vendors, kids' activities, demos. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. \$.

Northfield Mountain, Northfield: *Mushroom Walk*. Learn safe and responsible foraging methods with Mass Audubon field naturalist Jonathan Kranz. 10 a.m. Free.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Spirit & Song: Psychic Medium Fair*. History presentation, medium demo, photo exhibit, private app'ts. Fundraiser for The National Spiritual Alliance. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. \$.

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

Altamira Cider, Gill: *Banning Eyre, Zoe Pete Ford, The Horses, Holystone*, more. Cider, merchandise, food. Benefits the Cure Alzheimer's Fund. 1 p.m. By donation.

Dickinson Library, Northfield: *Dog Show Registration*: \$10 adults, \$5 children. 1:30 p.m. \$.

Dickinson Library, Northfield: *Dog Show*. 2 p.m. Free.

Unity Park, Turners Falls: *Good Neighbor Day Community Fair*. Live music by the *Jazz Queens*, face painting, info on community groups. 2 to 5 p.m. Free.

Marcus Hall, UMass Amherst: *New England Synth Meetup*. 2 to 5 p.m. Free.

Park Hill Orchard, Easthampton: *Winterpills, Pamela Means Band*. 4 p.m. \$.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Tobey Sol LaRoche, Olivia Nied, Luke DeRoy, Carly Lara, Matt Emmer, Rachel Davis, Lilah Asbornsen, E. Horace Winston III*, mentors and artists-in-residence at the Pond Lily Project. Fundraiser for The National Spiritual Alliance. 7 p.m. \$.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *The Pangeans, DJ Bongohead, Minyo Crusaders*. 7 p.m. \$.

Big E Court of Honor Stage, West Springfield: *The Smithereens*. 8 p.m. \$.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

Garlic & Arts Festival, Orange: *Inside/Out Dance Company, Star Lane Sox, Wallace Field, Stoner Will and the Narks, Christa Joy and the Honeybees*, more. Food, vendors, kids' activities, demonstrations. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. \$.

Unity Park, Turners Falls: *Montague Soapbox Races*. 12 p.m. Free.

Quarters, Hadley: *Western Mass Electronics*, with featured artist *Tree Trunks*. Bring your own synth, drum machine, sampler, etc. 7 p.m. No cover.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

Second Congregational Church, Greenfield: *The Joy of Red Nose Clown*. First of 10-week workshop series. Register at rednoseclownwesternmass@gmail.com. Tuition assistance available. 7:30 p.m. \$\$.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

Millers Falls Library, Millers Falls: *Movie, Daddy Day Care* (2003). 5 p.m. Free.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Sam Grisman Project*. 8 p.m. \$.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Horse Lords, No Thankyou, Silk Fence*. 7 p.m. \$.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15

Brick House, Turners Falls: *Spectre Folk, Jumpy, barbie.ai, Intac*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *Jessica Pavone, Kelly Bray, Julie Bodian*. 7 p.m. \$.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22

Bowker Auditorium, UMass Amherst: *Christian McBride & Ursa Major*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21

Full Moon Coffeehouse, Wendell: *Rani Arbo & daisy mayhem*. Benefit for the Foundation for Community Justice. 7:30 p.m. \$.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9

Palladium, Worcester: *GWAR, Midnight, X-Cops, Mac Sabbath*. 7 p.m. \$\$.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12

The Drake, Amherst: *King Tuff, Sheer Mag*. 8 p.m. \$.

CALENDAR

looking forward...

Local Americana four-piece *The Brookside Project* appear on this page twice, with gigs this Sunday at the Brewery at North Star Farms in Northfield and then next Saturday at the Garlic & Arts festival in Orange.

Turners Falls High School, Turners Falls: *Public Information Session* on the proposed Great River Regional School District. 6 p.m. Free.

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

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

Leverett Library, Leverett: *Learn to Spot the Wolf: Protect Yourself from Scams*. 1 p.m. Free.

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: *Movie, The Killers* (2023). 4 p.m. Free.

Gill-Montague Senior Center, Turners Falls: *Quilling Workshop* with Cyndi Bussey. Register at 863-9357 or the senior center. 5:30 p.m. \$.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

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

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: *Pokemon Club Scavenger Hunt*. Teens and kids. 5 p.m. Free.

Magic Wings, Deerfield: *Magic Wings After Dark*. Adults only. 5:30 p.m. \$.

The Egg, Albany: *Liz Phair, Frankie Cosmos*. 7 p.m. \$\$.

Community Music School of Springfield, Springfield: *Dr. Julian's Yes Yes*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Big E Arena, West Springfield: *The Beach Boys*. 7:30 p.m. \$\$.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Danielle Nicole Band*. 8 p.m. \$.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

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

Various venues, Northampton: *William Hill III, Sarah Hanahan Quartet, Johnny O'Neal Trio, Hot Club of New England, Expandable Brass Band*, more. See northamptonjazzfest.org. 11 a.m. Free.

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Deja Brew, Wendell: *Simon White & Rhythm Inc*. 8 p.m. \$.

MASS MoCA, North Adams: *Madison Cunningham*. 8 p.m. \$.

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RECIPES from page B1

Covered “tight” with the hefty lid, such a pie was an edible pantry, and meat was the essential filling. Vegetable pies are much less common. Tomato pie recipes feature in some 19th-century collections, as do potato pies, which were little more than mashed potatoes with onions and perhaps some cheese in a pastry case.

Some vegetable pies are classics of their country’s traditional cooking. Russia has cabbage pie, for example. This sounded dire to me until a Russian friend made one with a crust decorated with pastry leaves and star anise. It was so good – just the thing for the colder days of fall and winter.

Greece has its famous spinach-and-feta pie *spanakopita*, and almost equally popular, leek pies. Bakeries sell squares of each as take-out items for workplace lunches. Leek pies are also common in northern France, Belgium, and Wales, where the fillings are sim-

ilar: leeks with eggs and cream, sometimes in a one-crust tart, but in a two-crust pie in Wales.

America’s contributions to the vegetable tradition are pumpkin pie and sweet potato pie, desserts rather than main dishes, showing the ingenuity of people who adapted their culinary techniques to whatever food they could grow.

Here in western Mass we now have our annual cornucopia of vegetables of many kinds. The following pie recipes make use of cabbages, butternuts, leeks, and onions.

If you don’t care to make your own pastry, store-bought packages of the puff pastry used in cabbage pie make life easier.

The cornmeal topping of the butternut pie (*at right*) is a quick stir-it-up pie lid, while the leek pie (*below*) needs traditional short-crust pastry. It’s not as common in stores as puff pastry, but is worth looking for, though unlike puff pastry, it is not hard to make at home.



LATTICE-TOP LEEK PIE

For the pastry:
1 ¼ cups all-purpose flour
4 oz. (1 stick) cold butter
about 2 Tbsp. ice-cold water

To make the pastry, put the flour in a bowl, cut the butter into a dozen pieces, then rub them into the flour with your fingers until the mixture looks like breadcrumbs. (Or use a food processor.) Make a well in the center and add ice water a tablespoon at a time, until you can pull the mixture together into a dough.

Wrap the dough in foil or plastic, and chill for half an hour. Then roll it out. Set aside about one-fifth of it.

Grease a 9-inch pie pan and fit the rest of the dough into it. Don’t yet trim off any overhanging dough. Put the dish in the fridge while you make the filling....



HOPLEY PHOTOS

For the filling:
4 large leeks
4 Tbsp. butter
1 egg, plus 2 more yolks
1 cup heavy or whipping cream
4 oz. (about 4 slices) Canadian bacon, or other lean bacon (optional)
salt and pepper to taste

Trim any battered leaves off the leeks. Wash them, then cut them into inch-long pieces. Melt the butter in a frying pan, add the leeks, cover, and cook gently, stirring often for about 15 or 20 minutes or until they are tender. Let them cool to lukewarm.

Beat together the egg, egg yolks, and cream. Add the leeks and season with salt and pepper to taste.

While you are preparing the leeks, let the oven preheat to 400° F. Remove the pastry shell from the fridge. Put a piece of parchment paper or foil on the base and weigh it down with dried beans or baking weights. Bake for 15 minutes, or until it is beginning to brown.

Roll out the dough you have set aside and cut it into long strips. Use these to make a criss-cross lattice on top of the pie. Brush them with a little cream. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, or until the pastry is golden brown. Serve warm.

Serves 4 to 6.

BUTTERNUT AND BLACK BEAN PIE

For the filling:
3 to 4 Tbsp. oil
6 or 7 cups butternut squash, in 1-inch cubes
1 medium-large onion, chopped
one 8-inch celery stalk, diced
1 apple, peeled and thinly sliced
1 garlic clove, minced
1 tsp. oregano
1 tsp. chili powder
½ tsp. cinnamon
salt
one 15-oz. can black beans
1 cup apple cider

In a large frying pan, heat three tablespoons of oil. Add the butternut cubes. Let them soften with the lid on, but stir often until they are becoming tender.

Remove them from the pan. Add the onion, celery, apple slices, and the remaining oil, and soften for 4 or 5 minutes. Stir in the butternut, and then the garlic, oregano, chili powder, cinnamon, and salt to taste.

Drain the beans and mix them in. Add the apple cider. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes, then pile it into a deep pie dish or casserole.



For the crust:
1 ¼ cups yellow cornmeal
1 ¼ cups all-purpose flour
2 Tbsp. sugar
4 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. cinnamon
1 tsp. chili powder
½ tsp. salt
6 Tbsp. butter, melted
1 egg
¾ cup milk, or as needed

Preheat the oven to 375° F. In a medium bowl mix the cornmeal, flour, sugar, baking powder, cinnamon, chili powder, and salt. In a small bowl whisk together the egg and milk, then stir in the melted butter.

Make a well in the flour mixture and pour in the milk mixture. Stir to make a smooth dough. Dollop this on top of the butternut mixture, then spread to cover the top. Bake for 20 minutes, or until a skewer poked into the center comes out clean.

Serves 6.

RUSSIAN CABBAGE PIE

1 Savoy cabbage, about 2 lbs.
1 medium-large onion, chopped
3 oz. butter
salt and pepper to taste
4 cloves
2 tsp. fennel seeds or dried dill
3 hard-boiled eggs, roughly chopped
2 Tbsp. roughly chopped parsley
one 17-oz store-bought puff pastry
1 egg, beaten
3 or 4 star anise (optional)

Discard any coarse outer cabbage leaves and cut off the end of the core. Slice thinly. A food processor is helpful here. Also thinly slice the onion.

Melt half the butter in a large frying pan over low heat. Stir in the onion and let it cook for about 8 minutes, until it is soft but not browned.

Meanwhile, put the cabbage in a large colander. Pour boiling water all over it and let it stand a minute or two, then press it down with a plate to extrude excess liquid. (You may need to divide the cabbage into two batches.)

Add the cabbage to the onions. Cut the remaining butter into little pieces and stir them in along with the cloves, fennel seeds or dill, and salt to taste. Cover with a lid and cook over low heat, stirring often to prevent sticking, for about 20 minutes or until the cabbage is cooked but retains a little crunch.

Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Meanwhile, turn the oven to 420° F. Take the two sheets of pastry from the package and roll them on a floured surface to enlarge them about an inch all



round. Trim an inch off of the long side of one piece. With a small round cutter or spice bottle cap, cut a hole in the center of the other piece. Set these bits aside to use for decoration.

Put the smaller sheet of pastry on a large baking sheet lined with parchment paper or greased foil. Pile the cabbage mixture on top, leaving a half-inch border all round. Brush the border with the beaten egg.

Leaving the border empty, pack the cabbage onto that pastry, doming it higher in the center. Now cover this with the pastry with the hole, pressing it firmly onto the egg-brushed border.

Roll out the reserved pastry bits. Cut out leaf and flower shapes, by hand or with a cookie cutter. Brush one side of each leaf or flower with the beaten egg and arrange them decoratively on top of the pie. Brush all over the top with the beaten egg. If you have star anise, press them into the pastry as highlights.

Bake for 10 minutes, then turn the temperature down to 375° and bake 25 minutes more or until it’s deep golden brown. Remove from the oven, rest for 10 minutes, then serve. Any leftover filling can be reheated and served with the pie, or used to stuff tomatoes or other vegetables.

Serves 5 or 6.

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