

# The Montague Reporter

YEAR 21 – NO. 26

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EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

MAY 18, 2023

## Art Alert: Montague Sets Mural Process In Motion



MIKE JACKSON PHOTO

The town would create a mural on this face of the publicly-owned Shea Theater using state and federal funds. Officials promise opportunity for public input.

By JEFF SINGLETON

TURNERS FALLS – “This is an example of one of those agenda topics that has about ten minutes devoted to it, but we could spend about five hours discussing it,” said Montague selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz. His colleague, Matt Lord, nodded vigorously in the background.

The board had just approved a historic agreement with the local hydroelectric company, and was about

to review plans to implement over \$30 million in capital improvement projects over the next six years.

But the topic Kuklewicz was referring to, and indeed the one that would generate the most discussion at Monday’s selectboard meeting, was a proposal to paint a mural on the historic Shea Theater.

Town planner Maureen Pollock came before the board to recommend the town pay for a mural on the northeast side of the Avenue A

see MURAL page A8

## As Write-Ins Climb to Power, Montague Votes to Remove Clerk, Treasurer From Ballots

By MIKE JACKSON

MONTAGUE and GILL – It was a good week for incumbency in the spring town elections, and a good week for voters who enjoy writing their neighbors in for public office. Meanwhile, the number of elected seats was reduced by two,

strategically reducing the democratic burden in future years.

Seventy voters in Gill visited the polls Monday, a little under 6% of all registered voters, and were followed on Tuesday by 415 in Montague, a little under 7%.

The two towns combined 485 see BALLOTS page A4

## Proposed Law Would Shield Farmers From PFAS Liability

By SARAH ROBERTSON

BOSTON – Soil products derived from sewage sludge have been applied to land for decades – on golf courses, to remediate disturbed land, and even to fertilize crops. Options to dispose of wastewater sludge are limited, and much of it ends up at commercial composting facilities. In the United States, approximately 47% of all “biosolids,” an industry term for sewage sludge, end up applied to land.

While a patchwork of regulations have been aimed at ensuring pathogens and heavy metals do not end up in our food supply through land application of sludge, in recent years it has become clear that a class of harmful manmade chemicals has been spread undetected. Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in our soil, food, and water have been linked to the practice, and it is likely that many farms have been contaminated unknowingly.

For some farmers, biosolids have offered an affordable alternative to traditional fertilizers.

“I don’t think we know the extent of the problem,” state senator Jo Comerford’s office told the Reporter this week. “This is a complex issue that deserves a lot of careful scrutiny and input from

see FARMERS page A5

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

## Board Approves Rec Agreement With Gusto Not ‘Wholehearted’

By JEFF SINGLETON

“We’re never going to get everything that we would like, or our residents would like,” said Montague selectboard member Chris Boutwell on Monday, addressing the settlement agreement with the FirstLight Power the board was about to vote on, a milestone in the company’s federal relicensing process for the Turners Falls dam and Northfield Mountain.

“It’s been a frustrating process, and I think Chris put it more succinctly than I ever could,” said his fellow member Matt Lord. “We’re never going to get everything we want from the power company... because we want conflicting things ourselves.. It’s not with wholehearted gusto that I say this, but hopefully with thoughtful resignation.”

“I have some concerns,” selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz said of the agreement. “It’s been a long slog to get where we are.”

And so, with an air of exhausted resignation with the process – which has taken over a decade, and will continue at least a year more

see MONTAGUE page A7

## Showcase of Global Talent Becomes a Shea Tradition

By KAREN GUILLETTE

TURNERS FALLS – Center for New Americans (CNA) has been welcoming and serving immigrants in this area since 1992. The Northampton-based nonprofit ensures access to a wide range of resources and educational services that can help individuals and families gain and maintain economic independence.

Services provided by CNA include classes in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), help with career development, and some limited legal assistance. The organization recently had its first successful asylum application approved for an immigrant from Afghanistan. Former WRSI radio host Chris-

topher “Monte” Belmonte covered CNA for years on his *Mornings with Monte* show, and his wife teaches English in the program. Belmonte has also served as president of the Shea Theater Arts Center, and spearheaded the theater’s 2016 rejuvenation.

“When our group opened the doors of the Shea Theater back in 2016,” says Belmonte, “it was hard to imagine how vitriolic some of the rhetoric around immigrants would become in the following years... But, even then, the writing was on the wall.”

At the same time Belmonte was revitalizing the Shea, CNA was expanding its programming into Franklin County. CNA director Laurie Millman immediately saw

see VOICES page A6



BIANI SALAS PHOTO

Left to right: Johanne Juste, Rose Ermine Coquillon, Jean Ronaldo Loccident, and Kerlande Oriens take a break from practicing for Sunday’s showcase at the Shea Theater. Coquillon, a singer in her native Haiti, began taking classes with Center for New Americans after moving to Greenfield seven years ago, and first performed at *Immigrant Voices* in 2018 with fellow vocalist Juste.

## University Has Not Justified Privatization, Says Auditor

By SARAH ROBERTSON

AMHERST – The state auditor’s office called on the University of Massachusetts Amherst last week to pause the privatization of over 100 jobs within the school’s Advancement office until, as is required by law, the contract is put out to a competitive bid and it is established that the move would save taxpayers money.

Earlier this year, university officials announced their intention to outsource jobs from the marketing and fundraising office to the private nonprofit UMass Amherst Foundation, saying the move was necessary to comply with state retirement laws. Unions representing

Advancement office employees, the Professional Staff Union (PSU) and University Staff Association, have held rallies opposing the plan, which could end members’ participation in the state pension system as well as their union membership.

“The Auditor has made clear that the privatization of this state work cannot move forward at this point,” PSU co-chair Andrew Gorry said in a written statement released by the union. “Our Advancement employees must be allowed to continue their work at UMass, and the foundation must immediately stop all attempts to perform this state work, including hiring for these positions, and reverse all existing

see UMASS page A3

## RUNS IN THE FAMILY



DAVID HOITT PHOTO

Franklin Tech’s Kylee Gamache fist-bumps head coach, athletic director, and dad Joseph Gamache as she rounds third base on a 2nd-inning home run Monday afternoon. Tech soared, 11-1, against the visiting Mohawk Trail Regional School Warriors. For more high school sports coverage, including a note from our reporter, see Page A8.

### Writers, Proofreaders, Editors Now Determined By Election

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## A Broad View

Indeed, in other respects, you can hardly regard any creatures of the deep with the same feelings that you do those of the shore. For though some old naturalists have maintained that all creatures of the land are of their kind in the sea; and though taking a broad general view of the thing, this may very well be; yet coming to

specialties, where, for example, does the ocean furnish any fish that in disposition answers to the sagacious kindness of the dog? The accursed shark alone can in any generic respect be said to bear comparative analogy to him.

from Herman Melville,  
*Moby-Dick*, Chapter 58.



Melissa Leete (left) and Lindsey Savinski opened The Hideaway, their combined salon and studio, earlier this spring in Millers Falls. Savinski has a hair salon and Leete has a photography studio in the shared space at 41 East Main Street.

# MONTAGUE REPORTER



Left: The May 4 edition of the Montague Reporter made it all the way to... Pittsfield? "My husband Jack and I raised our two kids in Lenox," MR volunteer Maggie Sadoway writes. "By the time our daughter, Sonya, was 3, she joined her dad in volunteering at the Berkshire Museum in nearby Pittsfield: feeding the aquarium fish, hunting down the elusive armadillo, or bringing an injured turtle home to nurse back to health. On to the third generation: Sonya and family live a mile from the museum, a favorite hang-out place for 4-year-old son, Sagan, who prefers to be known as 'T-Rex,' especially when visiting the stegosaurus."

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Right: Deborah Roberts, whose aunt's wife Trouble Mandeson writes a column in these pages, browses the same edition in in the White Sands Desert in Alamogordo, New Mexico – "by the world's largest pistachio at McGinn's Pistachio Land," Trouble explains. "I specifically asked my wife to stop at the giant pistachio. I mean, there's nothing like it.... It's beautiful out there. And then there's the pistachio, literally in the middle of the desert."



KATHY GOUGH PHOTO

Left: This one got a little further. Our columnist Casey Wait, lurking behind the April 6 edition, writes: "Here's a pic of me and Mount Hiei with our paper in Kyoto, Japan!"



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Going somewhere? Take us with you!  
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# ON THE ROAD

## Letter to the Editors

### Why We Must Not Forget George Floyd

Next Thursday, May 25, three local groups dedicated to human rights and social justice will be organizing a Standout on the bridge between Sunderland and Deerfield (Route 116) to mark the third anniversary of the murder of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police.

Some may wonder why we are still talking about George Floyd in 2023. After all, Derek Chauvin and others who aided and abetted that hideous murder have been brought to justice and are serving time.

But Diane Mercomes, a Sunderland resident and a member of Sunderland's Human Rights Task Force, underscores why it is important that we continue to mark this anniversary:

"Americans have a history of forgetting about things they would rather not think about: uncomfortable things, awful things. George Floyd's murder is just such a thing, but I am determined not to let us forget about it. We can see his life snuffed out of him, right there on video. The thing is, George Floyd is not alone. There have been hundreds of African Americans like him, perhaps thousands, whose lives have been expendable. And there continue to be others, like Tyre Nichols who was ferociously brutalized by the police.

"There are things in history that we say we can 'Never Forget,' whether it be 9/11, the Holocaust, or what have you. For me George Floyd's murder is one of those things. He has become a symbol of something reprehensible that has been part of our society for too long, and we must never forget it."

Kim Audette, also of Sunderland, agrees:

"We need to keep these issues in the forefront of people's minds because things haven't gotten any better. Since George Floyd's murder, more than two hundred Black people have been killed each year by police while in custody or during other interactions such as traffic stops. If you are Black, you are almost four times as likely to be killed by a police officer than if you are white.

"By standing out on the Sunderland/Deerfield bridge, we are asking people to confront these facts and to end institutional and systemic racism. We are asking whether the police are the right people to intervene when someone is having a mental health crisis, and whether military-style weapons are a way to keep people safe."

Members of the Sunderland Human Rights Task Force (SHRTF), the Deerfield Inclusion Group (DIG), and the Hatfield Equity Alliance fighting Racism Together (HEART) are sponsoring the gathering. Members of surrounding communities are invited to take part.

Participants will gather at the Sunderland Public Library, 20 School Street, at 4 p.m., where there will be materials available for sign-making, and there will be a procession to the bridge at 4:20. The Standout on the bridge will be from 4:30 to 5:30 pm. The group will reconvene at the Library after 5:30 to close out the event.

Please join us and take a stand against racism in our communities and around the world.

Aaron Falbel, Sunderland Member, Sunderland Human Rights Task Force

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**Mindfulness Meditation for Seniors** starts Friday, May 26 at the Gill Montague Senior Center in Turners Falls. There will be gentle stretches, done on or next to a chair; deep relaxation; traditional meditation; and practical skills that help navigate the stress of daily life.

The six weekly sessions begin at 3:30 and run to 5 p.m. and are open to seniors 55+ from all towns. Instructor Jean Erlbaum, M.S., has been teaching locally since 1972. There is a fee, and pre-registration is required. For more information contact Jean at (413) 230-1518 or [jean.erlbaum@verizon.net](mailto:jean.erlbaum@verizon.net).

Turners Falls photographers Paul Teeling and Anja Schütz and writer Jamie Berger announce that they are opening **TEOLOS Gallery** this month at 3.5 Osgood Street in Greenfield. The opening event will be held during the monthly Arts Walk on Friday, May 26, from 5 to 8 p.m.

TEOLOS is an acronym for "the effect of light on silver." The gallery aims to showcase local and national artists and performers working in all mediums, as well as themed group shows. The first exhibit will be works by Teeling and Schütz. For more information, contact [teolosgallery@gmail.com](mailto:teolosgallery@gmail.com).

The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts will hold a **pickleball fundraiser** at the Turners Falls High School tennis courts at 9 a.m. on Saturday, May 27.

Pickleball is the fastest growing sport in America. The sport is played with plastic wiffle balls and paddles that look like larger versions of ping pong paddles. "It's like getting to stand on a giant ping pong table!" says organizer Mike Reddig.

Players will come from across western Massachusetts, southern Vermont, and southwest New Hampshire to bat wiffle balls and vie for prizes in four divisions: Open, Mixed Doubles, Over 55, and Fun. All entry

fees will go to the Food Bank.

Entrants need to sign up ahead of time but anybody can come by, drop off a donation of food or money between 9 a.m. and noon on Saturday, May 27 and see what pickleball is about.

Players can sign up online through links on [foodbankwma.org](http://foodbankwma.org).

Gallery A3 in Amherst has put out a **call for art** for their eighth annual juried show. The theme is "Undercurrents: Art that Reveals the Underseen." They look for "art that illuminates the rarely seen and overlooked, reveals mysteries, or introduces us to new views of our natural world, human relationships, unknown histories, or crucial issues of today." Entries are accepted between now and July 1. Visit [gallerya3.com](http://gallerya3.com) for more information.

Rising high school seniors are invited to apply for an **ALKU college scholarship of \$30,000**. Applicants must be enrolled in high school in Massachusetts, intend to apply to a four year, accredited institution, be currently in a mentor relationship for at least a year, and be able to demonstrate exceptional leadership and community commitment. The deadline is June 30, with decisions announced in the fall. Apply online at [tinyurl.com/ALKU Scholar](http://tinyurl.com/ALKU Scholar).

Artworks Gallery/Workshop 13 in Ware has put out another call for art. The theme is **Flower Power**. All styles based on floral imagery are welcome, from realism to surrealism to abstract and pop, and the show is open to any artist in the Northeast.

The submission deadline is Sunday, June 25. There is a one-time, non-refundable entry fee for submissions: \$25 for one piece, and \$35 for up to three. The show will be juried by Deborah Rubin. Entry form and details at [www.workshop13.org](http://www.workshop13.org).

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

Compiled by NINA ROSSI

Just a reminder that there's **several great events for families this Saturday, May 20**, including the **Diemand Farm Spring Fest** with food, music, and crafts in Wendell, and the **Música Franklin Family Fun Fest** at Unity Park in Turners Falls with performances, music, vendors, and food trucks. See [diemandfarm.com](http://diemandfarm.com) and [musica-franklin.org](http://musica-franklin.org) for details.

And across the river it's time for the annual **Bee Fest** from 9 a.m. to noon in downtown Greenfield. Activities include a bee promenade, free pollinator plants, kids movie, games, face painting, cake, bee-themed gift bazaar, educational presentations, and more. The Expandable Brass Band will play and march around town, with a sculpture unveiling at 11 a.m. See the schedule at [visitgreenfieldma.com](http://visitgreenfieldma.com).

There are no admission charges for these three events.

The **Leverett Library building turns 20 years old** this Saturday, May 20. There's a birthday party from 3 to 5 p.m., and all are welcome to celebrate with snacks, music by Gene, a slideshow, and a presentation about the history of the Leverett libraries.

The **Recital Chorus** will present its annual spring concert of vocal and choral music, directed by Margery Heins, on Monday, May 22 at 7 p.m. at the Episcopal Church of Saints James and Andrew in Greenfield. The concert is admission free, and the public is

encouraged to attend.

An online community forum for mentors, volunteers, and **anyone who works with LGBTQIA+ youth** is being offered on Thursday, May 25 at 6 p.m. Register to attend by visiting [tinyurl.com/mentoring-zoom](http://tinyurl.com/mentoring-zoom).

Next Thursday, May 25 kicks off the first **free Coop Concert** of the 2023 season at Energy Park in Greenfield. Bring lawn chairs, blankets, and friends to see Rob Adams, Joe Graveline and Nina Gross, and Katie Clarke and Larry LeBlanc perform from 6 to 8 p.m.

**Thursdays at the Wendell Meetinghouse** is a weekly series running in May and June at the Wendell Meetinghouse, located on the town common. Nina Keller shares her spiritual journey next Thursday, May 25 at 7 p.m. Admission to these events is free, with donations strongly encouraged. Proceeds will benefit the Friends of the Wendell Meetinghouse, and support continued building renovations.

There are several local events marking the **third anniversary of George Floyd's death** at the hands of police officers. Stand-outs Against Racism will be held at 4:30 p.m. next Thursday, May 25 at the following locations: in Sunderland on the Route 116 bridge (meeting at 4 p.m. at the Sunderland library); in front of Sweetheart Restaurant in Shelburne Falls; at the Little Red Schoolhouse on Route 2 in Charlemont; and on the town common in Ashfield.

UMASS from page A1

effort towards privatization."

On May 1, UMass Chancellor Kumble Subaswamy notified 124 employees that they would be offered jobs with the Foundation, or could choose to be laid off this month. Congressman Jim McGovern, state senator Jo Comerford, and state representative Mindy Domb issued a joint statement two days later calling on the university to halt the layoffs and meet with public officials.

"Lives and careers dedicated to public service are at stake," the joint statement read. "The University must re-engage with the union and rely on expert mediation rather than issuing ultimatums. A public university must have public accountability."

Last Wednesday, the university and unions reached a temporary agreement to avoid layoffs if the privatization plan moves forward.

"[T]he university is pleased to have reached an agreement with the unions that ensures there will no layoffs by providing union members expedited transfer rights should they choose to remain at the university rather than move to the UMass Amherst Foundation," university spokesperson Edward Blaguszewski told the Reporter. Blaguszewski did not respond to follow-up questions about the agreement and the reasons for the privatization.

"This is a welcome end to the outlandish threat of layoffs, which was a clear attempt to coerce us into at-will positions at the private UMass Amherst Foundation," said PSU member Jay Johnson. "But the larger issue of UMass's union-busting bid is far from over. Our unions and legislators maintain that public education is public work that requires public accountability."

Last Thursday, Massachusetts state auditor

Diana DiZogio sent a letter to UMass Amherst chancellors warning that the school has not submitted mandatory documentation justifying the privatization. "Our records indicate that we have not received the request for proposal, analyses, or any other documents related to this privatization," she wrote, "which are required before privatization can occur."

According to DiZogio, moving the marketing and fundraising jobs from the Advancement office to the Foundation "does not appear to comply" with MGL Ch. 7 §54, known as the Taxpayer Protection Act. This state law requires public agencies to solicit bids for any privatization contracts over \$678,044, submit a written statement to the auditor explaining the "specific quantity and standard of quality of the subject services," and certify that the winning bidder meets those standards. The proposals must also prove to be less costly for taxpayers.

The Advancement office's annual budget is roughly \$13 million, according to union officials. The two unions also contend that privatizing the jobs would violate a 2020 agreement signed by the university outlining the scope of their members' work, some of which is performed in partnership with the UMass Amherst Foundation.

Under state law, employees of a public college may not spend more than 25% of their working hours on projects for an affiliated private foundation. University officials' original rationale for transferring the jobs to the Foundation was that most Advancement employees' work exceeds this limit. The unions, however, maintain that fewer than 10% of their members are out of compliance with the standard, and have accused the university of ulterior motives for the outsourcing plan.

Arwen Staros Duffy, who serves as both UMass's vice chancellor for Advancement and the executive director of the UMass Amherst Foundation, told employees in February that the proposed transfers were intended to protect their past pension contributions. At a March meeting of the Massachusetts Retirement Board, state treasurer Deborah Goldberg called the situation a "tremendous misunderstanding" and refuted the claim that past contributions were at risk.

Goldberg, however, agreed at that time that the university would need to address the issue of its staff working too many hours under the Foundation.

"The university will continue to work closely with the state to ensure compliance in all areas," said Blaguszewski this week. "The university is confident that the prescribed reorganization, following guidance and direction from state regulators, and under the bargained transfer agreement between UMass Amherst and the unions, can continue as planned in full compliance."

However, the state auditor's letter casts doubt that the university can legally outsource the jobs to a private entity of its choosing without putting the work out to bid.

"The University's effort to privatize these functions may not proceed without analysis and determination from the [Office of the State Auditor], as required by law," DiZogio wrote. "If you believe OSA has received, reviewed, and approved the proposed privatization, or that the above laws do not apply to the University, please provide documentation to substantiate that position. Until such documentation is provided, however, it is our position that the proposed privatization violates Massachusetts General Law and cannot proceed."

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OP/ED

# Planning With and for Nature – and People

By ANNA GYORGY

**WENDELL** – Pulling into the WRATS, Wendell's recycling and transfer station and central meeting place, on a recent Saturday morning, I found Dan Leahy in his Wendell flag sweatshirt handing out invitations to the upcoming public forum on the town's draft open space and recreation plan.

Leahy's efforts as chair of the town's open space committee bore fruit the following Thursday evening, May 11. But the full house in the Wendell Free Library was also the result of years – decades! – of resident interest and efforts to protect valuable natural resources and scenic beauty in our town.

In an eloquent hour-and-a-half presentation, Leahy reviewed the results of the committee's two years of work on the draft plan, supported by Franklin Regional Council of Government planner Allison Gage. Their draft report, available online, is an impressive fact- and graph-filled 211-page document.

A special part of this work is an appendix detailing the results of a public survey completed in 2021 with 215 responses, impressive in a town of 924 residents. The May 11 forum was a next step in the process; residents have until May 25 to submit additional comments.

One aspect of the community not included in previous town plans was the history of indigenous peoples in Wendell. Leahy described discovering Wendell historian Jean Forward's work on the subject, and incorporating it into the open space plan.

Wendell is home to many naturalists, among them open space committee member Adam Kohl. He and his colleague Bill Stubblefield, also a town resident, along with other collaborators have identified 3,000 species of plants, insects, birds, mammals, lichens, fish, amphibians, and fungi in town, and anticipate finding thousands more.

Leahy shared Kohl's favorite quote from writer and eco-activist Terry Tempest Williams: "Perhaps the most radical thing we can do is to stay home, so we can learn the names of the plants and animals around us; so that we can begin to

know what tradition we're part of."

"Working on Wendell's OSRP was a true collaborative process," Gage, senior land use planner at FRCOG, wrote after the forum. "The Open Space Committee put a lot of effort and heart into the plan to shine a light on the town's abundant natural resources and vibrant community, and we had an incredible response to the survey that helped to guide the development of the action plan..."

"(Y)ou'll notice there is an emphasis on the regional context of Wendell's protected open space. I think that's an important part of this update that the Committee did a great job in guiding – Wendell residents can learn about how conserved land in their town connects to landscapes far from where they live, and hopefully will be interested in learning more about the importance and benefits of protecting open space, such as climate resiliency and supporting biodiversity."

Of key environmental importance to Wendell are its forests, its farmlands, fewer but beautiful and productive, and its many wetlands. Of these lands and waters, 62% are permanently protected as open space. Also crucial are the natural corridors of undeveloped land for wildlife and plants: Wendell is part of the largest contiguous protected land mass in southern New England, at 230,000 acres.

"We're part of a larger effort" in



The "Whale's Head" in Wendell State Forest.

this protection, explained Leahy, adding that while east of here there are few protected areas, 1,200 acres in Wendell have been protected since 2010.

With the 4,191 acres of Wendell State Forest (classed by the Commonwealth as "reserves") and 2,423 acres in the Whetstone Woods Wildlife Sanctuary, Wendell currently has 6,614 acres where no timber harvest is allowed.

Through land trust purchases and private donations, the area of land and wetlands under protection continues to grow. But threats remain. One currently involves plans for an industrial-sized battery storage facility, proposed for 12 acres

of now-forested land next to a Bio-Map Core Wetland habitat. Local committees and activists are aware of and oppose such inappropriate construction.

One of the excellent booklets and brochures the committee made available at last week's forum was MassAudubon's report "Losing Ground: Nature's Value in a Changing Climate." They write: "We estimate that ground-based solar represents roughly 6,000 acres of land conversion between 2012 and 2017 – or one quarter of all development."

Their report continues, urging use of rooftops and parking lot canopies for solar capacity, with incentives to help cover higher costs.

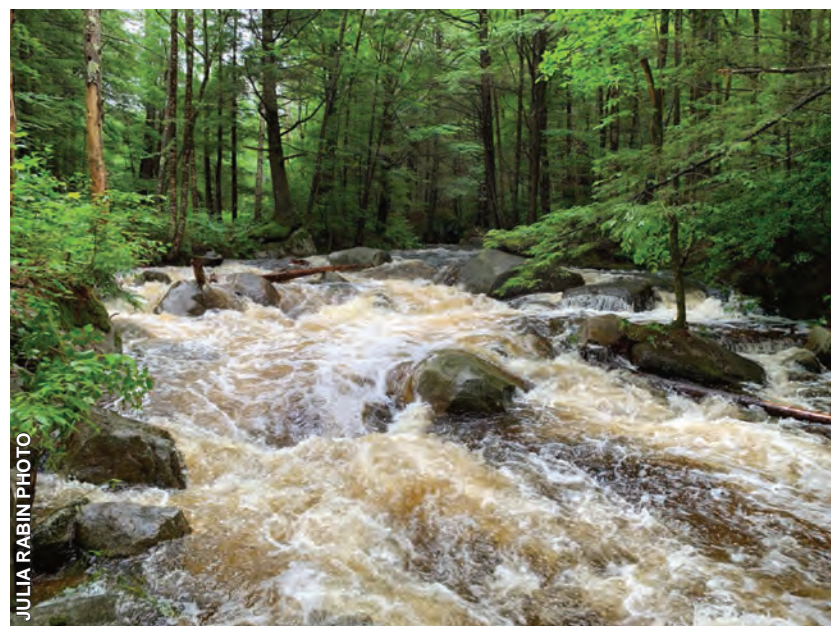
Protecting forests and wetlands contributes to reducing the extremes of climate change, but the point was made that protecting nature – from birds to bees to bears – is important for their own right to survive, beyond the economic interests of two-legged beings.

The draft plan can be read online at [www.tinyurl.com/WendelloSRP](http://www.tinyurl.com/WendelloSRP).

Wendell residents can submit additional comments to Gage at [agage@frcog.org](mailto:agage@frcog.org).

This Sunday, May 21, at 7 p.m. at the Wendell Free Library, Adam Kohl will give a presentation on "Native Plants and Pollinators Right Here in Wendell."

Anna Gyorgy serves on the Wendell energy committee.



Whetstone Brook, off Kentfield Road in Wendell.

## BALLOTS from page A1

votes determined the winners of this year's Gill-Montague regional school committee races. Incumbents Bill Tomb and Christina Marcalow (Gill) and John Irminger (Montague) all defended their seats handily, having run unopposed.

Three additionally vacant Montague seats, the result of a rash of resignations, beckoned write-in candidates. For a one-year seat, the leader of the write-in pack by far was Janice Katsoulis of Turners Falls, receiving a combined nine votes, distributed across four of the town's six precincts as well as Gill. As of press time, the front-runner for a two-year seat was Wendy Thompson, also of Turners Falls, with three.

Seven candidates, meanwhile, were written in for a three-year seat, but six of them only received a single vote. The seventh, John Reynolds of Montague Center, received two votes, both cast in his native Precinct 1. New members will be sworn in before next Tuesday's school committee meeting.

On the town side in Gill, nine names appeared on the ballot for 10 seats, which meant that one, the board of health, went to a write-in. Select-board chair Charles Garbiel came out on top with 14 votes. In Montague the blank race was for parks and recreation, and of the 46 write-in ballots cast, Jeffrey Singleton of Precinct 5 emerged

triumphant with a full 15.

In Montague, however, two elections were actually competitive – and two substantive questions asked voters whether to change the town clerk and treasurer/tax collector, respectively, from elected to appointed positions.

The idea has been a perennial proposal, but this year – apparently prompted by the imminent retirement of widely respected clerk Deb Bourbeau, recently treasurer and social secretary of the Massachusetts Town Clerks' Association – both questions passed with nearly 60% approval.

A three-way race for a seat on the Montague Housing Authority went to incumbent Karen Casey-Chretien who with 61% of the vote defeated challenges from Linda Ackerman (33%) and Brendan Kuntz (6%).

And a four-way race for board of assessors was swept up in similar fashion by Rebecca Jane Sabelawski, who has been filling out an appointed term in the seat and enjoyed being identified on the ballot as the incumbent. Sabelawski took 60% of the vote, besting Christopher Pinardi (26%), Gill assistant to the assessors Diane Sumrall (9%), and Kuntz again (6%).


All four percentages were rounded up, for any readers who may have noticed the total is 101%.



Suzette and Tristan Snow-Cobb were redistricted from Precinct 5 to Precinct 4 last year, but on Tuesday they worked the Precinct 5 polls at the Gill Montague senior center, now also located in Precinct 4. "There's no reason why Precinct 4 doesn't vote here," groused Suzette, who lives close enough to the center that she was using her own Wi-Fi, but had to borrow a car on her lunch break to drive to Franklin County Technical School to vote. "It seems like overkill how many precincts there are." Tristan added that it was difficult to park at the school. "People were parking illegally on the grass in front of the door," he said. "If there had been any sort of line today, there wouldn't have been enough parking."

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**FARMERS** from page A1

stakeholders and policy experts.”

This session, Comerford filed a bill that would protect Massachusetts farmers whose lands are discovered to be contaminated with PFAS from legal and financial repercussions. S.39, *An Act protecting our soil and farms from PFAS contamination*, would set up a special relief fund to test soil, water, and agricultural products for PFAS, remediate contamination, and pay costs incurred by affected businesses and individuals, including farmworkers’ medical bills.

Additionally, the bill would require all soil products manufactured with “biosolids” to be labeled as such.

“Enacting legislation like this would be the first step in a longer process of deciding who might receive funds and how much would be available,” Comerford’s office wrote. “We hope the bill will open up a discussion on the best policy choices.... [The] first step is to test biosolids being used on agricultural land to understand the scope of the problem, and to let farmers know about any products used in their soil so they can make decisions about their land.”

On Monday a hearing for S.39 and its sister bill in the House, H.101, was held on Beacon Hill by the Joint Committee on Agriculture.

“We want to ensure that farmers are not at risk of losing their farms, losing their livelihoods, due to practices employed on their land in the past that have generally been accepted management practices – until this point,” said Winton Pitcoff, director of the Massachusetts Food System Collaborative. “We need more research, we need more education, and we need to be prepared to support farmers in understanding the risks and addressing them where that’s needed.”

Pitcoff’s organization, an association of food and farm policy organizations, helped bring the issue of PFAS contamination of farmland to the legislature’s attention. PFAS, he argued, puts the stability of the state’s food systems at risk.

Removing contaminated farmland from agricultural use permanently, an approach taken recently in Maine, is “pretty extreme,” Pitcoff said. After several farms had to close due to high levels of PFAS found in milk, soil, water and vegetables, the state banned the land application of biosolids entirely.

“What this bill does is make sure we’re talking about the protection for farmers,” Pitcoff said. “I think Maine talked about that way too late in their process.”

Laura Spark, a policy advocate with Clean Water Action, called Maine’s approach the “most protective.”

“The problem with PFAS contamination on farms is that PFAS are persistent – they last, essentially, forever,” Spark told legislators. “They are bioaccumulative: the more we consume, the more they accrue in our bodies. And they are toxic at very, very low levels.”

**Assessing the Impact**

The state Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) currently regulates and permits the land application of biosolids, and determines whether products are fit for agricultural use, or for other uses such as capping landfills. No state or federal limits have yet been set on PFAS levels in land-applied

biosolids, but this is expected to change. In Massachusetts, wastewater treatment facilities have been required since 2019 to test for the presence of the chemicals in their sludge.

In 2018, after a review of the Environmental Protection Agency, the US Office of the Inspector General released a report titled *EPA Unable to Assess the Impact of Hundreds of Unregulated Pollutants in Land-Applied Biosolids on Human Health and the Environment*. This report detailed, among other things, that the agency does not have the data or resources necessary to assess the safety of 352 pollutants found in biosolids – 61 of which are designated as “hazardous” or “priority” pollutants by other EPA programs.

These chemicals include PFAS, heavy metals, pharmaceuticals, and other chemicals. The federal agency only sets limits for nine heavy metals in sludge.

**“They’re all deers in the headlights... They don’t want to move until this all shakes out.”**

**– Janine Burke-Wells, Northeast Biosolids and Residuals Association**

Janine Burke-Wells, executive director of the Northeast Biosolids and Residuals Association, told the *Reporter* that the farms in Maine with the most potent contamination had applied biosolids originating from a facility that processed high levels of industrial waste, including waste from paper products manufacturers.

“We need to just take a step back and have some more conversations about the risks of various sources,” Burke-Wells said, adding that she would support legislation relieving public water treatment facilities from liability for PFAS contamination, and exempting them from federal Superfund laws in such cases.

Burke-Wells praised Montague Clean Water Facility superintendent Chelsey Little for piloting a town-owned biosolids composting program. “There are others out there that will push this down the pipeline,” she said. They’re all deers in the headlights... They don’t want to move until this all shakes out.”

**Movers and Shakers**

Casella Waste Systems, one of the largest waste management companies in New England, recycles or disposes of most of the municipal sludge produced in Franklin County. A number of towns coordinate with the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District to ship their sludge to a facility in Lowell, where it is treated further and then trucked away by Casella for either disposal or recycling.

In the past, Casella contracted directly to dispose of sludge from both the Montague Clean Water Facility and POTW#2 plant in Erving, where residential and paper mill wastewater are treated by ERSECO Inc., a subsidiary of Erving Industries.

Casella ended its contract with ERSECO in 2021, citing concerns over “emerging contaminants” such as PFAS, forcing the paper company to procure a more expensive contract sending its sludge to Canada.

“In the absence of federal regulations concerning biosolids management,” Casella director of communications Jeff Weld told the *Reporter*, “states will be introducing unique approaches based on the volume of biosolids production vs. available landfill space, incineration capacity, and suitable land for treated biosolids application purposes.... Our charge is to work within the regulatory framework of each state in which we operate while providing solutions that are economically and environmentally sustainable for our customers and the communities we serve.”

In recent years Casella has been responsible for most of the biosolids application on farmland in Hampshire and Franklin counties. A public records request filed by the *Reporter* found that between 2010 and 2021, five farms in Greenfield, Hatfield, Sunderland, and Northfield and a parcel of land in Orange were spread with biosolids-based soil products.

In five instances, the product in question was Casella’s Biomix, produced using sludge from the Erving plant; the Northfield farm contracted with a different company that composed sludge from Nashua, New Hampshire. None of the landowners responded to requests for comment.

“We will continue to engage with all stakeholders concerning the emerging science around PFAS, and will be proactively providing comment and feedback on H.101/S.39,” Weld told the *Reporter*.

**How Much Farther?**

Mickey Nowak, executive director of the Massachusetts Water Environment Association, which represents wastewater operators, told the *Reporter* that in his opinion, a complete ban on the land application of biosolids would have serious repercussions on an already precarious and expensive waste stream. The state, he said, needs a master plan for biosolids.

“Anything else will result in chaos,” Nowak said. “If land application is greatly reduced or banned, where will these biosolids go? Incineration and landfill capacity is full. How much farther to distant locations can we ship our biosolids?”

Asked for comment on S.39, Nowak said that “the key to a long-term solution” is the reduction of PFAS at its source. “The bill addresses the concerns of farmers,” he argued, “but says nothing about the concerns of the 120 publicly owned wastewater treatment works in the Commonwealth.”

Last year, Comerford introduced another bill, *An Act restricting toxic PFAS chemicals in consumer products to protect our health*, which would have banned PFAS in child car seats, cookware, fabric treatments, cosmetics, and furniture. It did not pass. Comerford sat on the legislature’s PFAS Interagency Task Force, which helped to draft both pieces of legislation.

Comerford’s office said groups such as the American Farmland Trust, Northeast Organic Farming Association and Sierra Club brought the issue of farmland application of biosolids to her attention, and that she has yet to engage in conversations with Casella over the issue. “We have not talked with them yet, but would welcome discussions with them,” the office said.

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**VOICES** from page A1

the new developments at the Shea as an opportunity for students to express their talents and share their culture with a welcoming community. She put the idea out to the students at the various CNA sites, and there was a terrific response. An annual event, "Immigrant Voices: Celebrating the Arts," was born.

English is arguably one of the most difficult languages to learn. "The students who sit in our ESOL classes may be struggling to learn English, but they are experts in their own culture and traditions," Millman observes. "The Shea showcase gives them the opportunity to be the teachers and the experts... for others to learn from them. By sharing their talents in this way, our students can share their full self and in doing so, become more confident and successful in navigating their new cultural environment."

This year talent includes performers from Haiti, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ukraine, El Salvador, Venezuela, Guatemala, and possibly Afghanistan. Participants will take to the stage with song, dance, and storytelling from 7 to 8:30 p.m. this Sunday, May 21.

One program participant, Rose Ermine Coquillon, was the first Haitian student at the CNA's Franklin County site. She was a nurse in Haiti, but when she and her husband and young daughter came to Boston, they struggled to find adequate housing and employment.

Seven years ago, the family came to Greenfield. Coquillon began attending English classes and taking advantage of other support provided by the CNA. Within a year, she and her husband were both employed. They have recently built their own home, and are mentoring other Haitian immigrants in building successful lives here.

"I am so grateful to the Center for New Americans," says Coquillon. "It was a great opportunity for me. They always support us, and I can speak English now thanks to the program. I'm so proud of myself and all the Haitians that are doing good things in the community."

In Haiti, Coquillon was also a singer, performing in church choirs, at schools, and at weddings. She performed at the Shea with fellow Haitian vocalist Joanne Juste for the first time in 2018. Singing in Immigrant Voices, she says, is another thing that has made her proud of her heritage. "Representing my country in a positive way at this event is an honor for me," Coquillon says. On Sunday she will be joined by vocalists Juste and Kerlande Orelus, and accompanied by Haitian guitarist Jean Ronaldo Loccident.

A group of young third- and fourth-grade students from Sheffield Elementary School in Turners Falls will also be demonstrating their creative dance skills on stage for the first time. Evelyn Yasmin Galvez Mendez, Ashley Torres-Ovalle, Hederlin Bartalon, and Milady Tomas Mejia are from local Guatemalan families and are being mentored by Luisa Carolina Barreat de Kenny.

Barreat de Kenny came to this area from Venezuela via Spain on a student visa several decades ago with an interest in theater and the expressive arts. She completed a mentorship at Holyoke Community College and taught Spanish at the community college in Greenfield.

She has worked with the immigrant community as a medical interpreter at Cooley Dickinson Hospital, as a certified nursing assistant, and in a variety of other ways continues to help immigrants find and access needed services – such as the Center for New Americans. When her own parents migrated to the area, she enrolled them immediately with CNA to improve their English. They quickly became much-loved participants.

Barreat de Kenny has assisted with several of the CNA dance performances in the past, and decided this year to put her skills to work supporting the four young dancers. The girls will be performing a non-traditional dance to a song called "Gracias a la Vida (Thanks for Life)," recorded by a diverse group of Latin American vocalists. According to Barreat de Kenny, the concept of the performance is for the young



Scenes from the 2021 Immigrant Voices event at the Shea: Dancers Biani Salas and Frank Razzaia, originally of Venezuela, and Raquel Elizabeth Artiga de Paz, a singer from El Salvador who is now a published author.

MARY ELLEN KELLEY PHOTOS

dancers to shine their light in gratitude for life. She has encouraged them to have creative input into the dance, and they are also helping to make their own costumes.

"These young girls are the light," she adds.

The girls commented to the Reporter that they are nervous and excited, and also proud of themselves for how hard they have worked on the performance. "We want to express ourselves," says Bartalon, "to show what we have learned and that it is important to never give up."

Millman notes that another performer, an "amazingly talented woman" who was a singer in her home country and has taken the Shea stage at the last few showcases, is also featured in Jane Yolen's latest book, *Straw Bag, Tin Box, Cloth Suitcase: Three Immigrant Voices*.

"When Yolen was designing her latest children's book about immigrant journeys," Millman explains, "she asked if the CNA had a stu-

dent who would share her story, so I asked participants if anyone wanted to share."

Raquel Artiga de Paz, who fled with her family from gang violence in El Salvador in the 2010s before migrating to western Massachusetts, volunteered, and wrote her own story in Spanish. "The book is out in stores this month," says Millman, "and we are all excited to see her name listed as an author with Jane Yolen." Artiga de Paz will also be on stage at this year's event.

"We were thrilled that we could celebrate the voices and talents of our immigrant neighbors seven years ago, just a few months after we opened," said Belmonte. "And we are honored to have continued that tradition – pandemic aside – since then. The first time we hosted Immigrant Voices at the Shea, the theater was packed to the gills. It goes to show you that there are still plenty of people who are excited about celebrating each other,

despite our perceived racial, ethnic, and cultural differences."

Millman expressed her pleasure in how the Immigrant Voices event has evolved. "Seeing students like Rose, Carolina, and others return to the stage year after year," she says, "and many of the students attending as part of the audience, suggests that this program is now something that has a life of its own!"

For tickets to Immigrant Voices: Celebrating the Arts at the Shea Theater this Sunday, May 21 at 7 p.m., go to [tinyurl.com/voicestix](http://tinyurl.com/voicestix). Tickets are \$10; additional donations are welcome, and go towards providing tickets for performers' families.

Proceeds will support CNA's ongoing work providing educational, career development, and legal services to immigrants in Franklin and Hampshire counties. For more information about the Center for New Americans, visit [cnam.org](http://cnam.org).



PHOTOS AND REPORTING BY MIKE JACKSON


# FACES & PLACES



Above: "We are here to protest the blatant disinformation, deceptive advertising, and manipulation by crisis pregnancy centers," Marison Pierce Bonifaz, director of Generation Ratify Amherst, told the small crowd gathered on the Greenfield common last Saturday morning. "They are often unlicensed medical clinics, with unlicensed medical staff, and do not have to abide by any privacy regulations. In Massachusetts, they outnumber family planning clinics three to one.... Our generation demands comprehensive sex education to take control of our reproductive healthcare. It is a fundamental human right to receive accurate, non-biased medical information, and crisis pregnancy centers and lack of comprehensive sex education infringe on this right."

Following speeches, demonstrators processed (top right) up Main Street to Alternatives Pregnancy Center (bottom right). The event was co-organized by Generation Ratify, the FCCPR Reproductive Justice Task Force, River Valley DSA, and chapters of Indivisible and CodePink to coincide with a statewide day of protest against facilities the groups call "fake abortion centers."

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**MONTAGUE** from page A1

with a required approval process at the state level – the board voted unanimously to approve the agreement with FirstLight on river recreation.

But not before town residents were given another chance to air concerns about the agreement, and the process, despite a lengthy public hearing the previous week.

Town administrator Steve Ellis addressed several comments he had received by email, one of which questioned the company's requested 50-year license term and the town's ability to raise compliance issues during that long period. Neither town officials nor the general public, Ellis said, would be giving up their "free speech rights" under the agreement, and in fact the document "codified" commitments by FirstLight "creating the opportunity to legally challenge violations."

Ellis explained that Montague, along with several other towns, had consulted a law firm "that specializes in these agreements, and worked as an advocate and resource for us." While signing the document "does bind us to live with certain things," he said, "it also gives us a regulatory framework from which we can respond if there are violations of the agreements."

Separately, Ellis also noted that a resident living near a proposed kayak launch at the "grassy area" southeast of Unity Park had expressed concern that the launch would become an "attractive nuisance." Ellis said there is a plan for "gating and securing that area in the evenings."

Turners Falls resident Edite Cunha expressed concern that "We're giving up our right to comment and act for 50 years on fish and flow while we take on the responsibility of becoming a lobbyist for a private venture capitalist organization."

Montague did not participate in separate negotiations concerning river flows and fish passage, but the recreation agreement stipulates that signatories would not challenge the terms of the flows settlement, except on issues concerning riverbank erosion.

Cunha clarified that the "venture capitalist organization" she felt Montague would be lobbying for was FirstLight.

Lord called Cunha's analysis "a poor characterization." "I don't appreciate you calling me a lobbyist for a venture capitalist," he said.

Cunha denied calling Lord himself a lobbyist, but said the town would be forced to play that role if it signed the agreement on recreation. She added that she had a three-year-old grandson who would be 53 "when this is all over."

"I'm going to be memorialized 50 years from now as the one who signed, against your request," said Kuklewicz good-naturedly after the board unanimously voted for the agreement.

"Yup" nodded Cunha with a smile.

**Making a List, Checking it Twice**

Another major item on the May 15 agenda was a presentation by assistant town administrator Walter Ramsey on capital improvements the town is planning in the next six years. Ramsey shared a draft plan to schedule currently proposed projects from 2024 through 2029.

The list includes over 130 projects, with a potential total cost of over \$30 million, some of which

can be funded through grants or state aid. Ramsey said the planning department and the capital improvements committee had helped develop the list.

Ramsey listed what he called the "main building projects": the Carnegie Library; a new elementary school to replace Hillcrest; renovations at the Franklin County Technical School and the town hall annex; redevelopment of the former Farren Care Center and Railroad Salvage properties; a biosolids composting facility; and a long-term control plan for the sewage collection system.

The plan also includes major transportation projects, including some that are on the state's Transportation Improvement Plan list; a formidable list of improvements to the Clean Water Facility and sewer system; upgrades at the Turners Falls airport; and a lengthy list of purchases and leases.

Reviewing the status of Montague's long-term debt payments for previous capital projects, Ramsey noted that the debt for the public safety complex would be "retired" in FY'28, and for the new public works building in FY'45.

Lord said he found the plan "incredibly valuable" and Kuklewicz agreed, calling it a "living document." The selectboard chair, who also serves on the tech school board, said he thought the \$200,000 estimate for a feasibility study at the school was "way low."

### Ramsey noted that the debt for the public safety complex would be 'retired' in FY'28, and for the new public works building in FY'45.

Ramsey was asked about projects that the selectboard had previously identified as priorities for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, some of which appeared on the list with lower cost estimates and dates that may make them ineligible for those funds. Ramsey said the cost estimates on his list were from older sources. Lord said the selectboard, not Ramsey, would decide which projects remained on the ARPA list.

The board did not vote on the plan. Ramsey said public comment would be welcomed until the end of the May.

After the broader capital plan was discussed, Ramsey reviewed a list of town hall improvements beginning in the coming month, including expanding the town clerk's office into the former selectboard meeting room across the hall on the first floor.

**Seeds and Heroes**

Town planner Maureen Pollock presented three grant opportunities, including one that would help fund a large mural on the northeast wall of the town-owned Shea Theater on Avenue A. (See article, Page A1.)

The board authorized Pollock to apply to the state Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program for \$95,000 to add an equity component to the town's comprehensive plan and create what she called a "seed program" to help implement it.

Pollock later told the Reporter that the "seed" is a metaphor for an initiative to implement policies in the MVP plan which would focus on

how climate change would impact different groups in the community.

The board also approved Pollock's request, supported by Gill Montague Council on Aging director Roberta Potter, to apply for a state grant to fund a "digital literacy" program to help seniors navigate electronic media.

"We would be remiss if we did not apply for this grant," said Potter, noting that seniors who complete the training would "leave with a new laptop."

Pollock announced that the town of Montague had been declared a "housing hero" by the Massachusetts Housing Partnership, a non-profit that promotes affordable housing in the state. The award letter cited the town's housing rehabilitation program for low-income owners, funded by community development block grants, as well as zoning changes that align with state law Chapter 40R to promote the construction of "affordable" housing.

**Other Business**

The board approved a request by Potter to establish a "direct aid account" so that the Council on Aging can deposit a large donation from an outside donor. Potter said the concept was developed with town accountant Carolyn Olsen and approved by the finance committee.

In response to a question from Lord, Potter said the money would be used to assist seniors in emergency situations – for example when someone cannot afford a minimum winter oil delivery after exhausting their fuel assistance.

Ellis reported on developments in the FY'24 state budget, focusing on the local aid numbers proposed by the governor and those passed by Senate and House. Line items for "unrestricted general government aid" and "payments in lieu of taxes," he said, were consistent with "conservative" revenue estimates Montague used to build its own FY'24 budget, passed by the recent annual town meeting.

With a map and photos of proposed signage, Ellis gave an update on the town's combined sewer overflow notification plan. Montague is required to alert residents of overflows from its sewer system into the Connecticut River.

He also alerted the board to a regional meeting of the state Economic Development Planning Council, on which he sits, on May 19 at Springfield College.

A request by airport manager Bryan Camden to transfer \$10,100 from the airport health insurance account to the equipment repair and maintenance account, to cover "mid-year increases to electricity and wage line items," was approved, as was the use of public property on September 17 for the annual Soap Box Derby at Unity Park.

The board appointed Albert Millet to the position of groundskeeper at the public works department, and discussed Dorinda Bell-Upp's offer to represent Montague on the Six Town Regionalization Planning Board, which is exploring the feasibility of creating a new public school district. The selectboard is keeping the application period for the latter position open for approximately a month, and plans to make a decision before Mike Naughton reaches the end of his term.

The next selectboard meeting will be held Monday, May 22.



## LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here's the way it was on May 16, 2013: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

tage haulers during the repairs as it will interfere less with the work.

**Power Couple Hailed****More Bad Discoveries**

The Montague selectboard heard an update by superintendents Bob Trombley and Tom Bergeron on the ongoing sewer emergency at Industrial Boulevard and Millers Falls Road. A second segment of pipe, 350 feet long, has been found to have blockages. Contractor CDM Smith Inc. has completed borings of the damage and has prepared a document for contractors to bid on by May 17.

The work is scheduled for 40 days, and will include both Industrial Boulevard and Millers Falls Road, plus some work at Hillside Plastics and the trailer park. Trombley and Bergeron made the decision to continue hauling waste by sep-

The annual town report presented at Erving's May 8 town meeting was dedicated to Collis and Elizabeth Adams in recognition of their 55 years of service.

Collis Adams was town treasurer from 1958 to 1984, was town clerk in 1967, and served on the Council on Aging from 1998 to 2012.

In 1970, Elizabeth Adams was the first woman elected to a selectboard in Franklin County. She served until 1975 and was instrumental in helping plan and build the wastewater treatment plants, the Erving Elementary School (EES), the Erving Center and Erving's fire stations, and the renovation of the Erving Town Hall.

## 20 YEARS AGO

Here's the way it was on May 15, 2003: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

May 3 were witness to a time-honored tradition that has its roots in the rural villages of England from centuries ago. The maypole dance, with children winding ribbons round the pole uniting heaven and earth, had given way to troops of men and women clad in white and green with ribbons on their shirts and bells on their ankles.

**Wendell: Campaigners Snarl Traffic**

Dozens of complaints about parking delays at the annual election prompted the selectboard to start drafting a policy regulating campaigning outside elections.

Town clerk Anna Hartjens said about a hundred people complained about delayed access to the polls or being forced to stop by campaigners walking in front of their cars. While they cannot prohibit leafletting more than 150 feet from the polls, she said, officials do have a right to keep traffic moving along.

**Public Forum on Millers Watershed**

Communities in the Millers River watershed will have an opportunity to work together to bring about a shared vision for open space and recreation in the region for a public forum on Tuesday, May 20.

Although the Massachusetts Watershed Initiative was discontinued by the Romney administration, the state is proceeding with development of a regional open space plan for the Millers River Watershed.

**Montague: Dancing Into Spring**

People passing by the town common on Montague Center on

## 150 YEARS AGO

Here's the way it was on May 21, 1873: News from the Turners Falls Reporter's archive.

office to tell us of people who "come near going over the falls." It is a pity some of the careless mortals who are continually exposing themselves to the dangers of the falls, would not go over the dam, and thus furnish us with a local worth writing up.

**Local Matters**

The trees are all out in their spring clothes.

Gardening is the prevailing twilight employment.

The wind has changed. We can now smell dead cats while at our desk.

Albert Jones is building a new house east of the blacksmith's shop, Riverside.

Measles are very prevalent in town. Over sixty children are "out of school" with the disease.

The Turners Falls Lumber Co. are building an addition to their mill, 24x40 feet, in which a new planing mill and other machinery will be placed.

Every day people come to the

Mr. Eugene Eddy of Orange caught an otter, in a trap, on Saturday, that measured four feet and two inches from the nose to the tip of the tail.

The Sunday School at Montague City has recently given a donation of second-hand, but well kept books, numbering about 180 volumes to the German Sunday School in Turners Falls, which makes quite an addition to their library. They desire us to thank their friends in Montague City for this expression of sympathy with the work.

Dr. Sornborger's horse died from overeating, Saturday.



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**MURAL** from page A1

building by applying for a \$22,400 state grant and approving a local match of \$22,400 in federal American Rescue Plan Act funds.

The board eventually approved both the grant application and ARPA allocation, but only after nearly a half hour of discussion. Much of it focused on the process for placing a large mural on a historic building that would greet visitors entering Turners Falls.

"I love public art," said Pollock. "Suzanne loves public art," she added, referring to RiverCulture director and assistant town planner Suzanne LoManto, who attended the meeting to support the proposal.

Pollock said she and LoManto had "reached out" to an organization called Common Wealth Murals, a Springfield non-profit specializing in "large-scale public art." The organization's director Britt Ruhe, who also attended the meeting, had toured Turners Falls with them and determined that the northeast wall of the Shea was "the perfect building wall" due to its "high visibility on Avenue A."

Pollock said Common Wealth Murals would provide "project management" for the mural project, which would be funded by a Commonwealth Places grant from the state development finance agency MassDevelopment.

Kuklewicz asked whether there would be an "overall theme" to the mural.

Pollock replied that the town would need to create a "steering group" to oversee the project, issue a Request for Proposals (RFP), and follow a bidding process to hire an artist to paint the mural. If the selectboard "had any suggestions," she said, "or would like the theme to come back for review, that's fine..."

She also said the theater's operator, the Shea Theater Arts Center, would like to have input on the theme and the RFP.

"I'm all for community," said Ruhe, "and finding the right artist and right design that fits the specific community that it's in." She listed several cities and towns in the region, including Belchertown and Fitchburg, her organization had worked with. "I'm heading down to North Carolina tomorrow," she said.

Ruhe said the public would have input in developing the RFP, and that once an artist is selected, "there's a back-and-forth, a conversation that happens where you can really dig into more specifics.

They come up with a sketch; the sketch is approved by the steering committee..."

Kuklewicz also noted that as a former electrical inspector for the town, he has noticed that conduits on that side of the Shea building are sagging, and that he would like to see them reattached properly. "I come into town and it drives me crazy because of my OCD," he explained.

Lord, pointing out that the project match was not on the list of priorities for ARPA funds the board developed over the past two months, wondered why the project was not funded by an article at the May 6 annual town meeting.

Assistant town administrator Walter Ramsey replied that the grant program "wasn't announced until after the whole town meeting planning cycle," and that he and Pollock had held off on making an ARPA request until the board had developed "an ARPA spending strategy in general."

Historical commission member Janel Nockelby expressed concern that the project, on a historic building in a historic district, had not gone before the commission. She asked whether the town had a mural policy.

"It does seem like there's a rush for this," she said.

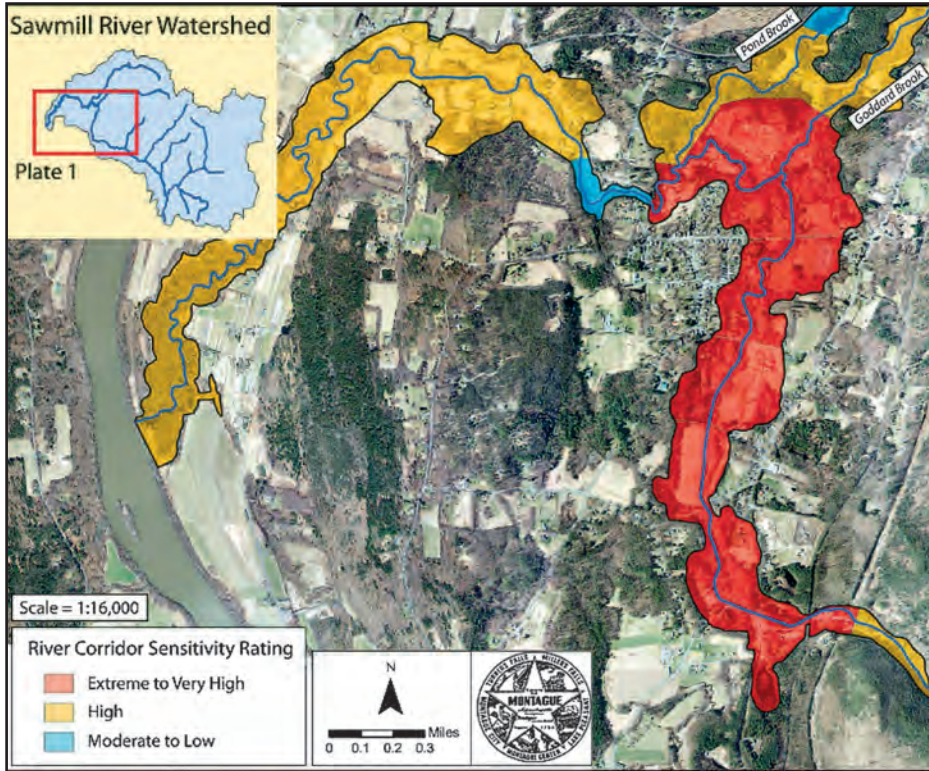
"Large-scale public art, and large-scale public murals, have been something that's been on every plan for at least 15 years," said LoManto, who also serves on the historic commission. "That's something the community has said they want."

RiverCulture, she added, had "put together a mural policy, I want to say three years ago, that was adopted by the selectboard." She said the policy discourages murals on bricks that are not painted, but "that side of the Shea has a coating of paint."

The "Mural Guidelines" adopted by the RiverCulture steering committee dated August 17, 2021 can be accessed at [www.riverculture.org](http://www.riverculture.org) under the "Programs" tab. LoManto told the Reporter that the project, if the grant is approved by the state, could take up to a year to complete.

"A large-scale mural is not joke," she told the selectboard on Monday evening. "From the RFP, to putting it on the side of the building, and making sure we have a really impactful piece of art."

"The first large-scale mural that you do sets the stage for everything after," added Ruhe.



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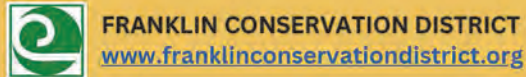
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**Montague Fire Station (Hybrid)**

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- River condition update (by speaker and residents)
- Landowner assistance for conservation practices

**LOCATIONS: Montague Fire Station at 28 Old Sunderland Rd. in Montague and [on Zoom](#)**

Please complete our brief [online survey](#) to be contacted by a conservation professional to share your property concerns and discuss recommended strategies and available funding programs.



Made possible by a grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and the Environment

## High School Sports: Returning to Form

By MATT ROBINSON

**TURNERS FALLS** – Several people have asked me why I stopped writing for the *Montague Reporter*.

Well, in March I was hospitalized. But after that long hospitalization and a slow, exhausting recovery, I have been able to ease my way back into high school sports. I stayed in contact with some of the principals, so I was kept abreast of the scores and highlights of the spring sports season; such as the new fence at Franklin Tech, Maddie's 500<sup>th</sup> K, and Coach Mullins' field dedication.

But I haven't had the energy to attend any games – until recently.

On May 8, I listened to the Bear Country broadcast of the Turners Falls-Franklin Tech softball game, and was pleased that I recognized most of the players on both teams.

Last week, I went to two softball games and the girls' tennis match against Greenfield. I was able to tolerate a total of seven innings in the two games, and I watched about five sets at the tennis match.

This week I plan to attend more games and matches, and hopefully, come playoff time, I'll be back to my old self.



Turners Falls sophomore pitcher Madi Liimatainen – seen here pitching against Franklin Tech on May 8 – reached a milestone three days later in a game against the Mount Greylock Mounties in Williamstown: 500 career strikeouts!

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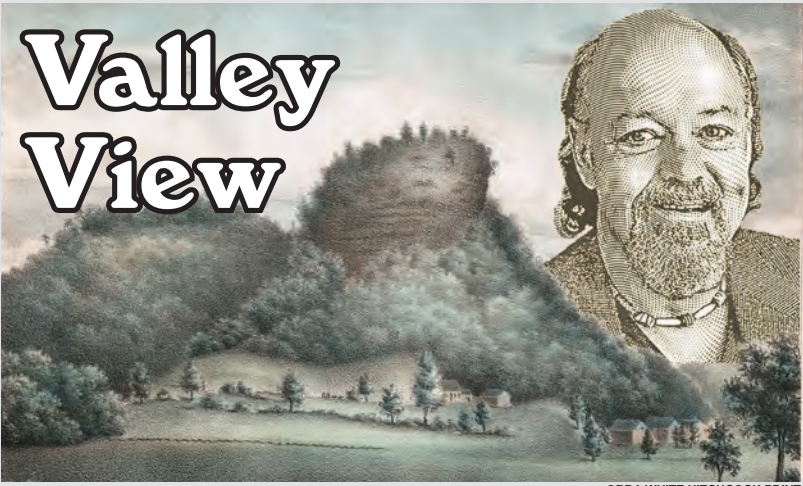
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MAY 18, 2023

*Above: Spring things, ongoing, in Turners Falls.*



## Valley View

ORRA WHITE HITCHCOCK PRINT

By GARY SANDERSON

**SOUTH DEERFIELD** – Looking for a hook to hang my hat on, so to speak, spun me into reminiscence leading up to my May 7 “Deerfield 350<sup>th</sup> Founders’ Day” talk.

The topic was the earliest settlement of Bloody Brook, or Muddy Brook – names that were interchangeable between the 1750s and 1840s for a village now called South Deerfield. My problem was that so very little is known about its groundbreaking days. I wanted to pull the audience in with something light before launching into a long-overdue look at the history of a place that has been ignored by historians in a town where history is important.

Rather than imagining what it was like to roam the mile-and-a-half-long path that connected the first handful of forgotten dwellings along what is today Main Street, I decided instead to start with the South Deerfield I knew. That is my childhood town, where spinster great-aunt Gladys annually flowered family graves in the village’s oldest burial ground, Sugarloaf Street Cemetery – that of the founders.

My talk would be delivered from the auditorium lectern at Frontier Regional School, which wasn’t my comfort zone. My legacy in that place was that I couldn’t pass senior English. Oh well. What does it mean a half-century later?

I would have been far more comfortable pointing out interesting features from the driver’s

seat of a country drive, or attaching surnames to stone-clad cellar holes lining a wooded walk along some discontinued road, or leading a group up a tidy stone wall to a high, lonesome hardwood spine with oaks, beeches and royal shagbark hickories. I’d be out of my element in an academic auditorium, would try not to bore anyone.

It was worth mentioning that I would be standing on a site that once represented the center of my tiny universe. It was my childhood neighborhood and that of my ancestors dating back to the village’s birth.

In the days leading up to the event, with soft spring pastels stirring my imagination, reminiscence sometimes flowed like surging stormwater. I pondered the approaching presentation for Deerfield’s 350<sup>th</sup> birthday realizing that I, as an untamed 20-year-old, had attended the 1973 Tercentenary a half century ago.

Better still, my ancestors had been there for the 100<sup>th</sup> and 200<sup>th</sup> celebrations as well. Many great-grandparents, great-aunts and uncles, cousins, and in-laws had attended the 1835 gala dedication ceremony for a new Bloody Brook Monument, and yes, kinfolk were also on hand in 1875 for the 200-year memorial remembrance of those slain during the infamous September 18, 1675 Indian ambush.

Nine of my great-grandparents and scores of relatives rest downtown in the village’s aforementioned oldest burial ground. I am

see **VALLEY VIEW** page B8



SUBMITTED PHOTO

*Built soon after 1759, the old Arms place on Bloody Brook Corner was among the first handful of village dwellings constructed, and the earliest “documented” dwelling the author could find in deeds. It was torn down in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. (The house built in its place, using recycled 18<sup>th</sup>-century cellar joists and framing timbers, is owned and occupied by the author’s mother!)*

## SCENE REPORT

# Tasting a Transformation

By ANNE HARDING

**TURNERS FALLS** – A restaurant, a market, an apothecary, a test kitchen, and an art project walk into a bar...

If you’re interested in the punchline, it might be time to find out what’s been happening behind the closed doors at the Great Falls Harvest. Trying to write about this collaborative is a bit like trying to capture the fluff of a dandelion in a windstorm.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HANNAH FULLER-BOSWELL

*Botanical breads, butters, and forest-roasted olives are brought out to tables during the first “Collaborative Kitchen” earlier this month at the Great Falls Harvest restaurant.*

Earlier this month, I wandered into the wonderland of what’s being coined as a year-and-a-half-long experimental art project, and experienced my first taste of the Forest Kitchen/Great Falls Harvest culinary exploration.

The back room of the Harvest has been taken over by Kyra Kristof and Hannah Fuller-Boswell and their shared library of beautifully potent objects related to a culture of deep belonging with a focus on food and food systems. The pair had known about each other for many years, finally met in 2019, and have started working together in a reality re-architecture firm known as the Imaginal Studio. What you will see at the Harvest is the work of two remarkable women who practically finish each other’s sentences.

The *Montague Reporter* interviewed Kristof and Great Falls Harvest chef Chris Menegoni back in 2014 when they started talking about food systems, local farmers, local food producers, and the concept of how businesses can overlap and share spaces and processes. They hosted a few open house style get-togethers with local farmers, foragers, and food producers, and continued talking about future collaborations.

In the meantime, Kristof has been working on an art project called Forest Kitchen ([forestkitchen.mystrikingly.com](http://forestkitchen.mystrikingly.com)), exploring the possibility of people being in a deeper relationship with the forest as a source of nourishment and medicine. Last year, after restaurants re-opened from the COVID shutdown, she and Menegoni hosted a small-scale dinner that merged forest and farm products.

It was a teaser and practice run for this new project.

The Curiosity Kitchen is offering chef’s choice, single seating, family-style dinners at 6 p.m. every Friday this month – all in the theme of “Chrysalis, The Taste of Transformation.” The meals are the combined effort of chef Menegoni, forest-foraging master Kyra Kristof, and their daughters, with Bridgette Chaffee at the front of house and a host of local and foraged food sources.

It was a real treat to enjoy the multi-course meal.

see **TASTING** page B5

## RECIPES

# Three Tart & Tangy Treats

By CLAIRE HOPLEY

**LEVERETT** – Rhubarb delivers a serious blast of acidity, and that’s a major source of this unusual plant’s amazing array of possibilities. The acidity comes from naturally occurring oxalic acid. It’s powerful stuff and used commercially in dyeing, cleaning, and rust removal. That’s why any pan used to cook rhubarb emerges from the task dazzlingly clean.

The scouring action has been applied to humans, too. The root was used as a laxative and in ancient Chinese and western medicine.

Rhubarb is a native of the far north of Eurasia – Siberia and Mongolia – and its roots, the only part considered useful, reached Europe along the Silk Road as early as 2,000 years ago. When 16th-century poet John Skelton wrote of “the rhubarb of Repentance,” he was using the laxative effects of rhubarb as a metaphor for the pangs of conscience.

Eating rhubarb stalks is first mentioned in 18th-century England. While awaiting the summer fruit harvests, cooks turned to spring’s rhubarb stalks as a pie filling, evidently deciding that their juiciness made them a reasonable substitute. Americans concurred, calling it simply “pie plant” when it arrived in the 19th century. Former Northampton resident, abolitionist,

see **RHUBARB** page B4



HOPLEY PHOTO

*An easy cheesecake recipe, made with Greek yogurt and topped off with a tangy mixture of rhubarb and ginger.*

# Pet of the Week



## “GREYSON”

Meet Greyson, a friendly, talkative stray kitty who showed up at a feral cat colony. The person caring for the colony cats recognized that this young fellow seemed to be asking for more than a meal and brought him to Dakin to find a home.

Greyson is gradually adjusting to an indoor lifestyle and seems to enjoy the company and attention of his human visitors but would prefer

to have access to outdoors. He has the spirit of a lion in his heart, and it makes him want to roam and hunt.

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).



## Sex Matters

a sex-positive health column

by STEPHANIE BAIRD

**SOUTH HADLEY** – May includes Mother’s Day, so I’d like to start this column with a hearty “Happy Mother’s Day” to all individuals who provide parenting to anyone in the form of nurturing and protecting. May also includes National Masturbation Day, May 28, so I’d like to take this column to promote self-exploration, particularly for those possessing vulvas and clitorises.

Unfortunately, many adult cis-women continue to report never having experienced an orgasm, either on their own, or during partnered sex, with some reporting “faking” an orgasm.

In fact, in one large US survey (Laumann, Paik, and Rosen, 1999), 24% of self-identified women ages 18 to 59 reported an inability to orgasm, as opposed to 8% of men. A lack of interest in sex was reported by 33% of the female respondents. No surprise, if they are not experiencing the breadth and depth of pleasure available.

Other research (Wade, Kremer, and Brown, 2005) found that while women who were knowledgeable about the clitoris experienced orgasm more frequently on their own, this did not increase the frequency of orgasm with partners.

These researchers noted that this disparity exists within the context of “gender inequality and a social construction of sexuality... that privileges men’s sexual pleasure over women’s, such that orgasm for women is pleasing, but ultimately incidental.” Women may not feel empowered or encouraged to ask for the stimulation that they need, for fear of appearing unfeminine, too demanding, or less desirable to their partners.

Indeed, a survey as recent as 2019 (Herbenick et. al.) found that 58.8% of female respondents, mostly heterosexual, said they had faked an orgasm at some point. Though most said they no longer did so, many women who continued to fake orgasms indicated that they were embarrassed to speak openly about sex with their partners. Women ages 18 to 24 were significantly more likely than older respondents to report not knowing how to ask for what they want.

So how do we rectify this situation, especially in light of the lack of sex-positive and evidence-based sex education in schools, as well as the ever-expanding supply of pornography showing women pretending to orgasm?

We start from the beginning teaching children boundaries about their bodies, encouraging them to enjoy and talk about positive sensations – swinging from monkey bars, rolling down hills, etc. From there we encourage children to speak up about things they like and don’t like regarding touch.

If schools don’t provide sex education that mentions masturbation

or vulvar and penile anatomy in a positive light, then we build a library of developmentally appropriate sex-positive books for kids. For kids with vulvas it’s important to provide accurate and detailed anatomical maps, and to mention the word “clitoris” numerous times throughout their development. It would be amazing if that word became as common as “menstruation,” “vagina,” or “breasts.”

Speaking of menstruation, I watched the movie *Are You There God? It’s Me, Margaret* this week and was delighted by such a positive depiction of a girl getting her period for the first time, with all the anxiety and curiosity leading up to it. I especially appreciated it when, after one girl got her period, the others asked “How does it feel? What does it feel like?”

It’s incredibly important for people to share their perceptions. This helps normalize, validate, and demystify a variety of experiences. If that film had been made shortly after Judy Blume’s 1970 book, we might be much further along in obtaining greater comfort with all things vulvar.

But back to orgasms for vulvas. While the assumption is that vulvas should easily orgasm with some kind of vaginal intercourse, this is actually not the case. Only about 21% to 30% of folks with vulvas report orgasming during intercourse with no clitoral stimulation. Cervical orgasms (discussed in my December 2022 column) aside, most people with vulvas need clitoral stimulation of some sort. While penile or dildo stimulation feels good for many, it may not be enough to assist with orgasming.

For folks who are pre-orgasmic, many books can provide step-by-step strategies to become orgasmic. Betty Dodson, the mother of masturbation, wrote the revolutionary *Sex for One* in 1987, and it continues to remain the seminal how-to book. One client I referred this book to reported having her first orgasms during masturbation within a couple weeks of reading it and following its suggestions. The one that really worked for her involved listening to music via earplugs to drown out exterior sound so that she could fully focus on her experience.

If you are pre-orgasmic, the essential steps include obtaining one or two different vibrators. The Hitachi Magic Wand is often cited as a favorite, but it is very intense, so it can be helpful to have a less intense vibrator on hand. Setting up a solitary environment where one can focus without interruptions is also key.

This goes back to Emily Nagoski’s idea of a “sexy context” to help us reduce sexual brakes and allow for sexual accelerators to flourish. This can include tidying one’s bedroom, lighting candles, playing sensual

music, reading a sexy book, or watching something healthy, accurate, and visually stimulating.

It can also help to spend some time considering your fantasies and desires. What do you want to experience in a sexual or erotic encounter? What kind of things in the past have rocked your world? Again, since women’s sexual desires have historically been devalued compared to men’s, it may be difficult to give oneself permission and freedom to identify erotic desires.

Once you have the mechanical device, the environment, and the mental context, the next step is simply to explore physical sensation using the vibrators, one’s hands, or perhaps a strong stream of water from a shower nozzle.

Again, having ample uninterrupted time is essential. You might also have some lubrication on hand if there is any concern of dryness or discomfort. Noticing physical arousal and feeling desire for sexual and erotic stimulation are very helpful conditions to precede orgasm. Adding in pleasurable stimulation is an essential ingredient.

Giving yourself permission to notice all the sensations, especially any sensation of tension building, is essential. Many different experiences and descriptions of orgasms exist. It is common to feel a building up, a crescendo, and then a release of tension, a.k.a. “climaxing.” Some say it feels like a huge, all-encompassing tidal wave washing over their body. Others state it feels more like several mini-waves cresting and falling. Almost all report feeling a great physical release at and after the orgasm.

The bestselling book by local author Emily Nagoski *Come As You Are* (Simon & Schuster, 2021) and its accompanying workbook still have some of the best information on how to help people with clitorises experience orgasm and pleasure. Look up my October 2019 column for details. Other helpful books include *The Elusive Orgasm: A Woman’s Guide to Why She Can’t and How She Can Orgasm* (Cass, 2007) and *Becoming Cliterate: Why Orgasm Equality Matters and How to Get It* (Mintz, 2018).

If you start to feel frustrated in this self-exploration, please take a break. Perhaps do some more research and try again later. While a universe of sexual and sensual pleasure is available without orgasms, it is wonderful to have the option.

*Stephanie Baird, LMHC is an OWL facilitator, EMDR consultant and psychotherapist, certified in Advancing Clinical Excellence in Sexuality (ACES,) and encourages her clients towards thriving sexual health. She welcomes feedback and suggestions at [sexmatters@montaguereporter.org](mailto:sexmatters@montaguereporter.org).*

## Have a question for the editor?

Email it to us at [podcast@montaguereporter.org](mailto:podcast@montaguereporter.org) and listen for our “Ask the Editor” segment to hear the answer!

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## MYSTRA MOVIE REVIEW #1

### Weird: The Al Yankovic Story (2022)



Review by TROY C. and JOSH B.

**TURNERS FALLS** – Well, this may seem strange and/or “weird,” but here it is, our first movie review for this column, and it’s for a new movie called *Weird!* It’s a movie about (yes) Weird Al, based on his life. Actually, we’re not even sure we can say that, as it really doesn’t seem to have any resemblance to his actual life.

Like many of you, we both grew up with Weird Al records, so why not check out this film, right?

Bests to *Weird Al* – what a long weird trip it’s been. (And it’s obviously still going!)

**JB:** *Um... I think this new Weird Al movie is good?*

**TC:** Sounds fun and magic. It’s called *Weird?*

**JB:** *It’s insanely stupid in some ways, but yeah, pretty fun. The whole thing is super fake, I guess. Not true at all. I’m not sure if it’s funny overall. Well, parts are funny for sure. And it’s pushed it into this crazy dimension. It’s on Roku.*

*The part I’m watching now... Weird Al and Madonna fall in love, I guess? Then he turns into Rambo or something, and Madonna heads a drug cartel. So yeah, I don’t think that part is real... I had a dream last night with Tiny Tim, and someone plays him in the movie. I guess that’s why. In the movie, Weird Al wrote “Eat It” before Michael Jackson wrote “Beat It,” and other artists rip him off too, so there is some role reversal, which is fun.*

*We sold a Dr. Demento LP this week in Amherst, I think because of this movie. Demento has a big role.*

**TC:** This is really dreamlike, and so magical. I love it. It’s life, and these interwoven dreamlike things in so-called “waking life.” I am very grateful for you sharing this.

**JB:** *I guess Weird Al wandered into Strange Maine once, the [Portland, Maine] record store Id M Theatable used to work at, and all those guys went nuts, even though they were underground music guys.*

**TC:** I like that he went into Strange Maine. This is also very magical. I’ve started watching.

**JB:** *Yeah, he has a cool kind of fame, like he’s a positive force. People are probably nice to him.*

**TC:** The person playing Weird Al looks familiar.

**JB:** *Oh yeah, that’s Daniel Radcliffe, he played Harry Potter. Yeah, that was strange. He doesn’t look that much like Weird Al, and I didn’t recognize him either, so I was wondering... why did they pick this dude? Because he’s famous, I guess.*

**TC:** I felt like that. I was sitting on a stoop in New York once, and the Lord of the Rings or Harry Potter guy was sitting on the stoop next to me. I asked him for a light.... Afterward the woman I was dating said, “That’s the so-and-so guy you got a light from, and talked to!” I didn’t know!

But the person was nice enough and gave me a light, and was chill.

This is great, this Madonna version... I didn’t know he dated Madonna. Is this a joke for the film?

**JB:** *Yeah, it was a joke.*

**TC:** It would be cool if they used Weird Al. He still looks healthy, and like he hasn’t aged. He probably never drank or smoked, probably eats super healthy. Seems like he would have been an explorer in some way. Music scientist makes sense... I’m not sure how they pick these actors.

**JB:** *Weird Al is actually in it, but he plays another role!*

**TC:** In real life, *Weird Al*’s history in the charts across multiple decades is rather interesting: “Weird Al Yankovic is one of only three artists who have achieved a Top 40 hit every decade since the 1980s on the Hot 100... The other two are Michael Jackson and Madonna.”

OK, almost finished. Tiny Tim’s character is hilarious. Also Elvira! I like the goofy aspect of it all.

Dr. Demento threw quite a party in the film. I’ve loved his “Hello Muddah” track since I was kid. I’m on his Spotify page... Remember these? Classics! All of them!

**JB:** *Oh yeah, some all-time faves on there: “Smoke That Cigarette,” plus Napoleon XIV... That whole LP is a classic. I thought that party scene was wild, too! Though some of the actors didn’t really capture who they were playing. They could have really pushed that scene over the top with the right people. But it was definitely funny, a really trippy cast of characters to picture hanging out: Devo, Divine, Warhol, Dali...*

**TC:** *Weird Al*’s parents encouraged him to follow his dream for living, in real life, and to play accordion. It is wild how they make his father out to be the kind of Rust Belt [stereotype], and he’s more cosmopolitan, and his mother too seemingly – until there’s the *Repo Man*-esque parent situation wherein the mother in the film – parody, satire – turns to the more father’s side, after he’s well-known and doing what he likes.

I also like that he does these parodies, and the differences that make them “legal,” but his great approach to asking the artists and getting permission. It’s an oral history of music, in some ways, within a song’s lyrics or structure – ZZ Top or Canned Heat, back to where they found these sounds. It also reminds me of *Negativland*, and John Oswald’s *Plunderphonics*, but sampling, too. However, with *Weird Al* there is something for sure his own take on tradition in songs like Tiny Tim’s, etc. There was room for experimentation.

He was maybe more left-field and out there, but more well-known too, because the music videos worked really well for him as a medium.

**JB:** *It seems like you are into the film. Cool.*

**TC:** I was reading about *Weird Al*... He’s interesting, and still something mysterious. It doesn’t seem

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

### ‘Stash House’ Burgled; Small Fire; Bigger Fire; ‘Involved Parties Getting Along Together Just Fine’; Loud Band; Scratchies; Negative Findings; BBQ Gaze

**Monday, 5/8**

6:18 a.m. Caller from Fourth Street states that a male party has been knocking on her door on and off since 1 a.m. She would like him moved along. Gone on arrival.

9:49 a.m. Alarm company reporting alarm sounding in greenhouse at Flower Power Growers. No vehicles in area. Property and building checked; all secure.

12:50 p.m. Caller from Swanson’s Fabrics states that her business was broken into overnight. \$30 in cash and a laptop computer are missing. Report taken.

5:46 p.m. Caller was coming home from Amherst and feels a vehicle was following her; states when she got home, they stopped and asked her for a bottle of water for their dog. This made her uncomfortable. Advised of options.

9:44 p.m. Caller states he just hit a deer on Federal Street; states he is uninjured. Message left with MassDOT to have deer picked up.

**Tuesday, 5/9**

7:23 a.m. Loose German Shepherd walking around Unity Park; Greenfield PD believes it may be a dog that was reported missing from their town. Dog’s name is “Yugo”; owner’s son is on his way to try and catch him. Dog will not come to officers and continues to walk along the bike path. Dog finally picked up by owner’s son.

3:56 p.m. 911 caller states there is a fire in the garden bed in front of the sports shop on Avenue A. Transferred to Shelburne Control. Officer advises TFFD put fire out.

4:29 p.m. Report of demolished building on fire on Wendell Road. Officer advising roads closed from split of Mormon Hollow at this time; Leverett blocking other side of road from Wendell. Officer advises

Eversource has cut power. Road reopened to one lane. Fire remaining on scene.

7:37 p.m. 911 caller from Walgreens states there is a smell of electrical burning coming from inside the freezers and the temps are warming up. Transferred to Shelburne Control.

7:48 p.m. 911 caller on 911-only phone requesting PD to Walgreens. Line open, but caller not answering further questions. Can hear “get in the car” and swearing in the background. Officer advises parking lot is quiet at this time. Mapping to Power Street. Male in background talking about punching and yelling at people. Now mapping to Millers Falls Road. Downtown areas checked; nothing found at this time. Phone disconnected. Officers will remain in area.

11:49 p.m. Caller reports hearing a female party yelling and screaming inside the Crocker Building; did not see anything physical but believes something physical may be occurring due to the nature of the distress in the female’s voice. Officer spoke to involved individuals at location, who deny anything happened. No signs of physical altercation. Involved parties getting along together just fine.

**Wednesday, 5/10**

3:30 p.m. Caller states that a white pitbull is roaming around in the Coolidge Avenue area. Dog appears to have a shock collar on. Officers advised.

4:34 p.m. Caller reports that he was rear ended by a small gray car on Greenfield Cross Road around 4 p.m. No damage to truck; just wants on record.

6:44 p.m. Caller states that his wife was threatened at work by a male party, who was trespassed from her work location, and he is looking for advice on how he should handle it. Re-

ferred to an officer.

7:49 p.m. Caller states that her ex-husband stole some of her child’s medication. Would just like on record for now.

11:40 p.m. Vehicle stopped at Vladish Avenue and Turners Falls Road after an earlier report of erratic operation. No signs of impairment; operator states he is having trouble with a ball bearing that is making operation a little erratic. Citation issued.

**Thursday, 5/11**

12:14 p.m. Officer advising there has been a fox in the Hillcrest area all morning; seems to be following them around and not leaving the area. Animal control officer responding; will discuss further with officer.

2:28 p.m. Fire drill at Lightlife Foods. FD aware as well.

4:15 p.m. 911 caller reports that a vehicle was driving erratically on Federal Street towards Millers Falls, tailgating and speeding, then it passed the caller and almost hit an oncoming truck. Referred to an officer.

6:41 p.m. 911 caller states that a female party took his vehicle; unknown where she was going. Officer spoke with caller; the two parties got into an argument, and she left for the night. Officers will attempt to locate vehicle and female.

9:18 p.m. Shelburne Control took a call from a party in Erving complaining about the band at Millers Pub being too loud. Officer advises door was propped open; it is now closed.

10:25 p.m. Caller from Montague City Road states that his girlfriend threw some of his stuff outside; requesting an officer to stand by to keep the peace. Officer advises caller is now gone for the night.

**Friday, 5/12**

12:52 a.m. 911 caller from North Taylor Hill Road states someone is trying to get into her house, knocking on the door and screaming for her to let them in. Area checked; nothing found.

8:49 a.m. Caller states that a gray Chevy pickup truck struck his dog on Hillside Road. Caller tried to flag him down, but driver did not stop. Unable to locate vehicle. Officer helping to check nearby woods for the dog, who ran off after being struck.

3:01 p.m. Caller from Scotty’s Convenience Store states that a gray SUV with two women inside has been parked on the edge of their lot for approximately an hour and a half. Officer advises parties are all set; just sitting in the vehicle scratching lottery tickets.

4:02 p.m. Greenfield Com-

munity College officer calling to speak with a detective about a student that has reported an assault to him. GCC officer is here; victim is now at the station to speak with an officer. Officer states female was offered medical and 209A options several times but declined. Female stated she wanted to come back tomorrow to speak to someone but did not want to speak to anyone today.

4:27 p.m. Caller states two individuals are walking up the Second Street alley with open containers, stumbling into vehicles while walking. Officer checked area; unable to locate.

8:02 p.m. Caller states that a vehicle just pulled out from a Federal Street driveway and a lot of dirt was dropped in the road. Officer advises that there were a couple shovelfuls of dirt that had been run over by vehicles and are now flattened.

**Saturday, 5/13**

1:38 p.m. Officer flagged down by a passerby near the paper mill on East Main Street; party reports that he saw a large, physically impaired man on a scooter with a young girl as a passenger. He then saw two males in a purple truck parked in a nearby parking lot. Party said he just didn’t feel right about it. Investigated; negative findings.

10:35 Caller states it looks like two people are attempting to break into a vehicle behind the Shady Glen. Officers tied up on another call. Contacting Greenfield PD and MSP to see if they are available. MSP trooper in Greenfield is *en route*. Officer advises nothing appears to have been gone through; no disturbance.

**Sunday, 5/14**

12:08 p.m. Walk-in advising that there was a confrontation with a dog owner whose dog he hit after it ran out in front of his truck. Caller advised of options if dog owner retaliates.

8:59 p.m. Caller from New England Extrusion states that a gold truck is driving up and down the road and has stopped and the driver has been staring at their BBQ area for over five minutes. When they went to confront the vehicle, it sped away. Area checked; unable to locate.

**Monday, 5/15**

4:12 a.m. Caller states she can see a male and female party approaching vehicles on Second Street. Officer spoke with two individuals behind the Cutlery Block, who told him they were out on a walk and while they were walking they stopped and admired a motorcycle, but didn’t do anything else and continued on.

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**RHUBARB** from page B1

and cookbook author Lydia Maria Child agreed that rhubarb is “the earliest ingredient for pies,” but noted its disadvantage: “These are dear pies because they take an enormous quantity of sugar.”

Sweetening is certainly vital to this tart pie filling. Less obviously, so is fat, because it coats the taste bud, softening the acid zing. This explains why rhubarb remains popular in baked goods, which always have butter or another fat as well as sugar among the ingredients.

Lydia Maria Child called rhubarb “Persian apple.” Maybe it got the apple moniker because it is so often substituted for apples. “Persian” is harder to explain, though in Persia (now called Iran) cooks also use rhubarb – not, however, in sweet dishes. Instead, they team rhubarb with meat, usually lamb, in *khoreh*, a type of stew that balances the unctuousness of meat with the tang of various vegetables and fruits.

Rhubarb also appears in soups and sauces and makes excellent sweet-sour chutneys. Clearly such recipes treat it as a vegetable, as indeed it is. But in baked goods it acts as a fruit, and that’s the way most

of us think of it. And so, in 1947, the US Customs Court reclassified it as a fruit.

In its fruity role, rhubarb is not restricted to pies. There are rhubarb muffins, rhubarb cakes, and rhubarb breads, such as the Danish marzipan-rhubarb breakfast rolls. In jams it’s paired with strawberries or ginger, and summer drinks include the rhubarb tea of nineteenth-century America and the *raparperjuoma* of Finland. More surprisingly, it’s an ingredient of the Italian alcoholic drinks Fernet Branca and Aperol.

So, from fashionable modern drinks to ancient medicine, enticing baked goods to tangy stews and unusual preserves, rhubarb can play many roles. It even stars in a Zoroastrian creation myth, which tells that the first man and woman, Mashya and Mashyana, grew out of a rhubarb plant. Promising to help battle the powers of darkness, Mashyana gave birth to 15 sets of twins, who spread around the world, aiding the forces of Light and founding all the races of humans.

Something to think about when you enjoy rhubarb this spring. Here are some less usual ways to enjoy it.



## PERSIAN LAMB & RHUBARB KHORESH

Lamb is the usual meat in a *khoreh*, but beef, veal, and chicken can appear too. Meat with some bone and a little fat is preferred, because they improve the flavor.

4 shoulder lamb chops (or 1½ lb. stew beef)  
salt and black pepper, to taste  
3 Tbsp. olive oil or butter  
1 large onion, chopped  
1 tsp. cinnamon  
2 cups rhubarb, cut into 1-inch pieces  
about 1 Tbsp. sugar (optional)

Preheat the oven to 275° F. Season the meat with salt and pepper. Heat the oil or butter in a casserole over medium heat and brown the meat in it. Remove the meat from the pan and stir the onion into the same oil. Cook gently without browning for a couple

of minutes, then return the meat to the pan, dust with cinnamon, and add hot water to come halfway up the chops. Bring to a simmer, then cover with a tight-fitting lid and put it in the oven. Cook for 2 hours, turning the meat over halfway through.

To finish the dish, remove the meat to a warm dish and discard the bones. Remove a cup of liquid. Put in the rhubarb, and simmer for 7 or 8 minutes on top of the stove. Taste again, and if it is too sour, add a tablespoon or more of sugar.

Serve over basmati rice. Reheat the removed cup of liquid and serve as a gravy.

## RHUBARB & GINGER JAM

4 or 5 cups rhubarb, cut into 1-inch pieces  
2 cups sugar  
2 to 3 tsp. powdered ginger, or to taste  
2 Tbsp. chopped candied ginger (optional)

Put the rhubarb in a big pan with two tablespoons of water. Cover and let soften completely over low heat. Stir in the sugar and the ginger, including the candied ginger if you are using it.

Stir to dissolve the sugar, and then increase the heat and boil it rapidly until it sets. Note that it won’t set as firmly as some other jams, but when it is thick and plopping slowly rather than bubbling quickly, it is ready.

Pour it into jars that have been sterilized by boiling for 10 minutes in a large pan of water. Cover the jars loosely with a cloth until cool, then put on the lids.

Rhubarb is so acidic that molds don’t grow on it.



Rhubarb-ginger jam on an English muffin.

## YOGURT & RHUBARB CHEESECAKE

This easy yogurt cheesecake is delicious plain, and as a foil for summer berries. If using strawberries, blueberries, or any other fruit, omit the vanilla and flavor it with the grated zest and juice of a small lemon.

4 eggs, separated  
½ cup sugar  
4 Tbsp. flour  
1 pound plain whole milk Greek yogurt  
1 tsp. vanilla extract

### For the rhubarb topping:

1½ Tbsp. butter  
2½ cups rhubarb cut into 1-inch pieces  
½ cup sugar, or to taste  
1 to 2 tsp. powdered ginger  
scant ½ cup of water  
2 tsp. cornstarch



HOPLEY/PHOTOS

An unusual take on a cheese type of cake.

Preheat the oven to 350° F. Grease the sides of a 9-inch springform or loose-bottomed cake pan. Line the base with parchment.

In a large bowl, whisk the egg whites until they mound into soft clouds. In another bowl, whisk the egg yolks with the sugar until they look paler, and the sugar loses its grittiness, about 3 or 4 minutes. Sprinkle on the flour and stir it in with half the yogurt.

Stir in the remaining yogurt and vanilla. Fold in the egg whites. Gently tip the mixture into the prepared pan and bake for 35 to 40 minutes or until it looks puffy, and a knife blade poked in the center comes out clean. Cool on a wire rack for 10 minutes. The middle will fall, leaving a raised edge. Remove the edge of the pan and let cool.

Cook the rhubarb in a pan that holds it in a shallow layer. First melt a tablespoon of butter and then, off the heat, stir in the rhubarb. Return to low heat and shake the pan until the rhubarb softens. Stir in the sugar and ginger and cook until the rhubarb is tender, adding a tablespoon or so of water if necessary. Mix the cornstarch with two tablespoons of water and stir it gently into the rhubarb, adding a little more water to make a thick mixture.

Stir in the remaining half-tablespoon of butter. Taste and add more sugar or ginger if you like. Let it cool.

To finish, remove the cheesecake from the base of the pan and put it on a serving plate. Fill the center with the rhubarb mixture.

### PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

## Farm Worker Story Project Hosts Story Booth; Screening and Discussion at the LAVA Center

**GREENFIELD** – Two upcoming events at the LAVA Center are hosted by *indiVISIBLE*, a Mass Humanities “Expanding Mass Stories” project focusing on migrant farm workers’ stories.

Next Friday, May 26, from 5 to 8 p.m., a storytelling booth will be set up to record stories for *indiVISIBLE*. Come tell your story of immigration, or of farm working; share your ideas or a warm human interest tale to add to our collection.

Stories will be used on either the project’s podcast, “The *indiVISIBLE* Hour,” or in its final documentation events.

And next Saturday, May 27 at 1 p.m., the public is invited to join a screening of *Risking Their Lives To Cross US Border: The Undocumented Migrants* by Java Discover Documentaries, followed by a conversation led by Alfonso Neal, executive co-director of the Pioneer Valley Workers’ Center.

This event, supported by *indiVISIBLE* and the LAVA Center, will also be the closing event for the exhibit *No Somos Máquinas (We Are Not Machines)*, which pairs photographs of western Massachusetts farm workers with their own words.



Portraits of western Massachusetts farm workers from the exhibit *No Somos Máquinas*. The exhibit closes at the LAVA Center after May 27’s documentary screening and discussion event.

The LAVA Center, located at 324 Main Street in downtown Greenfield, is a community arts space with a mission to create opportunities and build inclusive community in and through the arts and humanities. See [www.thelavacenter.org](http://www.thelavacenter.org) for more info.

To learn more about *indiVISIBLE* and

the “The *indiVISIBLE* Hour” podcast, “a program dedicated to collecting and preserving the oral histories, personal stories, and folklore of agricultural workers and their communities here in Franklin County, MA, and beyond,” check out [www.indivisiblegreenfield.org](http://www.indivisiblegreenfield.org).

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE LAVA CENTER

### Montague Community Television News

## Now Relive the Tribute Bands!

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

**TURNERS FALLS** – OZ/DC rocked the Shea, and we were there to capture it for your viewing pleasure. You may find it while flipping through your basic cable. (We’re Channel 9!)

Or you may watch it at any time of your liking on the MCTV Vimeo page. There you may also find any of the local town meetings, including this week’s select-board meeting from Montague, or their finance committee meeting – even the GMRSD school committee meeting! There’s always something new to watch on MCTV!

If you have videos of your own you would like to put on TV or our Vimeo page, send them over! Or if you need help, MCTV is always available to assist in local video production as well. Cameras, tripods, and lighting equipment are available for checkout, 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).

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## EXHIBITS

**Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls:** *Visions of the Connecticut River Valley*, work from regional artists featuring the nature of the river. May 7 through June 30.

**Rendezvous, Turners Falls:** *Crapo Tarot*. Tarot cards designed by Trish Crapo. Reception on Sunday, June 11 from 3 to 5 p.m. with three card readings.

**Barnes Gallery, Leverett Crafts and Arts:** *Engaging Nature*, over 140 pieces by the Amherst Plein Air Society. A portion of the proceeds goes to the Kestrel Land Trust. Through May.

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

**Artspace Gallery, Greenfield:** *Mike and Ike's*, work by Kyle Compton-Burch, Timothy Glover, Aubree Guilbault, and August Etzel. May 19 through June 2. Reception this Friday, May 19 at 5:30 p.m.

**Looky Here, Greenfield:** *What I Took With Me*, work by Nina Nabizadeh, Cima Khademi, Yasamin Zamanieh, and Leila Rahnama. Through May 31.

**170 Main Street, Greenfield:** *Peter Monroe*, fine art photography. Make an appointment to view the exhibit by emailing [estherwasm-ydog@yahoo.com](mailto:estherwasm-ydog@yahoo.com). Through July. Reception next Wednesday, May 24, from 4 to 5 p.m.

**LAVA Center, Greenfield:** *Why I Go to School*, art and essays by students in the Twice as Smart learning program. Through May.

**Leverett Library:** *Anne White*. Paintings and more. Through June.

**Wendell Library:** *Watercolor Landscapes*. New paintings by Christine Teixeira. Through

June 30.

**Northfield Library:** *Works by Arleen Kilpatrick*. New England inspirations. Through May 20.

**Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne Falls:** *Apricity*, photographs by Carin Teresa. *The Worlds Below Us*, paintings by Rosa Beryl. Through June 26.

**Shelburne Arts Coop, Shelburne Falls:** *Seeing Things in a New Light*, art and craft by member artists. Through May.

**Fiddleheads Gallery, Northfield:** *Regional Photography Show* by New England photographers. Through July 2. Reception on Thursday, May 25 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

**Jewish Community of Amherst:** *The Art of Collage*, mixed-media collage by Micha Archer. Through July 28.

**Gallery A3, Amherst:** *Roots*, abstract paintings by Tom Morton. Through May 27.

**Club George, Northampton:** *Spirit Hall*, soft sculpture creations by Jacqueline Strauss aka Jezacuclear. Through June 10.

**A.P.E. Gallery, Northampton:** *tender fortress*, an installation by Jae Southerland inviting viewers to explore dreams and memories within a fortress of tulle. May 28, 29, and 31 from 2 to 5 p.m. Special "dark mode" viewing Tuesday, May 30, from 7:30 to 9 p.m.

**Anchor House of Artists, Northampton:** *Larry Slezak*, new work in sculpture and paintings. *Andrew Magee*, large oil pastels. Through May.

**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*.



Clockwise, from top left: A salad of locally grown and foraged greens; the clientele, animate; flourless chocolate cake, surrounded by sweet-crisped strawberry leaves; the clientele, inanimate; seafood lasagna topped with dandelions and a mustard-pecan pesto.

### TASTING from page B1

Each food offering was beautifully plated and delivered with a brief talk about what was being served. Eventually classes will be offered in forest foraging, food preparation, expelling oils from forest plants, and much more.

Our meal started with Forest Roasted Olives alongside Botanical Bread and Butters. The warm olives were roasted in acorn and olive oils with white pine, ginger, seaberry, sumac, spicebush and rose; paired with a sweet, earthy cornbread made with einkorn, masa, and nettle flours; and served with a trio of botanical honey butters. It was difficult to choose a favorite – the first was a nettle-honey butter, the second hemlock, and the third was an exquisitely blended combination of rose, ginger, and sumac.

The nettle bread was also our first introduction to Velouria Menegoni and Safia Pincheira. These young women are North Star high school students who are planning to open a regular Sunday café with fresh baked goods, an espresso bar, and hot herbal elixirs. Check them out on Sunday afternoons from 1 to 5 p.m. at the Harvest.

The students also worked with Menegoni on the next course: delectable French-style savory onion tarts, served with apple cider molasses truffle *crema* and garnished with garlic mustard and ground ivy blossoms. We learned that onions are calming for agitated nervous systems. Menegoni created the savory filling, and Velouria and Safia made the pastries.

The tarts were a work of art, with each one a different presentation – stars, hearts, flowers, galettes, classic tarts, pockets, and even one baked in the shape of an envelope.

The tarts were served with a salad of spring greens – locally grown and foraged – with pecans, dried aronia and barberry, and more ivy and mustard blossoms. The salad was topped with pickled onions, rainbow carrots, daikon radish, and black currants, and tossed with a complex dressing of hickory nut oil, elderberry-infused honey, rose, house-made curry, ume pickle, and apple cider vinegar.

The third course was a serving of goat sliders, ground from Leyden's Frizzle Hill Farm goat meat, seasoned with sumac, cumin, coriander, and fennel and bound with eggs from Sorrel's Flock. Crusted



## EVENT PREVIEW

# Mutts and Mayhem 2023

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

**GREENFIELD** – I have written about a number of events in my area involving dogs. I am now adding to the list an obstacle course event called Mutts and Mayhem, which is being held by the Greenfield Recreation Department this Sunday, May 21 at 11 a.m.

"This is our second year for Mutts and Mayhem," said Kelly Jenkins, the assistant director of Greenfield Recreation for going on three years. She told me 32 dogs were involved in last year's event. This event will again be held at the Green River Swim Area. The obstacle course is a mile and a half and runs all around that area. Ramps, balance beams, tunnels, slip-n-slides, and hurdles are part of the course. Also like last year, there are 20 obstacle stations.

Some of the dogs involved have made pretty decent times when it comes to running the course. One was 16 minutes and 53 seconds, for the small dog category, Kelly told me. A time for the large dog category was 13 minutes and 41 seconds. "That was the quickest one," she said. That was a golden retriev-

er named Odin, who belonged to Alyssa Devlin.

The dogs must be at least a year old, and the individuals with them must be at least 13 years old. The small dogs can be up to 40 pounds, and the large dogs are 40-plus pounds. The small dogs run the course first, and then the large ones go. Dogs apparently get two chances to complete each obstacle.

"I think they enjoy being outside with their dogs and being active," was a reason Kelly gave for why people enter this event. Winners also get a prize pack. I assume some of the things in the pack you can find at Fantastic Fido's, a dog-grooming place that is one of the sponsors of the event.

Kelly also said, in connection with how well this goes this year: "We hope for even more dogs as part of it. We hope so!"

I personally don't know how many more than 32 dogs will show up this year, but it will be cool if the amount ends up being like 50. There is an option to pre-register for \$35, and on the day of, the amount is \$45. And just like last year, this money goes to the town's Paws Park.

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

- William Carlos Williams

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or to: [poetry@montagureporter.org](mailto:poetry@montagureporter.org)

# Our May Poetry Page

## From 'Naked as a Dime' (a Pastoral)

who then  
if stepping  
from a scene swerves in  
the alcove  
where the stream  
is so cold it  
makes you dizzy?  
who then  
says "crystal  
net, you  
constellations,  
you fall  
all over me,  
my face gives  
you contour,  
gives you  
my cheek bones,  
my breath,  
sweet as  
a cherry  
sleigh bed,  
a human  
problem, the  
letter I  
hungry for  
reasons,  
the letter  
I, spinning  
there on itself?"

Galatea "is  
not entirely  
convinced  
the move to  
take back  
the body  
will last"  
("Behold the  
New Naked,"  
in Thursday  
Styles, The  
New York Times  
10/20/22)  
It's the fashion  
to be immersed,  
turned by  
one hand as  
in the other  
a slow sharp  
blade tries  
to achieve  
that perfect  
citrus spiral,  
an orange  
rind unraveling  
over the  
countertop  
yes, as you

- Edward C. Barrett  
Cambridge

## From 'Scroll XX,' *Scrolls of a Temple Sweeper*

I come to walk or sit, to watch a boat float the expanse.  
Gulls and pipers, crows and butterflies.  
Albatrosses play on the rocks of Old Story.  
A love story  
Into these stars the flight of seagulls.  
At home here.  
A boy and girl longing once more to swim to the boat,  
to cross the hills and the clouds  
appearing in the reflection of starlight off water.  
I will help take them there.  
All of these visions in light,  
And a final breath of renunciation itself,  
my turning and return into the miraculous.

- Ninso John High  
Brooklyn and Lisbon

## Deception

I see you, my not-a-friend, my not-an-honest broker.  
Your plotting is not opaque.  
I see you, my little worm-meister, my resentful, scheming little nerd.  
You're playing checkers. I am playing chess.  
As you slip, I slide.  
You miss your mark. I take your queen... your Virgin Queen, my Mata Hari.  
I move about the board and snap your pieces toward the ceiling.  
Your anxiety reveals your next move and it's not clever.  
Your insecurity interrupts your breathing and makes your speech stutter.  
You try to bluff but I'm watching you from the other side. And I am ready for you.  
Rest up for the next round, Mata. I plan to count you among the fallen.

- JE Ingham  
Turners Falls



JE Ingham, Through the Woods Darkly

## Contributors' Notes

Edward C. Barrett is the author of nine previous books of poetry. He lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts where he is a senior lecturer in poetry at MIT.

JE Ingham writes: "My roots are deep in Montague. My German great-grandparents settled in Turners in 1882; my grandfather, Carl Sauter, was born on First Street in 1885; my maternal grandmother, *née* Bertha Bryant, was born in 1887 in North Adams, Massachusetts. Bertha spent her childhood summers in Lake Pleasant at 'The Cottage' my maternal great-grandfather owned at what is now 8 Turner Street." After working at a variety of professions in the East and Midwest, JE returned to New England in 2004 and, now retired, resides in Turners Falls.

Ninso John High's newest book *Scrolls of a Temple Sweeper* was published in early 2023 in a limited edition by Wet Cement Press in Berkeley. The trade paperback is about to be issued.



### WRITING THE LAND

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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, MAY 18

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *Beele 7*, feat. Steve Koziol, Leo Hwang, Joel Paxton, and Kevin Smith. \$ 5:30 p.m.

Wendell Meetinghouse, Wendell: Reading by Court Dorsey, Bernadette. Free. 7 p.m.

Bookends, Florence: *Colby Nathan, Cate Kennan*. \$ 7 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Dead Connection*, Grateful Dead tribute. \$ 8 p.m.

## FRIDAY, MAY 19

Nova Arts, Keene, NH: *Guerilla Toss, Rough Francis, Thus Love, Editrix, Landowner*, more. \$ 4 p.m. See [novaarts.org/thething](http://novaarts.org/thething) for more information.

Next Stage Arts, Putney: *Underground System*. \$ 6 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Jake McKelvie, Misery Quilts, Dearest Hearts*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Cinemastorm* movie double feature: *Mission: Impossible* (1996) and *Inside Man* (2006). Free. 7:30 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Rave in Taurus* feat. *ice rasta, DJ Kouch,*

*pandOravirus*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Jeopardy, DBB, Chained to the Dead, Sachem*. \$ 8 p.m.

## SATURDAY, MAY 20

Unity Park, Turners Falls: *Música Franklin Fun Fest* feat. *Expandable Brass Band, Abena Koomson-Davis, Música Franklin students, Djeli Forchion, Sir Mimealot, Isabella Mendes, and Viva Quetzal*. Free. 12:30 p.m.

Nova Arts, Keene, NH: *Mali Obomsawin Sextet, Maria Chavez, Susan Alcorn*, more. \$ 4 p.m. See [novaarts.org/thething](http://novaarts.org/thething) for more information.

Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: *Open Mic*, with performers *Claire Dacey and John-Michael Field*. Free. Sign-up 6:15 p.m., show at 6:30 p.m.

Millers Pub, Millers Falls: *Little House Blues*. \$ 7 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Sparkletown: A Tribute to Kate Lorenz*. \$ 7 p.m.

Parlor Room, Northampton: *Love Crumbs, Sandy Bailey*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Sapling, Stars Like Ours, Recent History*. \$ 8 p.m.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Lexi Weege & JJ Slater Band, Country Party Band*. \$ 8 p.m.

## SUNDAY, MAY 21

Nova Arts, Keene, NH: *Bill Callahan, Marisa Anderson & Jim White*, more. \$ 12:30 p.m. See [novaarts.org/thething](http://novaarts.org/thething) for info.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Unscripted Youth Improv Showcase*. Interactive showcase of a 16-week Brick House program. Refreshments available. Free. 4:30 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Odds of Eden, Between 3&4, Black Pyramid*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Center for New Americans presents *Immigrant Voices*. (See article, Page A1.) \$ 8 p.m.

## MONDAY, MAY 22

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Queer Poetry Open Mic*. Featured poet, Noemi "Saafyr" Paz. All ages. \$ 7:30 p.m.

## TUESDAY, MAY 23

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Jake Klar, Thompson Springs, Johanna Rose*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

## WEDNESDAY, MAY 24

Montague Center Library: *Pamela Means Jazz Project*. Free, outdoors. 6 p.m.

The Drake, Amherst: *Les Dérailleurs, Steve Waksman*. \$ 7 p.m.

## THURSDAY, MAY 25

Energy Park, Greenfield: *Rob*

*Adams, Joe Graveline & Nina Gross, Katie Clarke & Larry LeBlanc*. Free. 6 p.m.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *Bill Nace, Fujii|||ta*. \$ 8 p.m.

## FRIDAY, MAY 26

StrangeCreek, Greenfield: *Bella's Bartok, The Machine, Pink Talking Fish, Adam Ezra Group*, more. \$ 1 p.m. See [strange-creekcampout.com](http://strange-creekcampout.com) for info.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Cajun Two-Step and Country Karaoke Night with Les Taiauts, The Honky-Tonk Angels*. Free. 7 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Brand New Luddites, Slob Drop, Trash Mammals, Dead Street Dreamers*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

## SATURDAY, MAY 27

StrangeCreek, Greenfield: *Max Creek, Leon Trout, Start Making Sense, Bella's Bartok*, more. \$ 9 a.m. See [strange-creekcampout.com](http://strange-creekcampout.com) for info.

Lunder Center, Williamstown: *Samara Lubelski & Marcia Bassett, Wednesday & Kryssi*. Free. 5 p.m.

Bombyx Center, Florence: *The Samples*. \$ 7 p.m.

The Drake, Amherst: *Bill Frisell Trio* feat. *Tony Scherr, Rudy Royston*. \$ 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Olivia Nied*. 9:30 p.m.

### looking forward...

## SUNDAY, MAY 28

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *Bridget St. John, David Nagler, Stella Kola*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

## THURSDAY, JUNE 8

Bombyx Center, Florence: *Leo Kottke*. \$ 7 p.m.

## FRIDAY, JUNE 9

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Liturgy, HIRS*. \$ 8 p.m.

## THURSDAY, JUNE 15

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Sarah Bernstein & Kid Millions, Gold Dust, Luxor Rentals*. 9 p.m.

## SATURDAY, JUNE 17

The Drake, Amherst: *Mal Devisa*. \$ 8 p.m.

## FRI-SUN, JUNE 23-25

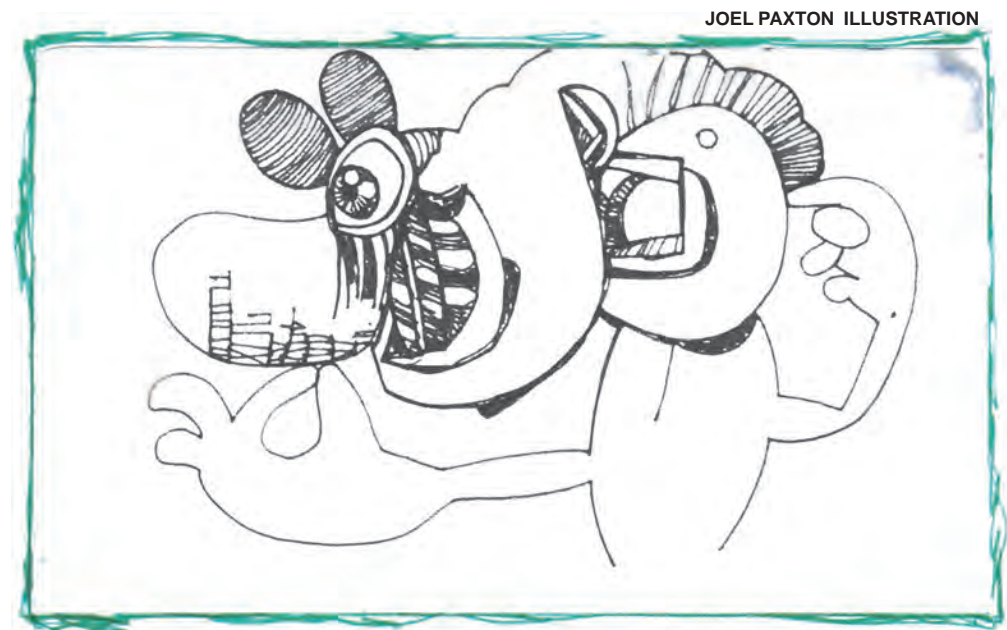
Franklin County Fairgrounds, Greenfield: *Little Feat, Sierra Ferrell, The Wood Brothers, Rubblebucket, Felice Brothers, Sandy Bailey, Winterpills, St. Paul & the Broken Bones*, many more. \$ See [www.greenriverfestival.com](http://www.greenriverfestival.com) for info.

## THURSDAY, JULY 6

Tree House Brewing Company, South Deerfield: *They Might Be Giants*. \$ 7 p.m.

## SATURDAY, JULY 22

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



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Carolyn Clark

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**VALLEY VIEW** from page B1

proud that my DNA indelibly stains that hallowed ground and can never be taken from me. There seem to be few people left in the village with ancestors in that ancient graveyard.

I wanted to share swirling memories that sped back to my wayward youth, when South Deerfield was a rowdy, two-cop town – one by day, the other by night. We had three downtown barber shops, two service stations, a car dealership, five village markets, a bakery with hard-crust Polish rye, two package stores, and four bars, including one called “Mucker’s.” We even had a cobbler, the village’s last, who fixed our shoes and resoled hardy Chippewa boots.

Oh my, what a cast of characters we had, starting with devilish pharmacist Billy Rotkiewicz. All town news and gossip rolled through his drugstore and soda jerk – first at Professional Pharmacy west of the common, then Frontier Pharmacy south of it. Teenage lover boys and even “liberated” hippie chicks with bold resolve would approach the counter to sheepishly purchase condoms.

“Nope,” Billy would snap like only he could, “Sold out. Spring fever. Try Boron’s Market.”

Stymied on their daring initial attempt, they’d trudge diagonally across Elm Street, where Evelyn Boron worked the till near the front door. When asked for condoms, she’d curl a wry grin and with a faint twinkle inquire, “Let me guess – Billy Rotkiewicz?”

South Deerfield was a hell-raising, fun-loving town back then, with Billy beating the drum to which many of us marched. Seems we were always up to something – cruising the streets after dark and creating all sorts of smalltown mischief, especially around Halloween, which for us started with the first hint of fall foliage. How could we possibly wait till the end of October?

On rare occasions when night cop Pistol Pete Kuchieski caught up with

us, he’d wave a stern finger and, in the most intimidating voice he could muster, sternly say, “I know you’re good kids, but this is gonna be your last warning. Next time I’ll have to write you up.”

For most of us it never happened. He was bluffing. Only the most serious offenses would require legal action. Praise the heavens for Pistol Pete. He had a heart, recognized the difference between kids’ stuff and crime, and would tell us straight up that the last thing he wanted to do was to give any of us a record. We sat in the classroom with his own kids.

A colorful character named Robert “Hawk” Wilson was a common attraction on the downtown streets. A small, wiry man, The Hawk staggered around wearing a light-colored cowboy hat and bolo tie with a turquoise slider. He trudged a path between the bars and the drugstore all day, every day. Billy, his most merciless needler, harangued him day and night, and kept him nourished: on the house. Say what you will about Billy; he was, at his core, a big-hearted, mischievous man.

When Hawk approached us on the street, he’d stop to face us down in his best gunfighter pose, arms bowed out to the side like Gary Cooper or Alan Ladd in the old Westerns. We’d take the same posture and draw on him for our daily giggles. “Too late!” he’d bark with a faux snarl. It was great, lighthearted, smalltown fun. Poor Hawk. The end was not kind to him.

I asked the audience to bear with me for one more short digression. I wanted to describe an example of the type of harmless downtown mischief that occupied our time on sticky summer days. I chose a game we played with an elderly target we knew as Yakims. He spoke broken English and, if memory serves me, lived on the corner of Braeburn Road.

Most everyone smoked back then, and Yakims toured the busiest downtown sidewalks salvaging left-

over tobacco from large, discarded cigarette butts. When he found a good candidate, he’d pick it up and, between thumb and forefinger, manipulate the tobacco out into a pocket-sized tin. It became the stash from which he rolled his own cigarettes – not the same kind we later rolled in the shadows.

Well, we used to humor ourselves with a playful little game at Yakim’s expense.

We’d lay out sidewalk bait by threading 2- or 4-pound-test monofilament fishing line through long, tempting cigarette butts and hide around the corner or behind the telephone booth with the other end of the invisible line in hand. When Yakims stooped down to pluck our bait from the sidewalk, we’d give it a little tug and watch a profanity-laced chase ensue. He must have thought a soft summer breeze was depriving him of his treasure. Fun while it lasted – he soon got wise to us, and our downtown sportfishing ceased.

So, that was my intro, followed by brief acknowledgments of those who have helped me most, and a quick list of essential sources I’ve used to understand the mid-18<sup>th</sup>-century building trades. Then it was off to a 70-minute PowerPoint journey, up one side of North Main Street and down the other. I focused on nine early properties I had researched.

I think it went as well as could be expected, despite never looking at the nine-page, single-spaced narrative I had prepared after finishing the intro. I decided on the fly that it was more important to look at and interact with the folks in the audience. I hope it worked.

I viewed the 90-minute presentation as a starting place, a work in progress that’ll outlive me. I only scratched the surface and stirred up a little dust from the tangled web known as Bloody Brook history, which has thus far been largely ignored.

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