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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

APRIL 18, 2024

‘Stepping Stones’ Sought For Pollinating Insects



SALLY PICK PHOTO

“I went outside this morning to check on spring flowers, and heard a buzzing noise,” Montague Center reader Sally Pick reports. “I looked up at the cherry tree, and it was loaded with honeybees from local hives!”

By MIKE JACKSON

MONTAGUE – “It’s absolutely beautiful, when you allow bees to come into your life, and into your yard,” says Ella Ingraham.

A few years ago, Ingraham went to the Nasami native plant nursery in Whately to buy some pollinator-friendly plants for her backyard in the Hill neighborhood of Turners Falls. She had been following a discussion about efforts to support native pollinating insects – an essential, but vulnerable, element in each region’s ecology – and attended presentations on the issue hosted by Greening Greenfield.

But nothing prepared her for what happened next.

“I planted these plants in my yard – I thought, you know, this is

a good thing to do – but when they bloomed, it was just mind-blowing,” she says. “There were so many pollinators on those plants! After that I was like, okay, the front yard’s going.”

This time, Ingraham enlisted the services of Tom Sullivan, a pollinator habitat designer who lives in the Patch. Sullivan cooked up a specialized habitat, and Ingraham gushes to describe it: a rare bee balm; flox; tiny penstemons; tall, purple ironweed; a number of “lovely” grasses, Virginia bluebells, a creeping aster.

Sullivan also recruited her into a small but burgeoning movement to spread pollinator-friendly habitat across the map. The pair worked on a proposal to convert a see **POLLINATING** page A6

Montague Receives 354 Applications For Mural Job

By MIKE JACKSON

TURNERS FALLS – A call issued this winter for a muralist to paint the side of the town-owned Shea Theater received 354 applicants, and the selection committee has offered the job to one and is waiting for a signed contract before announcing the winner.

According to town planner Maureen Pollock, consultants Common Wealth Murals winnowed the pool down to 48 candidates with prior experience working on walls the scale of the Shea – roughly 3,000 square feet – and the Shea Mural Steering Group met several times and interviewed their top-choice applicant before voting unanimously to offer them the job.

The town of Montague is offering the muralist \$15,000, plus room, board, transportation, and supplies, to spend time consulting with local residents, developing a design, and then creating the artwork on the theater’s northwest brick wall.

“It’s pretty amazing,” Pollock said. “We hope to do other mural projects – in other areas downtown, and in other places throughout the town of Montague.”

The goal of a public mural has been discussed at town hall for several years. A mural policy was developed and approved in 2020, guidelines for a mural program were issued in 2021, and in 2023 the selectboard approved a project for the Shea that would use a state Commonwealth Places grant and matching funds from the town’s federal American Rescue Plan Act allocation.

“This is something that is going to change the downtown,” assistant town planner Suzanne LoManto told the Reporter. “I’d like to publicly thank the jurors for putting their time aside.... It’s no joke, and everybody is taking it really seriously.”

Pollock said she and LoManto were joined on the steering group

Very Little Competition In Local Town Elections

By JEFF SINGLETON

FRANKLIN COUNTY – Local election season is upon us in Western Massachusetts, so we have been reviewing how many races in our main coverage towns – Montague, Gill, Erving, Wendell, and Leverett – will be competitive. The answer is, not many. In four of the five towns, for example, the incumbent selectboard member whose term expires this year is the only candidate for the position.

The notable exception is Leverett, which has a unique system of voting for town offices at its annual town meeting. There the selectboard incumbent, Melissa Colbert, says she will not stand for re-election, though as of this writing there is only one announced candidate to replace her.

Local elections occasionally see contests for other elected boards and committees – the planning board, library trustees, board of assessors,



Leverett finance committee member Jed Prunjansky has offered to stand for selectboard as Melissa Colbert has announced she will not seek re-election.

and board of health, to name a few. Voters also frequently see blank spaces on the ballot for these positions, when no one has “pulled papers” and collected signatures to fill see **ELECTIONS** page A5



The brick exterior of the town-owned theater is described as a “gateway” to the village.

by Shea Theater Arts Center vice president Josh Goldman and managing director Linda Tardif, one-time Turners Falls RiverCulture director Lisa Davol, UMass academic dean Leo Hwang, and Second Street

business owners Richie Richardson of FAB and Peter Chilton of Nova Motorcycles.

“Peter is a graphic designer – that’s really helpful,” she added. see **MURAL** page A2

AINSWORTH AT LARGE

Meisner Bids Adieu To Politics



AINSWORTH PHOTO

Alex Meisner leans against his Dodge Charger before his next-to-last selectboard meeting outside the Northfield town hall on Tuesday. His license plate reads XPRIUS. “I submitted it to the RMV as a joke and they gave it to me,” he said.

By CHIP AINSWORTH

NORTHFIELD – Alex Meisner has decided not to seek a third term on the Northfield selectboard. “A lot’s changed in six years, and I’ve done what I feel I can do with the position,” Meisner said in a telephone interview.

The 30-year-old Meisner was born in Northampton and raised in Easthampton and Holyoke. He moved to Northfield more than a

decade ago and climbed the socio-economic ladder, from the Bee Hive to a kindly gent’s home near the post office, to a duplex off the south end of Main Street.

He works at the sheriff’s office and has a wife Haleigh and two infant children, Jackson and Madelyn. As they grow, he fears he may have to look at the town in the rear-view mirror.

“Eventually we’ll have to get a see **AT LARGE** page A4

High School Sports: Packed Schedules

By MATT ROBINSON

TURNERS FALLS – On Thursday and Friday last week, it rained for two days straight, forcing more postponements and stacking up games for this week. The Franklin Tech and Turners Falls High School softball programs weathered the storm, and both remain undefeated. A trip to Turners Falls did not end well for the Blackstone Valley Beavers.

In baseball, Turners sandwiched two wins around a close loss to perennial favorites Pioneer.

The Turners/Tech hybrid tennis teams played some close matches but are still riding winless streaks, and the co-op track teams were outplayed by Frontier, but improved their performance over last year.

Girls’ Track

Frontier 134 – TFHS 11

On Monday the parking lot at Turners Falls High School was packed. Along with the 50-plus athletes on Frontier’s girls’ track team came carloads of fans. Not to mention the huge contingent of boys from Frontier and their entourage. With lanes filled with Red Hawks, see **SPORTS** page A4



DAVID HOIT PHOTO

Franklin Tech’s Makayla Fournier competes in the 100m high hurdles as the Turners Falls High School hybrid track team hosted Frontier Regional last Monday.

Lovingly Regurgitating Local News Into Your Tiny Beaks

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The Montague Reporter

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Coalescing

This Saturday, April 20 is a festival day not just for cannabis entrepreneurs, but also for local environmentalists of the small-is-beautiful camp. The Solar Rollers, a group that first rode bicycles from Amherst to Seabrook, New Hampshire during the anti-nuclear movement's ill-fated 1978 campaign against a nuke on the Seacoast, are dusting off the sweatbands and picket signs once again to ride on Northfield Mountain, with a *Return of the King*-style sequence of feeder marches joining them along the way to a "culminating rally" near the pumped-storage station's river intake.

The intake has been a tough place to draw a crowd, but the campaign has pulled out all the stops to publicize this Earth Day River Ride, and we wish them good weather.

It's a coalition effort under overlapping banners: activists calling for the government to decide not to issue FirstLight Power a new license to use the Connecticut River as the lower reservoir of the Mountain station; activists opposed to building industrial-scale battery arrays on local woodlands, activists opposed to building industrial-scale solar arrays on the same. The common thread is a feeling that the im-

port of such giant projects on living habitat (the river; the forest) is not worth whatever is gained, and that policymakers are not taking into proper account the value of those living systems.

Running full to empty, the battery system New Leaf Energy has proposed for leafy Wendell could release 105 MW of stored energy for four hours. By comparison, Northfield Mountain's full run-down can put out 1,168 MW for eight. Comparing them directly, if the Mountain were closed this year it would take 22 lithium-battery stations to restore the amount of storage flexibility it provides to the New England power grid.

That's not an argument for keeping it open – and there is a good reason nobody is hooking pumped-storage facilities straight to wild rivers in the modern era. But it's important to weigh the scales of what these facilities are providing.

The state of Massachusetts is currently deciding whether to issue a water-quality certification to FirstLight's Northfield and Turners Falls projects. It has been a long and weary process, and if it has done nothing else, it has provided us with a better map of the place in which we live.

MURAL from page A1

"Everyone provides a different and unique perspective to this project."

Common Wealth Murals (CWM) director Britt Ruhe said the chosen artist has confirmed their interest. "They're super talented, and very excited to come paint here," she said.

Given the town's goal of having the project completed by September, the first order of business after the contract is inked and an official announcement made is for CWM to schedule public input events. Ruhe said the process will include multiple in-person events, plus opportunities to give feedback online.

"We'll have the [first] community input session," she told the *Reporter*, "and then we'll be pulling common themes out of that session, and asking for additional input about those."

Ruhe said the volume of applicants was unusual, and credited this in part to the opportunity provided by the building. "It's big and it doesn't have a lot of windows – it's a great canvas for a muralist," she explained. "They probably took a look at the picture in the call and said 'Ooh, that looks good!'"

Ruhe said the public input sessions will involve asking residents

questions to help the muralist, who is "not from here," "get gritty and specific about this community," and learn things about the village and the town that could not be found with online search engines.

"We'll ask questions like, 'You know you're from Turners Falls when...,' or 'The thing I like best about my community is...,' she added, "or 'For the kids growing up in this community, this is what I hope for them.'"

According to publicity materials released by the town this winter, the goal is for the mural to "function as a gateway, with the goal of instantly branding the village as a creative community and encouraging residents and visitors [to] enjoy local retail shops, restaurants, and the art scene."

Pollock said the artist will then be asked to provide a "to-scale, color concept sketch" of the piece to the committee, and should expect to be asked to make further revisions. From there, she said, her department will develop a construction logistics plan, which is likely to involve closing the Avenue A entrance to the municipal parking lot beside the Shea while the mural painting is underway.



Jose DeJesus makes an under-the-hood adjustment at Engine Up Automotive on the French King Highway in Gill. He's been in business there for three years and says he loves working on cars and endeavors to keep repairs affordable by charging a flat rate for his services. He also has a license to sell cars.

Letter to the Editors

Exhibit: What We're Making Now

Like many people, I have been following the collaborative efforts of the Great Falls Discovery Center, the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, the Montague Public Libraries, and RiverCulture in their year-long exploration of *Food, Farms, and Factories*.

Since January there has been a wealth of talks, movies and presentations exploring the rich past of the area. The March/April exhibit at the Discovery Center's Great Hall, one such event, looks at Polish and other Eastern European immigrants and their contributions in the Connecticut River Valley.

It was at another of these events, exploring the rich history of the Turners Falls canal, that I asked, "What about what's being made in Montague today?"

The response I got was something along the lines of, "Great idea – do it!"

The result is a project we are calling "Made in Montague." I am working with documentarian Michaela Henry to put together an exhibit and presentation about what is being made in our town today.

Exploring the industrial companies in town is just one piece of the present – we are also looking for

input and exhibit materials from all those who are "making" things in Montague.

The exhibit will hang at the Great Falls Discovery Center hallway gallery from May or June through September, with a reception and presentation in July. We want to feature work from the wealth of people making art, music, movies, books, fashion, and more. Please respond via the survey at bit.ly/Made-in-Montague, or email madeinmontague@gmail.com.

Many thanks,

Anne Harding
Turners Falls

MONTAGUE REPORTER



ON THE ROAD

Millers Falls resident Theda Silver-Pell brought a lucky copy of the March 7 Montague Reporter on the 26-mile Inca Trail to Machu Picchu in Peru. Going somewhere? Take us with you! Send your photos to editor@montaguereporter.org.

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Compiled by NINA ROSSI

Learn about **fire safety in the home** at a talk given by Captain Geoff Ellis of the Turners Falls Fire Department this Saturday, April 20. Ellis will go over some simple tips to keep your home safe from any obvious fire hazards. The presentation is from 1 to 2 p.m. at the Turners Falls branch of Greenfield Savings Bank.

To reserve a spot, call (888) 324-3191.

The **Montague Clean Water Facility** invites the public to join them for an Earth Day celebration this Saturday, April 20 from 1 to 2 p.m..

"We will be revealing a beautiful new piece of artwork/interpretative sign installed at the Canalside Rail Trail/Bike Path," reads the announcement. The sign is designed by Mary Chicoine and features native fauna, birds, and fish.

The public may park in the dirt parking lot directly across from the bike path entrance. Staff will be on-site to help provide directions, if needed. They will be handing out Earth Day- and water cycle-themed goodie bags for elementary-aged children, while supplies last.

This is a rain or shine event at the facility at 34 Greenfield Road. For more information, contact superintendent Chelsey Little at cwf.supt@montague-ma.gov.

Get trained in **CPR and first aid** at spring workshops taught by the Institute for Wild Med and sponsored by the Cooperative Public Health Service which serves 15 boards of health in Franklin County.

The CPR course is two hours long, costs \$20, and will be held at the United Church of Bernardston at 5 p.m. on Thursday, April 25. You will learn skills to resuscitate adults, children, and infants in situations of cardiac arrest, stroke, drowning, and other life-threatening circumstances.

The first aid course teaches how to treat and prevent common illnesses and injuries such as bleeding, fractures, frostbite, heat stroke, and burns. This course is three hours long and will be held at the same location on Thursday, May 2 at 5 p.m., also for a fee of \$20.

Register at instituteforwildmed.com. Those taking both courses pay only \$30.

Hillary Hoffman of Federal Street Books in Greenfield writes that the store is celebrating **Independent Bookstore Day** next Saturday, April 27 with a Prize Wheel, where any customer can spin to win a free sticker, pin, or other exclusive prizes. Additional giveaways, including mugs, enamel pins, bags, and special edition books, will be made available free while supplies last with a minimum purchase of \$25. The store carries both used and new books, art supplies, and cards. They are open Tuesdays through Sundays; masks are required in the store.

Tom Ricardi will be at Northfield Mountain with **birds of prey** on Saturday, April 27, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Tom's organization, the Massachusetts Bird of Prey Rehabilitation Facility, cares for injured birds and operates a successful captive breeding program.

This free event takes place at the Northfield Mountain Visitor Center at 99 Millers Falls Road in Northfield. No registration is required, and all ages are welcome.

Also at 11 a.m. on Saturday, April 27, **local author and illustrator Micha Archer** will read from her new children's book, *What's New, Daniel?*, at the Montague Center library.

The Leverett resident and Caldecott Honor winner's detailed collages invite readers into Daniel's beautiful world, encouraging them to notice nature around them as Daniel explores the park in spring and finds that there are in fact a lot of new things, such as squirrels nesting, polliwogs growing, and migrating birds returning.

Archer works in oil, watercolors, pen and ink, and collage. Books will be available for sale, and the Friends of the Montague Public Libraries will host an art activity suitable for all ages.

A storytelling naturalist from the Southern Vermont Natural History Museum will share **tales of animals and magic** from around the world at the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls next Saturday, April 27 from 3 to 4 p.m.

This free event features a visit from a live animal related to each story. For ages six and up.

Polish folk artist Susan Urban will give a slide presentation of **costumes from various regions of Poland**, along with a regional costume map and miniature handmade samples of each costume, at the Discovery Center on Sunday, April 28 at 2 p.m.

This is the closing event for the *New Roots in River Banks* exhibit exploring the contributions of Polish immigrants to the Connecticut River valley.

The LAVA Center in Greenfield will hold **auditions for On the Boards '24**, a festival of new plays by local playwrights. Their announcement explains that they're looking for "a wide diversity of actors to perform in readings in a variety of plays. Honoraria offered! No memorization! Experience welcome but not necessary! No preparation required for the audition."

In-person auditions will be held at the LAVA Center, 324 Main Street, on Sunday, April 28 and Monday, April 29. Performances will take place in June and July. Learn more and sign up at tinyurl.com/lavaaud.

The UMass Amherst Libraries announce Western Massachusetts's participation in the ninth annual **City Nature Challenge**. This is a global event inviting people of all ages and educational backgrounds to observe and submit photographic or audio evidence of wild plants, animals, and fungi, using the free mobile app iNaturalist, from Friday, April 26 through Monday, April 29.

Identification of photographed species will then be crowdsourced through the online iNaturalist community from April 30 through May 5, with results announced Monday, May 6.

The wildlife information gathered during the Challenge "gives scientists, educators, urban planners, and policymakers insight into the biodiversity of urban locales throughout the world." Last year

more than a million observations were made, and this is the fifth year that Western Massachusetts is officially participating.

Signing up is easy and free. Visit inaturalist.org from your browser or download iNaturalist from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store. More information and an education toolkit are available at citynaturechallenge.org.

The **Turners Falls High School Alumni Association** invites all TFHS alumni to attend its virtual meetings, now held on Zoom. The format has been changed from in-person meetings to encourage more alumni to participate and share ideas for improving the Association.

"We exist to foster a community of TFHS classmates and friends," said association president, Doug Brown. "We realize that a significant number of alumni no longer live in the area. Holding our meetings online will allow them to attend and perhaps join us in planning our activities and events."

Other Association activities include donations to schools for specific projects, a quarterly newsletter, an annual golf tournament, and posting digitized yearbooks online. Brown added that the group is "always looking" for articles for its newsletter, *The Netop*. "By opening up our meetings," he said, "we hope to encourage our alumni to contribute their milestones, achievements, memories, or whatever they want to write."

Virtual meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month, except for January and July, at 6 p.m. Eastern time. To participate and receive meeting information visit the Turners Falls High School website and click on "Alumni Association Registration," or email Brown at dougbrown@gmrtd.org.

Antenna Cloud Farm is taking applications until May 1 for their 2024 Experimental Institute, scheduled for August 11 to 19 at their Gill location. The Institute offers the opportunity for musicians ages 21 and up to explore collaborative creativity, personal and artistic identity, community resilience, project incubation, career mentorship, and music as a tool for societal transformation.

Mentors include artists and educators Mazz Swift, Michi Wiancko, Pavielle French, and Xenia Rubinos, with support from Steph Davis and Anju Madhok, and possible visiting guest artists.

Antenna Cloud offers a tuition-free, all-expenses-paid fellowship. Apply at antennacloudfarm.com/experimental-institute.

A spring roster of programs and community engagement workshops has been released by Greenfield Community College. Find out about their offerings at engage.gcc.mass.edu.

The Community Engagement office is also looking for any Western Mass **elder interested in being a guest on Backyard Oasis**, a GCC-produced biweekly podcast designed by and for older adults. You can drop in for a one-time podcast or join a planning group; they are looking for more folks to be involved. Email Judy Raper at rap-erj@gcc.mass.edu to learn more.

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

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AT LARGE from page A1

house," he said. "There's hardly any place to live in town."

After serving four years on the sewer commission, Meisner threw his hat in the ring for a selectboard seat in 2018 when he was 24 years old.

"I was tired of seeing the selectboard not functioning to a professional standard," he said. "People weren't respecting the power of the position. I showed up at the nonpartisan caucus, and the next day Rob Leighton announced he was running."

Leighton was the town's police chief and a notorious ticket writer. The race drew a huge turnout for a local election, and Meisner won, 542-165. The joke around town was that now everyone knew how many people had gotten speeding tickets.

"A landslide," said Meisner. "He had no business being an elected official and beating him is my legacy. The town's mood changed after that. We revamped and restructured the police department, Leighton retired and we hired Jon Hall who's been outstanding."

His proudest moment was teaming up with town administrator Andrea Llamas to get \$2 million to fix the dilapidated road between Northfield and Warwick. "It was unsafe at any speed, especially for cyclists," said Meisner, who subsequently appeared before the legislature and

thanked Governor Charlie Baker, Lieutenant Governor Karen Polito, state rep Paul Mark, and others for their help procuring the grant.

Asked about Meisner's job performance, Llamas said, "He's matured. He's become less a talker and more a listener."

Meisner praised Llamas for being "a professional, unbiased, and stable administrator. I sleep well at night because of the way she runs the town."

During Meisner's two terms, a Boston developer proposed an industrial-sized solar array off Pine Meadow Road, and a Kansas architect has used East Northfield as a dart board for proposed development.

Asked his opinion of how planning board chair Steve Seredynski has managed the crises, Meisner said, "I feel badly for the man. He's lost years off his life serving on the planning board. I hope he finds solace and peace."

Although Seredynski favors development, his chief foil on the planning board has been Joe Graveline, who opposes putting thousands of solar panels on fertile farmland and a smoky campground on a quiet crossroad.

"Joe has an argument to make that ultimately costs the town money," said Meisner, "but he's passionate about what he believes in, and he has his rights under the First Amendment."

Meisner plays the saxophone and Graveline

plays guitar. Maybe they can form a duo.

Meisner's own undoing nearly happened at town meeting in May when he used the bully pulpit to verbally accost a resident who had spoken against the proposed \$13 million emergency services facility. "I'm not ever going to pretend I'm perfect," he said. "I got overly emotional about the issue. I made a mistake. I shouldn't have said what I said."

A registered Democrat, Meisner drives a gas-guzzling muscle car and owns guns. "Say that these days, and you're a Republican," he laughed. He is a "field training officer" at the jail, and starts the police academy in May.

His last selectboard meeting is April 30, one week before the annual town election on May 7. His seat will be filled by David McCarthy, barring a last minute write-in campaign. A carpenter by trade, McCarthy also sits on the finance and ESB committees.

"I'd do it all the same," said Meisner. "I played the position honest and all I got out of it was \$2,200 a year. I set out to do my job without any conflicts, without lawsuits, liabilities, scandals, or separation agreements. It was either run for a third term or quit while you're ahead."

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



SPORTS from page A1

the Thunder Ladies still managed to score 11 points, which is an improvement from last year's tally of two points.

Jakhia Williams placed second in the long jump, earning Turners three points for field events.

Powertown did a little better in the track contests. Williams finished second in the 100m, followed closely by Jaade Duncan. Addie Morrey and Kali Beam also took second and third in the mile, and Williams, Duncan, and Jazzy Gonzalez took second, third and fourth in the 200m.

Boys' Track

Frontier 109 - TFHS 30

In the boys' meet, Preston Duval, Cameren Candelaria, Josiah Little, and Dylan Culen broke the tape in the 4 x 100m relay race while Anthony Gallo came in first in the two-mile.

Candelaria also took second in both the 100m and 200m dashes, Little second in the long jump and third in the 100m dash, and Gallo third in the mile.

Joey Valvo took second in the 100m hurdles and third in the 400m hurdles, Logan Caron placed second in the 400m hurdles and third in the high jump, and Truman Long notched third place in the javelin.

Next Tuesday, the teams host the Athol Red Bears.

Baseball

TFHS 6 - Greenfield 4

Pioneer 2 - TFHS 1

TFHS 11 - Lee 1

The Boys in Blue played three baseball games in three days.

On Monday, they crossed the river and beat the Greenfield Green Wave 6-4. There were a lot of old-timers at this game, and alumni from both schools wore their school colors as they cheered on their teams.

Blue took a 1-zip lead in the first after Dylon Richardson walked, stole second, and eventually scored. The score remained 1-0 for a while, though both teams got runners on base, and was still 1-0 when I left for the track meet.

Derek Wissman and Cam Burnett ended with two hits apiece, while both Deven Sloan and Jackson Cogswell hit one each. On the mound, Richardson and Alex

Quezada combined for seven strikeouts, six walks, and five hits.

On Tuesday the team lost a squeaker against the Pioneer Panthers in Northfield. Pioneer clocked a two-run homer in the first inning which would turn out to decide the game. Blue got one run back in the fifth, but despite getting several runners on base they couldn't tie it.

Quezada and Kainen Stevens had hits for Blue, with Stevens getting the RBI. Joey Mosca pitched the entire game, striking out four, walking two, and giving up two earned runs.

Then on Wednesday the Lee Wildcats came to town. There were three sporting events happening simultaneously, so I couldn't watch the entire game, but when I left in the third inning Blue Thunder was up 6-0.

Turners would score five more runs in the next two innings, and the game was called via the mercy rule. Quezada, Wissman, and Burnett had two hits each while Richardson, Stevens, Mosca, and Angel Ruiz Scott had one each.

Stevens pitched all five innings. He K'd eight batters, walked one, and did not allow a single earned run.

Boys' Tennis

Frontier 3 - TFHS 2

Palmer 3 - TFHS 2

The Turners boys' tennis teams dropped two close matches this week, losing 3-2 down in Deerfield on Tuesday and again to the Panthers over in Palmer on Wednesday.

In the Frontier battle, Mike Boyle won the first singles match 6-3, 6-2 and Khalifa Seck won in third singles 6-4, 6-0. John Carmichael lost in second singles (6-0, 6-0), Vaughn LaValley and Mario Pareja dropped first doubles (6-0, 6-0), while Lucas Black and Michael Waite lost second doubles 6-0, 6-1.

The next day the Thunder traveled to Palmer High School and lost to the Panthers by an identical score. Boyle again won in first singles, 6-0, 6-0, while Black and Nathaniel Martin were granted a forfeit in second doubles. Noah Kolodziej lost in second singles play 6-4, 6-4, Carmichael was defeated in third singles 6-0, 6-0 and LaValley and Pareja lost in first doubles 6-0, 6-3.

The Boys in Blue host Springfield International this Friday.



Thunder hurler Joey Mosca sends the heat to the plate against the Pioneer Panthers in Northfield on Tuesday, as Alex Quezada stands ready to field a play. The Panthers edged the Thunder 2-1 in the closely competitive match.

Girls' Tennis

Mohawk 3 - TFHS 2

Frontier 5 - TFHS 0

Last Monday the Blue Ladies played against the Mohawk Warriors up in Shelburne, and lost by a forfeit. Sam Carr took second doubles 6-1, 6-1 and Lydia MacMunn-Seaman skated through her match in third singles 6-1, 6-0. Khia Huertas and Allysia Corbin dropped first doubles 6-1, 6-0 while Rachel Harris lost in first singles 6-0, 6-0.

The decider would have been second doubles, but Turners didn't have enough players, so they forfeited the entire match 3-2.

This Monday, April 15, the team went down to South Deerfield and were blanked 5-0 by the Frontier Red Hawks. In this match Blue suffered two forfeits, though four new Powertown players took to the courts.

Olivia Walbach dropped first singles 6-3, 7-5. Gianna Marigliano lost on the second singles court 6-0, 6-0 and Regan Marshall and Fiona Hutchinson lost the first dou-

bles match 6-0, 6-1.

The Thunder Ladies next host the Palmer Panthers on Thursday.

Softball

FCTS 7 - Blackstone 3

TFHS 11 - Mt. Greylock 5

TFHS 3 - Blackstone 0

FCTS 20 - TFHS 7 (JV)

On Tuesday, while the Turners girls were up in the Berkshires playing Mount Greylock, the Blackstone Purple Beavers came to Franklin Tech. The Beavers stayed overnight so they wouldn't have to travel for their game against Turners the next day. In Tuesday's mashup they wore white jerseys with purple socks.

One thing I noticed about this game is the dearth of visiting fans - I only saw about four or five families behind the visitors' dugout, while Tech cars filled the parking lot and were parked along Industrial Boulevard. Also among the spectators were a number of Turners Falls fans, sizing up the Central Mass Beavers.

This larger, higher-ranked school made their mark early, putting one

across in the first inning to take a temporary 1-0 lead. The Eagles tied it up in the bottom of the first, and then they were off to the races, piling on three more runs before the Beavers could notch their second. With the score a tight 4-2, Tech scored an insurance run in the fifth inning and two more in the sixth.

Lillian Ross, Cordelia Guerin, Kyra Goodell, and Lilianna Inman had two hits each with Inman parking a homer, Goodell placing an inside-the-park home run, and Ross and Guerin shooting doubles. Kaitlin Trudeau and Hannah Gilbert also hit safely for Tech. In the circle Gilbert pitched a complete game, striking out eight, walking three, and allowing one earned run.

Meanwhile in Williamstown, the Turners Falls Blue Thunder defeated the Red Mounties 11-5. Madison Liimatainen ended with three hits while Holly Myers, Ella Kolodziej, and Autumn Thorton had two each. Liimatainen pitched seven innings, striking out 17 batters, walking none, and allowing no earned runs.

On Wednesday the Blackstone Beavers came back to Turners Falls, this time to play the Turners Falls Thunder. The visitors had switched their uniforms between games, donning purple jerseys.

This game was pretty much of a pitchers' duel, with a couple of Blackstone errors thrown in. Blue got one run in the first inning, then scored two more in the third and fourth.

And that was it. For the next two and a half innings, both defenses kept the other team off the scoreboard and Turners coasted to a 3-nil victory.

Although Blue only had five hits - from Liimatainen (2), Mia Marigliano, Myers, and Ella Kolodziej - they scored when they had to, and left their fate in the gloves of their defense. Liimatainen threw a complete-game shutout. She struck out eight, scattered four hits, and walked nobody.

The third contest on Wednesday at Turners Falls High was a junior varsity softball game between Franklin Tech and Turners. It was pretty painful to watch as Tech took advantage of some Thunder errors and miscues to build an 11-1 lead en route to a 20-7 shellacking.



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ELECTIONS from page A1

an impending vacancy. There also some unusual elected boards. Leverett, for example, elects its finance committee members at town meeting, while in most municipalities the fin com is appointed by the moderator. Montague has an elected board overseeing its Housing Authority but an appointed planning board, while Wendell is the only town in our coverage area with an elected road commission.

The election of certain administrative positions, traditionally town clerk, tax collector, and treasurer, has become rarer – it was recently ended in Montague, for example, but remains the practice in Erving and Gill. The Gill treasurer/tax collector may become an appointed position this year, if that change is supported at the spring town meeting and then approved by voters.

All towns in our coverage area elect a town meeting moderator.

All the towns in our coverage area have chosen this spring to opt out of early in-person voting. Early voting for federal and state elections remains mandatory, and all the town clerks we spoke with said that the process, which was implemented during last month's presidential primary, places big demands on small, understaffed towns.

They also stressed that absentee ballots are still available for those who cannot make it to the polls on election day.

MONTAGUE

Date: Tuesday, May 21

Location: Montague Center Fire Station (Precinct 1); Franklin County Technical School (Precincts 2, 3, 4, and 6); Gill-Montague Senior Center (Precinct 5)

As in most of the towns in our coverage area, incumbents in Montague have filed papers for most key elected positions. These include selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz, Melanie Zamojski, the chair of the board of health, and Barbara Kuklewicz, chair of the parks and recreation commission.

There are some notable exceptions to this trend. One is the library trustees, where three three-year slots are on the ballot, but Tricia Perham was the only incumbent successfully filing papers. Another is the board that oversees the town Housing Authority, where Anthony Zera is retiring after 50 years.

And a third is the town moderator. Ray Godin, who served for many years and has been filling in again following the death of his successor Chris Collins, says he is calling it quits, though no one has put their name on the ballot.

Montague is the only town in our readership with an elected town meeting. Each of six precincts elects seven candidates annually for three-year terms, producing a 126-member body, requiring a quorum of 64 members to meet. In addition to the seven three-year seats that open up each year, some of which may not have candidates seeking re-election, there are often open seats in each precinct for shorter terms after members retire mid-term.

Town clerk Kathern "Beanie" Pearce was hesitant to announce the status of any town meeting seats yet, but noted that there are open three-year seats in all precincts except Precinct 1, Montague Center. She also stressed that even where candidates are listed on the ballot,

write-in votes will still be counted.

A separate ballot for the Gill-Montague regional school committee, made up of six members from Montague and three from Gill, will be provided to voters at polling places in both towns. Incumbents Lori Lee Adams and Carol Jacobs are running for Montague's two available three-year seats, along with Scott Hyman of Millers Falls, who has filed papers.

Another Montague incumbent, Clifford Spatcher, will be on the ballot to fill out the final two years of a seat he has been appointed to mid-term. Voters in both Gill and Montague can vote for candidates from the other town. James DeLorenzo will be on the ballot to represent Gill, as Cristina Marcalow has announced she is stepping down.

GILL

Date: Monday, May 20

Location: Gill Town Hall

Speaking of Gill, incumbents in most key positions – including selectboard chair Charles Garbiel, board of assessors member Thomas Storrow, cemetery commission chair Joan Pillsbury, board of assessors member Tim Storrow, board of health chair Jeffrey Blomstedt, and library trustee Anna Hendricks – will all be on the ballot, as will town meeting moderator Isaac Bingham.

As noted previously, James DeLorenzo will be on the school district ballot to represent Gill, and voters will also be invited to help select the Montague representatives.

One measure on the May 20 ballot would change the town treasurer/tax collector position from elected to appointed. Town clerk Doreen Stevens noted that "Part 1" of the annual town meeting, scheduled for May 6, would need to approve that bylaw change. As this is only two weeks prior to the election, this no doubt means that Peter Turban, the current treasurer/tax collector, will appear on the ballot regardless.

Stevens also said she wanted to remind voters that though there will be no official "early voting," either by mail or in person, her office will distribute and accept absentee ballots.

ERVING

Date: Monday, May 6

Location: Erving Town Hall

The key incumbents in Erving, including town clerk Richard Newton, selectboard chair Jacob Smith, health board chair Jeffrey McAndrews, and board of assessors and library trustees chair Dan Hammock, have all handed in papers and are on the ballot unopposed, as is town meeting moderator Richard Peabody.

The only notable race on the ballot is for tree warden, which pits incumbent highway superintendent Glenn McCrory against Anthony Cunha.

Current school committee chair Mackensy Bailey and member Mark Blatchley will be running for re-election to three-year seats on the committee, but no one has filed papers for an open one-year seat.

The May 6 ballot will also include a Proposition 2½ debt exclusion vote, authorizing the town to borrow funds to demolish the former International Paper Company mill, according to town administrator Bryan Smith. That debt exclusion question will then appear

on the warrant for the annual town meeting on Wednesday, May 8.

WENDELL

Date: Monday, May 6

Location: Wendell Town Offices

The town of Wendell has recently posted a sample ballot on its website that resembles and bears the title of an official election ballot.

The "specimen ballot," as it is called, shows that selectboard chair Laurie DiDonato is running for re-election unopposed, as are incumbents Martha Senn for the board of assessors, Florence Blackburn for the cemetery commission, Clifford Dornbusch for tree warden, and Kathleen Nolan for moderator.

Incumbent Mara Bright and non-incumbent Bernice Tuttle are running for two seats on the library trustees. On the planning board, Mary Thomas is running for re-election for a five-year seat, Steve Gross has filed papers for a three-year vacancy, but there is also a four-year vacancy with no listed nominee. Two residents have filed papers for the road commission: Beth Erviti for three years, and Jon Bowers to fill a one-year vacancy.

The town coordinator, Glenn Johnson, told the Reporter that he has already received a large number of "early" ballots in the mail, though these may be "absentee" rather than official "early" ballots. The town website says only that voting will take place from noon to 6 p.m. on May 6, and the page for "Early Voting" provides information about last month's primary, but does not mention the town election. Our efforts to reach town clerk Anna Wetherby to clarify this by our deadline were unsuccessful.

LEVERETT

Location: Leverett Elementary School

Date: Saturday, April 27

And then there is Leverett, the last town in the Commonwealth to elect its officials at town meeting rather than at the polls.

The meeting is, to be sure, open to all registered voters – but they are not encouraged to walk in, vote, and leave, but rather to spend most of April 27 at the elementary school gym, debating and voting on a range of issues, including the town budget.

As far as the election is concerned, candidates are nominated from the town meeting floor. They may give a short speech, and then voters generally hear statements from supporters. This reporter has attended two such annual meetings, and did not witness any competitive races or statements of opposition, but paper ballots are taken and counted in the event of a race.

A newsletter posted on the town website lists the incumbents whose term is expiring, and whether they have agreed to stay on the job. This year's list includes statements from longtime office-holders open to re-election such as Tom Ewing of the planning board, Rachel Flint and Lisa Sullivan Werner of the library trustees, Alan Goodman and John Hillman of the health board, Jim Staros of the board of assessors, and Nancy Grossman of the fin com.

There appear to be a few clear openings for nominees from the floor, including for the town's five-member school committee, where incumbents Jess Rocheleau

MONTAGUE PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT PUBLIC MEETING

**Tuesday, April 30, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.
Montague Center Volunteer Fire Dept.
28 Old Sunderland Road, Montague, MA**

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 138, General Laws, as amended, the inhabitants of the Town of Montague are hereby notified that the Montague Parks & Recreation Department will be sponsoring a meeting regarding the design of Montague Center Park on Tuesday, April 30, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Community Room at the Montague Center Volunteer Fire Department, located at 28 Old Sunderland Road, Montague Center, MA 01351.

Public participation is welcomed. For additional information, please call Montague Parks & Recreation at (413) 863-3216.

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and Becky Tew are declining to stand for re-election.

The big news from Leverett is the retirement of Melissa Colbert, the only selectboard member in our readership towns to leave their position. Colbert is listed as "undecided" near the top of the newsletter, but in a lengthy statement toward the end she announces her retirement, "due to the fact that we may have to move out of town."

Colbert goes on to say that she has "enjoyed every kind, thoughtful, curious connection made. I have no doubt whomever's arm we can twist to run for the next term will be a wonderful addition to the colorful scene of Leverett town government."

Apparently Colbert, soon after writing that, proceeded to twist the arm of fin com member Jed Proujansky, who formerly served on Northfield's selectboard. In a lengthy statement, Proujansky wrote that he had not initially considered joining the Leverett board, but on further consideration realized he would be "honored" to serve in that capacity.

Proujansky presents an impressive resume, which includes serving on the Pioneer Valley Regional school committee, as a founder and

board member of the Community Health Center of Franklin County, on the board of the Holyoke Community Health Center, and as a member of the Northeast Foundation for Children's finance committee.

Finally, Proujansky, noting that he had played a leadership role in the campaign to stop the natural gas pipeline proposed in 2014 by Kinder Morgan to run through Franklin County, suggested that "[i]t will be important for the town plan for the potential redevelopment of the Kittredge property to ensure that our interests are represented. I believe I am well suited to the task of representing the town's interests as we negotiate with the developers about appropriate development on that property."



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POLLINATORS from page A1

native-but-mowed corner lot at the nearby Sheffield Elementary School into habitat, which they pitched to school administrators Ingraham describes as interested but busy. From there helped launch a new initiative, the Montague Pollinator Action Group.

The MPAG has been meeting monthly at Montague town hall, under the wing of town planner Maureen Pollock; this Thursday afternoon marks its third meeting. The group provides a venue where the town's pollination enthusiasts can coordinate strategy, recommend priority public parcels for planting, and draw in more volunteers to help with the effort.

They are not starting from scratch. In 2017 the state Department of Agricultural Resources published the *Massachusetts Pollinator Protection Plan*, outlining threats, resources, and some basic action steps. Planners at the Franklin Regional Council of Governments took the ball and ran with it, producing in 2021 a much more in-depth *Regional Pollinator Action Plan for Franklin County* and working with eight local towns, including Montague, to produce specific action plans at the local level.

"I just came to [Pollock] with the thought that maybe we could do something," says Sullivan. "She told me, 'Well, why don't you start a group? We need it!'"

"The action plan has two broad strategies," Pete Wackernagel, a local landscape designer who has joined MPAG at the ground floor, explains of the document. "It talks about there being pollinator *corridors*, and pollinator *stepping stones*. The corridor strategy is that there are these larger habitat blocks – for example, the Connecticut River – that are basically going across the whole town. 'Stepping stones' refers to creating very small areas of pollinator habitat that would, taken together, form these sort of

discontinuous corridors."

According to Sullivan, different pollinating insects have different needs for how closely clustered these small stands of host plants would need to be in order to effectively build habitat. "It's 500 feet for the smallest bees, up to a mile for bumblebees," he tells the *Reporter*.

"Bumblebees live in colonies, they can fly up to a mile, and they're large, so they do a lot of pollinating of our crops – but there are seven families of native bees, five major ones.... 90% of the bees are solitary, and of those, 70% nest in the ground. It's like they're invisible to us."



Corridors and stepping stones, illustrated in Montague's pollinator action plan.

So far 20 local residents have come to MPAG meetings, and the group is working on prioritizing potential projects on town-owned land. Rising to the top of the stack, with the possibility of shovels in soil as early as this spring, is the Highland Cemetery in Millers Falls, where the cemetery commission recently opened a new area for green burials.

Annie Levine, who has already scrutinized the town's public lands twice – first with the Great Falls Apple Corps, for spots to grow edible plants, and more recently as a cemetery commissioner, scouting for future graveyards – has thrown her lot in with the MPAG as well.

"I thought it would make sense for me to come in with my knowledge of spaces, and offer what I had," she says. Cemeteries, in particular, might be a good strategic direction to go in building stepping stones between corridors.

"The town really doesn't own too much land that's throughout the whole geography of the town," she says. "There's random parcels in the Plains, there's one really funny parcel by Cabot Camp.... The cemeteries are one space where there's actually bits that are town-owned throughout the villages."

Levine says there are already plans for a garden at the foot of a sign showing the path to the green burial plot at Highland, funds are still earmarked to plant it, and the cemetery commission has already voted, "pending an approved plan of action," to make it pollinator-friendly habitat.

Ingraham and Sullivan are focused on the Sheffield project, meanwhile, and Wackernagel has been in talks with the parks and recreation department for parcels at Unity Park. As they hash out the list of priorities, all say new members are welcome to get involved.

"A real range of people have been coming," Ingraham reports. "Mothers and children, people around my neighborhood who are either planting or thinking about planting..."

While determining the best sites for "stepping stones" may be tricky, the town does have strong corridors to build from: the river that winds around it, and the pitch pine and scrub oak habitat at its heart – the Montague Plains.

UMass Amherst conservation scientist Joan Milam, who has "identified more bees than anyone in the state," Sullivan says, has identified the Plains as the location of the single highest diversity of bees in Massachusetts. "We have got to run with that. Those species that are there have got to be something we're really thinking about in a serious way."

Tip of the week ...

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For now, despite feeling the wind of policymakers and planners beneath their wings, MPAG's main challenge may be in convincing some of their fellow townspeople that native, pollinator-friendly plants are a practical and aesthetically sound option for public property.

"Maureen is very interested in having them look neat, and somewhat together," says Sullivan. "The early pollinator habitats had very big plants that would just flop over into the sidewalks, or be kind of messy-looking. They often didn't have get any attention beyond the initial planting, so they'd look kind of grubby."

"She's trying to avoid that, so design is going to be a big part of this whole thing – and the other part is connecting money for maintenance, or at least volunteers who will maintain it."

According to Levine, who also serves on the tree committee, there is an unwritten rule in Montague that property owners may plant gardens in the tree belt in front of

their homes – as long as they are aware the public works department may one day need to dig them up. "I find a lot of people didn't know it was a possibility," she says.

On the Hill, Ingraham gushes about a neighbor who planted a species of primrose in her yard and tree belt and has attracted brilliant pink primrose moths. "It's amazing – they just need a place, they need their host plants," she says.

"I planted these really tall goldenrod – they were four and a half feet tall when they reached their full height," Ingraham continues. "My grandchildren were using like a forest. They could just go through them. and nobody ever got stung! But there were just pollinators everywhere. These little wasps, big wasps, every kind of bees... It became very exciting."

Anyone interested in learning more about the Montague Pollinator Action Group is encouraged to email Sullivan at sullivan08@csld.edu.



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Amanda Gorman, *The Hill We Climb*



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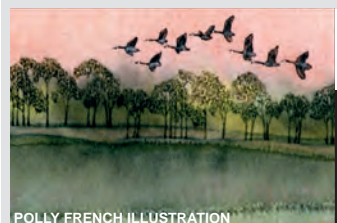


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OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER

APRIL 18, 2024



WEST ALONG THE RIVER

‘LE TEMPS A LAISSIÉ SON MANTEAU...’

By DAVID BRULE

THE FLAT, ERVINGSIDE – Charles d’Orléans (1395-1465) wrote lines of poetry in April, shivering within some far-off damp prison walls in 15th-century England. He had been taken prisoner at the Battle of Agincourt in 1415.

I don’t know if he had a window to look out of to note what was going on outside that season of spring, nor how long it had taken him to write the lines of his immortal poem. Did he sit pensively in his French poet’s hat, goose-plume quill in his hand, as he scratched out these lines in old French?

*Le temps a laissé son manteau
De vent, de froidure et de pluie,
Et s’est vestu de broderie,
De soleil luyant, cler et beau.*

(“The season has left off its mantle / Of wind, chill, and of rain / And has dressed itself in embroidery / Of shining sun, clear, and beautiful...”)

Just a bit later on, four hundred years later in fact, give or take, on April 18, 1852, Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) also wrote about the month of April in Concord in his journal:

The most interesting fact, perhaps, at present is these few tender yellow blossoms, these half-expanded sterile aments of the willow, seen through the rain and cold, – signs of the advancing year; pledges of the sun’s return.

For the first time I perceive this



LOUIS AGASSIZ FUERTES ILLUSTRATION

*Eastern towhee,
Pipilo erythrophthalmus.*

spring that the year is a cycle.... Why should just these sights and sounds accompany our life? Why should I hear the chattering of blackbirds, why smell the skunk each year? I would fain explore the mysterious relation between myself and these things.

I think H.D. was on to something there.

Fast forward to someone like me in 2024, sitting here in a slight morning chill, perhaps a bit audacious in placing myself in such select company, caught as I am between poetry and prose. I’m working, perhaps like my esteemed predecessors, trying to capture a fleeting moment of nature and weather in capricious April.

I can tell you for example that on April 10, I looked up from my morning book of poetry that usually sets my mind thinking in rhythm and language flow. The buzz from the coffee always helps, too. What did I see just over there?

The real poetry may be lurking under the overhang of the rhododendrons yonder with their swelling buds promising an extravagant month of June. Or perhaps it resides in the form of the patient song sparrow, the sweet springtime whistle of the whitethroat.

Then the unexpected form and color of the first towhee materializes next to the sundry sparrows. Likely riding in on the warm wave of wind welling up from the south as it did last night, this welcome migrant pokes about, scratching the earth like a proud rooster, cocksure of his right to be there.

Where days ago there were sparse patches of grass and a lingering coat of icy snow, there is now a growing carpet of pale green, and the dandified towhee is working the margin of lawn and lowbush for his breakfast.

You may not know this bird. He spends his summers up on the Montague Plains, far from neighborhood cats who would raid and kill the ground-nesting towhee female. He and his kin drop in down here to the flatlands along the river in early spring, then move on later in the nest-building season up to safer habitat.

For us in this household he ranks as a true harbinger of spring, along with the eccentric woodcock, who has been calling incessantly from the coverts of the bare woodlands these evenings since March 20.

For sure our tree swallows are see **WEST ALONG** page B8

Above: Ornamental quince joins the spring parade on Central Street in Turners Falls.

BOOK REVIEW

Bill Wasik and Monika Murphy, *Our Kindred Creatures: How Americans Came to Feel the Way They Do About Animals* (Knopf, 2024)

By CLAIRE HOPLEY

LEVERETT – Today we rarely see animals abused in our streets. The few cruelty cases that make it to local newspapers are usually home-based: dogs barking because they have been locked or tied for hours; animals starved or sick and left to suffer. Also hidden from immediate view are animals



raised for food in crowded stockyards or tiny pens.

But in the 19th and well into the 20th century, animals routinely suffered right out in the open. Horses were frequent victims. They were everywhere: pulling delivery drays, powering mill stones and presses, hauling crowded streetcars, and trotting between the shafts of elegant carriages. Drivers whipped them mercilessly if they didn’t perform quickly and powerfully enough. Coachmen check-reined horses’ heads excruciatingly high in the interests of a smart appearance.

Farmers and dealers took calves and hens to market tied in struggling bundles. Hunters boosted their egos by killing as many birds and animals as possible – hence the extermination of flocks of passenger pigeons, and herds of bison. Few dogs had a home indoors; working dogs lived outdoors; those roaming city streets were kicked or chased because people feared bites and rabies.

Few people batted an eyelid. Among those who did were Henry

Bergh of New York, George Angell of Boston, and Caroline Earle White of Philadelphia. They gathered supporters, founded humane societies, and lobbied politicians, businessmen, and editors about the routine and often public cruelty suffered by most animals.

In 1866 Bergh, son of a wealthy shipbuilder, founded the first humane society, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), which the New York State legislature authorized to enforce a new anti-cruelty law drafted by Bergh himself.

He also personally arrested offenders and delivered them to the hands of law enforcement, and maintained a relentless campaign in the courts and press against what he called *cruelism*, ultimately going so far as to suggest that offenders be publicly hanged.

Bergh had been inspired by the Royal Society for the Protection of Animals in England. Just so, his New York-based ASPCA prompted see **CREATURES** page B5

BOOK REVIEW

Martin MacInnes, *In Ascension* (Black Cat, 2023)

By DONNA PETERSEN

MONTAGUE CENTER – On the lookout for some good speculative (what if?) science fiction, I spotted *In Ascension* by a young Scottish author. It looked intriguing and was long-listed for the Booker Prize, so it should be good. Great blurbs on the cover – “shattering,” an “instant classic,” “transcendent,” “beautiful and moving” – and great reviews of a novel that explores humanity’s place in the cosmos and on Earth, and life itself.

We first see the main character, Leigh, as a young girl growing up in Rotterdam in the Netherlands with an unhappy family life. Her father beats her regularly, her work-obsessed mother is distant, and her once-close younger sister pushes herself away as she gets older.

Living in below-sea-level Rotterdam, Leigh becomes obsessed with the sea and the microorganisms living in the waters. Escaping her family, she heads to university and earns her doctorate researching marine microbiology and algae. On a research field trip, news breaks worldwide that NASA in the United States has made a breakthrough discovery in propulsion technology, setting the stage for the story.



Leigh ends up on a research vessel heading for an area near Ascension Island in the Atlantic Ocean to study a newly-discovered vent in the ocean floor. The mission seems to be funded by corporate interests that want to dredge and mine the ocean floor. The vent is much deeper than the deepest known ocean floor, the Mariana Trench. Why has it not been found until now?

The unmanned submersible that is sent down to investigate is destroyed and divers, including Leigh, who dive in the waters above the oval shaped site develop strange symptoms. The site is deemed too dangerous and quarantined.

Two years later, Leigh is recruited for a highly secret space project in California. She is to develop an algae “garden” as a food source for a long space exploration journey.

She finds this isn’t really a NASA project, it is a “group of agencies” and the Institute for Coordinated Research in Space (ICORS). This is not a “one giant leap for mankind” kind of mission, but more of a one giant profit step – kind of Elon-ish – for the unknown entities behind ICORS. Possibly the same sponsors as the earlier ocean mission?

see **ASCENSION** page B2

Pet of the Week



'STRAWBERRY'

Strawberry is a nervous boy, but once he gets to know you he settles down and enjoys the pets. He's been around other pigs before and would do well with another calm male with slow introductions. He's also lived in a home with a small dog, and while they didn't interact a lot, he wasn't concerned by the sounds.

Guinea pigs are incredibly social animals who need to be kept in pairs or groups to thrive. They need lots

of space to run around in, and toys to keep them active and enriched! They should get daily "floor time" outside of their cage.

Are you interested in adopting sweet little Strawberry? If you're ready to adopt, you can come in during open adoption hours, Tuesdays through Saturdays from 12:30 to 3 p.m. For more information, call (413) 781-4000 or visit www.dakinhumane.org.

ASCENSION from page B1

A strange new asteroid has appeared way out in space, but turned out not to be an asteroid, but a made vessel of some sort – and then disappeared. The secret project mission is to locate this oval object using NASA's newly-discovered "power" propulsion.

The arduous training and secrecy for the space journey over two years isolate Leigh from her sister and failing mother. She is totally focused on succeeding in her career and this mission, and her personal relationships wax and wane. During the training, as she is developing a suitable strain of algae for food, Leigh finds out that testing of the "power" technology is disrupting animal migrations around the planet.

Leigh and her two crewmates eventually blast off on their biologically, scientifically, and psychologically difficult mission. As they travel further from Mother Earth, their journey raises more questions than it offers answers. Did the unknown oval object somehow communicate with humanity? Was it a guide to be followed to some location in the cosmos? Is there life somewhere out there, wanting contact?

The story at this point leads the reader to consider questions and ponderings of their own. Leigh's family is a shadow presence throughout the book; when we think we have made our own independent life free of family, have we really? Have we dragged some ghost of the family dynamics with us, informing our choices

more than we realize?

The relationship between Leigh and her sister Hannah has helped define them both. Leigh sees herself as alone and dedicated to her work and her sister as always "belonging" and responsible, while her sister sees Leigh as selfish and impulsive and herself as caring and responsible. As I was finishing up the book, I heard a report on NPR about research into how important siblings are in the way we define ourselves and see the world.

The space mission doesn't go as planned, of course, but Leigh survives a fiery re-entry to Earth. Earth? What happens is again thought-provoking. Do we always come home? What about the seeding of life on celestial bodies? Where does it start or end?

Eleven years later Leigh's sister Hannah goes to Ascension Island where the three astronauts were to be quarantined after their return. She walks along the beach and sees a group of sea turtles laboring up the beach to lay their eggs. Coming back to where they began. *Coming home.*

There is more time spent on details, family, and little philosophical ponderings than most sci-fi, but I think it fits with the book's message and "feel." *In Ascension* is an engaging, worthwhile read that may stay in your head for a time while you think about the wonders and mysteries out there in the universe – and here on Earth.



FOAM COLLECTION UPDATES

Now's When to Unload That Foam!

FRANKLIN COUNTY – The special "Hold the Foam!" collection continues the next two Saturdays in April, from 9 a.m. to noon, at the Montague, Leverett, Wendell, and Northfield transfer stations. Each collection is open only to residents of the corresponding town.

These special recycling collections will only accept white blocky packing material and coolers made of expanded polystyrene foam (EPS or PS #6), commonly known as "Styrofoam." To meet these specifications, volunteers are reviewing the materials and may reject unacceptable items.

Julie Kumble reported that about two dozen people dropped off foam at the Montague station on the first Saturday of the month.

Foam items must be clean and dry. Before bringing materials to the collection, residents will need to remove any tape, labels, cardboard or wood.

These collections will not accept food-related "Styrofoam" items such as cups, plates, bowls, trays, egg cartons, or take-out containers. Other items that will not be accepted are wet or dirty materials, #4



Left to right: Volunteers Tamara Kaplan, Paul Lipke, and Julie Kumble help collect Styrofoam earlier this month at the Montague transfer station.

foam packaging material (LDPE), foam insulation board (XPS), and packing peanuts.

"We did turn away dirty foam," Annie Chappell wrote after the April 6 collection at Northfield, "but people generally accepted our standard because we let them know that ultimately the recycler has the final say, and we are complying

with their needs."

Last year the project, coordinated by the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District, diverted 90 cubic yards of foam from landfills to Gold Circuit E-Cycling in Agawam. The foam will be densified and ultimately recycled into picture frames, molding, or building insulation.

Senior Center Activities APRIL 22 THROUGH 26

WENDELL

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

LEVERETT

Chair Yoga classes are held on Wednesdays at 10 a.m., hybrid, at the town hall and on Zoom. Foot care clinic is held monthly.

For more information, contact the Leverett COA at (413) 548-1022 x 2, or coa@leverett.ma.us.

ERVING

Open Mondays through Fridays from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Daily snacks and coffee. Fitness room and pool table open.

Monday 4/22

9 a.m. Interval Workout
10 a.m. Seated Dance
12 p.m. Pitch Cards

Tuesday 4/23

9 a.m. Good For U Workout
10 a.m. Line Dancing
11 a.m. Social Stringers

Wednesday 4/24

9 a.m. Strength & Conditioning
10:15 a.m. Chair Aerobics
11:30 Bingo

Thursday 4/25

9 a.m. Barre Fusion
10 a.m. Pilates Flow

Friday 4/26

9 a.m. Quilting & Open Sew

GILL and MONTAGUE

The Gill Montague Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Lunch available Tuesdays through Thursdays. For more information please call 863-9357.

Monday 4/22

10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
12:30 p.m. Nail Salon
by appointment

Tuesday 4/23

9:30 a.m. Tuesday Knitters
10 a.m. Zumba Lite
10:45 a.m. Chair Yoga
12:30 p.m. Tech Help Drop In
3 p.m. Tai Chi

Wednesday 4/24

10:15 a.m. Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Outdoor Yoga
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
12 p.m. Bring Your Lunch Bingo
4:15 p.m. Mat Yoga

Thursday 4/25

1 p.m. Pitch
3:30 p.m. Tech 4 Seniors Class
(pre-register)

Friday 4/26

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

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LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here's the way it was on April 17, 2014: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

Montague Mom Meets Minecraft

Angela Rovatti-Leonard was chosen from a field of 14 hopefuls wanting to become the new children's librarian at the Carnegie Library. In that role, she will design and implement programming for kids from preschoolers up to tweens and teens.

Rovatti-Leonard received her master's degree of Library and Information Science in December 2013. She is exploring a video/photography program through MCTV and was introduced to Minecraft through her daughters. She thinks children aged 9 to 11 might enjoy it, too.

Self-Sufficient In Bygone Leverett

"One of the Leverett Family Museum's greatest strengths is its

many interesting exhibits," wrote Lisa Lipshires, a graduate student from Simmons College, in her recently completed preservation survey.

A glance at the inventory of manufactured goods – wool, tanned goods, blacksmithed items, handles for hoes and scythes, sturdily dove-tailed wooden boxes – reveals just how proudly self-sufficient the town of Leverett once was in the necessities of everyday living. The town produced lumber, textiles, machine tools, soap, brooms, palm leaf hats, boots and shoes, just about everything its residents needed to get by, although with agricultural land in short supply, the local groceries were stocked from further afield.

Fifty years of diaries kept by former town clerk Israel Taylor are among the museum's trove of collected wills, deeds, marriage certificates, and other documents. Also kept are ledgers of old town businesses, like the 16 mills that once spread out along the banks of Roaring Brook in East Leverett.

20 YEARS AGO

Here's the way it was on April 15, 2004: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

Cops in Schools Grant

Starting in September, a police officer will be stationed in the Turners Falls High School/Middle School. The position of school resource officer, which will last for at least four years, will be funded by a Cops in Schools grant.

"What is happening outside the school is affecting what is happening inside," said Montague acting police chief Gary Billings, in ref-

erence to concerns about racial tension and pre-gang issues a year ago.

Great Falls Eagle Watch

The first eagle baby of the year hatched on Wednesday, 35 days after being laid. Some had noticed a hole in one egg late Monday, and watched closely most of the day Tuesday, when the brooding female appeared restless and aware of something happening underneath her.

Tune into local cable to watch the second egg hatch!

150 YEARS AGO

Here's the way it was on April 15, 1874: News from the Turners Falls Reporter's archive.

Local Matters

Eight new buildings in course of erection.

All our manufactories are running to their utmost capacity.

The heavy snow of Thursday night caused a suspension of building operations.

Our Irish citizens are talking of another party. It is in good hands.

Barton is doing some fine photographing lately. We are glad to note his success.

No more work for the Board of Health – the pigs have been expelled.

Our beloved Rector Rev Julius II Waterbury sails to-day from New York on the Cunard steamer Absynnia for England where he will spend a few months. We shall miss him, yet we hope he will stay long enough to forget the call that he has in his pocket to one

of the most important charges in Connecticut. If Bishop Williams takes him from us our people will regret it for his mission has been as was that of our Saviour among the poor and lowly as well as the rich and proud. Joyous hearts will welcome his return.

What shall we say of Mr. Carswell's lectures? To say that they were the best we have been favored with would be to draw an invidious comparison, and but poorly express the estimate of our people. The crowd that waded through the mud and slush of Friday and Saturday evenings testifies in emphatic tones to the popularity of the speaker, while the large number of forty-three signers to an application for a charter for a Division of the Sons of Temperance evidences the complete success of his earnest appeal for help to stay the monster intemperance. Although Mr Carswell has been quite ill of late, and was suffering intensely while with us, his addresses evidenced the great genius of the man.

MONTV / MUSIK / MOUNTAIN



#71: Daniel Gay

Interview by J. BURKETT
and TROY CURRY

TURNERS FALLS – Dan Gay is an exciting musician who is actively playing all over the state and beyond these days. He plays an incredible assortment of kinds of music, including his own songs and covers of music from all over the world, and also bands like Lungfish – all done in his own new and innovative ways.

Check him out ASAP, live or on his Bandcamp or on YouTube even. He plays around Worcester, and also places like Mystery Train in Amherst. He is playing at the Wheeler Library in Orange next month, too... hope to see you there!

MMM: Do you have early music memories?

DG: My earliest music memory is dancing to "Too Tough to Die" by the Ramones in the kitchen of our Winooski, Vermont living room. That song "Wart Hog" that Dee Dee sings.

My dad played great records. A steady diet of Clash, Ramones, Sex Pistols, Zappa, Alice Cooper. There was always music playing in the house. My mom was at work a lot, but she was on board too, though that was Dylan and a lot of folk records.

MMM: You are a teacher... Do you teach anything music-related?

DG: I teach refugees and newcomers in Worcester. I'm a history teacher, but music is a big part of how I teach. I use songs to teach English and history, but more than that I learn the music of my students.

I've been teaching for 20 years, and have had students from a couple dozen countries, dozens of languages. Music is something they all want to share, and I always want to hear and learn from them. I've collaborated with a few... My favorite was a *krar* player from Eritrea. Amazing musician and human who drives 18-wheelers now. Brilliant musician.

MMM: How would you describe your music?

DG: I'd describe my music as folk, but not in a traditional sense. I don't use any effects, and play piano, guitar, and accordion in equal measure. I love punk rock, protest music, but I also love minimalism, klezmer, and eastern music from Ethiopia, Afghanistan, India, etc.

I guess I'm a bit of a variety show. I'm equally influenced by Paul Westerberg and Frank Black, writers like Céline and Camus, and guys like Philip Glass, Steve Reich, Michael Nyman, and Yann Tiersen.

Taraf de Haidouks have a big influence on my accordion playing. They're from Romania. Emahoy Tsegué-Maryam Guèbrou, the Ethiopian pianist and nun, she inspires me constantly.

I like to think I don't sound like too many people, but it's not on purpose. I love exploration.

MMM: Any favorite places to play?

DG: My current favorite places to play are The Stomping Ground in Putnam, Connecticut and Lost Towns Brewing in Hardwick. Also, Catholic masses at a couple of area churches and a few libraries. I never thought I'd have – or like – that gig, but as a skeptic of organized religion I do love the peace, providing the soundtrack for it, and working with great singers. And getting paid by the archdiocese is a trip for me. I really dig the priest's homilies... not the God part, but the overall message. The Stomping Ground is an incredible venue for original music, great owner, food, art, and clientele. There aren't a lot of places to play original music near Worcester, so I travel a bit.

I also dig playing at Waller's Coffee Shop and Star Bar in Atlanta, Georgia when I can. Atlanta has a great scene that I've been fortunate enough to be part of a couple of times... Tom Cheshire, an Atlanta punk rock legend (West End

Motel, Rent Boys) has brought me down a couple of times for festivals and shows, and it's been an amazing experience playing in the South. His music is a revelation, and I highly recommend it... and the city really supports new things!

MMM: Do you feel that music is a healing force?

DG: I perform a lot with my 15-year-old kid, Imogene. She's a freshman in high school, but has played dozens of shows (over 100?) with me. She brings a crowd and has a great voice. A singer, she digs a lot of shoegaze and new indie stuff and writes some of her own music. I love being able to perform with her... it's a big reason why I do it at all.

I'm 45 and love to play original music, and having a kid that loves music even more than me has been a dream that keeps me going. We do a lot of covers, but that's mostly what pays around here and she's young with a big repertoire. I'm a lucky guy.

I think making music with family is a gift and healing force, even if it's cover-heavy. It's only good, positive, and pure. There aren't many things I can say that about. About 50% of my gigs are with her... a different kind of show, but a big part of what I do.

MMM: Are you reading anything interesting?

DG: I've been rereading John Steinbeck novels recently, and Sinclair Lewis. I think *It Can't Happen Here* should be essential reading for every American. Because it can happen. It is happening. Just read it... good indictment of Fascism.

MMM: Any favorite West Mass stories or shows?

DG: Western Mass has an incredible scene. The shows you've put on at Mystery Train that I've seen are among my favorites... Ralph White, Michael Hurley, Sunburned Hand, Joseph Allred, Kath Bloom, heroes of mine who all perform at the store... Seeing Dinosaur Jr. on Amherst Common in 2017 was surreal.

I worked for a few years with Joe Pernice from the Scud Mountain Boys/Pernice Brothers... also a great UMass guy who writes incredible songs.

The Valley is a mecca... I feel fortunate whenever I play out here. Later this year I'll be putting on an international music program at the Orange Public Library, free to the public, all ages, and some other shows in Hardwick at the winery and Lost Towns Brewing.

Thanks for the chat!

Hit the lawn of the Wheeler Memorial Library in Orange on Saturday, May 25 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. for Daniel Gay's solo concert "Immigrant Songs: Music of New England Diasporas." This concert is family-friendly, free, and open to the public. See orangelib.org for more information.

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CREATURES from page B1

interest in animal protection societies in other states. Caroline Earle White of Philadelphia and Emily Warren Appleton of Boston both consulted with Bergh on setting up humane societies, and lobbied wealthy and influential relatives to get funding and legislative authority.

In Philadelphia, White devoted herself to creating homes for the thousands of stray dogs exposed to cruelty and starvation as they roamed the streets. She ultimately had a 50-year career in animal welfare.

In Boston Appleton campaigned for the establishment of a Massachusetts humane society. She succeeded when George Angell, horrified after two horses were pitted against each other in a Boston sled race that killed them, decided to devote his life to campaigning against all forms of animal cruelty. A man of enormous energy, he wrote to newspapers soliciting founding members of a humane society in Boston.

One of Appleton's first acts after establishing the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (MSPCA) was to create a magazine called *Our Dumb Friends* that used a mixture of polemic and fiction in its anti-cruelty campaigns. He didn't restrict his efforts to Massachusetts: he traveled the country encouraging and helping humane societies in other states.

Many people campaigned against hidden abuses that especially horrified them. Florence Merriam took up the cause of birds, such as the heron and egrets that were being decimated for the feathers that were then the height of millinery fashion. Others took

on the plight of cattle in the slaughterhouses of Chicago, or animals in Barnum's circus, or fought against the use of live animals in experiments and demonstrations.

Each of these animal abuses is described in separate chapters of *Our Kindred Creatures: How Americans Came to Feel the Way They Do About Animals*. Many chapters are fascinating as well as distressing. All of them show the amazing energy of the 19th century, often used for economic gain which caused much cruelty to animals and people, but also exhibited in the unflagging efforts of anti-cruelty campaigners: Bergh, ever assiduous to bring court cases; Angell, equally energetic but also inventive in finding new ways to appeal to people, including founding the children's Band of Mercy and writing stories, songs, and poems for it; and Caroline White, whose dogs' home revolutionized the care of dogs, and whose later anti-vivisectionist campaigns help throw light on the ambiguities and evils of animal experimentation.

So in the sense of tracing the history of anti-cruelty organizations and the arguments and barriers they had to overcome, this book makes good the promise of its title by describing the events that led to better lives for horses, dogs, cats, and other domestic animals. It also makes clear that the fate of food animals raised and killed for meat is by no means so fortunate.

What is lacking is any sustained discussion of underlying economic, philosophic, or social contexts. Occasional speculations cast rays of light. For example, the authors raise the idea that the abolition of slav-

ery in 1865 created a public mood receptive to tackling other forms of cruelty, but this is not pursued at length. Similarly, they note that many anti-cruelty supporters were women, some of whom played leadership roles. But what part did anti-cruelty play in the burgeoning feminist agenda?

There are also passing references to the defense of the status quo on the grounds that the Bible claimed that humans have dominion over animals, but no consideration is given to the role of religion in either abuses or the campaigns to end them. Buddhism teaches that animals are fellow beings whom it is wrong to hurt or kill. Hindus revere animals, some of them as gods. The Talmud instructs Jews not to cause pain to animals, though the Torah teaches that humans take priority over them.

In accepting the latter belief and using it to justify the human use of animals for its own purposes, perhaps Christian doctrine bears some blame for the animal abuses detailed in *Our Kindred Creatures*, even though many anti-cruelty campaigners were themselves devout Christians.

These caveats notwithstanding, the clear, accessible style makes this book compelling and interesting. While it details past abuses and lauds the people who worked so hard for their correction, it also draws attention to the uncomfortable facts of our use – some would call it abuse – of animals for food, especially in the current context of global warming. In this way, this history does not only survey the past, it also invites readers to examine the present and peer into the future.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS
GCC Info Session

GREENFIELD – A Greenfield Community College admission representative will be tabling at the Greenfield Public Library next Tuesday, April 23, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. to talk more about the MassReconnect Program, which gives aid to students 25 and over who don't have a college degree to attend community college for free. MassReconnect funds free community college certificates and degrees including all costs related to tuition, fees, books, and supplies. For questions, contact hellema@gcc.mass.edu.

Soap Box Signup

TURNERS FALLS – The Seventh Annual Montague Soapbox Races will be held on the Unity Park hill in Turners Falls on Sunday, June 2, at noon.

There will be no same-day cart registration – you must register in advance. All carts must be hand-built, and anyone from 8 to 80 yrs old can race. You can find more information and fill out the online form at www.montaguesoapboxraces.com. The deadline is Wednesday, May 29.

EXHIBITS

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Rivers of Franklin County*, geology-inspired, map-based art by Joe Kopera, through May.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *New Roots in River Banks*, an exhibit on Polish and other Eastern European immigration stories and their contri-

butions in the Connecticut River Valley. Through April 28.

LOOT, Turners Falls: *Auto Partitas*, twelve little trios of mixed-media works inspired by automotive parts, by Nina Rossi. Through April.

Sawmill River Arts, Montague: *Sara Casilio*, paintings on Duralar, through April.

Wendell Free Library, Wendell:

Karie Neal, paintings and mixed media artwork depicting animals, flowers, landscapes, and birds. Through April.

Greenfield Library, Greenfield: *ServiceNet Community Art Exhibit*. Paintings, photography, and other art works by more than 20 artists from the ServiceNet community. Through May, with a reception on Wednesday, May 1 from 1 to 4 p.m.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *Pauline Star*, photography exhibit. Through April.

Looky Here, Greenfield: *Inside, Outside*, paintings by Emily Giamari. Through May. Reception next Friday, April 26, from 5 to 8 p.m.

Artspace, Greenfield: *Divinites*, mixed-media by Jules Jones referencing medieval themes and the divine feminine. Through April 26.

Leverett Crafts & Arts, Leverett: *Bill & Dianne Dolan*, painting and pottery, through April; pop-up exhibit, *Dancing Bear Farm Fig Paintings* by Susan Valentine, on April 20 and 21 only.

Gallery A3, Amherst: *Defining Space*, paintings by Karen Iglehart and Janet Winston, through April.

Shelburne Arts Coop, Shelburne Falls: *Local Color, Local Light*, oil and gouache paintings by Ashfield artist Ken Condon. Through April.

Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne: *Lou Wallach: Photographs*, black-and-white images of the natural world, through April 28.

Watermark Gallery, Shelburne Falls: *Grand Opening*, innovative work by Andrew Sovjani, Jan Morier, Christine Kaiser, Cynthia Consentino, and Laurie Goddard.

Arts Bank, Shelburne Falls: *Volcanix II*, Christin Couture's woodcuts on Pellon fabric of the Popocatepetl volcano. By chance or appointment: redtinebluefire@gmail.com.



Turners Falls artist Jules Jones's mixed-media show *Divinites* is up at Artspace in Greenfield through next Friday, April 26.

The Gill-Montague Education Fund
2024 Annual Gala

Saturday, April 27 7 p.m.

Turners Falls High School Theater

Advance Tickets: \$30 At the Door: \$35

Ticket Locations: Hillside Pizza, Bernardston; Weatherheads, Erving; Bobby's Hair & Nail Salon, Northfield; World Eye Bookshop, Greenfield; Freedom Credit Union, Greenfield Savings Bank, and Scotty's Convenience Store, Turners Falls; and at www.thegmf.org.

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The Children's Page

YONERDOD ILLUSTRATION

CHELLA AND VIOLA LOVELIGHT
WORDS BY BEVERLY KETCH & PICTURES BY HANNAH BROOKMAN



ONE SPRING AFTERNOON, CHELLA DECIDED TO TAKE A WALK DOWNTOWN. SHE TOOK HER SHOULDER BAG TO BRING LUNCH TO VIOLA, WHO WAS WORKING AT THE MONTAGUE REPORTER. AFTER SHE BROUGHT IT, SHE PLANNED TO USE IT TO COLLECT ROCKS BY THE RIVER.

IT WAS A FINE DAY, AND SHE SAW ALL THE KIDS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OUT DRAWING WITH CHALK, RIDING THEIR SCOOTERS, JUMPING ROPE AND ENJOYING THE SUNSHINE AND BREEZES OF K STREET. NO SOONER DID SHE STEP ONTO AVENUE A THAN SHE SAW MR. HARBINGER, DRESSED IN ALL WHITE AND PUSHING HIS ICE CREAM CART.



A YOUNG CUSTOMER WAS JUST TAKING A THREE-SCOOP CONE FROM HIS HANDS. "CAREFUL TO BALANCE IT PROPERLY, OR YOU'LL LOSE IT. AND EAT IT QUICKLY AS YOU CAN, OR IT MAY MELT AND RUN DOWN YOUR ARMS." "THANK YOU," SAID LITTLE MAVIS, BUT SHE DIDN'T LOOK AT ALL CONCERNED. "HELLO CHELLA," SAID MR. HARBINGER. "YOU BETTER GO BACK FOR YOUR UMBRELLA!" "MORE LIKELY I'LL GET CAUGHT UNDER A RAIN OF FLOWER PETALS THIS MORNING," SHE REPLIED WITH A SIDWAYS GLANCE AND A WINK.



CHEERFULLY SHE PROMENADED DOWN THE AVENUE. SHE SAW A GIRL HULA HOOPING IN BIG HOOP EARRINGS.

AS SHE WATCHED, SHE LOOKED DOWN AND SAW THE FAIRIES WERE WATCHING TOO, HOVERING JUST ABOVE THEIR LITTLE VILLAGE IN THE TOWN PLANTER, WATCHING EVERY MOVE THE HULA HOOPER MADE. SUDDENLY, AS SHE TWIRLED, HER EARRING FELL RIGHT INTO THEIR FAIRY TOWN.



FAUNA FLEW DOWN AND PUT IT AROUND HER WAIST AND GAVE IT A SPIN. ALL THE OTHERS LAUGHED AND CHEERED AS SHE FIGURED IT OUT.



CHELLA GOT A PIECE OF WATERMELON OUT OF VIOLA'S LUNCH AND DELICATELY SET IT ON THEIR LITTLE FAIRY TABLE. THEY ALL FLEW AROUND MERRILY AND WAVED UP AT THE GIANT CHELLA AS SHE HEADED OFF TO THE NEWSPAPER OFFICE.

IN SHE WENT AND CAME OUT AGAIN WITH VIOLA BY HER SIDE, LAUGHING AT HER FUNNY STORY OF THE HULA HOOPING FAIRY! ONWARD THEY WENT TO THE RIVER TO HAVE A PICNIC LUNCH AND COLLECT ROCKS.



"WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO WITH ALL THESE ROCKS?" ASKED VIOLA AS SHE TOOK A TURN WITH THE HEAVY BAG. "I JUST LOVE THEM!" SAID CHELLA, WITH FEELING. "OH," SAID VIOLA. "THAT'S SUCH A VERY GOOD REASON."

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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!

THURSDAY, APRIL 18

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *Steve Koziol & Friends*. No cover. 5:30 p.m.

Bookends, Florence: *Bugslam, Miracle Blood, Imp Say Glyph, Wax Input*. \$ 8 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Sword II, Noah Kesey, Thus Love*. \$ 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, APRIL 19

Hitchcock Brewing, Bernardston: *Wildcat O'Halloran*. No cover. 6 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Film & Gender, SLOBDROP, Sapien Joyride*. \$ 7 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Back In Black, AC/DC tribute*. \$ 8 p.m.

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Madison Cunningham, Juana Molina*. \$ 8 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Earthless, Minami Deutsch*. \$ 8 p.m.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Gaslight Tinkers, Ditrani Brothers*. \$ 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Don Gadi, MF Oblivion, Slushroom*. \$ 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 20

Franklin County Fairgrounds, Greenfield: *Toasted Jam feat. Papoose, Styles P, Gorilla Zoe*, more. \$ 1 p.m.

Creation Station, Easthampton: *King Saison*. \$ 6 p.m.

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *Korona's Kaos*. No cover. 7 p.m.

Mount Toby Meetinghouse, Leverett: *Carrie & Michael Kline, Joe Blumenthal*. \$ 7 p.m.

JJ's Tavern, Northampton: *True Jackie, Early Day Miners, All Feels*. \$ 7 p.m.

Hutghi's at the Nook, Westfield: *Setting, Junk Orbit, Willie Lane*. \$ 7 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Dead Man's Waltz, Dead/Band/Allmans tribute*. \$ 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Simon White & The Roots All Stars*. \$ 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *The Beatnuts, Fabeyon, Konflik, Brandie Blaze*. \$ 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Catamount, Derek Sensale*. \$ 9:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, APRIL 21

CitySpace, Easthampton: *Bellwether, Sgraffito Kill, Magick Lantern, DJs barbie.AI and Ice Rasta*. Benefit for Smith SJP and

Gaza mutual aid. \$ 7 p.m.

Holyoke Media, Holyoke: *Flywheel presents Dear Nora, Ruth Garbus Trio, bobbie*. \$ 7 p.m.

MONDAY, APRIL 22

Dracula, Holyoke: *The Body, World Peace, Space Camp*. \$ 8 p.m.

TUESDAY, APRIL 23

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Blaque Dynamite*. \$ 8 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24

Tori Town, Holyoke: *Perennial, Friendly Spectres, bobbie, Sleep Destroyer*. \$ 6:30 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Vision Video, Then Comes Silence, Dutch Experts*. \$ 7 p.m.

Tori Town, Holyoke: *Friendly Spectres, bobbie, Sleep Destroyer, Perennial*. \$ 7 p.m.

Cold Spring Hollow, Belchertown: *RM Francis, Lean, Python Pit, Death Spiral*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Bluegrass and Beyond*. No cover. 9:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, APRIL 25

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Jeff Coyne, Goldsetter, Gaud, S. Bright and the Clearwater Swimmers*. \$ 9 p.m.

FRIDAY, APRIL 26

Clark Art Institute, Williamstown: *Myriam Gendron, PG*

Six. \$ 7 p.m.

Nova Arts, Keene: *Michael Hurley, Stella Kola*. \$ 7 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *The Slambovian Circus of Dreams*. \$ 8 p.m.

The Drake, Amherst: *Clap Your Hands Say Yeah, Lost Film*. \$ 8 p.m.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Silvie's Okay, Brennan Wedl, Mal Devisa*. \$ 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 27

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Bellow-er, Viqueen, Hauzu*. RPM Fest launch event. \$ 7 p.m.

Buoyant Heart, Brattleboro: *Cesar Alvarez, Content Clown Ohyouare*. \$ 6:30 p.m.

Bombyx Center, Florence: *Robyn Hitchcock, Eugene Mirman*. \$ 7 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Cinemastorm double feature: Mouse Hunt, Willard*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *Arnold Dreyblatt*. \$ 8 p.m.

TUESDAY, APRIL 30

Parlor Room, Northampton: *Amythyst Kiah*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

The Drake, Amherst: *Wheatius, Gabrielle Stembenz*. \$ 8 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 1

Nova Arts, Keene: *Bill Orcutt Guitar Quintet*. \$ 7 p.m.

looking forward...

THURSDAY, MAY 2

Bookends, Florence: *Stella Kola, Hoonah, Camp Sainte Helene*. \$ 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, MAY 4

Hutghi's at the Nook, Westfield: *Dirt Devil, Mountain Movers, Phemale, Tempestade, Clockserum*. \$ 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, MAY 10

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Rickie Lee Jones*. \$ 8 p.m.

The Drake, Amherst: *Frankie Cosmos, Katie von Schleicher*. \$ 8 p.m.

FRI-MON, MAY 24-27

Camp Keewanee, Greenfield: *Strangecreek Campout feat. Rubblebucket, Max Creek, Too Many Zooz, Pink Talking Fish, Badfish, Bella's Bartok, Moon Boot Lover, Dirtwire*, more. See www.strangecreek-campout.com.

FRIDAY, JUNE 14

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Bettye LaVette*. \$ 7 p.m.

SUNDAY, JUNE 23

Tanglewood, Lenox: *Kool & The Gang, En Vogue*. \$ 2:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, JULY 18

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Steve Earle*. \$ 7:30 p.m.



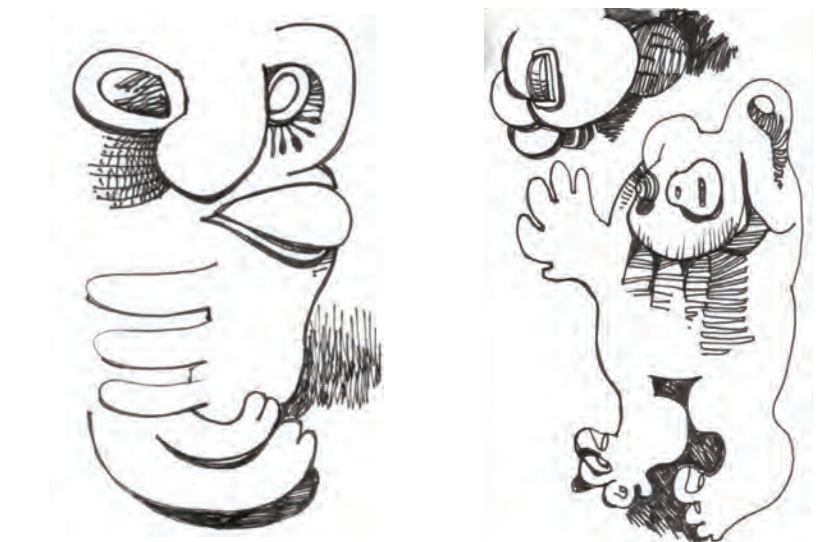
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WEST ALONG from page B1 welcome every spring, but they're not here yet. The robins who used to be a sign of spring no longer fulfill that role. They and the bluebirds have never left, preferring to spend the winters with us. We can say the same for the February redwings, always a relief to see, yet they have become so familiar by now, arriving in snow, sleet, and icy rain, that they just don't seem to signal real spring.

No, for sure, it's the towhee this year, if you please.

He's dressed in his old-fashioned colors that no baseball team has yet adopted. We'll leave the baseball clothes to the Orioles, the Cardinals, the Blue Jays. Our towhee still wears his 19th-century outfit with russet chestnut on his sides, a black waistcoat and cap, fancy white tail feathers, and a glaring red eye. He calls out his slogan, "drink your tea-ee!" to remind you that he is indeed here, on the premises, and has brought the spring with him.

April 16, a warm wind carrying April showers swept up on a southerly flow. It felt wonderfully pleasant after the harsh pelting and icy rain mixed with frozen snowflakes.

Nowadays we can almost see the grass turning tender green.

Another hopeful sign involves a newly flowering peach tree. A certain peach stone planted itself a few years ago in just the right spot. Most likely tossed off the back porch by the peach-loving woman of the house, the stone landed in fertile ground, and lo! Over the past summers it rapidly grew into a sapling. Only a few years later at four feet tall, it is already greeting the spring with burgeoning pink buds!

That wild-sown peach stone, now grown into a handsome young tree, is already outpacing the store-bought tree from over at Agway's. That reluctant and scrawny tree should follow the example of her

wild sister and get busy thinking about providing us with some fruit for an early summer dessert of peaches and ice cream!

Ummm. I'm just thinking I could top off that dessert with some vodka-soaked Montmorency cherries harvested two years ago, swimming in the water of life and curing up in a mason jar on the parlor buffet.

Maybe I'm getting ahead of myself.

The river rushes by day and night, but especially today. The madcap paddlers up in Athol and Orange will have had a real river-rat ride if the white water surging past us is any indication.

Living up to its indigenous name, the *paguag* ("clear water running through open lands"), the river now known as the Millers surges in a joyful springtime deluge through this ancient valley to its appointment with the mighty Connecticut a mile away.

All the while, spring is coming to the old pasture, trout lilies poke up through the fallen leaves of autumn that litter the woodlands floor beneath our grandfather oak. Soon we will welcome the song of the solitary virtuoso singer that is the wood thrush, the cheery call of the summer redstart, while the persistent announcements of the ovenbird will ring out from the towering pine forest of Mineral Mountain.

*Il n'y a bête ni oiseau
Qu'en son jargon ne chante
ou crie:
Le temps a laissé son manteau
De vent, de froidure et de
pluie...*

("There is neither creature nor bird / But in their language sings or calls / The springtime has left off its mantle / Of wind, chill, and rain.")

*Verses by Charles
d'Orléans (1394-1465);
translations by the author.*





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EVENT ANNOUNCEMENT

Joseph & Dreamcoat At Ja'Duke Theater

TURNERS FALLS – *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* opens this week for one weekend only!

One of the most enduring shows of all time, this 1972 Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is a reimagining of the Biblical story of Joseph, his father Jacob, his eleven brothers, and the coat of many colors.

Told entirely through song with the help of a main character Narrator, the play follows preferred son Joseph. Sold into slavery by his brothers, he ingratiates himself with Egyptian noble Potiphar, but ends up in jail after refusing the amorous advances of Potiphar's wife.

While imprisoned, Joseph discovers his ability to interpret dreams, and soon finds himself in front of the mighty but troubled, Elvis-inspired, Pharaoh. Joseph's solution to Egypt's famine elevates him to Pharaoh's right-hand man – and reunites him with his family.

The magical musical is full of catchy songs in a variety of styles, from a parody of French ballads ("Those Canaan Days") to country-western ("One More Angel in Heaven") and calypso ("Benjamin Calypso"), along with the unforgettable classics "Any Dream Will Do" and "Close Every Door."

This two-hour show is appropriate for all audiences and groups. (Note: Strobe and special lighting effects will be used through the show.)

Ja'Duke Theater is located at 110 Industrial Boulevard in Turners Falls. *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* shows this Friday and Saturday, April 19 and 20, at 7 p.m. and Sunday, April 21 at 2 p.m.

While at the show, stop by the concessions stand for a special energizing tea, only available during the run of the show.

Tickets and more information are available at jaduketheater.com.

EVENT ANNOUNCEMENT

Gravestone Girls in Gill

GILL – The Gill Historical Commission is excited to bring you "Welcome to the Graveyard," a 90-minute illustrated "virtual tour" chronicling cemetery art, history, and symbolism, this Saturday, April 20 at 1 p.m. on the second floor of the town hall.

From New England burial grounds of the 17th and 18th centuries, through the nationwide rural cemetery movement of the 19th century and into 21st-century locations, the program examines why we have cemeteries and gravestones, why they look like they do, and how styles and art have evolved over almost 400 years. The presentation is robust, with photographs of original gravestones and burial grounds found in Gill alongside images from cemeteries visited by the Gravestone Girls over many years.

After the program, guests are welcome to continue exploring with an optional guided walk-through of the Center Cemetery.

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