

# The Montague Reporter

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

APRIL 27, 2023

WENDELL SELECTBOARD

## Dan Keller Retires from Board



HEINEMANN PHOTO

Keller held the seat ever since winning all 70 votes in a 2003 special election.

By JOSH HEINEMANN

Wendell selectboard member Dan Keller went to his last selectboard meeting April 19, after 20 years on the board and 17 before that on the finance committee. His name is not on the ballot for the May 1 election. One candidate, Paul Doud, filed papers for the seat. Former board member Chris-

tine Heard came to commemorate the occasion, and when the meeting ended, Keller read a statement about his time working in town government. There were some treats on the table, but the meeting otherwise progressed as normal.

Keller admitted he might suffer withdrawal and come to a meeting or two after stepping down, and he

see WENDELL page A5

## ‘Our Sacrifice to Keep That Water Clean’: Comerford, Saunders Introduce Bill For Quabbin Watershed Reparation

By MIKE JACKSON

BOSTON – “All for this,” said state senator Jo Comerford (D-Northampton), holding aloft a Mason jar full of clear fluid as she testified Wednesday afternoon before the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. “Quabbin water, needed in eastern Massachusetts. Two hundred million gallons a day, at present...”

“But do you know who doesn’t have access to Quabbin water?”

The senator paused. “The Swift River Elementary School, in nearby New Salem. Its well poisoned with PFAS. Its children, staff, and faculty drinking water from plastic bottles – as Quabbin water flows east.”

Comerford and her colleague in the state house, Aaron Saunders (D-Belchertown), were at the public hearing on waterways, wetlands, water resources, and oceans to explain a bill the pair introduced in their respective chambers in February.

S.447/H.897, *An Act relative to the Quabbin watershed and regional equity*, is an attempt, after nine decades, to materially compensate the towns surrounding the 39-square-mile artificial reservoir,



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Comerford urged the Environmental and Natural Resources committee to advance the bill.

the main source of drinking water for 53 “customer communities” in Massachusetts’s eastern region and for roughly 3 million of its 7 million residents.

If passed, the bill would expand western Massachusetts’ representation on the governing board of the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA), which manages the redistribution of water from the Quabbin to its customers.

“There’s been very little done too look at how [MWRA has] operated over the course of these last several decades,” Saunders explained. While one of the 11 seats is cur-

rently set aside for a “resident of a Connecticut river basin community who represents water resources protection interests,” the bill would expand that to three, expand the board to 13, and set term limits.

Nearly 40 more communities, Comerford said, are considering becoming MWRA customers.

“Drought, rivers drying up, towns needing water,” said representative Mindy Domb (D-Amherst), testifying in support of the bill. “Other legislators, my colleagues, are saying ‘Oh, let’s just go to the MWRA.’ Western Mass can’t do that!”

see QUABBIN page A6

GILL SELECTBOARD

## As Expenses Spiral, Gill Officials Contemplate the Nature of Money

By KATE SAVAGE

With town hall closed to public access, the Gill selectboard gathered around a table in the Slate Memorial Library on Monday to discuss rising energy prices and a pay bump for the police chief. They also took time to muse on corporate personhood, dark money in politics, and what a small, rural town like Gill can do about it all.

Gill resident Steve Bathory-Peeler proposed an article for May’s annual town meeting encouraging state representatives to push for a 28th amendment to the US Constitution giving states the right to limit money in politics, and to distinguish when it comes to campaign donations between “natural persons” and “juridical persons” such as corporations.

The selectboard voted to put the article up for vote at the May 22 annual town meeting.

“I was unaware of this until recently,” said Bathory-Peeler, explaining that he is a “concerned citizen” operating alone. “An amendment to our Constitution is something that citizens can do when the Supreme Court makes a mistake,” he said, pointing to women’s suffrage, the abolition of slavery, and presidential term limits. “Whatever big issues we might be interested in – whether it’s climate change, healthcare, international relations, gun policy – there’s so much money in politics now that we can’t get things done right.”

Selectboard member Greg Snedeker said he supported the amendment due to his experience teaching

see GILL page A6

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

## Town Abuzz With Activity, Flush With Relief Funds

By JEFF SINGLETON

At its Monday night meeting, the Montague selectboard filled downtown Turners Falls with an extensive schedule of late spring and summer events. The board also discussed a number of infrastructure projects, and spent time revising its approach to spending over \$1.5 million in federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

RiverCulture director Suzanne LoManto received approval for a formidable series of events in downtown Turners over the coming months. These included about a dozen events at Peskeompskut Park, including movies and concerts, a puppet parade along the sidewalk on May 7, and a “music walk” on July 1 beginning at Spinner Park. LoManto said the puppets would mostly be made of cardboard, and would not interfere with traffic.

LoManto also received approval for a porta-potty to be placed on the northeast corner of Peskeompskut Park from June through August. She said the toilet would be locked between events and emptied weekly by Carson’s Cans LLC. The receptacle will also be available to patrons of the local farmers market,

see MONTAGUE page A7

ERVING SELECTBOARD

## Residents Favor Single Payment, Capital Override for Mill Demo

By KEITH WATERS

On Monday, April 24 the Erving selectboard held a meeting of its own, a joint meeting with the finance and capital planning committees, and a public information and input session about the possible demolition of the former International Paper (IP) Mill.

The town has \$600,000 in grant money from MassDevelopment for site readiness that could be used to

fund the demolition of the mill complex. The total demolition cost has been estimated at \$4.3 million, and the town risks losing the grant money if it does not spend it soon.

The mill has been owned by the town since it seized it for lack of tax payments in a years-long process from 2010 to 2013. Erving has tried to interest developers in the mill, but has not had any luck. It is now seen as a liability to the town in

see ERVING page A4

LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

## Town Meeting Approacheth

By GEORGE BRACE

At their meeting on Tuesday, the Leverett selectboard’s main order of business was making final preparations for annual town meeting, set to take place this Saturday, April 29, beginning at 9 a.m. at the Leverett Elementary School gymnasium.

The board met with town meeting moderator Larry Farber to decide who would introduce motions for residents to vote on each of the 30 articles on the meeting’s warrant. “So, we’re going through the motions?” town clerk Lisa Stratford asked, to much laughter.

Articles include the election of town officers, the town’s overall FY’24 budget, special expenditures, and minor “bookkeeping” matters

requiring town approval.

Leverett follows a unique protocol in electing its officials; according to the town newsletter, it is “the only town left in the commonwealth to elect our public officials from the floor of town meeting.” Candidates can announce their intention to run for positions in advance, but official nominations are made by residents at the meeting itself, then voted on.

Twelve positions in town government are up for election. At the time of Tuesday’s meeting, seven candidates had announced they were running for re-election unopposed, and five positions had no announced candidates. A forum for candidates to speak had been scheduled for

see LEVERETT page A8

## THE CLINCHER

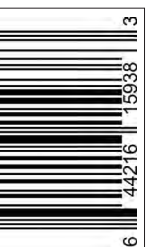


DAVID HOULT PHOTO

Turners Falls’ Cadi Wozniak smashes a walk-off single to the outfield fence, driving Madi Liimatainen home for an 8th-inning 9-8 home win against the Wabonah Warriors last Thursday. The Turners squad is 5-and-4 for the season.

Many Items Omitted Due to Lack of Space, Fugue State

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# The Montague Reporter

"The Voice of the Villages"

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## GUEST EDITORIAL

# A Letter of Intent

By WILL QUALE

**MONTAGUE** – “The Trustees of the Montague Public Libraries and the Libraries’ Director intend to apply to the Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program in the hopes of expanding the Carnegie Library or constructing a new main library.”

So begins the letter of intent which the Trustees have submitted this week – with a letter of support from the selectboard – the first milestone in a grant application process that will involve substantial community input through the next year. The rest of our letter to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners follows a brief explanation of the grant process, and some historical context.

Many of the 43 Carnegie public libraries in Massachusetts have been significantly expanded over the past century; others, when deemed too small for their rapidly growing towns, took on different roles as new libraries were constructed. Of the Carnegie public libraries in seven Massachusetts towns, all architecturally similar to ours, only Montague’s remains a library in its unaltered original size – a size recognized as inadequate by 1915, when Montague’s first request for expansion funds was denied by the Carnegie Corporation.

In 1999 the state awarded Montague a grant to plan an expansion to the Carnegie, and in 2001 our proposed expansion was awarded a state construction grant for 40% of the project cost. But the town needed to fund the remainder at a time when several major capital projects were underway, or vying for limited funds.

With regret, in 2005 the Trustees voted not to take the project to town meeting. “We felt we had to do this because, although we desperately wanted to improve our library facilities, we didn’t feel the plan was fiscally responsible based on the town’s budget scenarios,” they later wrote in a *Montague Reporter* guest editorial (March 29, 2007), explaining in great detail the architectural and site complications that had forced the scale and cost of the proposed project and had led to their decision.

At that time, the state used to require the Trustees to choose a course of action – expansion or construction – prior to engaging in the planning and grant application

process, and they had chosen expansion. In 2023, however, this has changed. The process now begins by exploring community needs and how these could be met by both expansion and construction, allowing communities to evaluate each and then choose their best path forward.

The grant program has never given preference to one over the other: since 1987, MPLCP grants have funded 62 new buildings and 169 expansion and renovation projects. To fulfill our purpose as Trustees – enabling our libraries to best serve the needs and interests of our community – we will pursue this grant with extensive public engagement.

A contextualized history of past attempts to improve the Carnegie will soon be online, and this week we begin the work of forming a committee who will help evaluate our community’s needs.

Our letter of intent continues:

“Completed in 1904, the Carnegie Library in downtown Turners Falls boasts lovely architectural features. Unfortunately, the curving staircase and large entryway take up much of the library’s interior footprint, making what looks like a large building from the outside quite small in reality. Realizing that the building lacked adequate space, the library’s Trustees first proposed an addition in 1915, but were not granted funding.

“In the 108 years since then, two additional expansion efforts have failed. The town’s population has increased by 2,000 and the number and variety of materials needed to serve the community have expanded, but the main library remains unchanged.

“Patrons and staff have made do as well as they can, but the building’s inadequacies were the main complaint made by survey respondents for the Montague Public Libraries’ 2022 strategic plan. They called out the building’s inaccessibility, lack of parking, lack of reading space, and lack of space for young adult materials. One survey respondent did not mince words, commenting, ‘the physical layout is atrocious.’

“The building is technically accessible, thanks to a wheelchair ramp added in 1997, but those using a chair are limited to browsing in the children’s area and the new books section. The adult fiction, non-fiction, and media collections are inaccessible, as are the restroom, the local history collection, and the program space on the

Will Dobias (left) and Jonathan George (right) flank chef-owner Walker Widner in the Gill Tavern kitchen last Sunday afternoon.

Widner says he loves running a country restaurant and making creative food from scratch. Many of his ingredients come from neighboring farms, with a few foraged items such as ramps and fiddleheads added in the spring.



NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION

## Letter to the Editors

# Public Desires the Wild

Governor Healey’s campaign promise for a moratorium for “commercial logging” on the 617,000 acres of state-owned forest land has gotten a lot of press coverage. It has generated a wide range of views on what the role of our forests should be in mitigating climate change, biodiversity loss, and the decline of public green spaces.

Is it possible to find a position that everyone can agree on? Probably not. But there are some things that we know for sure.

We know that scientists are saying that we need to greatly expand lands permanently protected from logging and other industrial uses – categorized as “GAP 1” or “GAP 2” by the US Geological Survey. The Harvard Forest’s *Wildlands and Woodlands* project calls for giving this protection to 10% of New England forests. The UN Convention on Biodiversity, which includes 195 countries, is urging that 30% of the planet be protected by 2030 (known as “30 by 30”). The late world-renowned biologist, E.O. Wilson, contended that half the Earth should be saved for nature.

We know that today, less than 2% of Massachusetts has this level of strong, permanent protection.

There are “reserve” areas on state lands that are largely protected from human management. We know

these reserves, covering about 20% of our state-owned land and 2.5% of the Massachusetts land base, are not permanently protected by law.

We know that laws governing state public lands don’t say how much or how often state lands will be logged. And our agencies don’t even call it logging any more. It’s “wildlife habitat improvement,” “even-aged management,” “ecological restoration,” and the like.

We know firsthand from collecting thousands of signatures from people across Massachusetts that most citizens don’t know that our state lands are logged, and that they oppose this logging once they learn that it is happening.

We know that most people think it makes no sense that state land is being logged, burned, and sprayed with herbicides with the goals of “helping” wildlife, helping store carbon, or protecting water resources.

We know that people want places of solace and renewal. Places like our National Parks, where logging is not allowed.

We know all of this because we have been talking with scientists, environmentalists, agency officials, and policymakers. But even more important, we have been speaking with a multitude of members of the public of all ages, backgrounds and

regions of the state. We feel that most people agree that the vision of Henry David Thoreau is more important than ever – that Wildness is the preservation of the World.

This simple and profound sentiment is what has led us to work to submit bills to the legislature for three sessions running. What we are asking for is simple and straightforward. We know what is needed. Moratorium or not, we need more reserves on state-owned lands and to make them permanent by law.

This is very modest and highly reasonable action for the Legislature – or the Governor – to take. These lands are owned by the people of Massachusetts. We all have the right to speak out on their behalf.

Please ask your legislator to co-sponsor our vital bills this session: H.904, *An Act relative to increased protection of wildlife management areas* (Rep. Danillo Sena), and H.894, *An Act relative to forest management and practices guidelines* (Reps. Lindsay Sabadosa and Aaron Saunders).

For more information, see [www.savemassforests.com](http://www.savemassforests.com).

**Janet Sinclair**  
Shelburne Falls

**Michael Kellett**  
Concord

second floor of the building.

“Though Turners Falls is a community of voracious readers, our cramped shelf space dictates that for every book added to the collection, one must be removed.

“The popular local history room has been occupied for several years by two full-time staff members, due to the unsuitability of the basement for office use. While the basement will soon be renovated, this means that the Children’s Librarian, Library Director, and Tech Services/Local History Librarian will be utterly removed from the comings and goings of local patrons. This disconnection from the main patron space disallows the kind of patron engagement that staff wish to have.

The local history room will again be available for public use, but is too small to house even half of the local history collection.

“Though the second floor provides program space for up to 100 participants, it can only be reached by a 23-stair staircase, which proves difficult for those with bad knees or small children, and impossible for those who use a wheelchair. Though some programs are still held in the space, library staff frequently hold programs at accessible off-site locations or outdoors in an effort to be equitable to patrons of all abilities.

“By pursuing funding through the MPLCP, the Libraries’ Trustees and Director will be able to explore the space needs and interests

of the community. From previous feedback, we know that our patrons want accessible and comfortable spaces to work, study, and meet. They want space for children’s programs and a separate teen area. All of these things would be feasible in a new or improved building.

“After a century of limping along in a beautiful but limited facility, we look forward to the prospect of providing the community with a building that fosters connection between neighbors, intellectual curiosity, learning, play, and respite.”

*This editorial was approved by the Montague Public Libraries Board of Trustees, of which Mr. Quale is a member.*

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Compiled by NINA ROSSI

Enjoy a **pancake breakfast** at the Montague Congregational Church in Montague Center this Saturday, April 29 from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. For just \$8 you can get pancakes with real maple syrup, sausage, juices, coffee, and tea. Just stop by, no tickets or registration necessary. Proceeds will benefit the Deacon's Fund.

On Saturday, April 29 from 11 a.m. to noon, Hilltown Sleddogs will demonstrate **dryland mushing with sled dogs** at Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environmental Center. "This is a sport you can do with your own dog of any breed, as long as they like to run," says the press release. "Cani-Cross is jogging with a dog pulling you or trotting alongside. Bikejoring, Scootering and Rig Racing are activities you can also do with one or two dogs."

Hilltown Sleddogs ([www.hilltownsleddogs.com](http://www.hilltownsleddogs.com)) is a touring and racing kennel, home to a team of Alaskan husky sled dogs in Cummington. Sign up for the free program at [www.bookeo.com/northfield](http://www.bookeo.com/northfield). (Leave your dog at home during the demonstration, though.)

This Saturday, April 29 from 11 a.m. to noon, **Sylvia Wetherby will read her children's book *Polly Gone*** at the Montague Center Library. This is followed by a workshop where kids can make their own Percival Porcupine using clay and toothpicks.

The next **Psychic Fair** hosted by the National Spiritualist Association is on April 29, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Thompson Temple, 2 Montague Avenue in Lake Pleasant. Readings are 25 minutes long and cost \$30. For more information, see [www.spiritualallianceusa.org](http://www.spiritualallianceusa.org).

DIAL/SELF invites youth ages 10 to 18 to attend a **Self Care Celebration** with their AmeriCorps team

this Saturday, April 29 from 1 to 4 p.m. at Unity Park in Turners Falls. The event will provide self-care goody bags for attendees, as well as snacks, treats, and arts and crafts materials. "We want local young people to know that the community cares about them!" say the organizers.

The Montague Solar Planning Committee wants Montague residents to take the **UMass Solar Survey**. Renters and owners in Turners Falls, Millers Falls, Montague City, Lake Pleasant, and Montague Center can log on to [www.tinyurl.com/montaguesolar](http://www.tinyurl.com/montaguesolar) to share their preferences about the future of solar in the villages. Take the survey now through April 30.

On Sunday, April 30 from 9 to 11 a.m. there's a "**bioblitz**" – an attempt to record as many species as possible – at the Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area. Join conservation planner Lynn Harper, retired from the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, to explore the globally uncommon pine barrens and wooded hills of the Plains.

There is no limit to the number of participants, but email [harperlynn@msn.com](mailto:harperlynn@msn.com) if you're planning to come. Meet at Plains Road at the power line – approach from Turners Falls Road only – in Montague.

Join the Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust for their second **City Nature Challenge** event this Sunday, April 30 from 1 to 3 p.m. in Warwick. May Grzybowski, Mount Grace's TerraCorps land conservation steward, is leading a bioblitz hike at Arthur Iversen Conservation Area. Grzybowski is passionate about citizen science, and will lead the walk to mossy forest, vernal pools, and a washbowl falls. Meet at 67 Gale Road in Warwick.

There will be another bioblitz hike with Grzybowski at the Alderbrook Meadows Wildlife Sanctuary Trail

next Monday, May 1 at 839 Millers Falls Road (Route 63), Northfield. Walk around a beaver pond spotting wildlife between 6 and 7 p.m.

Mount Grace uses iNaturalist to learn more about the conservation land and to keep a record of the natural history of the forests. Participants are asked to download the iNaturalist app to their phones before arriving at the event, as these areas have limited cell signals. To register, email [grzybowski@mountgrace.org](mailto:grzybowski@mountgrace.org).

A very **special Cinemastorm** double feature at the Shea Theater this Sunday, April 30 from 7 to 10 p.m. will feature a special Q-and-A and trivia session with writer and director John Sayles. Sayles will be there with director Robert D. Kryzkowski and New England Public Media personality and Shea president Monte Belmonte as two of his films are screened.

*The Brother From Another Planet* (1984) is a sci-fi drama about an alien who crash-lands on Earth and finds himself hiding in the heart of Harlem. *The Alligator* (1980) is described as a "sneakily subversive horror film that follows a baby alligator that is flushed down the toilet and grows up to be a massive, man-eating monster."

The movies and talk are free, and there will be a cash bar.

On three Thursdays in May from 4 to 5 p.m., the New Salem Public Library will offer a **Beginning Genealogy Workshop Series** led by Philip Johnson, a local genealogist who specializes in Massachusetts and Swedish research but who can help with any genealogy. The workshops will cover topics such as how to begin research, how to create a family chart, and recommended software and sites for research, free and paid.

Registration is required, and spaces are limited. Participants will need to bring a laptop to access websites. The workshops are on May 4, 11, and 18. Call (978) 544-6334 to register.

Jimmy Dunson of **Mutual Aid Disaster Relief** will give a talk next Friday, May 5 called "Building Power While the Lights are Out: Disaster, Mutual Aid, and Dual Power." The conversation will take place at 7 p.m. at 104 Fourth Street in Turners Falls.

A quote from Dunson's book, a collection of people's experiences with mutual aid crisis response, reads as follows: "Disaster capitalism, although still currently dominant, is no longer the only powerful force when disasters occur. There is a growing movement of movements engaged in decentralized, liberatory disaster relief, rooted in the values of mutual aid and solidarity."

Would you like to **help out the Montague Common Hall** and get your hands dirty? Head down on May 6 from roughly 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and help polish up the building and engage in some community-building gardening fun with friends, neighbors, and soon-to-be-friends.

The Greenfield Recreation Department is putting out a call for teams for its second annual **Cornhole Tournament** to benefit the city's annual Independence Day fireworks celebration. The tournament, scheduled for Saturday, May 6 at 3 p.m. on Court Square, will feature food trucks, drinks, a live DJ, raffles, children's activities, and more.

The entry fee is \$50 per two-person team, and players must be at least 18. Prizes will be awarded to the top three teams. Registration and sponsorship information is available at [www.friendsofgreenfieldrecreation.org](http://www.friendsofgreenfieldrecreation.org). The rain date is Sunday, May 7.

On Saturday, May 6 from 4 to 8 p.m., Sadie's Bikes will hold their first **Gumball Machine Takeover** at their new 83 Canal Street location in Turners Falls. Owner Nik Perry is having people curate prizes for the gumball machine each month. This month features prizes by Candy Fiend of Providence, Rhode Island.

Candy Fiend has filled each capsule with five freeze-dried Skittles. "They kind of explode and turn into giant planets in your mouth," Perry says. "They have the consistency of wasabi peas, but they taste like Skittles." Candy Fiend also collects odd bikes – unicycles, bikes that steer backwards, and other contraptions. He will bring a selection with him and there will be weird bike demos. Bring quarters for the gumball machines!

There will be an **art show, reception, and parade** on Sunday, May 7 in connection with an exhibit

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at the Great Falls Discovery Center. Called *Visions of the Connecticut River Valley*, the group show celebrates the nature of the watershed, with proceeds going to the Friends of the Discovery Center in support of programming there.

The fun starts at 1:30 p.m. at Peskeomskut Park. MuZen puppeteers will lead a parade down the Avenue to the Center, where an opening reception ensues between 2 and 4 p.m. There will be performances by cellist Stephen Katz and experimental ambient trio Panthalassa, with poetry and storytelling interludes.

Refreshments will be offered for a sliding-scale donation.

Send your local briefs to  
[editor@montaguereporter.org](mailto:editor@montaguereporter.org).



## Another Letter to the Editors

### Hydro Licenses Should Be Denied

Negotiations about the future health of the Connecticut River ended three weeks ago between FirstLight Power and a group of concerned organizations. The sad result was no meaningful progress toward protecting the river from the daily damage wreaked by FirstLight's so-called "green energy" facilities in Northfield and Turners Falls.

FirstLight's claim that the agreement is "a huge win for the environment" is far from the truth. First, if the company obtains a new license on these terms, it will be granted another 50 years of choking off the life of the river by releasing only half the water needed to support fish and invertebrate populations downstream of the dam. FirstLight will also be granted ten years to install improvements to its almost-useless fish ladder – an absurdly long time for a company making millions each year from destruction of the river and its fish life.

Second, the company's glaringly irrational Northfield Pump Storage Station will be permitted to keep draining the river daily. This

facility uses more power – from the grid – than it generates! Its existence is due solely to rate differentials; it consumes energy during times of the day when rates are low, pumping the water up to the reservoir at the top of the mountain. Then it releases the water when rates are high; that's how the station generates a large profit even though it runs at an energy loss. This is "hydropower"?

FirstLight sells the Northfield station by claiming that Massachusetts has large problems meeting peak energy demands; this is false, as journalist Karl Meyer has amply demonstrated. Meyer has also extensively documented the level of harm being done to the river each day as the Pump Station suctions fish, larvae, and eggs – close to 100% of them doomed to die – into its turbines.

To make the situation even more worrisome, FirstLight CEO Alicia Barton declared recently that her company hopes to use wording from last summer's climate bill to dramatically *increase* (by as much as three times)

the amount it sucks daily out of the river at Northfield. This would be devastating for the remaining fish, and could have dire implications for fishing in Barton Cove, which already experiences large fluctuations in water level as a result of the pump station.

And who would pay for this increase? You guessed it – Massachusetts ratepayers. Because of a quirk in the new law, the public would end up footing the bill for energy storage that we don't need.

The pump station and the dam were licensed 50 years ago, and now the company is requesting another 50. It was a mistake to license the pump station back then, but it certainly makes no sense at all to allow it now. And the dam should not be given *carte blanche* for another 50 years of operation in anything close to its current form.

The good news is that the negotiated agreement that was just announced is not the end of the fight to save the Connecticut – it's just the beginning!

The next twelve months are crucial for public mobilization regarding the relicensing process. The more pressure the public applies on the MA Dept. of Energy and on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the better the chance that the relicensing process will lead to meaningful protections for river health.

Both FERC and MA DOE could require far more meaningful changes to the Turners Falls Dam. MA DOE could prevent any increase in the amount of water sucked out of the river at Northfield and require the creation of a fund to pay for future decommissioning of the facility. These restrictions are a more likely outcome than outright denial of the new license – which is what river advocates would really like to see – but we won't even obtain these concessions unless we make our voices heard in large numbers.

You can plug in to this effort through any of the following organizations: Western MA Rights of Nature ([WMassRN@gmail.com](mailto:WMassRN@gmail.com)), the Connecticut River Conservancy (which appropriately refused to sign on to the agreement with FirstLight), Greening Greenfield, and the Connecticut River Defenders. Please get involved!

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ERVING from page A1

terms of insurance, vandalism, risk of accident or fire, and loss of possible tax revenue.

Town officials now favor demolishing it, believing there is a better chance of selling the land to some commercial concern without the rather decrepit mill complex on it. However, as the town is near its tax levy limit, "we would have to do some version of an override [vote]," selectboard member Scott Bastarache explained.

The town faces two decisions: whether or not to pay for part of the project by pulling money from the town's stabilization funds; and whether to pay for it all up front, which would require a capital override, or finance it over either three years or five years, using a debt override. At Monday's information session, townspeople were presented with six options for paying for the demolition, based on each combination of these factors.

The town has about \$11 million in stabilization, and the options presented would use \$1.85 million of it - half the town's expense of \$3.7 million, if the MassDevelopment grant is also used.

According to the presentation, the one-time cost to the average residential taxpayer of paying for the project all at once, without using stabilization funds, would be \$584.60. Financing it over five years would make this \$132.55 for each of the five years, and using stabilization to cover half would reduce the annual increase to \$66.28.

Asked to indicate which option they would prefer, the great majority of those in attendance said they preferred to pay for the whole project up front, without using stabilization funds.

Town resident Mark Burnett drew a parallel with the Usher Mill, and asked what had

happened to it. A number of town government people presented explanations. As selectboard member William Bembury recalled, the owners of the Usher Mill told the town they were leaving and intended to leave the buildings empty and not sell them. Later they were sold to someone, and soon after that, in 2007, they burned by arson. After that, the town had to take them and pay for the cleanup. The site is now Erving Riverfront Park.

Principal assessor Jacquelin Boyden recalled the story similarly.

Edward Hines of Wendell, who used to teach in Erving, recalled a detail Bembury and Boyden left out, but which they did not refute: around 1990 the Houghton family, the mill's owners, offered it to the town for free to be turned into a high school for Union 28, which the town was trying to find a place for at the time; the town turned down this offer.

Burnett asked why the town had to take responsibility for the building after it had been illegally burned down.

"We were tasked with the cleanup," Boyden answered. "There wasn't a chance to redevelop it... We were never given that opportunity."

"The town chose to take it," Burnett later argued. "The town chose to take the IP Mill, as well."

"The IP Mill was taken for back taxes, correct," selectboard chair Jacob Smith replied.

"So the town chose to do that," Burnett shot back.

Boyden mentioned that without any buildings on it, the IP Mill property would be worth around \$600,000, and businesses there could contribute at least \$20,000 to the town's tax rolls each year.

## AT LARGE

# Emergency Services Building a No-Go

By CHIP AINSWORTH

**NORTHFIELD** - No one looked happy filing out of the Pioneer Valley Regional School auditorium after the special town meeting on April 19. A motion to appropriate \$13.5 million for an emergency services building had failed. Only 54.8% had approved the motion, well short of the required two-thirds majority.

Denying the town's loyal and devoted fire chief Skip Dunnell a new fire station seemed cruel, but the ESB wasn't a top priority for Northfielders saddled with burgeoning water rates, a \$750 annual sewer bill, property and excise taxes, and a looming recession.

Don't blame them though, blame Town Hall. Dunnell would've gotten his new fire station if a new police station and EMS facility wasn't jammed into the package. "Three roosters in one henhouse wouldn't have worked anyway," quipped a retired town employee.

Northfield is more Mayberry than Manhattan. According to the most recent town report, police made 22 arrests in 2021-22. Whoever designed the safety building must watch a lot of *CSI Miami*. The new police station would have included an interrogation room, a booking room, a squad room, an evidence room, and a bulk evidence room for the big busts.

Meanwhile Northfield's EMS

crews averaged less than a patient transport a day in Northfield, Bernardston and Erving in 2021-22. Why did it need a new facility with all the bells and whistles?

The battle between Town Hall and the taxpayers happened on the 248th anniversary of the battles of Lexington and Concord. Then as now, neither side came to listen.

Inside the sweltering auditorium, a woman tugged at town clerk Dan Campbell's sleeve. "Please start the meeting," she pleaded.

"I can't start the meeting," he said. "The moderator starts the meeting."

Skip Dunnell stood on stage dressed in a pressed white shirt and said, "We didn't anticipate nearly this amount [of people]."

The meeting was called to order by moderator Nathan L'Etoile almost an hour after the 6:30 p.m. scheduled start. Someone near the stage held up a box of Kleenex and said, "There's tissues for anyone who needs one."

During the 90-minute presentation people in the audience yelled, "Speak up!" and "We can't hear you!" Budget figures shown on the screen were harder to read than the smallest letters on an eye chart.

Town administrator Andrea Llamas - she of the soon-to-be \$115,000 salary - boasted that Northfield has one of the lowest property tax rates in the state. "And we want to keep it that way," someone said.

As is her wont, Llamas was exaggerating. Northfield's tax rate of \$13.58 per \$1,000 valuation is about 175th of the 351 cities and towns in the Commonwealth. If Article 1 had passed, the rate would have significantly increased from year to year.

### Midnight at the Oasis

Prior to the intermission, school superintendent Patricia Kinsella listed a colleague to wheel out several cases of bottled water. People gulped them down and returned to the arena to hear more arguments.

"Here is the question that will not be accurately answered," said Brian Bordner, the president of Tri-State Precision on Ashuelot Road. "What is this going to cost you on your tax bill? They won't tell you because they can't. They don't know. They are just getting started!"

Selectboard member Alex Meisner spoke as a private citizen, albeit one who doesn't own property and wouldn't be burdened if Article 1 passed.

When Meisner criticized Paul Gorzocoski for calling the ESB a "billionaire's yacht of a proposal," he was shouted down and L'Etoile gavel-slammed the meeting back to order.

"North Korea must be such a simple place, with no democracy," joked the *Greenfield Recorder's* Domenic Poli.

No one will ever see Meisner's outburst because technical difficul-

ties prevented it from being recorded. "The PA system wasn't working properly," said BNCTV operations manager Otis Wheeler. "I'm really disappointed it isn't available."

Asked to comment on his outburst, Meisner texted, "Attitudes and opinions can flare up and mine did, so for that I apologize. It was an isolated incident and I hope it is not held against me."

"I don't need to pay taxes to have a say," he added. "This isn't the 1800s."

When voters checked in they had been given square slips of cranberry-colored paper that said YES on the top and NO on the bottom. Shortly before 11 p.m. they tore off their choice and put it in the ballot box on the left side of the stage.

Police chief Jon Hall carried it across the lobby and into the library where the contents were spilled onto a table and counted. After the result was announced people scurried out of the auditorium and into the parking lot. Nobody stopped for a tissue.

"Some think lose-lose, others win-win," said Sam Richardson.

"They will just keep bringing it back until it passes, like Deerfield did for the elementary school," said former Deerfield resident Joan Valva. "People got tired of going."

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

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**WENDELL** from page A1

will remain on the board of assessors. He spoke about the teamwork that made working on town boards “fun” and rewarding. Heard also said cooperation made working in Wendell fun.

When he got into his car after the meeting, a Bob Dylan song started along with the car.

**Spring Cleaning**

The board also held an extra meeting on Friday, April 14. Anne Diemand came to promote a “TED Walk,” showing respect for another long-serving board member, the late Ted Lewis.

Starting in the 1970s Diemand and Lewis sponsored a spring pickup each early April as melting snow exposed litter along the roads. People would gather at the town barn and head out collecting bags of trash and piling junk on the roadsides, and Diemand and Lewis would collect the bags and piles in a town truck and bring them to the dump.

This year, Diemand proposed using the April school vacation week for litter pickup. She offered to collect bags from the roadsides, borrowing Harry Williston’s truck to avoid using a town one. When Williston was chair of the highway commission he entered every citizen who brought in a bag of trash into a raffle, the prize being ten free WRATS bags.

**New Website**

Robert Heller reported on the website committee’s choice of Proud City to build a new town website. It would cost \$2,000 to begin, \$2,000 for a “beta” launch eight weeks later, and \$1,800 for the first annual maintenance fee. Adding meetings would add \$500 to the launch cost and \$600 per year.

Wendell’s IT maintenance budget still has \$7,500, an appropriate source if the finance committee approves. Other sources, including ARPA money, may be easier to use.

Proud City wants Wendell representatives to attend twelve 45-minute classes and do homework to keep the site current. Town coordinator Glenn Johnson-Mussad and

other town staff were recommended. Treasurer Carolyn Manley suggested a “town coordinator special projects” line item for the FY’24 budget, to use when Johnson-Mussad is given a short-lived extra job.

The board voted to approve hiring Proud City, and member Gillian Budine offered to be a point person for contact with them.

**Wood Bank & Orchard**

Tree warden Cliff Dornbusch said he has two UMass volunteers processing trees into firewood at the wood bank. No money has arrived from the grant he applied for in October to cover the expense of a splitter and saw.

Some logs from the National Grid cutting were left on private property along the road, and will be in the way of brush cutting. Dornbusch is encouraging the landowners to move the wood.

After talking with the open space committee, the first location Dornbusch mentioned for an orchard is along the north common, where fruit trees could replace the crabapples as they fail. He expressed concern about fumes from traffic. He said he liked the front Fiske Pond, where sumacs are reaching the end of their life, but Wendell bought that property with a restriction for undisturbed natural progression.

**Swift River Water**

Wendell and New Salem share a \$100,000 grant to install PFAS filters in the Swift River School water system. At the April 19 meeting, Keller said he still favors a new well, the approach recommended by Wendell facilities engineer Jim Slavos after PFAS were first found at the school.

The New Salem selectboard favored the filter system, and Mass-DEP approved it as an approach that could be implemented sooner. Wendell agreed as long as the new well idea was not abandoned.

Heard said siting a new well inside the building, in a utility room near big machines, would be unwise. Keller suggested \$20,000 for the cost, and Budine said the state might help with drilling it.

A neighbor offered an easement

for a well, but MassDEP will not help unless the well is located on public property. Much of the school property is wetland, which calls for con com involvement.

**Town Personnel**

Leverett police chief Scott Minckler reported that officer Meghan Gallo left his department, along with her role as Wendell’s animal control officer. In Leverett animal control is separate from police, as it was in Wendell until Maggie Houghton retired. For now Leverett police are providing animal control, and a regional service is available for a fee. Leverett is advertising for a new full-time police officer and animal control officer.

Manley came to discuss town personnel policy. She suggested requiring comp time be capped at 40 hours and spent within a calendar year, and said highway supervisor Al Frost supports those limits. The road crew earned hundreds of hours of comp time plowing this winter. Time-and-a-half would be awarded for work on holidays.

Four of Wendell’s six employees and two of its three retired employees use town health insurance. Manley suggested offering those who decline it some of the money Wendell saves. Johnson-Mussad, one of the two current employees who decline it, said this would be nice. Spending would come from the insurance line in the town budget.

Manley asked whether someone who transfers from another town to Wendell a year or two before retirement would be entitled to the same benefit as someone who worked 10 or 20 years for the town. She said the proposed changes should be reviewed by a lawyer.

**Back Roads**

Open space committee member Dan Leahy brought a memorandum of understanding he had worked out with Audubon and DCR for a property the town took for back taxes at 40 Gate Lane. The five acre-acre lot on a discontinued narrow road, with a condemned house, has brought Wendell no tax revenue for years and is a liability.

Audubon would pay \$12,600 for taking down the building, and would create a small parking area next to Gate Lane in exchange for the property.

Keller told Leahy the town may dispose of property by auction, or by advertising a request for proposals (RFP). The RFP can be targeted specifically to an organization that would use the property as the town would like.

Leahy brought up discontinuing Stone Cutoff Road, as was suggested by the sole resident of that section, but the laws that govern dis-

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continuing roads are complex and ambiguous, and it would require another call to counsel.

**Fields**

Johnson-Mussad met with Gerry’s Landscaping about this year’s summer mowing schedule for town properties. In 2022, three-week intervals allowed grass to grow so long as to make the job more time-consuming. Gerry’s recommends mowing twice a month, but Wendell’s pollinator group prefers less frequent mowing.

The office building area, commons, and library have a need for more frequent mowing, but Gerry’s would mow all town properties as one operation. Selectboard chair Laurie DiDonato said grass on the common grows slowly.

In 2022 mowing started late, and grass was already tall. Budine suggested starting in the third week of May, and making a decision about the schedule on May 3.

Wendell was asked to sign a consent order for a new solar field on Adams Road in Greenfield. Wendell’s involvement stems from being a host community for Seaboard Solar, which promised credits for electric bills and up to \$60,000 income

for the town. Seaboard failed to build as much as they promised, sold and split up, and now Wendell may be in a position to get some credit for that old commitment, or even payment.


DiDonato suggested mentioning payment, and getting counsel’s opinion before signing the form.

**Other Business**

The board voted to allow Budine up to \$1,700 to buy 26 chairs and a rolling dolly from Uline to replace rusted and broken chairs at the town hall. She agreed to check how much room was available. The plan is to replace all the chairs over several years.

Diemand Farm asked to be made an official posting place for town meetings. It was once one of seven posting places, but that number was reduced to one, outside the office building, to save the town coordinator from driving all over town for every selectboard meeting. An email to the farm will be printed and posted, without making it an official site.

There is a backlog of nominations for citizen of the year. Nominations will be accepted until mid-June.

The town election will take place next Monday, May 1, from noon to 8 p.m. 

**PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT****NELCWIT Celebrates the ‘Power to Persevere’**

**GREENFIELD** – The Power to Persevere, the annual celebration and fundraiser for the New England Learning Center for Women in Transition (NELCWIT), will be held Thursday, May 4 from 5 to 7:30 p.m. at Greenfield Community College. The program features a talk by former Massachusetts Secretary of State candidate Tanisha Sullivan and music by local rock band She Said.

NELCWIT provides sexual and domestic violence crisis services to people of any gender, sexual orientation, ability, or immigration status. Their services are free of charge, do not require insurance, and are available in Spanish. To talk to a staff member or schedule an appointment, call the 24/7 hotline at (413) 772-0806.

Sullivan has focused her life’s work on service, equity, and impact. In 2017 she was elected President of

the NAACP Boston. Voting rights is a priority for the NAACP, and Sullivan has led data-driven, solutions-oriented efforts to expand access to the ballot box.

Voices From Inside (VFI) will present their work. Through creative writing workshops, VFI helps currently or formerly incarcerated women find their voices, return to their communities with success, and become leaders.

There will be a cash bar, a buffet dinner, and an installation of the Clothesline Project, which brings awareness to the issue of violence through the display of t-shirts decorated by those who have experienced it.

To register for the event or make a donation, go to [www.givebutter.com/NELCWITfriends2023](http://www.givebutter.com/NELCWITfriends2023). You may also attend without registering, and make a donation there. For more information, contact [zoe@nelcwit.org](mailto:zoe@nelcwit.org).

**Dan Keller’s Farewell Speech...**

In leaving the Selectboard, I would like to thank all the Wendell citizens who supported me over the years and gave me the great honor and pleasure to serve the Town. I’d also like to thank all Wendell citizens for supporting Town efforts and the many projects the Town has undertaken.

As I thought about my uncharted future, I also had the chance to think back over the ups and downs in Wendell during my time working for the Town, which comes to 47 years when you include my membership on the Finance Committee. I thought about what I liked most about the jobs, and what I learned.

And it turns out they are the same thing, and it’s teamwork. For almost every week of those years I saw how town employees, committee members, and those in other town institutions worked together as a team. I realized that many of the things I’ve loved have had teamwork at their core – things like playing basketball, playing in a band, and working for the town.

I recently spent some time watching the women’s Final Four basketball this year, and it gave me a very vivid picture of how teamwork works. Essentially, every player on a team knows what her teammate is doing – where she is, and where she is going. She can pass the ball to a spot where she knows her teammate will be, even though the opponent doesn’t know where that spot is. It’s almost as if the team were not five individuals, but one living organism.

If we all know what the others are doing, and what they’re planning to do, we can work together as a team. And when we are overwhelmed, or stuck, we have help, and backup.

This has been true, over all those years, for the Selectboard, the Finance Committee, Town Clerk, Coordinator, Treasurer, Tax Collector, Assessors, WRATS officials, Highway Department, Planning Board, Custodian, many committees, and the list goes on, to include many other town institutions, like the Good Neighbors.

That’s a lot of communication that has to take place, and a lot of transparency, but it’s been working in Wendell for many years.

That’s my wish for the town. To keep it up!

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## QUABBIN from page A1

Domb said that Granby, one of the towns in her district, “can’t tap into the Quabbin even though they’re eight miles away.” Comerford and Saunders’s bill would require the MWRA to study the feasibility of expanding its service to the Chicopee, Westfield, Connecticut, and Millers river basins.

Another provision of the bill addresses payments *in lieu* of taxes (PILOT), fees the state pays to municipalities in which it owns land. MGL Ch. 59 § 5G specifically exempts all land below the “high-water mark” of the Quabbin reservoir from eligibility for PILOTs, “a discriminatory provision that is actually, truly, hard to defend,” Comerford argued on Wednesday.

The bill would make these lands, flooded between 1938 and 1946 by the damming of the Swift River Valley, eligible. While the towns of Dana, Enfield, Greenwich, and Prescott were discontinued and dismantled, their dead disinterred and reburied above the waterline, Belchertown, Hardwick, New Salem, Pelham, Petersham, and Ware still exist and could receive PILOTs for their submerged sections.

Finally, the bill would place for the first time what Saunders called an “excise” on the transferred drinking water, set at 5 cents per 1,000 gallons.

This would amount to only 6 cents per month for the average Boston household, he told the committee, but generate \$3.5 million a year for a “Quabbin Host Community Development Trust Fund.” Municipalities and non-profits in watershed towns could apply to use the funding.

“For far too long – far too long – the recompense for towns

that steward this water has been a pittance relative to the value,” said Comerford. “For too long, I would suggest, Massachusetts has taken from its four western counties.... without a care for our arrested economic development, our potable water issues, our sacrifice to keep that water clean, and our lasting trauma.”

Three members of the public offered testimony at the hearing, all in support of the bill.

William Tinker of Hardwick said that over 4,000 acres of land in his town is undevelopable due to the watershed protections, and shared an estimate that 2 billion gallons of rain fall on that land each year, recharging the Quabbin.

“The value of that 2 billion gallons, based on the MWRA selling at their rate of 8 cents a gallon, is equivalent to \$160 million,” Tinker said. “And that’s just our town.”

Tinker added that Hardwick cannot afford to build a wastewater treatment plant, but is ineligible for the MWRA’s own loan program because it is not a customer community.

Judith Cohen, also of Hardwick, described the lands surrounding the reservoir as an “accidental wilderness” that amounts to an unplanned “system of water purification,” and said the 5 cents per 1,000 gallon fee was not enough to repay or maintain this ecological service.

“This is a unique region in the state,” said Glenn Ayers of Greenfield, retired regional health agent and former water and wastewater operator. “The water quality here is outstanding, because the towns that provide the land are protecting the water supply for millions.... This bill is critical to addressing the sacrifice these towns have made, and continue to make, on a daily basis.”



# Montague Revamps Rescue Act Strategy

By JEFF SINGLETON

The Montague selectboard heard a new proposal on Monday from assistant town administrator Walter Ramsey for spending approximately \$1.6 million in “unobligated” funds the town has received under the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Although no votes on specific projects were taken, board members voiced strong support for the new approach, which starts by allocating funding to several broad categories of projects.

However, the shifting process and criteria may put in jeopardy projects the board seemed to leave ARPA money to implement over the past month.

The discussion, the second time in the past two months the board has tackled this complex and time-consuming issue, was primarily a presentation by Ramsey.

At its March 13 meeting, the board had discussed approximately 17 projects, with cost estimates totaling \$2.72 million, and ranked them by priority to be financed by the town’s \$1.58 million in “unobligated” ARPA funds. However, the large gap between projects and available funds seemed to disappear when a project to renovate Montague Center Park, which had ballooned to \$1.57 million, was temporarily taken off the table by parks and recreation director Jon Dobosz.

Several weeks later, the board placed three projects at the Clean Water Facility, which had accounted for about another \$400,000 of the wish list, onto the town meeting warrant to be funded by reserves instead. That created a situation where virtually all the projects on the March 13 list could be funded by ARPA.

While the math remained broadly the same in Ramsey’s presentation this week, the process for making decisions had changed significantly. Ramsey sorted the project into four broad categories with percentages attached. “Wastewater treatment,” at \$1.23 million, had ballooned to half of all ARPA spending. “General capital projects” were 30% of the total at \$736,387, and “economic and community development” came in at 10% with a total of \$245,462. A new category, titled “unforeseen expenses,” was allocated the final 10% of the unobligated funds.

Ramsey did not review specific projects, which will apparently be discussed the next Monday, but material in the board’s packet indicated more specific criteria

for ranking them. These included the potential “return on investment,” and whether a project might otherwise be eligible for grant funding. The latter brought the Montague Center Park project back on the list, with a cost of between \$700,000 and \$1 million minus a possible \$500,000 grant.

Ramsey also recommended bringing the roughly \$400,000 in Clean Water Facility projects back onto the ARPA list, to “ease the burden to [sewer] ratepayers.” Later, he indicated the projects still “might come up at town meeting,” and recommended the board develop a “strategy” to address them there. Town clerk Deb Bourbeau confirmed to the *Reporter* that the town meeting warrant has already been posted, with these wastewater projects listed as Articles 16, 17, and 18.

These changes, and a \$245,000 allocation to “unforeseen expenses,” would reduce funds available for other projects by over \$600,000.

Ramsey said the new approach to the ARPA spending, and the new budget figures, were the result of consultation with town administrator Steve Ellis, selectboard member Matt Lord, and capital improvements committee chair Greg Garrison. Lord endorsed Ramsey’s presentation on Monday, as did selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz.

The board was asked whether the repeated changes in the process might undermine public understanding town’s ARPA priorities, or public input. “No I’m not concerned about it at all,” said Lord. “We’re trying to do the best that we can with a bunch of money that we never expected to have. There have been town members who have found a way to advocate for the issues that they find important.”

Lord added that one of his goals was to create a process that “engages the appropriate sets of people in town who are knowledgeable and experienced in making these types of decisions.” “There was no set governance process on how to spend it given to us, [so] we’re just doing the best that we can,” he said.

Kuklewicz said he agreed with the proposal to spend half the funds on wastewater treatment, but suggested that “we may want to go over [30%] on the capital [projects].” The board will probably assign priority ratings to specific projects at its next meeting.

## PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

### Amazing Geology in Gill

GILL – Professor Richard Little will reveal adventures in Gill’s “deep history,” from the glacial shores of Lake Hitchcock to the fractured middle of the Pangaea supercontinent, this Saturday, April 29 at 1 p.m. at the Gill Elementary School. Little will discuss drumlins, dinosaurs, rare Jurassic armored mud balls, and drifting continents.

Gill’s rocks and landscape record these diverse dramas through geologic time, making it one of the best places in the world to study geology! Little is Professor Emeritus at

Greenfield Community College. He has written several books about local geology, and is promoting the unique Jurassic armored mud balls to be an official Massachusetts State Sedimentary Structure.

Copies of Little’s books will be available at sale prices at this program, as well as special t-shirts and displays of the rare armored mud balls. For more information, see [www.Earthview.rocks](http://www.Earthview.rocks) and [www.ArmoredMudBalls.rocks](http://www.ArmoredMudBalls.rocks). The talk is sponsored by the Gill Historical Commission.

## Montague Community Television News

### Author Talk Archived

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – Montague’s Local Author Series continued at the Montague Center library with a talk by resident Rebecca Daniels featuring her work, *Finding Sisters*, an autobiographical story about DNA and biological kin. Check out our video of the event.

We are also pleased to present a recent Montague board of assessors meeting, as well as the latest Montague selectboard meetings.

All MCTV videos are available on our Vimeo page, and all community members are welcome to sub-

mit videos to be aired on Channel 17 and featured on the Vimeo page. Think of what you would like to make, and come see how we can help! MCTV is always available to assist in local video production as well. Cameras, tripods, and lighting equipment are available for check-out, and filming and editing assistance can be provided.

Or is there something going on you think others would like to see? If you get in touch, we can show you how easy it is to use a camera and capture the moment. Contact us at (413) 863-9200 or [infomontaguetv@gmail.com](mailto:infomontaguetv@gmail.com).

## GILL from page A1

economics. “Money is not what people think it is,” he said. “It’s not necessarily the bills in your wallet. It’s a social arrangement. And that social arrangement can be changed at any time, through the legal system, to benefit some and not others.”

“The tide is turning in economics,” Snedeker added, gesturing to a book on the library shelf in front of him written by economist Thomas Piketty. “Neoclassical economics is on its way out because of the massive inequality we’re having,” he explained along with widespread recognition of the “success trap,” which meant “the more money you have, the easier it is to be successful and to make money.”

“I’m very, very passionate about trying to correct inequality,” Snedeker concluded. “I think we’re all tired of it, and as a small town, it’s not in our interest at all.”

Bathory-Peeler told the *Reporter* he started looking into the issue after the US Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*. He said he was “impressed, in a negative way” to learn about the 50 years of anti-abortion activism that had culminated in the decision, and decided he wanted to help a movement for change get started now, “even if it takes 50 years to make it happen.”

## Sticker Shock

“The sad news is, come January, we’re going to lose this really great electricity pricing that everyone’s been enjoying for a couple years,” said town administrator Ray Purington, announcing the new two-year energy contract signed by 13 Franklin County Towns.

From 2024 to 2025, the de-

fault cost for the Gill Community Choice Power Supply Program will be 15.1 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh), up 47% from the current rate of 10.3 cents/kWh.

Residents can also opt into a “Green 100” plan, which uses 100% renewable energy, for 18 cents/kWh, or a discount plan with less renewable energy at 14.5 cents/kWh.

“There’s a lot of instability in general in the electricity and energy markets right now,” said Purington, explaining that this pushed the group to lock in the contract now, rather than wait in the hope that prices would fall.

“People who have been enrolled in the town’s program have been protected by the rate shock that already happened,” said Purington. “So, its time has come,” he said with a sigh. “You can’t shelter from the prices forever.”

Selectboard chair Charles Garbiel said the prices “still weren’t bad” compared to Eversource’s current rates. (Eversource’s fixed rate for small general service is currently at 22.515 cents/kWh.)

“If at any point during those 24 months the Eversource default price is lower than the town program,” Purington added, “there is no fee, no charge, to opt out of the town program and go back to Eversource.”

## Chief’s Cost of Living

The selectboard approved a 5% cost-of-living adjustment for police chief Christopher Redmond for the 2024 fiscal year.

The personnel committee recommended a 6% increase for most positions in town, but the guidance didn’t extend to the police chief. Snedeker explained that the Social

Security cost-of-living increase is currently 8.7%, but that some living pay increases for the chief had been “front-loaded” in the town’s last contract agreement with him.

“I keep putting myself in the shoes of townspeople,” said Snedeker. “Because we did give increases up front, how are they going to respond to this?”

“I think, based on the person it’s going to, they will be mostly in favor of it,” answered selectboard member Randy Crochier. “I think he’s worth twice that.”

“It’ll be my 32nd year with the town starting in July,” Redmond noted. When asked if he would be comfortable with a 5% increase, he answered, “I’m comfortable with anything.”

## Other Business

Asbestos in the town hall is currently being encapsulated or removed, a process that will likely continue for the next several days. Next steps include allowing materials to dry and replacing flooring. Purington said he had no estimate about when the process would be finished and public access could resume at town hall.

The town will place a new driver feedback traffic sign on West Gill Road, where police are receiving complaints about speeding cars. “I think that’ll make a lot of people over that way kinda happy,” said Crochier.

The Memorial Day committee is planning a ceremony for Sunday, May 28 at 9 a.m. Participants will gather at the Gill Church before crossing the street for a ceremony at the war me-



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SUZETTE SKNOVAC/BB PHOTO

On Wednesday morning the Montague tree committee received a delivery of 90 trees from Bigelow Nurseries of Northborough, with help from the town DPW. Above: Committee member Bob Austin lets DPW employee Dan Poirier know where to drop 'em.

**PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**

# Three Arbor Day Rituals

**MONTAGUE** – To celebrate Arbor Day this year, the Montague Tree Advisory Committee has teamed up with the Great Falls Discovery Center to plant a Redbud in the small garden next to the accessible parking lot, directly across Avenue A from Town Hall. The public is invited to attend and celebrate the planting at 11:30 a.m. on Friday, April 28.

That afternoon, at 5 p.m., the public is also invited to celebrate Arbor Day by planting a Red Maple at Rutter's Park in Lake Pleasant.

And on Saturday, April 29 at 10 a.m., the public is invited to celebrate the planting of an Autumn Blaze Maple near the playground at the public park off of Station Road in Montague Center.

## LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

*Here's the way it was on April 25, 2013: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.*

\$200 to take the decals off an older vehicle to allow the department to maintain one unmarked cruiser.

### Cruiser Feud Bubbles Over

The Gill selectboard meeting came to an abrupt halt about halfway through on Monday, when John Ward stood up from the table and announced, "I am done with this meeting. You no longer have a quorum," and walked out. The frustration had been building over whether to put Town of Gill markings on the new four-wheel drive Ford Interceptor SUV police cruiser. It would cost about \$500 to mark the vehicle, and an additional

Ward had advocated marking the Interceptor, the police department's new front-line vehicle and the first cruiser bought by the town's own taxpayers in many years.

But police chief David Hastings resisted the idea, saying he would be the officer primarily driving the Interceptor, and that since he was often on call when not actively on duty, he might find himself in the position of driving the Interceptor to dinner in a neighboring town, where the sight of a marked Gill police cruiser in the driveway might create the wrong impression.

## 20 YEARS AGO

*Here's the way it was on April 24, 2003: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.*

make the river a healthier place for humans and wildlife," Ziomeck said. The board voted unanimously to award these funds.

### Museum Nearly Complete

Dave Ziomeck of the Great Falls Discovery Center asked the Montague selectboard to approve the pass-through of grant money from the Department of Environmental Management in the amount of \$15,000 to be used to support the design and fabrication of hands-on exhibits in an annex of the nearly completed visitors' center.

Exhibits in the small, 20-by-8-foot room overlooking the canal and river will be "based on the human impact on the river, from fishery to industry, and on efforts to

### Biodiesel on the Horizon!

The Pioneer Valley Biodiesel Cooperative is a newly-formed coop whose mission is to make biodiesel more available in the area, both by purchasing the fuel in bulk for its members and by constructing a facility that would process waste from local restaurants into new biodiesel.

The group was recently awarded \$32,000 from the USDA's Rural Business Enterprise Grant program, which will fund the coop's formation and a feasibility study.

## 150 YEARS AGO

*Here's the way it was on April 30, 1873: News from the Turners Falls Reporter's archive.*

were in a boat in the vicinity of the ferry, and in meddling with the ferryman a rope overturned their craft and [they] very foolishly swam to the drifting boat instead of the shore, which would have been much easier reached, and clung to the sides of the unmanageable death trap to be swept over the dam. John Perry and John Burbank discovered the boys floating down the river clinging to the upset boat, and rescued them when within a few rods of the fall. One of the lads lamented the losing of a highly colored clay pipe more than the ducking!

Lot owners on Second, Third and L streets are complying with the requirements of their deeds by planting shade trees in front of their premises.

### Local Matters

There is a great need for more dwellings, and the want of them keeps a number of people from coming to the place.

FOOT-BALL is what the boys enjoy themselves at now.

The shower of last night will keep the dust down one day at least.

"Uncle" John Clark of Riverside is about his farm as lively as ever this spring. He is the oldest person in this vicinity, and may live to see his home a city.

Two young boys came near going over the falls yesterday. They

for the project during dry weather in late June or July, and that the town is working "to get through the hurdles of the federal permitting agencies."

### Other Business

Angela Wheeler was appointed to the tree advisory committee, and Ryan Paxton was officially appointed as public health director.

Paxton, who attended the meeting, had been approved by the board of health on April 12 and has negotiated a contract with the town. According to health board member Michael Nelson, Paxton has agreed to complete training within a year to become a registered sanitarian and septic installer, and former director Gina McNeely has agreed to stay on a "per-diem" basis during the transition.

Ellis was appointed by the board to the state's 25-member Economic Development Planning Council. The governor's website says the council holds regional meetings for public input and creates four-year plans for economic development in the state.

Ramsey announced that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) had extended the deadline for agreements between FirstLight Power and stakeholders in the company's hydroelectric relicensing process until May 1.

He said Montague has a "tentative settlement" on the recreation agreement, which has been the town's focus, and was waiting on a "final copy" which should be ready for the board's review at its May 1 meeting. FERC has "signaled," he said, that it will accept the final agreement if it comes in a bit after the new deadline. Ramsey said the agreement would retain the town's right to comment on erosion issues during the upcoming water quality review process.

A lengthy, itemized response from Trinity Senior Communities of New England on the status of artifacts from the former Farren Hospital, which is due to be demolished, was quickly reviewed. Ramsey said the town's lawyers are "pushing for a clean environmental report" – a Phase II subsurface investigation – before Trinity formally transfers the cleared land to the town.

The next selectboard meeting will be held Monday, May 1.



### MONTAGUE from page A1

which has been moved from Wednesdays to Saturdays.

It will be a busy season for River-Culture, the town's cultural promotion project, which will also be sponsoring the traditional May Day celebration in Montague Center, featuring Morris dancers and fiddle music, on Sunday, May 7 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The board approved a number of requests for a second annual Makers' Market event on Saturday, June 3, at the end of Second Street next to Unity Park. These included the use of public property on the street, an entertainment permit, and a one-day beer and wine license for Pioneer Valley Brewery at a nearby lot on Second Street. The market is being organized by the parks and recreation department in collaboration with Nova Motorcycles and the brewery.

Library director Caitlin Kelley received approval for the use of Peskeompskut Park for a puppet show on August 4. She said the show will be about a "spunky" princess that outwits a dragon, but added: "I won't tell you guys the rest of the story. You have to come and see the puppet show."

Add to all this the annual RPM Festival, a heavy metal concert at the Millers Falls Rod and Gun Club on September 1 through 3, a planned Soapbox Derby on September 17, and the reboot of the fall festival once known as Pumpkinfest, and the town of Montague could find itself to be a popular destination point over the next six months.

### Projects in the Works

The selectboard agreed to support a potential application to the state board of library commissioners for a construction grant for a new library, or renovation of the Carnegie Library in Turners Falls. Kelley said the applications would not have to be submitted until May 2024, but the state wanted to see a "letter of intent" in advance.

The letter, on which Kelley said she and town administrator Steve Ellis had collaborated, does not take any stance on whether the town will opt for a new library or a renovation of the Carnegie, noting that "there is not yet consensus" on the issue but

that a recent survey had rated "libraries" as a top local priority in the coming years. Kelley said she liked the state's new process because it "collapses" the previously separate design and construction phases into a single grant.

The board executed a \$22,250 contract with the engineering firm Weston & Sampson for design work and bidding support for the Eleventh Street bridge project, though the project has yet to be approved by the May 6 annual town meeting.

A contract with the engineering firm Stantec, for a new box culvert over the Sawmill River on Ferry Road, was amended to allow the firm to design a culvert that could be constructed by the town's public works department, rather than a more costly project that conforms to state bidding requirements.

Assistant town administrator Walter Ramsey reported that the town sought to comment on a draft wastewater permit issued by the state under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). The board approved a response from Ellis and Clean Water Facility director Chelsey Little.

Ramsey alerted the board to an upcoming application for a state Municipal Vulnerability grant to help the town comply with the NPDES permit's terms. He said that ARPA funding – under a new category, "unforeseen expenses" (see article, Page A6) – could be used for the town's 25% match. The board did not take a vote on the grant, which Ramsey said would focus on the town's "collection system," or sewers, and not the treatment plant.

Ramsey told the board that US Senators Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey had agreed to Montague's proposal for a \$2 million earmark in an upcoming federal budget for collection system improvements. "That doesn't mean the funding is imminent," he said, "but that the first hurdle has passed."

Chair Rich Kuklewicz asked about the status of a previously-approved Montague City Road flood remediation project, in light of the road's closure during last weekend's rains. Ramsey said the project was "very much inching along," that construction company Davenport Trucking is planning to "mobilize"

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**LEVERETT** from page A1

Tuesday's selectboard meeting, but there were no takers.

The candidates running for re-election are Tom Hankinson for selectboard; Cat Ford for board of assessors; Lizzie Alwan for board of health; John Swartz for constable; Jed Proujansky for the finance committee; and Joan Godsey and Chris Condit for library trustees.

Two slots on the board of health, one on the finance committee, one on the planning board, and one on the school committee have no announced candidates.

The town will also vote to approve a FY'24 budget of \$7,170,615, a 4.9% increase over the current year.

Special articles include the allocation of \$140,000 for a paving project at the highway department and library, \$125,000 for fire department equipment, \$26,000 for accounting software, \$11,000 for mosquito control, and \$1,000 for heating the Field Building.

Also on the warrant is a resolution to petition the state to grant "non-citizen permanent residents (resident aliens)" the right to vote in municipal elections and serve on elected boards and committees.

The final article calls for a statement pertaining to "Leverett Indigenous History, Culture and Land Acknowledgement" to be read at the start of future town meetings.

**Electricity**

Town administrator Marjorie McGinnis announced a two-year aggregated electricity purchasing contract with Dynegy Energy Services, set to take effect next January 1, had been signed by Leverett and 14 other Massachusetts towns.

Residents will be able to choose

among three green energy options for electricity, or "opt out" of the program and receive Eversource's basic service.

Two of the three available green options will be below Eversource's projected basic rate of 15.8 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) during the first six months of the contract: 100% green electricity from national sources at 14.3 cents/kWh; and 49% green, with 24% coming from Massachusetts sources, at 15.1 cents/kWh. The third, 100% Massachusetts-generated green power, will cost 18.0 cents/kWh.

**Other Business**

The selectboard reviewed potential grant projects to pursue through the state's "Community One Stop for Growth" program. It was decided to pursue funding for "Leverett Center revisioning" and "Complete Streets and Safe Bike Routes."

Board member Patricia Duffy said the revisioning proposal would look into "how we could spruce up town center."

McGinnis said the "Complete Streets" funding could serve as an initial step for the town to join the state's Complete Streets program, which incentivizes towns to develop streets that provide "safe and accessible options for all travel modes - walking, biking, transit and vehicles - for people of all ages and abilities."

The board reviewed a handout for town meeting with a breakdown of expenses involved in the town's joint-policing agreement with Wendell, and appointed Nicholas Feld as a part-time police officer.

The board reviewed a job advertisement for an on-site assistant for the town's new accounting program.



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APRIL 27, 2023

Above: Photojournalist Joe R. Parzych captures the roaring backsplash at the Turners Falls Dam earlier this month.

## Got Extra Kale? Donate It!

By KAREN GUILLETTE

**MONTAGUE** – There is a growing awareness that millions of Americans are negatively affected by food insecurity and diet-related diseases due to lack of access to fresh, healthy produce. With inflation making food costs soar, coupled with cuts to the SNAP program, many families are struggling to put healthy food on the table.

Representative Jim McGovern recently urged the public not to wait for Congress to act, but to keep working on the local and state level to address these issues.

One such innovative local effort is the Drawdown Montague Garden Share Project.

In despair about climate change, a group of eight to ten residents of Montague Center gathered in 2017 to discuss Paul Hawken's new book, *Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Developed to Address Climate Change*.

They were inspired by Hawken's view that "global warming is not an inevitability, but an invitation to build, innovate, and effect change, a pathway that awakens creativity, compassion, and genius. This is not a liberal agenda, nor is it a conservative one. This is the human agenda."

Although the original purpose of the group was to do climate-related projects, they realized that many things can contribute to strength-



SUSAN CAMPBELL PHOTO

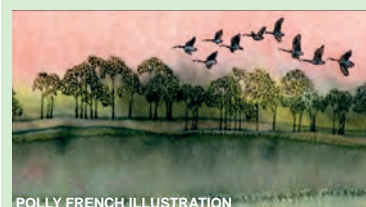
Drawdown Montague Garden Share Project members (left to right) Dave Jacke, Kathy Schermerhorn, and Paul Lipke prep the 2022 harvest.

ening the sustainability of a community. They began collaborating with other area professionals, and focused on recycling and composting at the Shea Theater and area restaurants. They worked with Amy Donovan of the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District to establish a composting center at the Montague landfill, and organized free fix-it events for local residents.

But then COVID hit, and everything came screeching to a halt. The group wondered what to do to help during the pandemic. Since most of the members were avid gardeners

and had ample surplus veggies, the idea of the Drawdown Montague Garden Share was born.

"There was joy in the process of developing this project through gardening and being able to help the community in a time of difficulty," says Susan Campbell, one of the group's three volunteer coordinators. As their website highlights, Drawdown Montague's goal is to pursue activities that "involve hopeful, creative problem-solving; collaboration with a range of other groups and organizations; and see **SURPLUS** page B5



## WEST ALONG THE RIVER SPRINGTIME COMES TO THE FLAT

BY DAVID BRULE

**THE FLAT, ERVINGSIDE** – As you may recall, this hamlet I call the Flat is situated on a flood plain terrace, about twenty feet above the rushing river. I may well be among the last to call it thus by its colloquial name that goes back almost two hundred years. Most living down here are less connected to the topography of the place, less than those who came before, and certainly less than I feel connected. Too many modern distractions nowadays separate most humans from their environment.

The Flat is made up of about 25 households, and this neighborhood sits like a small island community on this ancient floodplain. It is actually surrounded on three sides by the river, so I guess that would make it more of a peninsula community.

With only one road in and the same road out, and multiple dead-end streets, I fancy we live in splendid isolation, although we are only a five-minute walk from convenience up street such as the Element Pub and Carroll's convenience store.

The Flat is both a real and imaginary place.

Living for forty years in this old house on the Flat, deeded down the generations from great-grandfather to me, the place has sparked my imagination and provided me with hundreds of stories. I can turn back the calendar and time-travel to the 1870s simply by stepping out the back door and into the woods, or by climbing the stairs up to the north bedroom where all the memories are stored chockablock in closets and drawers.

But on days in April, waiting for spring, I'm more grounded in the reality part, as the season inches forward steadily, but maybe too slowly for my taste.

Give me a true snowy winter, or

a real spring turning into summer. Transition periods like this April find me impatient to get on with it! Since my job, for which I am paid absolutely nothing, is to be secretary to Mother Nature, I carry on writing down what she is up to out here. Just in case you don't get much chance to spend time out of doors.

For example, I can report that on *April 16*, the first true April shower fell the night before, after a spell of mid-summer heat that pushed 90 degrees pretty hard. We went from a figurative 0 to 60 in a New York minute, from 30 degrees to 85 seemingly overnight.


Off came the Irish woolen hand-knit bought years ago in grandmother's native County Kerry. I tossed the *québécois* deep-winter hat that covers the ears into the drawer, took down the palm-frond sun hat and the beat-up faded Red Sox ballcap, and then out the door with me, remembering to avoid the already burning sun.

Screens went up on the windows, and we set up the breezebox fans bought a few heat waves ago at Aubuchon's Hardware. They churned all night to draw in the April air wafting over from the rushing river.

Our Siberian Nicky, still in his thick winter coat, has had no time to shed. During the day he chose to sleep in the cool dirt under the sheltering hemlock. At night he gave up his bed in the north bedroom to sleep near the front door at the foot of the stairs.

The hyla peepers over in the oxbow marsh ring their silver bell voices, singing of the passing of many friends and elders gone and left us over the winter. The peepers' chiming voices are a good way to remember those who passed on and to remember that in spite of it all, the cycle is renewing itself, and is


see **WEST ALONG** page B3



### Unearthing the Archives

By Charlotte Kohlmann

**THE ALTERNATIVE PRESS COLLECTION**  
AT THE FORBES LIBRARY • Part I



*Nothing human is objective. We knew this and therefore built machines. They are objective; computers are objective; but they do not deal with human experiences. They deal only with problems which counter human possibility; they eliminate problems in the physical environment – but they do not describe human experiences.*

– Bart Kaplan, *Mother of Voices* Volume 1, Issue 2 (December 1967)

**NORTHAMPTON** – In the face of elitist news and print marketplaces, subjectivity and authenticity can be hard to find. Publishing uncensored voices, disenfranchised by corporate interest and thirst for market-mass readership, can be an exercise in providing meaningful choice. Examples of this exercise flourished for 32 years right here in the Connecticut River Valley. Numerous local contributors published free, underground monthly newspapers and magazines, combining human ingenuity with inexpensive print capabilities.

Northampton's Forbes Library Special Collections now houses a 188-item collection, featuring nine of these publications – and counting. The collection is also hosted at the Internet Archive hub, and can be viewed at [www.archive.org/details/forbes-alt-press](http://www.archive.org/details/forbes-alt-press) via phone or computer.

According to Dylan Gaffney, information services associate for local history and special collections at the Forbes Library, the collection originally came together after Historic Northampton was approached about hosting an exhibition of photography from local publications, and learned that private collections of see **UNEARTHING** page B4



The first issue (November 1967) of *Mother of Voices*, a Northampton-based underground newspaper featured in the Forbes Library Alternative Press Collection.



MONIQUE BRULE PHOTO

Yellow trout-lilies, *Erythronium americanum*.



# Pet of the Week



## “PEANUT”

Some people like them tall, dark, and handsome...but we think short, leggy, and cute works just as well!

Peanut is a handsome little man looking for a new home. Peanut can be a little shy when you first meet him, but he warms up within just a few minutes and becomes an instant cuddle buddy!

Because Peanut was found as a stray, we don't know how he will do with cats or kids, or if he

is house trained. We do know that he's the cutest little fellow around and would be a happy boy in a quiet, loving home.

Interested in adopting? Animals at Dakin are currently available only in Springfield. Contact adoption staff at [springfield@dakinhumane.org](mailto:springfield@dakinhumane.org) and include your name and phone number. For more information, call (413) 781-4000 or visit [www.dakinhumane.org](http://www.dakinhumane.org).

## Senior Center Activities MAY 1 THROUGH 5

### LEVERETT

Chair Yoga classes are held on Zoom on Wednesdays. Foot care clinic is held monthly. For more information, contact the Leverett COA at (413) 548-1022 x 2, or [coa@leverett.ma.us](mailto:coa@leverett.ma.us).

### WENDELL

Foot care clinic is the first Wednesday of each month. Call Katie Nolan at (978) 544-2306 for information or appointments. Senior Health Rides are available. Contact Jonathan von Ranson (978) 544-3758.

### ERVING

Open 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Mondays through Fridays. Open for cards, coffee, and snacks daily. Fitness room open daily.

Ask the Nurse and Blood Pressure Clinic is the first Tuesday of each month. Brown Bag lunch is the first Thursday of each month. Veterans' Services are the first Wednesday of each month. For more information, please call (413) 423-3649.

### Monday 5/1

9 a.m. Interval  
10:15 a.m. Stretch & Infusion  
**Tuesday 5/2**  
9 a.m. Good For U

10 a.m. Line Dancing

### Wednesday 5/3

9 a.m. Cardio Low Impact  
10:15 a.m. Chair Aerobics  
11:30 a.m. Bingo

### Thursday 5/4

9 a.m. Core & Balance  
10 a.m. Barre Fusion

### Friday 5/5

9 a.m. Quilting & Open Sew

### GILL and MONTAGUE

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

### Monday 5/1

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

### Tuesday 5/2

3 p.m. Tai Chi  
**Wednesday 5/3**  
9 a.m. Veterans' Hours  
10:15 a.m. Aerobics  
11 a.m. Chair Exercise  
12 p.m. Bring Your Lunch Bingo

### Thursday 5/4

10:30 a.m. Brown Bag  
1 p.m. Cards & Games

### Friday 5/5

10:15 a.m. Aerobics  
11 a.m. Chair Exercise  
2 p.m. By the Seat of Your Dance

## MAY LIBRARY LISTING

### Montague Public Libraries

Turners Falls: Carnegie (413) 863-3214  
Montague Center (413) 367-2852  
Millers Falls (413) 659-3801

Erving Public Library (413) 423-3348

Gill: Slate Library (413) 863-2591

Leverett Public Library (413) 548-9220

Northfield: Dickinson Library (413) 498-2455

Wendell Free Library (978) 544-3559

### MONTAGUE

**Multiple days:** *Art Exhibit.* Paintings by Sheree Bloomberg, April 14 through May 12. Montague Center.

**Multiple days:** *Grab & Go Bags.* Science: Rain gauge. Craft: pipe cleaner caterpillar. Free kits at all branch locations while supplies last.

**Every Wednesday:** *Story Time.* Join for stories and songs. Montague Center, 10 a.m.

**Every Wednesday:** *LEGOs at the Library,* every Wednesday in May. Carnegie, 2:30 to 4:30 p.m.

**Every Thursday:** *Playgroup.* Guided and free play for preschoolers; older siblings welcome. Montague Center, 10 a.m.

**1st Saturday:** *Used Book Sale.* Fiction, paperbacks, kids' books, DVDs, CDs, audiobooks. Hundreds of recent donations. Carnegie, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**Saturday, May 6:** *Free Comic Book Day.* Pick up a free comic book, do a craft. Costumes encouraged. Carnegie, 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

**2nd Monday:** *Friends of MPL Meeting.* All welcome. Email [vgatvalley@gmail.com](mailto:vgatvalley@gmail.com) for more info. Carnegie, 5:30 p.m.

**2nd Thursday:** *Lemonade Social.* Millers Falls, 3 to 4 p.m.

**2nd Thursday:** *Book Club.* May 12: Michelle Zauner, *Crying in H Mart.* Montague Center, 7 p.m.

**Monday, May 15:** *Game Day.* Board and card games. Designed for families with children; all are welcome. Montague Center, 3 to 4:30 p.m.

**Wednesday, May 17:** *Health Plans for Seniors.* Presentation and discussion led by Blue Cross Blue Shield representative. Montague town hall annex, 2 to 3 p.m.

**Wednesday, May 17:** *Author Series.* Emily Monosson, *Blight: Fungi and the Coming Pandemic.* Refreshments provided. Montague Center, 6 p.m.

**4th Friday:** *Youth Advisory Committee.* Bring your ideas and suggestions for teen library programming. Snacks provided. Carnegie, 4 p.m.

**Wednesday, May 24:** *Health Literacy for Seniors.* Finding reliable and accurate health resources online, workshop with library director Caitlin Kelley. Montague town hall annex, 2 to 3 p.m.

**Thursday, May 25:** *Toto the Tornado Kitten.* Meet children's

book hero Toto and his author at this special story hour. Carnegie, 3:30 p.m.

### ERVING

**Every Wednesday:** *After-School Activities.* Ages 2 to 10 in the Children's Room; ages 11 to 19 in the Teen Room. 1:30 to 3 p.m.

**First Thursday:** *Friends of the Library Meeting.* All welcome. 5:30 p.m.

**First Sunday:** *Family Movie.* Community Room, 1 p.m.

**Sunday, May 7:** *Romance Scams.* Presentation by Greenfield Savings Bank. Snacks provided. 11 a.m.

**Third Thursday:** *Board of Library Trustees.* Monthly meeting, open to the public. 4:30 p.m.

**Sunday, May 21:** *Learn About Foster Parenting and Adopting.* Snacks provided. 12:30 p.m.

**Third Sunday:** *Craft Day.* Make a seasonal craft. Materials provided, RSVP required. 1 p.m.

**Last Thursday:** *Book Challenge Coffee Hour.* See [mass-book.org/readingchallenge](http://mass-book.org/readingchallenge) for more info. 5:30 p.m.

### LEVERETT

**All Month:** *Art Exhibit.* Wood cut, mono print, and collages by Anne Louise White.

**All Month:** *Story Walks.* New story on the trail behind the library every Thursday.

**Every Monday and Wednesday:** *Online Qigong.* Free, all welcome. See [leverettlibrary.org](http://leverettlibrary.org) or email [CommunityQigong@gmail.com](mailto:CommunityQigong@gmail.com) for info. 10:30 a.m.

**Every Wednesday:** *Playgroup.* For children ages 0 to 5 and their caregivers. Email [budine@erving.org](mailto:budine@erving.org) to RSVP. 10:30 a.m.

**Every Thursday:** *Play Mahjongg.* Beginners welcome. 1:45 to 4 p.m.

**Thursday, May 4:** *What's Wrong with My Houseplant?* Zoom with master gardener Bonnie Power. Sign up on our website. 2 p.m.

**Every Saturday:** *Tai Chi.* Free classes, all welcome. Space limited, masks required. Call Dennis at (413) 367-9760 for info. Intermediate to advanced 10 a.m., beginners 11 a.m.

**Tuesday, May 9:** *Book Talk.* Local author Sharon Dunn, *An Island in Time.* 6:30 p.m.

**Saturday, May 13:** *Tool Care, Skill Share, and Plant Swap.* 12:30 p.m.

Weather, etc. sometimes causes changes in library events; you may want to call ahead to confirm events.

**Thursday, May 18:** *Book Talk.* Valerie Keogh, *The Librarian.* Zoom, 2 p.m.

**Saturday, May 20:** *Mushroom Inoculation Workshop.* Learn how to inoculate your own shiitake mushroom log. RSVP required, (413) 548-9220. 12:30 p.m.

**Saturday, May 20:** *Leverett Library's 20th Birthday!* 3 p.m.

**Tuesday, May 23:** *Book Discussion.* Mohsin Hamid, *The Last White Man.* 6:30 p.m.

### NORTHFIELD

**Every Tuesday:** *Drop-in Knitting.* Join fellow knitters and crocheters to chat and share projects. 6 to 8 p.m.

**Every Wednesday:** *Stories and Playtime,* for ages 0 to 5. 10 a.m.

**Every Wednesday:** *Open Tech Hours.* Pop in for help on anything library-related. Bring your device. 1 to 3 p.m.

**1st Wednesday:** *Readers' Choice.* May 3: Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day.* Pick up a copy at the library. 10 a.m.

**1st Thursday:** *Spice Club pick-up starts.* Stop in for a sample and suggested recipes while supplies last. Look for a new spice every month.

**1st Saturday:** *Puzzle Swap.* Dozens of new-to-you puzzles for kids and adults. For more info email [friendsofdml01360@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofdml01360@gmail.com). 10 to 11:30 a.m.

**2nd Wednesday:** *Readings Group.* May 10: Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God.* Pick up a copy at the library. 3 p.m.

**Wednesday, May 10:** *Architecture of Early New England.* Online Zoom event; email [dmemlib@gmail.com](mailto:dmemlib@gmail.com) to register. 7 p.m.

**2nd Thursday:** *Environmental Awareness Group.* May 11: Tom Wessels, *Reading the Forested Landscape.* Pick up a copy at the library. 6:30 p.m.

**Thursday, May 18:** *Amphibians* with Mike Jones, state herpetologist. 6 p.m.

**Saturday, May 20:** *Coffee Hour: Northfield's Field Library and the Ladies' Benevolent Society.* 10 a.m.

**Thursday, May 25:** *Take Me to the River.* Find the best Connecticut River access and info. 6:30 p.m.

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**WEST ALONG** from page B1 indeed coming back around again to the rebirth and resurrection.

Hold on, though. Within a few days we were plunged back into 40-degree weather, the heat wave already only a memory. Convinced by the exceptional warmth, the cherry tree and dogwood were clearly considering opening their blossoms, almost three weeks ahead of time. The new chill slowed their enthusiasm, but we're concerned that a late frost might kill their flowers and ruin our plans for another cherry harvest in June. We'll be needing a new supply of fruit for our vodka cherry recipe, put up in July for the Christmas holidays.

*April 20.* The see-saw of the season continued, and finally the fickle spring sun accepted to warm us a bit after chill clouds and near-freezing temperatures yanked us from summer weather to winter and back again. But at least the trickle of bird migration has begun to take our mind off worrying about the climate.

This early morning, a wee bird calls from the clusters of tree buds that hang like Spanish moss from the branches of the maples. That voice distracts me from my morning book of poetry. I took Mary Oliver down from the shelf yesterday, but I have to say she's not doing it for me this time around. Out of respect for her I will carry on and finish her first volume of collected poems before she goes back up on the shelf.

Then again, turning the page there's a hint of a better poem, so maybe I'll give her another chance!

Back to the bird prying me loose from the page. He gets me to put aside my reading glasses and coffee cup and try to focus with still sleep-fogged eyes on this tiniest of feathered folk. A ruby-crowned kinglet – emphasizing the “-let” part of its name, not a king but a kinglet with its diminutive form suffix – is about as big as your thumb. He's barely visible in the fuzz of the maple buds, but his voice is insistent. He is busy pirouetting in faint flight from branch to branch, and I can make out the movement but little else. His ruby crown, a red tuft of feathers on the tip-top of his head, is invisible to these half-awake eyes trying to focus on this mite of a bird.

The kinglet apparently came in with the first ripple of migrants – hardly a wave in that respect, but there are new feathered folk in the yard. A towhee turns up under the feeder in his early 19<sup>th</sup>-century colors, such an old-fashioned looking bird in chestnut, black, and white. Then a russet brown thrasher joins him, along with a dozen or so chipping sparrows that weren't there yesterday and probably will be gone tomorrow.

The whole sparrow tribe has rained down on the yard, and their quick brown movements catch the eye under every bush. Song spar-

rows, white-throats, fox sparrows, a lone swamp sparrow patrol the edges of the rhododendron. They will soon move on, leaving the place to more summery birds like the oriole and rose-breasted grosbeak.

By *April 23*, the Sunday morning rain turns into a day-long steady drenching, but nothing that quite qualifies as a downpour. Regardless of intensity, all of nature drinks after such a long un-April-like dry spell.

On *April 24*, I check in on kindred spirit Henry David Thoreau and his journals to see what he was up to on April 24, 1852. He tells us:

*Lay in the dead grass in a cup-like hollow sprinkled with half-dead low shrub oaks. As I lie flat, looking close in among the roots of the grass, I perceive that its endless ribbon has pushed up about one inch and is green to that extent – such is the length to which the spring has gone here – though when you stand up the green is not perceptible. It is a dull, rain dropping and threatening afternoon, inclining to drowsiness. I feel as if I could go to sleep under a hedge. The landscape wears a subdued tone, quite soothing to the feelings, no glaring colors.*

Well, some things haven't changed since 1852, but on the other hand, you won't catch me lying down in the dead grass out in great-grandfather's woods. The ticks would have a feast in no time! I'm sure he didn't have to worry about that.

What I do have and Henry David didn't, or at least didn't mention, are the thousands of trout-lily leaves with their modest cloche-like pale yellow flowers. At eye level they seem demure, simple and unassuming spring flowers; most people wouldn't even notice them. They spread across the woodland floor, completely covering the spaces between grandfather oaks, slender silver birch, and fallen wild cherry tree trunks.

The tight fists of ferns are pushing up, too, and there's a wood duck whistling through the trees down near the spring in the lower pasture gone to woodlands.

Be sure that the evening sun will send out golden rays from under the western clouds to signal the end of a late April day, teasing as always. By the time you get around to reading this, we'll be perched on the edge of the new month, and we can put fickle April in the rearview mirror, as the poetess calls her, that babbling idiot of a month who has strewn her random gifts of flowers behind her, even across this imaginary place called the Flat.

Let's hope we will have smooth sailing on into a true springtime, to welcome in the month of May, with her fiddlers on the Montague green, her flowers, and her countless cups of birdsong.



**HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG**

**Other Females; Golf Cart Cameo; Having Anxiety; Pounding Noise Woke Him; Through The Barricades**

**Monday, 4/17**

3:15 p.m. Caller from Dell Street states someone stole the license plate from his car. Will go to RMV tomorrow to cancel.

3:46 p.m. Caller from Federal Street states her neighbor has been revving the engines of the cars in his yard all day and it is too noisy. Referred to an officer. 6:23 p.m. Caller from Morris Avenue states her neighbors, unsure which house, are playing their music so loud that her walls are shaking. Caller called back stating the parties left the house and all is quiet now.

**Tuesday, 4/18**

4:40 a.m. Caller states that a person is watching her and making her feel uncomfortable in the Third Street parking lot. Caller states the person is looking into vehicles. Female located by officers; was heading to work with other females. 3:43 p.m. DCF reporting that a juvenile took off from their custody. Last seen riding bike near Cumberland Farms. If located, hold and contact DCF.

5:07 p.m. Caller states she has been feeling threatened by her mother lately due to swearing and possibly “coming to do something about it.” Would like to discuss options with an officer.

6:19 p.m. Caller from First Congregational Church reports that kids were throwing rocks at the church bus that is parked in the back parking lot and broke a few windows. Officer spoke to a mother of one of the kids; she and the caller will work it out amongst themselves.

6:39 p.m. 911 caller states a five or six people are yelling about drugs in an Avenue A apartment. Officer unable to make contact with anyone from the apartment.

**Wednesday, 4/19**

2:59 a.m. Caller from Keith Apartments reports hearing a female party screaming outside the rear of the building. Officer advises upon arrival, female was in her apartment and had the door open a few inches. Female slammed door when officer made it into the hallway and stated police aren't allowed inside her apartment. Female made a statement about electrical current and was advised to be quiet due to the noise level. Neighbor instructed to call back if she makes noise again.

11:49 a.m. Caller reports she is being harassed and threatened by a male party she was friendly with.

1:53 p.m. 911 caller reports his two older siblings were in a physical fight and one had a knife and threatened the other one with it. Officer requesting CSO. CSO on scene with family.

5:29 p.m. Caller from Meadow Road looking to speak with an officer about the larceny that occurred

on his property over the weekend; states an officer never showed up to take a report. Caller told to stop by station or call when he is home to give a statement.

8:20 p.m. 911 caller from Vladish Avenue states a male party is attempting to get in through the back door; male is yelling at them through the back door, possibly on drugs or something. Male party wearing plaid shirt and plaid pants. Caller states yard is fenced in; not sure how the male got to the back door. Party removed to hospital; summons issued.

**Thursday, 4/20**

1:29 a.m. DCF in the lobby to speak with an officer about past calls regarding involved individuals. DCF also requests previous calls at location regarding individuals. Services rendered. 3:08 p.m. 911 misdial; caller states she doesn't know why her phone called; it was in her golf cart but maybe it dialed because the cart fell over. Caller states she is all right and doesn't need any services.

3:44 p.m. Caller from Taylor Hill Road states people are riding four-wheelers around his property all the time. Officer advised.

4:35 p.m. Caller from L Street states neighbor is burning trash and leaves in an open pit, and the houses are close together. Control contacted to dispatch FD.

5:22 p.m. Caller from Third Street reports people trespassed into the building again and did vandalism.

6:19 p.m. Caller from East Mineral Road states each morning around 6 a.m. a group of people in pickup trucks go up and down the street at high rates of speed; requesting patrols.

9:06 p.m. Caller from Montague City Road states a white vehicle is sitting in the middle of the road with its blinker on. Caller states it was horizontal in the road at one point. Caller called back stating they took off over the bridge.

10:44 p.m. Caller states a male left the hospital and possibly still has an IV in his arm.

**Friday, 4/21**

7:24 a.m. Caller reports seeing and hearing a male and female yelling near Avenue A and Fourth Street. Caller states she saw the male party force the female into the back seat of a gold Chevy after seeing the male slap the female. Officer advises vehicle located on Third Street. Female party located; not requesting assistance from police; is having anxiety. Occupants advised of complaint. Female advised she is in the vehicle of her own free will and not in harm, and was not forced into the vehicle. Male denied forcing female into vehicle; they are having a verbal argument.

Male party, who was operating vehicle, advised he does not have a license to do so. Male advised he is on his way to the clinic and will get a ride with MJT van services. Female party operated vehicle away. Summons issued.

2:16 p.m. Caller from Prospect Street states she received mail with a phone number on it to call and save money on her electric bill. When she called, they were rude and said they talked to her daughter yesterday and hung up on her. Caller feels this is a scam; wants on record.

4:34 p.m. Caller came to department looking to file a no-trespassing order. Per officer, he is to file with the sheriff's department.

6:08 p.m. 911 transfer from Shelburne Control: dog on roof on Montague City Road; requesting fire department. Dog secured; came back through rip in window screen.

9:56 p.m. Caller states Pioneer Valley Brewery has a live band playing too loud; states this is unacceptable in a residential neighborhood. Officer advises music at acceptable level.

10:02 p.m. Caller from G Street states her neighbors are having a party, having a fire and playing music, and it's too loud. Music at acceptable level. Officer advised parties of complaint.

**Saturday, 4/22**

12:26 a.m. Caller from G Street reports his neighbors are yelling and screaming; states he is trying to sleep and advises it sounds like multiple people at location. Officer spoke to people at location about noise. Music is being turned off for the remainder of the night.

7:12 a.m. Caller from Fourth Street reports his neighbor is building something on his porch. The pounding noise woke him.

8:48 a.m. 911 caller from Fourth Street requesting to speak with an officer regarding the recent death of a friend. She was given the officer's number.

12:36 p.m. Party into station to report that a note was left on her vehicle while she was out walking yesterday morning. The note stated that she looks like Jennifer Aniston and left a phone number for her to call. Advised of options.

2:19 p.m. Caller reports dogs fighting in the yard of a green house on Montague Street. One dog has been yelping for quite a while. Quiet on arrival.

5:20 p.m. Caller from Morris Avenue states her cat went missing Thursday night or Friday morning. Indoor cat, black and red; face mostly red.

6:13 p.m. Caller states she was supposed to meet with a male party today to receive \$300 he owes her; however, she never went

as there is a rumor going around that she is prostituting in Vermont. States she lost her job and is in danger of losing her housing and cell phone and doesn't know what to do. She doesn't want to file a restraining order as she will feel bad as the male party is homeless. States she has had this happen with multiple people before and doesn't know how she continues to end up in these situations. Caller states she feels better calling and talking to the PD about these issues because someone will listen to her, and these situations which occur often with multiple people give her anxiety.

6:21 p.m. 911 caller from Morris Avenue states her cat is stuck under her deck and she doesn't want to go under it. Officer advises cat removed.

6:35 p.m. 911 caller states someone broke into a third-floor apartment on Farren Avenue. Officer advises male party who lives in Apartment 3 is home. Eviction notice active, will need to vacate premises by 4/27.

Caller on phone with landlord upon arrival. Landlord declines speaking to officer; advises he thought other paperwork was in place.

**Sunday, 4/23**

1:28 p.m. Officer reporting northbound lane of Montague City Road is flooded. DPW advised. Received notification someone has moved the road closure signs to the side of the road so cars are passing by then having to turn around.

Road closure signs moved back into place. Water almost down to yellow line.

5:07 p.m. 911 transfer from Shelburne Control: caller states someone drove through the barricades on Montague City Road, stopped, looked around, and then kept going. Officer from Petersham called, stating he and his wife were driving in the area and the front bumper of the car that went through the barricades is in the road. Caller will stay at location until MPD arrives. Officer requesting DPW come back to replace barricades for the night. DPW will bring new barricades and cones. Contact made with vehicle owner; citation issued.

11:46 p.m. Caller states an orange vehicle, possibly a Camaro, is doing burnouts in the Bridge Street area, driving around the block multiple times. All quiet in area; must have taken off.

**Monday, 4/24**

3:10 a.m. Food City employee states a male is acting suspicious and looking in the door; she would like an officer to drive by. Caller doesn't feel comfortable getting out of the car. Male party is homeless; just walking through. Employee is inside.

69 episodes are now available!

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## UNEARTHING from page B1

local publications were held onto by a few people who had a hand in making them.

The Forbes took on the opportunity to collect and properly house these independently-made publications. Gaffney then began to scour the internet and local bookshops for additional long-lost back issues. He remains in search of alternative press publications from the Valley in hopes of widening the collection's content and filling in missing links of this underground publishing history. (If you might have something of interest, see the information at the end of this article.)

This collection is still in the stages of scanning and processing. Gaffney is on the hunt for "whatever other materials might be out there in the world" that can be included in the assemblage.

The nine alternative, independent and/or underground publications currently in the collection were all produced between 1967 and 1999. They include, in order of introduction: *Mother of Voices* (1967-69), *Scat* (1979-80), *The Community Times* (1980), *The Valley Women's Voices* (1980-87), *The Northampton Herald* (1981), *Oh No! Noho!* (1985-86), *Perkins Press* (1991-92) *Valley Optimist* (1994-96), and *VMag* (1997-99).

Once free "takeaways" handed out on Main Street, picked up at local corner shops, or found in circulation boxes, these publications now stand on their own as significant editorial records. They are artifacts reflecting generations of community voices not typically covered by mainstream news and print outlets, and they act as mirrors for current political and cultural trends.

The rise in alternative publishing can be attributed to the counterculture protest movements of the American 1960s and '70s, the establishment of punk music and other subcultures like zine culture, access to cheap printing technologies, and a do-it-yourself ethos.

One can flip through the scanned pages of the counterculture newspaper *Mother of Voices* to read Northampton police blotter reports, poetry by jailed authors, and thoughts on the psychology of anti-war demonstrations. These underground newspapers gained traction throughout the country and represented a popular trend for youth of the era. Articles on war, racial injustice, and social unrest appear in this newspaper alongside vibrant screen-printed artwork.

In editor Chuck Volkmann's statement in what would be the newspaper's next-to-last issue, he mentions that "a major block to effective sincerity is the cloud of illusion." The newspaper tried to combat this issue by offering a vessel for nonviolent action, disseminating information that would help mobilize a larger network of like-minded thinkers.

"If we cannot develop an understanding of ourselves and construct a lifestyle around it," Volkmann continues, "our efforts to help others are merely an escape from ourselves and we help no one." The sentiment still resonates today.

Volkmann also discussed what he saw as the publication's decline: "The novelty of the paper's existence diminished, revealing that putting out a newspaper is hard, not very glorious work," he wrote. "Thus the staff became stratified according to how much work people were willing to do."



FORBES LIBRARY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

There are 17 issues to go through in this archive of *Scat*, a comics gazette and arts calendar founded by the Pioneer Valley Graphics Guild, an association of local cartoonists who wanted to make their own platform as they saw "armies of Mickeys and Minnies, seas of Katzenjammer Kids, whose cities were populated by the fevered creations of S. Clay Wilson and R. Crumb."

"If no one else was going to discover us," they write in Vol. 2 No. 4 (December 1979),

"then we'd have to discover ourselves."

In a letter to the editors – quite possibly fabricated – published in the October 1979 issue, a reader describes his experience on the Coolidge Bridge with a heavy rock tied to his legs as he was considering taking his life and jumping off the bridge. Just when he was going to jump, he writes, an issue of *Scat* blew directly into his face. "In just a few short moments I felt the return of something long missing from my life... humor."

A number of *Scat*'s monthly issues ran as double issues, with separate "College" and "Community" editions – the latter skipping over some of the cruder humor and art apparently made available on local campuses. One notable member of the magazine's editorial board, and its "office manager," was comics artist Peter Laird, who would go on to create the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.

The reader can also sink into *VMag*'s 24 issues, each on a different theme. The magazine was carefully curated, with punchy graphics and layout design. Amongst the storytelling we see adverts for defunct independent restaurants and shops; music and film reviews; local history lessons; and schedules for radio and community TV shows of the moment.

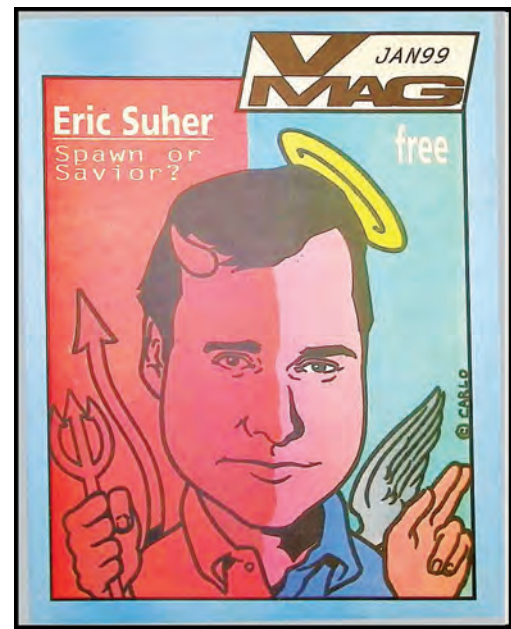
January 1999's cover article by David Biederman, titled "Eric Suher: Spawn or Savior?," grapples with Suher's then six-year real estate exploits around Northampton. In his 12-page article, Biederman describes "the City revealed as a dazed, confused and clueless entity that is grasping at straws to stop its [sic] downward economic slide."

Biederman outlines Suher's strategy of acquiring properties at reduced prices based on promises of building the art and music economy.

"Suher has revealed the establishment press – the *Daily Hampshire Gazette* and *The Valley Advocate* – to be lightweights," he writes. "They seem to blush and turn aside whenever Suher talks about his 'vision' of Northampton, that thing he has been dangling in the face of the City for six years, like a carrot on a stick, refusing to divulge the slightest detail as though it were secrets of state."

The piece leaves the reader unsure yet hopeful for the arts capital and its future. On the other hand, a reader of today will know Suher's 30-year stint in this city, and the drastic implications of his strategy.

Libraries might not traditionally be expect-



FORBES LIBRARY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

ed to catalog low-tech, Kinkos-printed magazines and newspapers alongside big-name publishers, editors, and authors of verified credentials. But by drawing together these unaccredited publications, the Alternative Press Collection is helping to document local sub-cultural waves this valley has seen in a way that is otherwise difficult to capture. This collection archives democratic expression that has been going on for decades, and helps to pass it on generationally. A common strand of doing things yourself or with community, building something out of almost nothing, has deep collective roots in our region, even as many individuals may come and go.

The collection also serves as a time capsule, not only of liberation, but of collaboration. Many facets of life were recorded – what these people were curious about; the artwork they were making; who they listened to and what they watched; the things they cared about and how they felt – and all before the internet drastically changed the way we communicate.

*The Forbes is looking to expand its Alternative Press Collection. If you or anyone you know has back issues of the publications already featured in the collection, or is aware of any that are not yet included, you are invited to contact Information Services Associate for Local History & Special Collections Dylan Gaffney. He can be reached at [dgaffney@forbeslibrary.org](mailto:dgaffney@forbeslibrary.org) or (413) 587-1014, and is available for appointment.*



## EXHIBITS

**Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls:** *Visions of the Connecticut River Valley*, work from regional artists featuring the nature of the Connecticut River, May 7 through June 30. Reception with music and performances on Sunday, May 7, from 2 to 4 p.m. Procession with a giant puppet from Peskeomskut Park to the Discovery Center at 1:30 p.m.

**Rendezvous, Turners Falls:** *Montague at Work and Play: Illustrations from the Montague Reporter, 2019-2023*, fifty-two full-color illustrations by Nina Rossi of people at work and play in the villages of Montague. Through May 15.

**Montague Center Library:** *Sherée Bloomberg*, paintings. Through May 12.

**Barnes Gallery, Leverett Crafts and Arts:** *Over Under and Through the Warp: The Art of Tapestry Weaving*, group show of textile artists. Through April 30.

**Goose Divine Energy, Greenfield:** *Topographies and Other Surface Tensions*. Dr. Adhi Two Owls explores the surfaces of natural forms. Through June 15.

**Looky Here, Greenfield:** *What I Took With Me*, work by Nina Nabizadeh, Cima Khadem, Yasamin Zamanieh, and Leila Rahnama. April 28 through May 31. Reception this Friday, April 28 at 6 p.m.

**LAVA Center, Greenfield:** *Taking Flight*, paintings of birds by Annie Quest and photographs of big birds by Lindy Whiton. Through April 29.

**Wendell Free Library:** *Stephen Dalmass*, photography. Through April.

**Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne Falls:** *Apricity*, photographs by Carin Teresa. *The Worlds Below Us*, paintings by Rosa Beryl. Through June 26. Reception on Saturday, May 13, 2 to 4 p.m. with music by James Bird.

**Shelburne Arts Coop Gallery, Shelburne Falls:** *You Wear That Well*, wearable textile art by Nancy Baker, Arthur de Bow, and Sue Kranz. Through April.

**Fiddleheads Gallery, Northfield:** *STEAM-Y Art and Science*, art that incorporates the sciences. Through May 14.

**Sunderland Library:** *Art with Heart*. Local artists work with grieving children in the Center for Grieving Children and Teens, a Cooley Dickinson Hospital program. Through May 4.

**Augusta Savage Gallery, UMass Amherst:** *Portraits in Red: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls*, paintings by Nayana LaFond. Through May 12.

**Gallery A3, Amherst:** *Roots*, abstract paintings by Tom Morton. May 4 through 27. Reception next Thursday, May 4, from 5 to 7 p.m.

**Anchor House of Artists, Northampton:** *Primordial Memory*, new work by Anna Bayles Arthur; *Way Out There: Drawings from the Field*, sketches from biking in New England by Micah Litant; *Finding*, abstract oil paintings by Robert Markey. Through April 29.

**Brattleboro Museum and Art Center:** *Keith Haring: Subway Drawings*, 18 works from NYC subway stations, through June 11. Four new spring exhibits: Daniel Callahan, *EnMassQ*; Mitsuko Brooks, *Letters Mingle Souls*; Juan Hinojosa, *Paradise City*; and Cathy Cone, *Portals and Portraits*.

## TV EYE

### How 2022's Quantum Leap Stacks Up

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

**GREENFIELD** – The original *Quantum Leap*, with Scott Bakula as Sam Beckett, lasted five seasons. The sequel TV series covered a whole lot in their first season with Ben Song (Raymond Lee) as the leaper.

Over those five seasons, the original series covered racism in a couple episodes. It also had major historical events as part of the story in two episodes, and an "evil leaper" storyline for a handful. Sam Beckett even leaped into himself as a young man.

The new series did its own take on some of that as well. With some things, I would say it did a better job than the original.

The first major historical event that the new show did was the big San Francisco earthquake that happened in 1989. This was not a bad event to use in that context, but I liked the ones better that were part of the original. The Watts riots were a huge part of a story called "Black on White on Fire," and three episodes also featured the events leading up to the Kennedy assassination. Talk about interesting episodes, when it comes to that piece of history – Sam was in the body of Lee Harvey Oswald, the man who killed Kennedy. The assassination still goes on track, but there is a little twist for people to see, if they watch the ending of the last episode connected to that story.

I should mention that the new series throws the whole "leaping within your own

lifetime" rule out the window. In the original, Sam did leap out of his own lifetime once – into the middle of the Civil War – but we learned this was due to a genetic anomaly. I liked the Civil War episode very much.

Throwing out that rule makes the sequel TV series a whole new ball game, and a fun series to watch. It helps give us an episode set in the Wild West. I thought the Wild West one matches up to the Civil War one pretty well, when it comes to how well both did for plots.

The original *Quantum Leap* did an episode called "Justice," involving the Ku Klux Klan, which focused on racism. I loved that episode dearly. In a modern attempt at this, the new series focuses on the issue of transgender prejudice in an episode called "Let Them Play."

"Evil leaper" storylines were in a handful of episodes in both shows. This situation ends by Ben leaping into himself at the beginning of his time-travel project, more or less like Sam did at one point.

I thought the new version of this was way better, though: Ben has to rely on his friends from the project to help against their past selves with this leap. Then, as he is trying to take out the evil leaper, he has to literally revisit leaps where he met this guy. The final episode was just way cooler than what the Sam Beckett character did in that situation.

Some of these things may be why the sequel series has been given a second season.

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**SURPLUS** from page B1

replicable, scalable solutions that can be widely shared.”

For the past few years, Drawdown Montague has focused on gathering surplus veggies and flowers weekly from local gardeners, primarily in Montague Center, and donating them to the Franklin Area Survival Center food pantry.

Although the group mainly involves gardeners in the Montague Center area, other contributors include a gardener in Lake Pleasant who grows a lot of cucumbers and zucchinis, someone with fruit trees in the Patch, and some folks who glean at Atlas Farms in cooperation with Temple Israel Greenfield.

According to co-coordinator Paul Lipke, the all-volunteer group of 24 to 35 local residents has donated 80 to 100 bushels of food a year to the Franklin Area Survival Center, as well as many bouquets of beautiful flowers.

Fern Kolakoski, executive director of the Survival Center for the past six years, says she really appreciates the work of the Garden Share Project. She notes that the Big Y supermarket has been donating fresh produce once a week to the Center but that now, with the vegetables provided by the Garden Share from June to October, they can provide fresh food twice a week on a regular basis.

As for the donated flowers, Kolakoski says they are “food for the soul!”

Kolakoski adds that if the Center has surplus tomatoes or other veggies, they offer them at the Thrift Store to anyone who wants them, Monday through Friday.

As the Drawdown Montague website indicates, the group is focused on a variety of other projects, including a tool and gear share, garden tours, and chats about garden challenges such as jumping worms and voles.

They have also instigated special recycling collections for styrofoam on Saturdays in April. The final one will be held this Saturday, April 29, from 9 a.m. to noon at the Montague transfer station at 11 Sandy Lane in Turners Falls. The free collection is only open to residents of Montague (there is another collection site in Northfield), and pre-registration is not required. For more information on types of styrofoam accepted, readers may contact the Waste Management District at [info@franklincountywastedistrict.org](mailto:info@franklincountywastedistrict.org) or (413) 772-2438.

Campbell says Drawdown Montague has built a good list of ready volunteers. “We want to plug into existing projects,” she says, “or create the next stage of something else.”

The Garden Share Project would like to expand its efforts to Montague’s four other villages. “You don’t have to have something every week,” Lipke emphasizes. “We take any surplus you can grow that you have enough to share.”

According to the website, on Monday nights and early Tuesday mornings from June through October, you will be able to drop off your vegetable or flower surplus at a nearby drop-point by 8 a.m. Any amount of produce is fine, from a single bag of salad greens or a posy of flowers in a jar to an entire box of kale, and there is no obligation to participate every week.

The group’s volunteer drivers, washers, and packagers will put it all together and deliver it to the food pantry that morning, and it will be feeding other Montague citizens later that same day.

The project’s three volunteer coordinators all say they have found many benefits to being involved. Lipke, one of the original members, worked on a big scale on Environmental Health Care Without Harm issues for decades, and explains that he wanted to do

something hyperlocal.

“It gives me an opportunity to do with and for my community,” he tells the *Reporter*. “It’s something I can do in the morning that is feeding someone in the afternoon. I can help to grow love and produce! Another nice thing about it is we can make this effort and the beneficiaries are anonymous – they have no more obligation to return the favor.”

Campbell, a retired forester who designed the state’s Forest Stewardship program and was a cofounder and executive director of the Massachusetts Woodlands Cooperative, says she feels similarly. She worked regionally in the New England states and throughout Massachusetts, but had never done anything locally, and wanted to be more connected to her community in Montague.

The climate crisis, she says, makes such connections seem more important than ever. Campbell says being involved in the Drawdown Montague Garden Project has been “a great way to meet and get to know interesting people... to learn who’s out there, and what skills and energy they might share if and when trouble comes.”

Dave Jacke, the newest of the three coordinators, has been a student of ecology and design since the 1970s and has run an ecological design firm, Dynamics Ecological Design Associates, since 1984.

“I have been living in Montague Center for over ten years, and was feeling isolated and wanted to get to know people,” Jacke says. “I learned about the Drawdown Montague project, and since I had extra food in my garden, I started contributing veggies the year before last. I then decided to meet every Tuesday morning to help wash and prepare the produce and flowers.”

“I enjoyed meeting Paul and Susan, and relished the chance to be where the rubber hits the road,” he continues. “Inequality is a big prob-



SUBMITTED PHOTOS



Top: Surplus produce from Drawdown Montague fills the back of a car, ready to be delivered last year to the Franklin Area Survival Center.

Above: Donated surplus produce on offer at the Survival Center.

lem, and I like to share surplus generally as an ethic that I value. I’ll probably grow more this year just to have more to give away.”

The group is also building collaborations. “Along the way,” Jacke says, “as we’ve talked to folks in the other villages about our work, we have heard of other efforts helping food-insecure people, such as the Finders Collective and Our Lady of Peace’s initiatives. And of course,

the [Great Falls] Apple Corps, and the community garden at Unity Park. It seems there is a pretty vibrant community of folks taking food insecurity seriously in Montague!”

For more information on the Garden Share Project and to find ways to participate, check out [www.drawdownmontague.earth](http://www.drawdownmontague.earth) and click on “Projects.”



## Fears of AI and ChatGPT: Both Unfounded and Real

By RYNE HAGER

**TURNERS FALLS** – AI is the hottest subject in tech right now. To be sure, it has been popular off and on for a good chunk of the last decade, but new so-called Large Language Models (or “LLMs”) like GPT-3 have brought new attention to the concept – together with generalized fears. Some of these fears are founded, but others couldn’t be further from the truth. While it’s not up to me to determine your opinions, a small explainer on precisely how these systems work at a technical level might help you arrive at your own conclusions.

At their simplest, these new LLMs are basically just a very big and very complicated way of doing autocomplete, the tool on your phone that fixes your spelling – and, occasionally, messes it up. These systems are trained on vast quantities of text, scraped from the internet, to create statistically-weighted models of that

information for predictive modeling. In other words, they can determine which words are more likely to appear next to other words.

And that’s basically it. From that relatively simple level of understanding, the model can take a question as an input and try to string together likely-sounding words that would follow it, mimicking a conversation, an answer, or other requested details.

In mathematical parlance, it’s a kind of Markov chain, which means a big network of probabilities assigned to possible outputs for a given input. These LLMs simply look at what sort of text users provide as input, and based on the statistical likelihood of other words it’s seen that follow similar strings of text online, it generates a response that suits those numbers. So it’s ultimately autocomplete, but for whole sentences and paragraphs rather than single words.

Now that you know how the system works, there’s little risk of Chat

GPT pulling a HAL 9000 – these kinds of systems are nowhere near a “real” AGI (Artificial General Intelligence, a term researchers use for a hypothetical AI that exhibits true understanding).

And GPT-4 is really just a grown-up version of the same system on your phone that can’t ducking chew the write whirreds. It’s just a dumb, innocuous tool, right? But from this simple system other interesting and concerning properties emerge.

When you deal with these LLMs, the way that you ask a question also dictates how it answers. If you’ve heard of the legal term “leading question,” that concept applies here. Because these models look at things on a purely statistical level, asking a question in a certain way can introduce a built-in bias for a specific answer the LLM can’t easily ignore when generating its output. That’s because of the data it’s trained on.

Consider: If a specific question is asked with skepticism, the model is going to be considering those skeptical-indicating words in how it processes that input, and its output is more likely to match where and how it’s seen that sort of skepticism on the data it’s trained on – i.e., the internet. The same logic applies on the other side: asking a question with an assumption of truth can encourage it to answer in the affirmative.

The simplicity of this autocomplete-like system also means LLMs are prone to what is called “hallucination.” This highly eu-

phemistic term of art in AI development basically means the model can lie, without intending to – it intrinsically lacks what we consider intentionality.

Because it’s just stringing together likely words that would follow input, these systems are just as likely to come up with false citations, titles, and even entire stories that sound plausible. The systems don’t want to be misleading – again, they don’t want anything, really – they’re just picking words probabilistically out of a hat in ignorance of their content or meaning.

An often-cited metaphor is the Chinese Room Argument, which holds that the distinction between a computer following a program and a human who blindly follows instructions without comprehending the input or output becomes immaterial, if the output is the same. More importantly, this suggests that if the human can do a thing without understanding it and appear to be intelligent, a computer can, too.

Lastly, and as stated previously in passing, LLMs are trained based on huge volumes of public text; almost entirely, the text that researchers feed these models comes from the public internet. This ranges from forums like Reddit to news sites and even personal blogs. It includes deeply factual research and reporting, as well as hate speech and false claims. And equally importantly, this means the demographic distribution of the input data follows

the demographics of the content present on the internet itself, meaning it skews to Western-focused, English-speaking, predominantly white and heteronormative input. Since input to the model dictates its output, the text it generates is statistically likely to follow that.

These issues, among others, are why there are ongoing debates regarding ethics in AI development, and why researchers need to be especially careful in choosing what sort of data is “safe” for input to reduce bias – and if it’s even possible to generate a system that follows such simple rules without bias.

Because it might not be.

This is particularly worrying when you further consider that these tools are already widely in use, generating content the public at large will find and read as we try to answer our own questions. And the day might further come when that LLM output, published online, feeds back into the system as a whole as a part of future AI and LLM models, more deeply cementing these various biases before they can be adequately addressed – and potentially impacting our ability to eliminate them, or even to see them for what they really are.

For more questions about consumer technology, how gadgets work, or which doodad to buy if you need X, Y, and Z, shoot me an email at [deviceadvice@montaguereporter.org](mailto:deviceadvice@montaguereporter.org).

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## the poetry page

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

- William Carlos Williams

edited by Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno  
Readers are invited to send poems to the  
*Montague Reporter* at: 177 Avenue A  
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# Our April Poetry Page

## Snow Day

A snow day is a day you take time to look for that sock.  
Coming off last night in a heat and fury  
Good god flung someplace into the moonlight.  
If the boyfriend stayed over maybe you have two reasons.

A sunny day is simply too delicious, too wide open to spend on your knees  
In a common crawl between the window and the bed  
Ear to the dust.  
Feeling feeble.

Chance it now to rise in quiet. Amend the night with its calls to heat, to sorrow, and breakage.  
Extend a peaceable common care to objects.

On a snow day when the boyfriend is over she shudders at black clothing.  
Re-thinking to wear something deep red or even purple: there's nothing wrong with color.  
Color has something to say and she changes her day just a bit more.  
He might stay over.

- Edna French  
Montague

## The Cruellest Month

T.S. Eliot says you are the cruellest month.  
Being alive is cruel,  
when one's heartbeat is a dirge.  
A refractive raindrop  
is a mirror  
of April's measure.  
You are the supreme interrogator,  
each hatchling nest a torture chamber,  
or a rite of passage.  
Once, up to my neck  
in an enveloping May morass,  
I thought May was the cruellest month;  
crueler, even, than July,  
the month I was born.  
By then, you had come and gone,  
and I recall no such cruelty from you,  
at least that year.  
Maybe when T.S. Eliot says you are the cruellest month,  
he means you are the saddest month,  
at least for some people.  
I think you are like the sea;  
a refractive raindrop,  
a tidal wave,  
a tear.

- Kevin Smith  
Greenfield

## All the Best

All the best poems  
have already been written  
by all the better poets,  
top rhymes taken,  
word tree shaken  
until all the bitter fruit  
dropped to the page,  
tales of love and  
stanzas that rage  
against hills fallen down,  
the death of the crown,  
our place in the universe,  
the passing of a hearse,  
all of life and death,  
no thought unexamined,  
no wordless blight  
enacted on this stage  
remains unscribed to a page  
turning yellow with time,  
eventually to dust,  
rejoined with the stars  
like the best of us.

- G. Greene  
Greenfield

## Planet Earth

Your shoulders carry so much:  
the mountains of Champéry  
the madness of Manhattan  
quirky and uncomplaining  
your touch, sometimes silent,  
sometimes a cacophony  
of chaos and confusion,  
belies its organic reason;  
unassuming it arches  
in and out across each breath  
expressed in rhythmic season,  
gives purpose to our scurrying  
self-absorption.

Once reflected on  
your magnificence makes sense  
of our nonsense, extinguishes  
and honours every life and death  
with tenderness and clarity.

- Julian Nangle  
Dorchester, Dorset, UK

## Contributors' Notes

G. Greene is the author of *Poems In A Time of Grief*. He lives in Greenfield.

Julian Nangle is a poet and bookseller living in Dorchester, Dorset. He is married to Anna and between them they have four surviving children, each with offspring of their own. Julian and Anna are kept busy by their fourteen grandchildren. His *Collected Poems* will appear some time this year from Alyscamps Press.

Kevin Smith, an ex-Turners Falls resident, now lives in Greenfield, where he continues to play the tuba, walk his dog, and be inspired by his girlfriend, Stephanie.

Edna French has lived in New England, and in the town of Montague, for years. Also a photographer, a recent focus included urban structures imprinted by human nature: "Town Without Pity" and "Town Without Pity (next door)" Professional success includes proposal writing and research for education, arts, and community health fundraising.

Special Note: Signed copies of Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno's *Night Suite* are available for purchase for \$20 to benefit the *Montague Reporter*. Signed copies of his limited-edition translation of Isidore Ducasse's *Poetry* are available for a donation of \$50 (normally \$125).



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# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



The Reporter is looking for volunteers to help us curate this listing. Interested? Contact us at [editor@montaguereporter.org](mailto:editor@montaguereporter.org)

### THURSDAY, APRIL 27

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *PWRUP, Jeopardy, Hans Gruber and the Die Hards, Girth Control*. \$ 7 p.m.

Bombyx Center, Florence: *Fatoumata Diawara*. \$ 7 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Landowner, Plant Fight, Rockin' Worms, Phroegs*. \$ 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Zane Provost*. Free. 9 p.m.

### FRIDAY, APRIL 28

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *Little House Blues*. Free. 7 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Cajun Country Karaoke & Two-Step Night with Les Taiauts, The Honky-Tonk Angels*. Free. 8 p.m.

The Perch at Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Play, Mira and the Liminal Dimension* (see preview, Page B1). \$ 7 p.m.

Bombyx Center, Florence: *Loudon Wainwright III, David Howley*. \$ 7 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Crazy Train, Back In Black, Ozzy Osbourne and AC/DC tributes*. \$ 8 p.m.

Academy of Music, Northamp-

ton: *Langhorne Slim, John Craigie*. \$ 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Bluegrass and Beyond*. Free. 9:30 p.m.

### SATURDAY, APRIL 29

Diemand Farm, Wendell: *SpringFest* feat. 2 Car Garage, Passenger Side, crafts, food, etc. Free. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Holyoke Senior Center, Holyoke: *Flywheel Zine Fest*. Free. 11 a.m.

Element Brewing, Millers Falls: *Love N' Co*. Free. 6 p.m.

Turners Falls High School: *Faithfully*, tribute to the Eagles and Journey. Benefit for Gill-Montague Education Fund. \$ 7 p.m.

The Perch at Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Mira and the Liminal Dimension*. \$ 7 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Adam Ezra Group, Whiskey Treaty Roadshow*. \$ 8 p.m.

JJ's Tavern, Florence: *The B-52.0s, The Lucky Shots, The Urojets*. \$ 8 p.m.

Daily Op, Easthampton: *Large Professor, J-Live, Tableek, DJ Rec1ne*. \$ 8 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Rough Francis, Voices in Vain, Dead Street Dreamers*. \$ 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Slob Drop, The Flemms, Street Trash*. Free. 9:30 p.m.

The Palladium, Worcester:

*Benny the Butcher*. \$ 7 p.m.

### SUNDAY, APRIL 30

The Perch at Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Mira and the Liminal Dimension*. \$ 2 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Cinmastorm* double feature: *Brother From Another Planet* (1984), *Alligator* (1980). In-person event with writer and director John Sayles. Free. 7 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Mega Mango, Grape Juice*, special guests. \$ 7 p.m.

Brick House, Turners Falls: *P.G. Six, Stella Kola, Tall Travis*. All ages. \$ 8 p.m.

### TUESDAY, MAY 2

Mystery Train, Amherst: *Anthony Pasquarosa, Buck Curran, Danny & Jenna, Gastric Lavage, Liam Grant*. Free. 5 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Privacy Issues, Erica Dawn Lyle, Fred Cracklin, Valley Gals*. \$ 8 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Hari Kondabolu, Atheer Yacoub*. \$ 8 p.m.

### THURSDAY, MAY 4

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Scorpion Porch, Foxfires, Sink, Compress*. \$ 7 p.m.

Wendell Meetinghouse: *Community Sing with Annie Hassett and Court Dorsey*. By donation. First in a nine-week "Thursdays at the Meetinghouse" series. 7 p.m.

Bombyx Center, Florence: *Rufus Wainwright*. \$ 7 p.m.

Epsilon Spire, Brattleboro: *Jessica Moss, Ka Baird*. \$ 8 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Consider the Source, Bunnies*. \$ 8 p.m.

### FRIDAY, MAY 5

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Dead Man's Waltz* (The Band / Grateful Dead / Allman Bros. tribute). \$ 8 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Radio the Band, Mavrodaphne*. \$ 8 p.m.

The Drake, Amherst: *The Gaslight Tinkers, Nectar*. \$ 8 p.m.

### SATURDAY, MAY 6

Mount Toby Meetinghouse, Leverett: *Sword of the Spirit*, one-act play about John Brown by folk duo *Magpie*. \$ 7 p.m.

Bookends, Florence: *Gracious Calamity, Jenifer Gelineau, Country Party Band*. \$ 7 p.m.

Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: *Isaac Taylor, Miners, Cloudbelly*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Kalibells*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Echoes of Floyd* (Pink Floyd tribute). \$ 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *the frost heaves & hales, Buzzard*. Free. 9:30 p.m.

### looking forward...

#### FRIDAY, MAY 12

Nova Arts, Keene: *Vapors of Morphine, Jake McKelvie & the Countertops*. \$ 7 p.m.

#### SATURDAY, MAY 13

Belltower Records, North Adams: *Josephine Foster, Stella Kola, Gray/Smith & Speer*. \$ 7 p.m.

#### SUNDAY, MAY 14

The Drake, Amherst: *Acid Mothers Temple, My Education, Sunburned Hand of the Man*. \$ 8 p.m.

#### WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14

Tree House Brewing, Deerfield: *Yo La Tengo*. \$ 7 p.m.

#### FRIDAY, JUNE 16

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Souls of Mischief*. \$ 8:30 p.m.

#### SATURDAY, JULY 22

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Guerilla Toss*. \$ 8 p.m.

#### SATURDAY, AUGUST 26

MASS MoCA, North Adams: *Pixies, Modest Mouse, Cat Power*. \$ 7 p.m.

#### SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

Millside Park, Easthampton: *River Roads Festival* feat. *Dar Williams, Lisa Loeb, Shawn Colvin, Sweet Honey In the Rock*, more. \$ Noon.



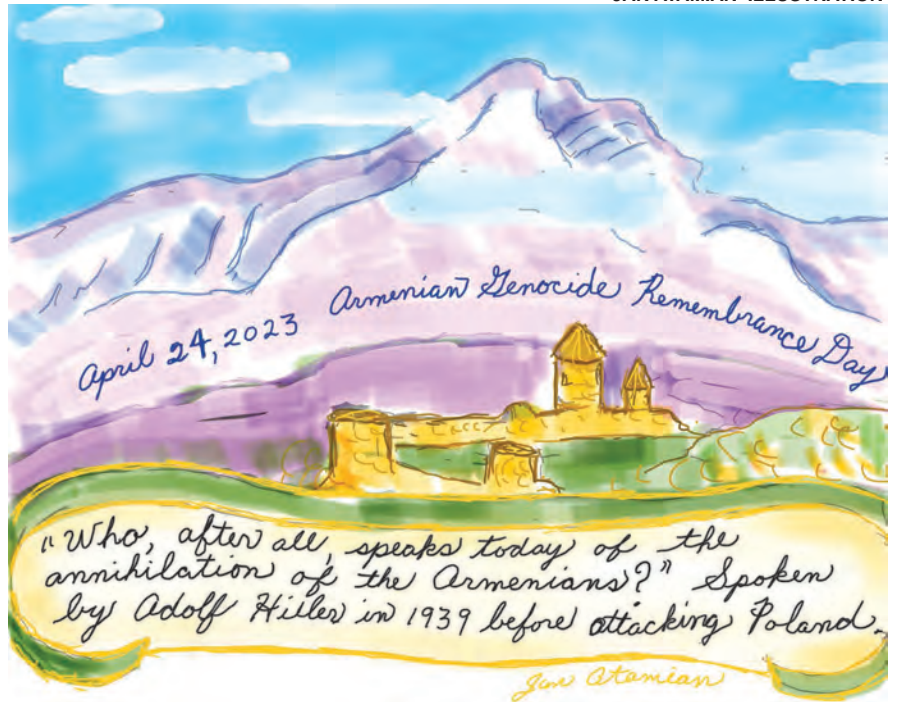
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## "THE SKINNY CRYPTIC #2"

(Did anyone have answers for the first one? Well, we got a second... - Eds.)

1. Slip personal comfy footwear on, or people who try to walk on ice, their there!

2. Artist lost his hat in a warehouse full of pasta macaroni. Can you find it?

3. Mist gets eerie. Good setting for a who-done-it, sounds like.

4. I am better when poetry's afoot, you see.

5. Are they farmers, or are they nuts?

6. Make a sound of note.

7. Make believe you take care of things beforehand first.

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SUBMITTED PHOTO

**#LIX: P.G. Six**

Interviewed by J. BURKETT

**TURNERS FALLS** – Pat Gubler, a.k.a. P.G. Six, is a great acoustic-based musician who you should know by now. If you don't, check him out ASAP. He has at least seven solo albums out now, plus 45s, collaborations, etc., and he used to be in an amazing band called Tower Recordings.

He's playing a rare solo set at the Brick House this Sunday, April 30 with Stella Kola and Tall Travis. This show is highly recommended.

His first solo LP *Parlor Tricks and Porch Favorites* was just reissued, which is a great place to start listening.

**MMM:** What are your early music memories?

**PG:** Honestly, some of the first stuff I remember was music in church. My family was Catholic, and it was the '70s – the era of the "guitar mass." Songs by people like the St. Louis Jesuits and Ray Repp.

And my older brothers used to play rock records like Grand Funk Railroad, the Doors, and CSNY. They actually used to taunt me with David Crosby's "Almost Cut My Hair." I hated having my hair cut as a kid, and the song would make me upset – haha, they thought it was pretty funny!

Also, I remember they would play the Doors song "Hyacinth House" from *LA Woman* and point

to the album cover at Jim Morrison and say "That guy is the one singing." I was like: "No way that guy is singing this! That voice sounds like it comes out of a guy like Mr. Kincaid from *The Partridge Family*!"

I didn't know the word "crooning," but it didn't add up to me. He didn't look like he should sound that way!

**MMM:** What were your favorite rock albums growing up?

**PG:** Some things that come to mind, and this was definitely the influence of my older brothers:

Jefferson Airplane – *Surrealistic Pillow*. Jethro Tull – *Songs from the Wood*. I also really liked Earth, Wind, and Fire – *All 'n All and I Am*.

Those were ones I would put on myself. Technically I wasn't really allowed to touch their records, but I sneaked it.

**MMM:** How about your favorite folk, acoustic, Incredible String Band-type albums?

**PG:** Some of my favorites are Bert Jansch – *Rosemary Lane*, the Incredible String Band's *5000 Spirits or the Layers of the Onion* and *The Hangman's Beautiful Daughter*, and Alan Stivell's *Chemins de Terre*.

**MMM:** Were you in bands before Tower Recordings? How do you think about TR now? (I think they still sound great... and what a

live band...!)

**PG:** I was in a band in high school called Satyagraha (Gandhi's policy of passive resistance). Honestly, I couldn't even pronounce the band name. And then in college, I was in a band called Eric's in Oregon.

The first band I was in that released anything was the predecessor to Tower Recordings, called Memphis Luxure. We did a couple of 7" singles.

I have fond memories of playing with Tower – I experienced a lot of ridiculous, Spinal Tap-like moments. We accidentally took New Zealand musician Chris Heazlewood's guitar loading out during a CMJ. (He got it back the next day.)

At Swarthmore College in PA, we locked the keys in the van while the engine was running. Good youthful fun.

**MMM:** What are some of your favorite moments doing P.G. Six stuff over the years?

**PG:** One of my favorite moments – I had played a few shows opening up for Bert Jansch in the States. When I went over to London with the band, he and his wife Loren came out to see us play at a club in London. It was very kind of them. After we played, he said: "We haven't been up this late in years, Pat."

**MMM:** Do you have any stories about playing harp? Are you a fan of other harp players, new or old?

**PG:** I got interested in the harp through my brother Steve. The first harp player we listened to was Derek Bell. I got to meet him years later – he was giving a lecture on music and mysticism. He was extremely charming and funny – and a monster of a musician. He could read down an orchestral score and make up an arrangement for piano on sight. He epitomized the absent-minded professor type. Lovely man.

Other favorite harp players: Robin Williamson from the ISB, Alan Stivell, Ann Heymann, William Taylor, Alfredo Rolando Ortiz, Joanna Newsom.

**MMM:** Any western Mass stories? Do you like Mass in general?

**PG:** I love western Mass. I grew up on the border of New York and Massachusetts, near Great Barrington. I would sometimes go to classical concerts over that way – there seemed to be a lot of early music performances happening

there by an ensemble called Aston Magna. And sometimes I would see some things at Simon's Rock of Bard College.

From playing up in the Meetinghouse in New Salem, I wound up getting these really interesting books by J.R. Greene called *Strange Tales from Old Quabbin* and its follow-up *More Strange Tales from Old Quabbin*. Fascinating stuff.

**MMM:** Any good jokes?

**PG:** Why did the Scarecrow win a Nobel Prize?

Because he was outstanding in his field.

RiverCulture is seeking summer events for the 2023 **Montague Summer Events Calendar**, which will be circulated in the *Montague Reporter* and available at locations throughout the five villages. To have your cultural events – music, dance, theater, workshops, exhibitions, movies, festivals, craft fairs, etc. – listed, submit the names, dates, times, costs, and basic descriptions to [riverculture@montague-ma.gov](mailto:riverculture@montague-ma.gov) by **Friday, May 12**. Call Suzanne at (413) 863-3200 ext. 115 with any questions.

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