

# The Montague Reporter

YEAR 22 – NO. 22

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

APRIL 25, 2024

## LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

### School Budget Down to the Wire: Will Four Towns Agree on Growth?

By **GEORGE BRACE**

At their meeting on Tuesday, Leverett's selectboard was unable to finalize two warrant articles that would partially fund the town's contribution to the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District, but expected to be able to do so by this Saturday's annual town meeting.

In March the regional district presented a late request for an 8.2%

increase in funding from the towns – after Leverett's board had already approved a 4% increase and included it in the town budget. A 4% increase is the maximum allowed under an existing agreement among the four towns in the district, Amherst, Pelham, Shutesbury, and Leverett.

In response to the increased request, Leverett's board had decided to add two articles to the town

see **LEVERETT** page A8

### New Bike Path Sign Touts Treatment Plant's Eco Role



Clean Water Facility superintendent Chelsey Little (left) and artist Mary Chicoine discuss the elements of the new educational signage unveiled on Monday.

By **HUGH FINNERTY**

**MONTAGUE CITY** – Monday, Earth Day, brought new signage and new messaging to the section of the Canal Side Bike Path that crosses Greenfield Road. This particular area of the path is well known for its scenic trestle bridge, the sixth-old-

est in the state, and is a favorite for walkers and bikers alike. The scenic section of trail connecting the towns of Montague and Deerfield is much less renowned for being the location of the Montague Clean Water Facility, or CWF.

As people across the globe reflect see **SIGN** page A6

### High School Sports Week

By **MATT ROBINSON**

**TURNERS FALLS** –The Turners Falls and Franklin Tech softball teams continued their unbeaten seasons this week, as they ready for what is likely to be an epic head-to-head battle this Thursday.

The track teams from the two schools also won their first meets of the season, and the Turners girls their first tennis match. Meanwhile, the Tech baseball team traded two close matches, and up in Dalton, an eighth grader from Great Falls Middle School got a life lesson.

**Boys' Tennis**  
Springfield Int'l 3 – TFHS 2  
PVCICS 5 – TFHS 0  
Pope Francis 3 – TFHS 2

Last Friday, the boys from Springfield International topped the Thunder 3-2 on the tennis courts. It was senior trip week, so Noah Kolodziej had to step up to first singles. He outlasted his opponent in an extended match tiebreaker to give Blue a 1-0 edge. Vaughn LaValley and Mario Pareja also won a tight match on the first doubles court 6-4, 7-6.

The Internationals beat John see **SPORTS** page A4



Franklin Tech's Gabe Tomasi soared over the 5'4" bar on Tuesday, placing first in the high jump as the Eagles hosted the Atbol Bears at Turners Falls High School.

## MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

### Bar Granted Time to Market Liquor License; Muralist Named

By **JEFF SINGLETON**

Between the Uprights, the sports bar and entertainment club on Avenue A that has been on the market for nearly a year, closed its doors at the beginning of April but its owner, Lew Collins, received approval from the Montague selectboard Monday night to extend the business's liquor license for six months.

Collins announced the closing in an April 3 Facebook post. "I have been trying my best to do everything possible that I could do financially to ride out the storm until someone bought the Bar," he wrote, "but at some point reality plays the biggest factor, and after thinking painfully for so long, I had to come to the conclusion and face the reality of shutting down for good."

The announcement pointed out that the business, formerly the Bridge Cafe, 2nd Street Cafe, and 2nd Street Sports Bar, "has served as a neighborhood bar for many decades and multiple generations for the people in our Montague community and beyond."

At the April 22 meeting, Collins requested that the town extend his all-liquor license for six months so that he can sell it, to "recoup some of the loss that I have had to go through."

"More importantly," he said, "I have always done the right thing in my business – been there as manager and as owner for 21 years, one-third of my life." Collins said he would work to bring a "reputable business" to the town, and check in with town hall on his progress once a month.

The board quickly approved the request, and put the license on its agenda for October 28. "If you are making progress and need more time, keep us posted," said chair see **MONTAGUE** page A7

### Opponents of Hydro Renewal Hold Rallies on River Banks



Members of the Connecticut River Defenders perform a sketch likening the entrainment of fish and eggs in Northfield Mountain's turbines to "smoothies."

By **SARAH ROBERTSON** and **MIKE JACKSON**

**TURNERS FALLS AND NORTHFIELD** – Many longtime environmental activists convened for a bike ride and series of rallies last Saturday to protest the relicensing of the Northfield Mountain pumped storage facility, and to draw attention to a myriad of issues related to energy infrastructure development.

"These projects are financial parasites that suck money out of the pockets of energy users far beyond the costs to build, use and maintain them," Wendell biologist and activist Bill Stubblefield told a cheering crowd gathered near the pumped-storage project's river intake at the day's final event.

The ride and rallies were timed in part to highlight an open comment period on the final application submitted on February 22 by FirstLight Power, the owner of

Northfield Mountain and the Turners Falls dam and power canal, to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) for relicensing the projects. FERC has agreed to extend a 60-day comment period to 90 days, through May 22.

On Monday the hydro company also applied to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for a water quality certification – a key requirement of the renewal – and the state Department of Environmental Protection is soon expected to begin its yearlong review of the plan with a separate 35-day comment period.

The company is requesting new 50-year licenses to operate both projects.

At the mid-point of Saturday's demonstrations, about 75 people gathered at a temporary stage set up on the riverbank at Unity Park in Turners Falls. Speakers and musicians raised issues related to what they described as the misguided siting of energy infrastructure projects in western Massachusetts, and condemned FirstLight for making profits off the river. A banner displayed beside the stage declared that the Connecticut was a "dead river."

"Every single one of you could weigh in on this to FERC before see **RIVER** page A6

### Mishap in Industrial Park Pops Many Tires

By **NATE DAVIES**

**TURNERS FALLS** – Count two Montague police cruisers among the tally of 21 vehicles already reporting tire damage from a spillage of small, sharp pieces of metal on Industrial Boulevard last Friday.

According to the Montague police department's call log for April 19, a call came in at 12:09 p.m. warning that "there are little pieces of sharp metal all over the road near Lightlife foods, JaDuke, and the Tech school." An officer arrived on scene at 12:21 p.m., and the call log continues: "Ofc [...] report[ed] hundreds, if not thousands of small, sharp metal fragments covering the road [...] Trail of metal debris appears to start at a company called Duravent."

Reached by phone on Tuesday, Montague public works foreman Will Stratford confirmed the spill. "I sent a couple guys out to go clean it up," Stratford said. "It was all along Industrial Boulevard."

A local tire vendor in Greenfield had a small pile of the steel shards ready when asked if he had heard about the spill. "Oh yeah," he said, pulling out a handful from behind his desk and dropping them on the table. "One lady had four shards in one tire. We would have more, but a lot of people wanted to keep them."

see **TIRES** page A3



The spilled steel shards wedged in drivers' treads.

#### Please Remember to Rewind!

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# The Montague Reporter

"The Voice of the Villages"

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## Founded by

Arthur Evans Harry Brandt David Detmold  
August 2002

## Centrifuges

It's certainly beginning to feel like one of *those* springs, when the momentum of politics in the streets eclipses for a little while the ability of commentators to follow the plot, or of parties to call the shots.

The focus of news coverage in the US is split between two intense, seemingly non-intersecting stories: a domestic courtroom drama that *could* upend the presidential election, but so far has only captured the attention of those who identify intensely with one or the other of the country's political parties, and a burgeoning internationalist moment dragging global political dynamics into our normally cloistered country for the first time in decades.

Everyone knows these things will intersect by November, but right now it's hard to tell which layer is the sandwich filling and

which is the bread. University administrators, for example, are stuck in a no-win situation: billionaire donors are pulling their funds as more and more students sit in on lawns, relieved to feel the real-world company of others equally shocked and ashamed by at their phones have shown them for the last six months.

Which, now, is mass graves.

Of course, there is always another argument, and now the argument against being shocked and ashamed to see mass graves is that the those people must have buried each other's corpses months ago and are only pretending to be making such a fuss digging them back up.

As we go to press, a civilian-led movement is setting sail to deliver humanitarian aid by direct action. In another week, we'll know what has happened to it.

## CORRECTIONS

Two name errors marred our April 18 edition, and it is on us to own up.

First, in our reporting on the condition of upcoming local town elections (*Very Little Competition In Local Town Elections*, Page A1), we very mistakenly wrote that an incumbent retiring unchallenged from "the board that oversees the town Housing Authority" in Montague, after serving on it for 50 years, was Anthony Zera.

"That's Stash," an editor told the reporter during editing. "No, wait, I think Stash is Stanley."

Well, it was Stash, and it *should* have been "Stanley."

"My cousin Andy will be pleased to see his name in print," Stanley "Stash" Zera wrote good-humored-

ly to us, flagging the mistake.

Sorry to both Zeras, and to any voters we may have misled!

Second, we misspelled the name of Monica Murphy, coauthor of the newly released book *Our Kindred Creatures: How Americans Came to Feel the Way They Do About Animals*, in the headline of our review of that book on Page B1.

We spelled it "Monika." Investigation shows that an editor somehow typed it up this way before layout, perhaps echoing the last two letters of the name of Murphy's coauthor, Bill Wasik.

We have not reached out to Ms. Murphy for comment on the matter. We apologize dearly to all stakeholders. Thanks to everyone who flagged these errors for us!



Adam Tobin poses inside his Unnameable Books bookstore, a new business in the 66 Avenue A building that served as the home of several generations of taverns. Tobin started selling books as Adam's Books in Brooklyn, then was forced to drop the name when the Adams Book Company registered a complaint. Unnameable Books sells new and used books and also hosts readings, film screenings, and musical events.

## Letters to the Editors

### Harm, or Harm, or Harm

I appreciate you publishing the Connecticut River Defenders' letter explaining the negative impacts of the Northfield Mountain pumping station. However, it would be helpful to also give your readers an understanding of the benefits of such facilities, so they can understand the trade-offs involved.

Most power generation cannot turn on and off on a dime in response to power demand. Big power plants that burn coal, natural gas, or nuclear fuel work best when they run continuously, producing power 24 hours a day whether it's needed or not. Having a power plant that can produce electricity only when it's needed and store 70% of the

surplus power that the big burners are producing at off-times means we emit less carbon overall.

Such facilities will become even more important as we transition to a green energy future. The sun doesn't shine at night and gives us less power in the winter, nor is output from wind power consistent. Thus, as more green energy gets built, we will need more pumped storage, which, despite being a century-old technology, remains the most efficient large scale energy storage option we have.

For comparison, Northfield Mountain stores more than 20 times as much power as the proposed battery storage in Wendell

– itself rife with controversy – and will last decades longer.

None of this is to say that the Connecticut River Defenders are wrong. The plant absolutely does kill fish and there's no way to fully mitigate that harm. Drawing directly from a natural waterway, the Connecticut River in our case, has higher impacts than constructing a lower reservoir and having the pumped storage be a closed system.

But the system is already built and running. So that's the trade off. Would you close Northfield and replace it with 20 Wendells?

Marcus Graly  
Northfield

## The Carnegie Library Is Overdue for an Upgrade

At the upcoming May 4 Montague Town Meeting, members will have an opportunity to vote on Article 17, which will fund the next stage in the planning and design of an improved library for Turners Falls.

Our beloved 118-year-old library simply does not meet the current needs of the community due to its inaccessibility, its small size, and its lack of safe or adequate parking.

Libraries are an essential part of the life of a town: they are constantly evolving to meet the needs of citizens of all ages. New spaces, such as small group meeting rooms, a large community room, a children's program room, a teen space, and separate computing and reading spaces would allow residents to meet, work, study, and access needed services.

Library officials are committed to an open planning process that pays homage to Turners Falls' history and

the aesthetic of Avenue A. Options currently being explored include an expansion of the current Carnegie Library, building a new structure at 38 Avenue A, or picking up the current library building and moving it to 38 Avenue A with appropriate expansion.

An improved Carnegie Library will not mean that the other branches will close, or have their hours or services cut.

Support for Article 17, funding the design phase, is the next essential step. If we fail to appropriate these funds, Montague will not be able to apply to the state's library construction program for another five to eight years. Please let your town meeting members know how important the library is to your family and community.

David Dempsey, Montague  
Secretary, Friends of the Montague Public Libraries

### ANNOUNCEMENT: ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION

Members of the Montague Tree Advisory Committee will continue the annual observance of Arbor Day in Montague this week.

On Friday, April 26 at 9:30 a.m., MTAC members will plant a Prospect Elm on the tree belt on Avenue A, across from the Carnegie Library.

On Saturday, April 27 at 11 a.m., a Honey Locust will be planted in front of the post office in Montague Center.

The public is welcome to help with these tree plantings, in celebration of Arbor Day.

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Compiled by NINA ROSSI

**Artful Antics**, a **pop-up exhibit of children's artwork** from the Greenfield Artspace's April vacation programs, is going up at the Franklin Community Coop's 170 Main Street storefront in Greenfield. The work was created by kids ages six and up led by instructors Chaldea Deyman and Lucas May.

Stop by from 5 to 8 p.m. this Friday, April 26 during the Greenfield Arts Walk to celebrate the work of young Greenfield artists with conversation and refreshment. The exhibit will be up through May 3.

Erving is holding a **Town Wide Tag Sale** this Saturday, April 27 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., with a rain date of Sunday, April 28. Pick up a list of tag sale sites at the Erving Public Library at 2 Care Drive. A map of Erving showing the locations of tag sales will be on display there on Saturday.

Funds raised from tag sale registrations make it possible for the Friends to sponsor the summer reading program and other events at the Erving Public Library. The Friends are also holding a plant sale, raffle, and book sale at the library beginning this Saturday and running through May 12. Raffle items include gift certificates, garden items, and locally-made arts and crafts.

The Montague Cemetery Commission invites the public to a **dedication ceremony for the town's first green burial cemetery**, Highland Woods Natural Burial Ground, this Saturday, April 27 at 10 a.m. The brief ceremony will be held rain or shine. Highland Cemetery is located at 398 Millers Falls Road.

A **rabies clinic will be held in Wendell** this Saturday, April 27, from 10 a.m. to noon at the police station on Center Street. All are welcome.

The cost is \$20. Dogs must be on leashes, and cats in carriers. Bring proof of prior vaccination to be eligible for a three-year vaccine.

For any questions, call Maggie Houghton at (978) 544-7773.

Got old or unwanted medications? Drop them off between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. this Saturday, April 27 during **National Prescription Drug Take Back Day** at police departments in Montague, Erving, Sunderland, Deerfield, and Leverett.

If you need to get rid of needles/sharps or liquid medications, which are not accepted at most Take Back Day locations, Baystate Franklin Medical Center in Greenfield has drop boxes in their lobby.

The National Spiritual Alliance will host a **Psychic Fair** from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. this Saturday April 27 at Thompson Temple, 2 Montague Avenue in Lake Pleasant. To register or for more information, visit [spiritualallianceusa.org/calendar](http://spiritualallianceusa.org/calendar).

Founded in 1874, Lake Pleasant is the oldest continuously-existing same-site year-round Spiritualist center in the United States and is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year.

Take a literary journey around the world as a storytelling naturalist from the Southern Vermont Natural History Museum shares **tales of animals and magic** this Saturday, April 27 at 3 p.m. at the Discovery Center in Turners Falls.

With each story, a live animal will visit to bring a natural history piece to the myth and legends. For ages 6 and up in the Great Hall.

The annual **Hilltown Draw-Around** is a fun, family-oriented event sponsored by the Art Garden in Shelburne Falls. It starts at noon and runs to midnight this Saturday, April 27 at the Cowell Gym, 51 Maple Street.

The floor and walls will be covered with repurposed paper, and visitors will find lots of drawing and mark-making tools, prompts, and inspirations, to create drawings anywhere they wish. Over 500 people typically drop in to make their mark during the 12-hour event.

The result is an immersive, temporary art installation on 8,000-plus square feet of paper.

The Draw-Around is a pay-what-you-can fundraiser for youth programs at the Art Garden, with food, music, workshops, and other fun stuff going on. Learn more at [theartgarden.org](http://theartgarden.org).

On Saturday, May 4 a **tool care and plant share** event will be held at the Leverett Library from 12:30 p.m. until done. Sharpening, tool, and handle care advice will be shared at a do-it-yourself table. Folks are invited to bring or take plants and seeds.

Another tool care table is planned at the Leverett Village Co-Op the following Saturday, May 11 as part of the Co-Op's annual Spring Fling.

This year's **Montague May Day** celebration will be held Sunday, May 5. Welcome in the spring with May songs, maypole dancing, and Morris dancing on the town common in Montague Center. Festivities begin at 10 a.m. with a procession from the Montague Center post office to the town common. Young children have the honor of carrying the maypole. All are invited to sing May carols and weave ribbons around the maypole.

Montague May Day is supported by RiverCulture and free of charge. Participants are encouraged to bring along a blanket and picnic lunch, and advised to arrive early; parking near the town common is limited.

The collaborative art group Exploded View – of which I am a member – is hanging our new **community art exhibit, What's On Your Plate?**, at the Discovery Center in Turners Falls. The show opens with a reception on Sunday, May 5 from 2 to 4 p.m. Christian McEwen will be there with her Giant Listening Ear from noon to 3, ready to receive whatever stories people want to share with her, and at 3 p.m. Exploded View will present a new spoken-word art performance titled 8.

*What's On Your Plate* will remain up through June, and a variety of related programming focusing on the Discovery Center's year-long theme of "food, farms, and factories" is planned during the two months of the exhibit, including "How to Make a Meadow"; *Made in Montague*, an exhibit looking at present-day production in the town; a downtown foraging walk; and an edible plants presentation.

A closing reception will be held

June 29 with creative readings by Exploded View followed by a sing-along with local bard Annie Hassett.

Lisa Winter, a multimedia artist from Wendell who has been working with miniatures for decades, is displaying her **"My House" sculpture installation** at the Wendell Meeting-house on Sunday, May 5 at 4 p.m.

The project began several years ago as a personal reaction to trauma and turmoil. "Winter has handcrafted the 1/12-inch-scale table top-sized structure, from its working hearth and garden fountain to the dodgy back alley, and populated it with characters, fixtures, and objects of personal and cultural significance that explore human darkness and promote emotional healing," reads the announcement.

The artist will discuss the evolution of this project, its construction, and use as therapeutic intervention, at the showing.

The tenth annual spring concert of the **Franklin County Community Chorus** takes place at 3 p.m. on Sunday, May 5 at Greenfield High School. The 60-member chorus performs a wide variety of music from Broadway, as well as pop, rock, folk, and classical genres, and the concert will showcase the talents of a very special guest, 1995 GHS graduate and Broadway-show veteran Kevin Duda, in a set of solo selections.

Tickets will be available at the door: \$15 for adults and \$10 for seniors and children under 12.

It's never too late or too early to designate a **healthcare proxy**, create a **living will**, and assign  **durable power of attorney**. Learn about these care plans and take steps to make your own during two free, back-to-back online sessions on Tuesday, May 7 from 3 to 4:45 p.m., sponsored by LifePath and the Greenfield Community College community engagement office.

Register for one or both at [tinyurl.com/lifeplannow](http://tinyurl.com/lifeplannow).

The Japanese tradition of **visible mending** called *sashiko* will be taught in a free workshop at the Montague Center Library on Saturday, May 11 from 2 to 4 p.m. Rachel Beaupré of Wee Things Fiber Arts is the instructor, and the class is geared for adult beginners and children over 12.

Sashiko mending uses running stitches in geometric patterns to fasten small quilt pieces over holes, stains, or tears in fabric. Bring a garment to repair, or make a sample piece. Registration is required; email [kmartineau@cwmar.org](mailto:kmartineau@cwmar.org).

Veteran yoga and meditation instructor Jean Erlbaum will be offering **Mindfulness Meditation for seniors** at the Gill-Montague Senior Center on Thursdays from 3 to 5 p.m., starting May 23 and running through June 27. Erlbaum guides participants into gentle stretches and deep relaxation, and helps folks understand the physiology of stress and ways to live with less anxiety.

The six-week class is offered at \$75, thanks to funding from the senior center. Send payment by May 15 to assure registration to Jean Erlbaum, 56 Orchard Street, Greenfield, MA, 01301. For any questions, contact [jean.erlbaum@verizon.net](mailto:jean.erlbaum@verizon.net).

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

## GREAT FALLS FARMERS MARKET

### OPENING DAY!

Saturday, May 4  
9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Peskeompskut Park  
Turners Falls

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## UNNAM EABLE BOOKS EVENTS

**MOVIE NIGHT**  
DOGTUOTH  
YARGOS LANTHIMOS

MAN ROT'S FROM THE HEAD  
JANICZA BRAVO

OUTER SPACE  
PETER TSCHERKASSKY  
FRI. APRIL 26 • 7PM

**MUSIC**  
RAMON & JESSICA  
AND  
MARE BERGER  
SAT. MAY 4 • 7PM

**FICTION READING**

CLAIRE DONATO  
KIND MIRRORS,  
UGLY GHOSTS  
FIONA WARNICK  
THE SKUNKS

SAT. MAY 18 • 7PM

66 AVENUE A • TURNERS FALLS

### TIRES from page A1

Made of steel, the flat metal fragments each have three straight sides with a sharply curved, pointed tip at one end. Measuring a little over half an inch long and three-eighths of an inch wide, they are as thick as a butter knife, with a point sharper than a fishing hook.

Duravent is located at 130 Industrial Boulevard in Turners Falls and manufactures products such as flexible air ducts, gas vents, and air duct accessories. Calls to the plant supervisor at Hart and Cooley Inc., Heat Fab division, a subsidiary of Duravent at the Turners Falls location, were not returned as of press time.

Reached at the factory on Industrial Boulevard, a human resources representative who answered the door said that the supervisor hasn't returned these calls because the



Each shard was just over half an inch long and sharper than a fish hook.

plant is going "through Corporate" to figure out how to go about compensating drivers for the damage.

When I mentioned that not only was I one of the people who had found pieces of metal in my tires, but that I was also covering the story for the *Montague Reporter*, he declined to comment further.

The Montague police have re-

quested that people who find shards of metal in their tires report it to them for their records. It is unclear if there were other places the shards may have been spilled. You can report damage to the department at their non-emergency line at (413) 863-8911, or by going into the public safety complex at 180 Turnpike Road.



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in Montague



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Film Festival**  
**Sunday,  
May 5, 2024**

All Souls Unitarian Universalist  
Church of Greenfield  
399 Main Street, Greenfield

**FREE ADMISSION**  
Facilitated discussion to follow films.

**Schedule:**  
Doors open at 12 Noon.

12:30 p.m. *Who We Are:  
A Chronicle of Racism in America*  
Discussion led by Carl McCargo

3 p.m. *Lakota Nation vs. the  
United States*  
Discussion led by Strong Oak


5:30 p.m. **Supper:** A nourishing  
vegan meal prepared by Stone Soup  
chef Kirsten Levitt and staff, boxed to  
take out or eat indoors. Sliding scale  
\$4 to \$10, no one will be turned away.

6:30 p.m. *Till*  
Discussion led by Momodou Sarr

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## NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

# Truck Fire; Speed Bumps; PFAS; Mill Reuse

By KEITH WATERS

The Erving selectboard held a meeting on Monday, April 22, Earth Day.

Highway superintendent Glenn McCrory talked with the board about a recent incident involving the town's new plow truck. It caught on fire during the last storm, April 4, and has been deemed by insurance a total loss.

McCrory said the operator smelled the fire before it became visible and exited the vehicle. The insurance will need to do some sort of investigation because of its value, but no one present at the meeting expressed concern about insurance not paying out. The plan the town had specified the truck's "replacement cost" as the requested payout, so it would be that minus the deductible.

Town administrator Bryan Smith reported that he had already requested quotes from three vendors and received one for \$123,000, with a six-to-10-month delivery time. The board voted to proceed with replacement, at a cost not to exceed \$125,000.

## Speed Bumps

The board also discussed the use of speed reduction devices, namely temporary speed bumps, on North and Church streets with McCrory and police chief Robert Holst. The town used these devices for a number of months last year.

McCrory said he found them harder to install than he had been led to believe by the vendor, and a number of neighbors mentioned that they were loud.

Holst said that speeding on North Street is a problem, and that according to the town administrator it has been a problem since at least

the 1970s.

"I've been trying to pay attention to the plates on the vehicles flying by my house," said resident Dan Watson, "and the majority of them are out of state - New York, Vermont, New Hampshire. I... think we should push on pulling them over, ticketing them."

Permanent speed bumps, narrowing or otherwise twisting the road a little, and making North Street one-way, northbound only, until it gets to Church Street were all mentioned as possibilities. The matter will be discussed further at future meetings.

Bryan Smith reminded the board that a new round of state Complete Streets grants will be available next year, and suggested the town could get together a grant proposal for that.

## Environmental Conditions

Water and wastewater superintendent Pete Sanders was present to discuss the results of recent testing for PFAS in and around the Maple Ave landfill. PFAS was detected in water samples from the landfill and at one of the nearby residences. As a result of this, the residence will be given bottled water until further testing is done and the state Department of Environmental Protection weighs in.

Bryan Smith also presented the board with a plan from the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) to apply for a state grant to study the brooks that meet near North and Church streets, cross Route 2, and join the Millers River. A study a few years ago found elevated levels of *E. coli* in their waters, and there have also been a number of flooding events in the past few years.

FRCOG will apply for the state funding, a

604(b) Water Quality Management Planning Grant, and is asking the town to write a letter of support. The grant would pay for a study, which could result in action plans for which there may be more grants available.

The board agreed to do so. Selectboard chair Jacob Smith suggested soliciting letters of support from some of the private residences affected.

## Other Business

In response to its most recent call, Erving received one proposal for the redevelopment of the town-owned former International Paper Mill. The proposal was from a group called Hancock Academy, who intend to run facilities to train tradespeople and address building material sustainability.

Hancock's proposal was missing some statutorily required material and was therefore rejected, but Bryan Smith and the selectboard members said they were still interested, and hope the developer can return with some more information and funding.

Bryan Smith also shared an idea that he said the city of Worcester recently used successfully: to partner with a developer who could use a partial demolition. In this scenario, the town only has to pay for a partial demolition and has someone moving in when that is done, as opposed to paying for a total demolition and then having land to sell.

The conservation committee lost a member and gained a member. Carolyn Berg had to resign due to health issues, and Marty Garcia was appointed.

The town election will be held Monday, May 6, followed by the annual town meeting on Wednesday, May 8.

## SPORTS from page A1

Carmichael 6-2, 6-1 in second singles, Khalifa Seck 6-4, 6-1 in third singles, and Lucas Black and Michael Waite 6-2, 6-0 to sneak away with the win.

On Tuesday, the Blue Boys were swept Blue 5-love by Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion. That wasn't the main story, though - for the first time in memory, the boys and girls played on the same court at the same time. Nobody seemed happy that 10 matches would be played on five courts, but it gave players the chance to socialize and watch the openers.

In the boys' battle, Immersion made quick work of Kolodziej (second singles), Carmichael (third singles), and Pareja and LaValley (first doubles). The players who won for Blue were Michael Boyle, 6-1, 6-4 in first singles, and Black and Patrick Andrews, 6-1, 6-2 in second doubles.

As I was leaving for the track meet, Coach Touloumtzis called out to me: "We have another dual match tomorrow."

Wednesday's rains dampened that dual match. While the girls' contest against Renaissance was postponed, the boys played on against Pope Francis - sort of. Their first singles match was called in the second set, with Boyle losing 2-0 although the second match was never finished. Second singles was also called early, with Kolodziej getting the win, and neither doubles matches finished, LaValley and Pareja dropping on the first court and Black and Seck getting the nod on second doubles.

The only completed match of the afternoon was third singles, where Carmichael was downed 6-0, 6-0, making another close loss for Blue.

## Girls' Tennis

TFHS 3 - Pioneer Christian 2  
Palmer 5 - TFHS 0

The Turners girls' tennis team notched their first victory of the sea-

son on Monday, 3-2, against Pioneer Christian down in Springfield.

It wasn't easy. Avery Heathwaite dropped the third-set tiebreaker in first singles and Blue forfeited third singles. But Olivia Walbach won second singles (6-1, 6-1), Allysia Corbin and Lydia MacMunn-Seaman first doubles (6-0, 6-1), and Khia Huertas and Gianna Marigliano second doubles, 6-0, 6-4.

(The Reporter was unable to get the final stats for the Palmer match.)

## Track and Field

FCTS 91 - Athol 37 (boys)

TFHS 114 - Athol 17 (girls)

The Tech boys' track team defeated Athol on Tuesday, giving the Birds their first victory of the season. Cameron Candelaria won the 100m and the 200m, and Logan Caron both the 110m and 400m hurdles.

Other first-place winners included Justin Lent (400m), William Thomas (800m), Anthony Gallo (1,600m), William Thomas (3,200m), Gabriel Thomas (high jump), and Josiah Little (long jump).

In the girls' win, Jakhia Williams won the 100m, 200m, and long jump, and Ripley Dresser the 800m and high jump. Ella Guidaboni finished first in the 110m hurdles and the 400m hurdles, just like Caron.

Taylor Youmell won the 400m and finished second in the high jump, Laken Woodard won the javelin and placed second in the 400m, Madeline Brandl was first in the triple jump and third in the 110m hurdles, Danielle Chagnon broke the tape in the two-mile, and Sofia Moreno won the mile.

Other scorers included Makayla Fournier (second in the 110m hurdles, the 400m hurdles, and triple jump), Jazzy Gonzalez (second in the 100m and 200m), Charlotte Canterbury (second in the 800m), and Madysen Lynde (second in the shot put).



DAVID HOITT PHOTO

Tech's Josiah Little placed first in the long jump Tuesday with a distance of 17'9.5".

## Baseball

FCTS 2 - Westfield Tech 1

Athol 8 - FCTS 4

Last Thursday was a close one, as the Franklin Tech Baseball Eagles outlasted the Westfield Tech Tigers 2-1. Tech scored once in the bottom of the first inning and an insurance run in the third. West would score their only run in the sixth.

Tech could have scored more. Hunter Donahue hit a shot over the outfielders' heads. A run scored, and Donahue was given the signal to hold at third, but didn't heed the call; the catcher caught the throw and braced for the slide. Donahue went headfirst into the catcher's chest pad, which didn't make either coach very happy. He was called out, but Tech was able to preserve the victory.

Donahue logged a run, a hit, an RBI, and a triple, and Brody Hicks made one hit and scored a run. Kyle Begos, who pitched seven innings, allowed two hits and one earned run, walked two, and struck out nine.

On Monday Tech played an even closer game. It took nine full innings for the Athol Red Bears to defeat them.

Donahue singled in the first inning, and Begos hit a sac fly to score him. Pitcher Mason Lehtomaki allowed the first two batters base hits, but pitched his way out of it. In the second inning Athol took the lead off a walk, a hit-by-pitch, and an error, but Tech tied it back up in the third.

Athol stole back the lead in the fourth inning when a pickle at first base resulted in two runs crossing the plate. In the sixth Franklin answered with two runs of their own, and neither team could score in the seventh, sending the game into extra innings. Athol finally broke the stalemate in the ninth inning, scoring four more runs to ice the game 8-4.

Donahue (3), Tucker Hicks (2), and Tyler Yetter, Gavin Crossman, and Dylan Young had hits for Tech. Lehtomaki pitched six innings,

see **SPORTS** next page

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## NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

# Farmer Pitches Shade Tradition

By KATE SAVAGE

At Monday's meeting, the Gill selectboard approved a tree-planting program at Gill Elementary and an application for improving energy efficiency at the Turners Falls High School. They also signed warrants for the upcoming town meeting and election.

"I've had this idea of starting a tradition of planting a tree with every sixth-grade class, sort of as a ceremonial ending to their time at Gill," said local farmer and school volunteer Sorrel Hatch.

Hatch noticed Gill Elementary's declining shade trees while walking her three children to school each day. "I've been very concerned because we have a lot of very old maple trees," she said. "When those start to really come down, there's going to be nothing left.... I can see it being really barren."

Hatch also pointed to a treeless lawn island in front of the school, which contains a stump next to a plaque that states "Forever Growing." She described parents lining up in their cars to pick up their kids, baking in the sun on the shadeless blacktop.

Hatch said her priority this year is planting a shade tree – perhaps a red maple – on that grass island. Each subsequent year, she and the graduating class will plant an additional tree in an area approved by school officials.

Hatch said she was "fairly confident" that money for the saplings could be found from various small donations, particularly because they would be planting small, young trees.

## Hot Topics at Town Meeting

The board signed the warrant for the annual town meeting, which will be held Monday, May 6 at 7 p.m. at the town hall. Town administrator Ray Purington said there are five "hot topics" on the warrant which residents should consider beforehand.

Two articles deal with converting elected town positions into appointed positions. Currently, Gill's treasurer and tax collector are elected by voters, but many towns in the region have transitioned them to appointed roles. Proponents argue this allows selectboards to enforce requirements of technical skill and experience, and to appoint qualified non-residents if necessary. Additionally, appointed members can be easily removed if they are failing to do their work correctly, while there is no clear recall process for elected officials in those roles.

A past attempt to make these positions appointed failed in town meeting.

The third "hot topic" is a non-binding question about discontinuing Mount Hermon Road. The Northfield Mount Hermon School, which owns the land on both sides of the road for its full length, is petitioning the Franklin Regional Council of Governments for privatization of the road.

Selectboard chair Randy Crochier said the article would "take the temperature of people" regarding the potential change.

Rounding out the five, the warrant also includes a question about adopting the "Prudent Investor Rule," a state provision which Purington said could "allow the treasurer a little more flexibility in how they invest trust funds," and a question about increasing the real estate tax exemption for legally blind residents from \$437.50 to \$500, the maximum amount allowed by the state.

The board also approved the warrant for the annual

town election, to be held Monday, May 20 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the town hall. For each position listed on the ballot, there is exactly one candidate officially running.

"The last couple of elections, we've had vacancies that no one has even stepped up for," said town clerk Doreen Stevens, "so that's nice."

The election ballot will also include the question about changing tax collector and treasurer to appointed positions, as well as a question about expanding the sewer commission to hold additional appointed members.

Though the town election will be hand-counted, the board approved using the ImageCast vote tabulator for the September 3 state primary election and November 5 general election.

## Fossil Fuel Futures

"The energy commission is overwhelmed," confessed Vicky Jenkins, the chair of said group. Facing a deluge of potential energy efficiency projects from federal, state, and non-governmental sources, the commission recently decided to team up with the Montague energy committee to apply for a state pilot project to help make the Turners Falls High School fossil-fuel-free.

The Building Electrification and Transformation Accelerator (BETA) pilot program is offered through the state's Clean Energy Center. It helps building owners make a plan for full decarbonization.

Jenkins said that Heath Cummings, facilities director of the regional school district, will be completing the application, and the towns will have no financial obligation if they are chosen.

At the same time that the state plans for zero carbon emissions by 2050, a fracked gas pipeline expansion could also be coming to the region. Energy commission member Claire Chang attended to ask the selectboard to sign a letter in opposition to "Project Maple," a proposal by the company Enbridge which would expand the capacity of a gas pipeline running from New York to the coast of Massachusetts. Though the pipeline does not pass through western Massachusetts, opponents are gathering signatures from elected officials throughout the Commonwealth.

The letter Chang brought is directed to Governor Maura Healey, asking her to not grant the state permits which the company would need to expand its operations. Selectboard members did not say whether or not they would be signing the letter as individuals.

"We're supposed to be reducing our reliance on fossil fuels, not increasing our reliance," said Chang, "so it seems backwards to me to spend money on infrastructure that's going to last 50 or 60 years." She also noted that it was unclear whether the extra fuel would be used in Massachusetts or exported elsewhere, and said the expansion sites would affect a number of communities that have already been hit hard by the health and safety impacts of energy industries.

## Other Business

The selectboard appointed the following individuals to the board of fire engineers for the year ahead: Gene Beaubien, William Borcy, Stuart Elliott, Andrew Howell, William Kimball, Greg Parody, Mitchell Waldron, Forester Menson, and Jake Whitney.

The board awarded the contract for this year's lawn mowing and cleanup services to Art Kaczynski of Artscape Landscape & Design, at the same prices as last year.

## SPORTS from previous page

allowing five hits, four earned runs, three walks, and 11 strikeouts. Gavin Crossman, pitching three, struck out three and walked one.

### Softball

TFHS 11 – Wahconah 5

FCTS 12 – Mohawk 0

FCTS 7 – Hopkins 1

FCTS 22 – Mahar 3

TFHS 8 – Taconic 3

FCTS 22 – Northampton 10

Last Thursday the Turners softball team went to Dalton, where they defeated the Wahconah Warriors 11-5.

I didn't go to this game, but a source attended the JV game. He told me that with Turners way behind, Kendra Steiner cracked a home run over the fence. She rounded the bases and was congratulated by her teammates. The Wahconah coach then walked to the ump and said Steiner did not touch home plate, so she was called out.

I confirmed this with JV coach Jennifer Luciano. "Yes," Luciano answered, "she hit a bomb that cleared the fence, and the parking lot against the fence." She also confirmed Steiner was called out after the rival coach told the umpire she'd never tagged home.

I suppose this was one of those life lessons. But with Turners down by 13 runs, did they really need to press the point?

The same day, the Eagles shut out Mohawk Trail 12-zip. Tech consistently got runners on base, smacking nine singles and a home run for good measure. This allowed several reserve players to get in on the game.

Nine different batters had hits against Mohawk: Lindsey Taylor (2), Lilly Ross, Kaitlin Trudeau, Shelby O'Leary, Hannah Gilbert, Gianna DiSciullo, Sandra Johnson, Samantha Duncan, and Jenna Petrowicz, with Taylor parking a homer and Emma Peterson, Kristine Given, and Kyra Goodell scoring runs. Three pitchers helped blanked Mohawk: Hannah Gilbert (two walks and nine Ks), Brayleigh Burgh

(three walks, two Ks), and Ross (one K).

On Friday the Golden Hawks of Hopkins came to Tech, and drew first blood. That 1-0 lead only held for an inning and a half, as Tech scored two runs in the second inning and four more in the third.

Cordelia Guerin (3), Ross, Lilianna Inman, and Kaitlin Trudeau (2 each), Kylee Gamache, and Gilbert all had hits, with with Guerin clocking two doubles and Petrowicz and Goodell scoring runs. In the circle, Gilbert struck out 12, walked one batter, and let up one earned run.

On Monday, Tech dismantled the Senators of Mahar 22-3. Thirteen runs in the second inning did the Senators in, and they headed into the bottom of the inning down 15-zip. Mahar did get two runs in the bottom of that inning and another in the third, but were unable to chip away enough to prevent the mercy rule from kicking in.

Tech again got runners on base, placing 15 singles and a home run to clear them off. Di-

ciullo, Trudeau, and Goodell (3 each), Ross (2), and O'Leary, Gamache, Gilbert, Burgh, Peterson, and Duncan had hits for the Eagles, with Gamache blasting the homer. Burgh pitched all five innings, allowing two hits, three earned runs, 10 strikeouts, and no bases on balls.

On Wednesday the Turners Falls Thunder blew away the Taconic Green Thunder, 8-3. It was Powertown's closest game of the season so far. Holly Myers had three hits including a double, Madison Liimatainen hit a double and a single, Madisyn Dietz batted in a run, and Janelle Massey and Anne Kolodziej had hits for Blue. In the circle, Liimatainen allowed three earned runs, gave seven walks, and struck out 16.

The Tech Eagles, meanwhile, were continuing their own winning ways, defeating Northampton in a 22-10 hit fest. The stats for this game came in after press time.

Tech and Turners play each other this Thursday – when the dust settles, only one will remain undefeated.

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## MONTAGUE PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT PUBLIC MEETING

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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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## MORE NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

## Task of Creating 'Village Center' Will Be Assigned to 'Working Group'

By JEFF SINGLETON

**MONTAGUE CITY** – Approximately 50 minutes of Monday's meeting of the Montague selectboard were devoted to discussing plans for a new "village center" on the property of the former Farren Hospital. The plans, which have been developed by consultants from VHB Associates, have been presented at a public hearing and to the town planning board, and described previously in this newspaper.

The three general options for the site, introduced by town planner Maureen Pollock and presented by Luke Mitchell of VHB, are based on low-, medium-, and high-density housing, combining affordable and market-rate units, along with commercial and public spaces.

"These are purely conceptual drawings representing the vision for the site," said Mitchell. "They are not a proposed site layout, [but] are really about the vision."

Mitchell also described three potential development approaches, which included selling the property to a private developer using a land development agreement, first rezoning the lot and selling it to a developer, or maintaining town control and perhaps selling smaller parcels to developers one at a time.

Pollock said she had sought the advice of state and regional experts including affordable housing developers. She said the town may not have the staff capacity to manage the project itself, and suggested choosing a private developer, who could then help "leverage" the project to receive state aid for needed infrastructure upgrades.

It was also recommended, Pollock said, that Montague establish a "working group" to create a plan for the

property, and hire a consultant to assist them.

Members of the selectboard, and of the general public, made a variety of comments on the "village center" models. Selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz said he would like to see "more green" in the project design, as well as a plan for maintaining the property prior to construction, which could take as long as a decade.

Montague City resident Peter Hudyma said the proposal did not reflect the "many different ideas" expressed by the public at the input sessions organized by VHB. He also advocated for more green space, particularly at the southwest end of the property, noting that Montague City is the only village in the town that does not have a public park.

Mary Mattiace, on the other hand, said that when the project is done, "we're all going to be 10 years older... so some of the loudest folks right now who are making their voices heard will be themselves interested, perhaps, in some of these housing units."

The board did not take a vote on any of the proposals or the "vision" presented by VHB, but directed Pollock to establish a working group "and get back to us on what that might look like," in Kuklewicz's words. The board seemed to agree with her recommendation that the town find a single developer for the overall project.

In related news, the board approved a \$2,800 contract with the construction and engineering firm Intertek PSI to update the existing Phase I environmental assessment of the property. Assistant town administrator Walter Ramsey said the previous assessment had been updated in October, but "these have a shelf life of 180 days, and we really should have a current one."

## RIVER from page A1

May 22," Joe Graveline, senior advisor with the indigenous preservation nonprofit Nolumbeka Project, told the audience at Unity Park.

"As coalitions or independent organizations," he added, "you should weigh in and ask for intervenor status, because if this goes to court – and I think it will – we need to be here for each other. We need to be here to come up with the money for the attorneys, we need to be here for spiritual support for each other, we need to be here for the river."

"It's hard to conceive," said Fergus Marshall, a member of the activist group Connecticut River Defenders, "but this stretch of the river gets violently and abruptly altered by reversing its flow for many miles when water is extracted or released from the operations at Northfield Mountain."

Greenfield protest singer Ben Grosscup took the stage to lead a sing-along. "We will walk as one, we will fight as one, we will rise as one," attendees harmonized, some pumping their fists with determination. He was followed by Hana Zara of Shelburne Falls, whose sobering dirge about ecocide earned a more stricken response.

After a few more speakers, a Buddhist monk and nun from the Leverett Peace Pagoda began slowly beating a drum, and the bicycle contingent headed back out on the road.

Around 60 attended the final stage of the rally at the Riverview Picnic Area in Northfield, where hummus sandwiches and sweets were served by members of No Assault & Batteries (NAB), a group opposing a utility-scale electricity storage facility proposed in Wendell.

"We're all thinking about climate resilience and transitioning to solar, and we need to protect democracy – local home rule – because we know what kinds of energy facilities, sited where, are best for our communities," said Court Dorsey of Wendell.

"If the state can override Shutesbury and Wendell's zoning bylaws to accommodate the corporate appetite for profits, then what other community is safe?"

The Earth Day River Ride was organized by members of the Solar Rollers, an anti-nuclear activist group formed in 1978, in partnership with five other groups, according to event fliers: the River Defenders, NAB, Smart Solar Shutesbury, the Wendell State Forest Alliance, and Forest Allies for Responsible Solar.

"We just win one fight and the next comes up, but the money people never miss a beat," 91-year-old Rema Loeb of South Hadley told the Reporter.

Loeb was a member of the Sugar Shack Alliance, a local coalition formed in response to the proposed Kinder Morgan gas pipeline, when she traveled to the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in 2016 to take part in the Dakota Access Pipeline protests. Her granddaughter drove her to the rally on Saturday.

"When you have children and grandchildren, you realize: what kind of world are we leaving for them?" Loeb said. "When my husband was alive... He would cry now if he saw what was going on."

At 28, Sara Brown said she had determined she was the youngest cyclist at the rally, which she had learned about at a talk co-hosted by another advocacy group, the Western Mass Rights of Nature, and the Nolumbeka Project.

Nolumbeka president David Brule opened the Northfield rally with a land acknowledgement, sharing Native names of the area's rivers and some local history.

"This is a confluence where indigenous peoples joined for more than 10,000 years. We live in a very special, highly charged place, and we should realize and honor this," Brule said. "The sacred living waters that, taken together with our Mother Earth, provide us with all that we

need to survive – water is life."

Nolumbeka is an officially recognized intervenor in the relicensing process. Brule said that last week the organization recently sent its final offer in lengthy settlement negotiations with FirstLight over the company's commitments to cultural resource preservation.

David Detmold, an original Solar Roller, served as emcee as more speakers and musicians took turns on the small stage. Detmold described the pumped-storage facility as the "last vestige of the nuclear reactor age," as it was originally built to harness excess energy from the Vermont Yankee power plant, which was decommissioned in 2014.

Advocating for a publicly owned and operated energy grid, Stubble-



Saturday's rallies brought together old colleagues who today focus their opposition on a variety of large-scale energy facilities.

## SIGN from page A1

on their relationship with the environment and how they can live more in harmony with our home planet, wastewater treatment is not typically a part of the conversations. CWF superintendent Chelsey Little said she hopes to change that.

"I know so many people use this trail," said Little, "so I was really trying to showcase [that] we're not just stinky – we have a lot of other things going on. I wanted to change people's perspective of that."

"Wastewater is part of having a healthy community," Little told the Montague Reporter minutes before revealing the new sign to a small crowd gathered on the canalside trail on Monday. "The treatment process is very scientific. We're here because we care about the river and we care about our community, and that's what the sign represents."

The sign itself was a collaboration with local artist Mary Chicoine, whose depictions of local birds and fish, and their roles in the ecosystem, bring it to life. "We wanted this to be interactive and interesting to people traveling the bike path," Chicoine explained.

Approved by both the state Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), which owns the bike path land, and the Montague selectboard, the sign includes brief descriptions of the CWF's operations and illustrates the confluence of wastewater treatment, the outdoor scene, and the environment more broadly.

Little said she realized the size and power of the local art community, and decided to harness it to bridge the gap between the public's perception of the CWF and the ecological reality of its role. "That's why we we started with that... to get those kinds of people realizing that hey, wastewater's cool, too!" she said. "I thought that would be a good way to get more people involved."

This isn't the CWF's first foray into forging bonds with local artists. The plant's first mural, now the department's logo, was designed in 2021 by Lahri Bond. Its mesmerizing blue circle, ringed with animal species native to the area, painted a picture of a CWF that wants to create harmony with the environment.

The level of care shown by Little and her team were recognized in 2023 when Little received the Water Environment Federation's Hatfield Award, given for "outstanding performance and professionalism in the operation of a wastewater treatment facility."

"We do wastewater treatment – it's not a sexy topic," said Little. "But all of us here are extreme professionals. It takes us a long time to get our licenses, and a lot of us have backgrounds in science and have degrees."

Little holds a master's in public health from the University of Vermont, and CWF laboratory manager Noah Diamond, also on the scene on Monday, holds a bachelor's of science in hydrogeology from Antioch College.



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**MONTAGUE** from page A1

Rich Kuklewicz.

The license does not need to be sold to a business opening in the same building, according to town administrator Steve Ellis.

**Cities Targeted**

On a more upbeat note, Brian Westbrook of PDP Productions and RPM Fest, LLC presented an “overview” to the board of plans for the annual RPM Fest, a three-day festival of camping and heavy metal music at the Millers Falls Rod and Gun Club on Turners Falls Road on the weekend of August 30 through September 1.

Westbrook estimated that 700 attendees, plus several hundred staff and band members, would be present during the three days of the event.

Police chief Chris Williams asked what activities would take place between 10 p.m. and midnight. Westbrook responded that there would be music trivia, as well as burlesque and a drag show on Friday, a wrestling event “with performers dressed up as monsters, destroying fake cities and such” on Saturday, and another wrestling event on Sunday.

Williams reported that his department had received no official complaints from neighbors during the event’s previous two years. “We’ve had complaints over social media, but we were never called,” he said.

The board did not take a vote on any permits because, according to Kuklewicz, “this is more of an informational session for us.”

**Muralist Chosen**

Town planner Maureen Pollock announced that the steering committee charged with reviewing 354 applications to paint a mural on the northeast side of the town-owned Shea Theater has chosen muralist Darion Fleming of Charlotte, North Carolina.

Pollock said Fleming had experience painting walls the size of the Shea’s, and that the committee noted his “distinctive style,” which embodies “a departure from traditional community murals, which are busy with many themes that dilute the composition.” Fleming’s work can be seen on his website and Instagram page.

Pollock said the committee hoped to schedule community input sessions with the artist, who has already signed a contract, at the Shea during June.

She said the committee was “pencil in” the final week in August for painting the mural, and that the planning department was considering a ribbon cutting and “maybe a block party” when it is completed.

**New Library Job?**

Library director Caitlin Kelley came before the board with a proposal to expand the staffing of the libraries by splitting a current library technician position into two full-time jobs – a library technician/assistant, and an adult services coordinator.

Kelley said she based this proposal, which the department would implement halfway through the upcoming fiscal year at a budget increase of \$27,979, on the town’s wage and classification study, as well as staffing levels of similar libraries in the area. Without the new

position, the library budget being proposed for FY’25 at the May 4 annual town meeting is \$518,233.

Kuklewicz responded that the selectboard had not seen any results of the ongoing wage and classification study, so “we have a lot of material to digest.” He said Kelley’s proposals were “great,” but that he would like to review an “org chart of what you have today.”

Ellis said he and assistant town administrator Walter Ramsey had received a large “dump” of job descriptions for various departments several weeks ago, and were still in the process of reviewing them. He said he hoped the study would be completed by the end of May, at which point “we’ll have to make decisions about what to do where there seem to be mismatches.”

The selectboard did not take a vote on Kelley’s proposal, which has been endorsed by the library trustees.

**Pollock said the committee noted Fleming’s “distinctive style,” which embodies “a departure from traditional community murals, which are busy with many themes that dilute the composition.”**

The board did approve a \$5,950 contract with graphic designer Liz Moran to create a logo for the public libraries. Kelley said the new logo will be financed by annual state aid so that “everything can feel a little bit more professional” and “more polished.”

The board signed off on numerous “assurances” for state grants to help fund the design and construction of a new library in Turners Falls, or renovation of the existing Carnegie Library. These stipulations – 24 for the design and planning phase, and 41 for construction – include the need to evaluate potential flood hazards, to protect the structure against vandalism, to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act, and to create a structure “for a minimal operation of thirty years.”

“You couldn’t change it if you wanted to,” said Ellis. “This is the cost of doing business with the state.”

**Weed Pact Deep In Edits**

Ellis reviewed an “amended” host community agreement between the town and the cannabis firm 253 Farmacy, which the company plans to submit to the state Cannabis Control Commission (CCC) before May 1.

The CCC, in response to state legislation passed over a year ago, has eliminated many features of these required agreements between firms and municipalities, and has provided “model agreement” language which it is assumed would expedite renewal of licenses if adopted.

Montague officials have expressed concerns about this model agreement, and have previously indicated they would like the town to draw up its own HCAs, and see how the CCC responds. To complicate matters, the 253 Farmacy is seeking a new license to sell medical marijuana to add to its growing, production, and sales licenses.

Ellis told the board that given the uncertainties of the new policy, he

and 253 Farmacy officials had decided to “quickly” create a version of the HCA that integrates their existing agreement with the language proposed by the CCC. He shared a five-page draft showing the existing HCA with numerous insertions in red and “comments” on the side.

The resulting document would be submitted this month, Ellis said, “with the expectation that we will get an advance review from the Cannabis Control Commission that will give both the company and the board a clear understanding before it’s time to submit all the materials in August.”

One issue that came up in Monday’s discussion was the provision in the CCC’s model text that the town list all “generally occurring fees” applicable to 253, such as water and sewer fees. Town officials have opposed this on the grounds that it might prohibit the levying of a future fee, such as a betterment tax to upgrade industrial park infrastructure, and the draft presented by Ellis did not list such fees.

Selectboard member Matt Lord, who has been critical of this requirement, suggested that a list developed by the town treasurer of all possible fees and taxes be included in the HCA, to make the point that institutions that “ask stupid questions get stupid answers.”

Kuklewicz said the board should wait an “extra week” to vote on a final revision of the HCA and not a “marked-up” version, and his fellow members nodded in agreement.

Ellis said the draft reviewed at the meeting pertained to the sale of “recreational marijuana,” but he later clarified to the *Reporter* that the language would first be used for the application 253 Farmacy is submitting for medical marijuana, then applied to the other licenses the company holds.

**Other Business**

The board appointed a committee to choose a new superintendent at the Department of Public Works (DPW) to replace Tom Bergeron, who will retire in June. The committee consists of Kuklewicz, Ramsey, airport manager Brian Camden, Clean Water Facility superintendent Chelsey Little, Turners Falls water commissioner Ken Morin, DPW office administrator Brandy Patch, DPW foreman Will Stratford, and Montague Center resident Leigh Rae, with Bergeron and Ellis as “*ex officio*,” non-voting members.

Approximately 50 minutes of the meeting were devoted to discussing plans for a new Montague City “village center” on the property of the former Farren Care Center (see article, Page A6).

A memorandum of understanding with the town of Northampton, as the lead town on a state-funded grant to address violence against women, was approved by the board at the request of Williams.

A \$267,658 contract with Daventryport Trucking for the “Hillcrest Neighborhood Playground Project,” funded by community development block grants, was approved, as was an application for a state Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness grant to evaluate stormwater runoff and erosion on numerous sandy slopes around the town, edges of the Montague Plains.

The next selectboard meeting will be held Monday, April 29.



**LOOKING BACK:  
10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK**

*Here’s the way it was on April 24, 2014: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.*

**Hacked in Gill**

“Somebody somewhere, probably one-quarter to one-half my age,” said Gill town administrative assistant Ray Purington, “hacked in and infected a couple of the .html files” on the town’s website two weekends ago, knocking it down for several days.

The town spent \$90 to enroll with a service that repaired the files and would help fend off other attacks.

**Neat Skateboard Trick:  
\$78,000 = \$400,000**

The Montague selectboard, in tandem with the parks and recreation director, the town planner, and the Unity Skate Park commit-

tee, will seek approval at the May 3 town meeting for the town to borrow up to \$400,000 for a long-planned skate park.

Unity Skate Park committee member David Detmold said that with grants and fundraisers, the facility would cost taxpayers considerably less, only \$78,000 – about the same price as sewer line inspection and cleaning along Canal Street.

**Snow Off the Avenue**

The giant pile of snow in the Food City Plaza is finally gone. Leah Timberlake of Gill won the Carnegie Library’s annual contest to determine who can guess when the mound will finally melt away. By guessing April 16, she won a \$20 gift certificate to the Second Street Bakery. The actual date was April 17.

**20 YEARS AGO**

*Here’s the way it was on April 22, 2004: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.*

**Wendell’s Wishes**

Wendell’s development planning committee began this month with everyone present giving a short summary of their hopes for the town.

One major hope was for better access to high-speed internet in town, seen as a handicap for existing businesses and a barrier to the

creation of new ones. A second shared hope seemed to be light industrial development to take some of the tax burden off of residential properties and create local jobs.

The third major category responded to fears that either residential sprawl from the East would turn Wendell into a town like the ex-farm community of Lincoln, or that Wendell would find itself the site of extravagant second homes belonging to out-of-towners.

**150 YEARS AGO**

*Here’s the way it was on April 22, 1874: News from the Turners Falls Reporter’s archive.*

**Local Matters**

The owner of that white silk pocket handkerchief you found works in our office.

T.M. Stoughton, Esq., is operating his bird track ledges again. Some fine specimens have been secured.

Millers Falls has been detached from the Turners Falls district and attached to the Northfield district by the M.E. Conference.

Our division of the Sons of Temperance will be organized Thursday evening, at Good Templars Hall.

The Baptist Mite Society’s Sociable at the residence of Mr. Joseph Bartlett on Wednesday evening last was a very enjoyable evening. Rev. Mr. Wyman was kindly remembered by the guests assembled.

Our congratulations, Charles and Ella. There have been Wilder weddings before, we doubt not, but none that bid fairer to be joyous and happy. At least, we hope so.

Mr. Campbell has 25,000 new brick, two cars of brown stone delivered from Springfield, on the

ground, and fifteen masons who sleep in the cellar – all awaiting the movements of the carpenters toward the construction of the Oakman schoolhouse.

Yesterday was quite a day for accidents at the Lumber Company’s mill. A.R. Jones and a man named Mores were the first hurt but how badly we haven’t learned. Mr. H. Lewis was very badly hurt and will probably lose the sight of one eye by the slipping of a file with the sharp point of which he was endeavoring to make a hole in a belt on a mine shafting.

One duty of a journalist is to speak of all things as he finds them. If there is aught which mitigates against a social polity it is his duty to denounce it. Just as it is incumbent upon him to give a word of praise to whatever there is good, and one of the best things ever presented to the ladies, to machinists, to silversmiths, watchmakers, in fact all who have anything of a metallic substance worth keeping clean, is the Red Star Cleaning Powder. We have seen it tested regularly for one year past, and assert our belief that it has no equal. For sale by all our grocers. Try it once.



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**LEVERETT** from page A1

meeting warrant asking for the additional funding, rather than change the main town budget. The first article would temporarily change the cap in the district assessment agreement from 4% to 8.2% to allow the expense, and the second would then approve the additional funds, totaling \$64,721.

At the meeting on Tuesday, board chair Tom Hankinson reported that representatives of all four member towns had met last Saturday to discuss the situation, and that Leverett and Shutesbury had agreed to propose a 6% increase as a compromise position. Members of Leverett's school committee and fin com were also at the meeting, Hankinson said, and everyone "performed very admirably under pressure" in coming up with the new proposal.

The regional school committee was scheduled to meet Wednesday night to take up the matter. The final budget, and assessments to the towns, must be approved by two-thirds of the nine-member committee. Five members represent Amherst, and two represent Pelham.

If a majority of the towns in the district cannot agree on a revised assessment pact, the costs to the towns will be divided according to a so-called statutory assessment method provided by the state.

Hankinson said the town "will know more by the end of the week," and that he expected the board would recommend articles at town meeting reflecting either a 6% or 8.2% increase, depending on how things play out in Amherst and Pelham.

**Volunteers for Office**

The board also held a sparsely-attended candidates' forum, giving residents who intend to stand for town offices at Saturday's town meeting an opportunity to speak. Jed Proujansky was the only person to do so, announcing his candidacy for the selectboard position being vacated by board member

Melissa Colbert.

Proujansky said he had experience on the selectboard in Northfield, as well as 25 years of municipal committee experience, and has been serving on Leverett's fin com. "I feel like I can work as a selectboard member and help the town, so I threw my name in the hat," he said.

"After a little bit of arm-twisting," Colbert responded with a smile.

"Just a little," said Proujansky, also smiling.

According to the town newsletter, incumbents make up the majority of announced candidates for the remaining positions, with only one contested race: incumbent Tom Ewing and challengers Greg Tozzolo and Kimberly VanWagner are seeking to fill two available five-year positions on the planning board.

Incumbents facing no announced challengers include Jim Staros for the board of assessors; board of health members John Hillman and Alan Goodman; Brian Emond for constable; Nancy Grossman for the fin com; and Lisa Sullivan-Werner and Rachel Flint for library trustee positions.

Two school committee seats need to be filled, but thus far only Marnie Genre has announced a candidacy.

Current town moderator Larry Farber is listed as "undecided" on running for another term.

That is where things stood as of Tuesday night's meeting, but Leverett is unique in the Commonwealth in allowing candidates to be nominated and voted on from the town meeting floor.

**State Funding**

The board deliberated on state Community One Stop for Growth grant application opportunities, choosing to pursue an infrastructure drainage project grant for Dudleyville Road, a grant to help "re-vision" the town center, and a planning grant for addressing distressed properties.

The board also decided to pursue a state Green Communities grant to improve the insulation at the town hall, the library, and Leverett Elementary School.

Historical commission chair Susan Mareneck informed the board of a neighborhood renewal initiative available through the state attorney general's office.

**Other Business**

The board approved a scheduled \$1 per hour raise for a highway department employee hired last year. The board approved a \$3,300 reserve fund transfer to cover a deficit in the town counsel account. Town administrator Marjorie McGinnis said the deficit was due to costs associated with the Millers Road bridge project, and no increase to next year's town counsel budget was needed.

At the close of the meeting, a resident rose to thank board member Melissa Colbert for her service. Board member Patricia Duffy, tearing up, said Colbert had been "really wonderful," and that her "equanimity and self-possession has really changed the tone of the selectboard."

"We will miss you incredibly," she told Colbert.

Hankinson seconded Duffy's comments, and after a round of applause for Colbert subsided, he reminded her that she still had to help represent the board at town meeting on Saturday.

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**NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD**

**Country Store Seeks Water Hookup**

By **JOSH HEINEMANN**

Wendell Country Store proprietor Patti Scutari came to the Wendell selectboard's April 17 meeting to ask about being connected with Wendell's public water system. The store, with its associated Deja Brew pub, serves the public, so its water is considered a public water supply, and as such is required to meet higher standards than a private well, including expensive monthly testing.

The nearby town well was drilled as a public water supply when the library and town office were built, and at that point only town-owned buildings – the town hall, police station, senior center, library, and office building – were connected.

The town well can supply 2,000 gallons per day, and since none of those buildings is occupied full-time, water use for all of them averages about 100 gallons a day. When the pub was open full-time, water use at the pub and store came to 1,500 gallons per day. With the pub now open only for special occasions, water use is much lower, though Scutari said she would have to check to see what that level of use is.

Scutari was advised by the state Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) to look into connecting with the town water system. The town well properties about the store's. She said she would pay for the connection, and pay the town for water use at the store and pub.

The town would then get something, she reasoned, and she would also save money by paying just for water use rather than the onerous monthly water testing.

The now privately-owned Wendell Meetinghouse has

been granted permission to connect to the town water and wastewater systems, but has not yet been connected.

The selectboard agreed to check with town facilities engineer Jim Slavas, and take some time to consider legal implications. Both the Meetinghouse and the Wendell Country Store and Pub are open to the public, so private residences would still be in a different category.

At the prior selectboard meeting on April 3, board members had responded to a Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) initiative requesting information about Wendell's water resources and water supply systems. Water use in towns served by the MWRA has dropped. The MWRA study might have some relevance to the Wendell Country Store's water situation.

**Other Business**

Town coordinator Glenn Johnson-Mussad said the town's request to the state for a fail-safe review of the 100-megawatt battery system proposed for forested land between Wendell Depot Road and New Salem Road is still outstanding.

Members of No Assault & Batteries (NAB), the group organized to oppose this project, came to the April 17 meeting to discuss the single-article special town meeting scheduled for May 1. The article would create a town bylaw, six pages long, that might give the town some input and control over the project.

The moderator is not expected to read the entire bylaw at the meeting, but citizens will be given paper copies ahead of the vote. NAB speaker Nina Keller asked board members for their endorsement of the article.

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# MoRe



FEATURES@MONTAGUEREPORER.ORG OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER APRIL 25, 2024

Above: Ismail Asaad has moved his Mohawk Falafel and Shawarma food truck across the river to Turners Falls, in this Second Street lot behind Pioneer Valley Brewery and across from Unity Park, Unity Skatepark, and Nova Motorcycles. Asaad tells the Reporter he is still weighing whether to take Sundays or Mondays off, but is open most days from 11 a.m. or so to 8 p.m. A group of supporters is also helping raise funds at [www.givebutter.com/4rNErs](http://www.givebutter.com/4rNErs) for Asaad, a native of the West Bank, to establish a brick-and-mortar location. At the truck, Asaad offers an option for community members to pay in advance for meals for people who are hungry but might not have money. He makes it clear he wants to feed people.

## RECIPES

# Spain's Tapas: Not Just Snack-Sized!

By CLAIRE HOPLEY

**LEVERETT** – When are tapas not tapas? It's a bit of a trick question, but here's the answer: When they are *raciones*, which are bigger servings.

Most tapas menus in Spain give two prices: one for *tapas*, and one for *raciones*. That's useful because while an order for a tapa will get you an appetizer-sized portion, a *racion* order will be produce a lunch or even a supper-sized portion. This is good

news if you like tapas but don't find them handy for American occasions except parties. Make a larger amount and serve it as a meal rather than as a mere drinks-time tidbit.

The exception is such tapas as a dish of olives or peanuts or yummy potato chips, often served in Spain *para picar* – to nibble on. Order a drink in most bars and just such a munchie is likely to be included.

This is the origin of Spain's tapa tradition, which comes from the southern province of Andalusia. Dust and flies can be a nuisance, so people kept them out of their drinks by covering the glass with a slice of bread as a lid – a *tapa*. Another tradition is that a Spanish king ordered bars to serve something to eat with alcohol to curb drunkenness.

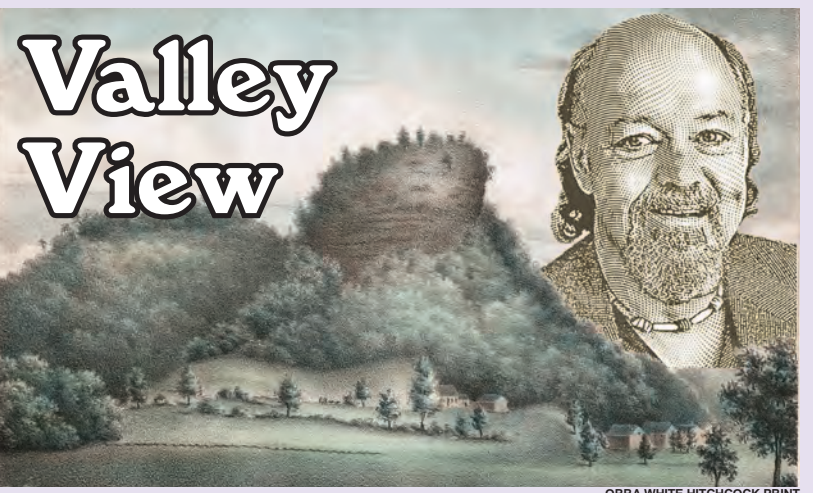
Whatever the case, the bread slice lent itself to a lid of its own in the form of a veil-thin slice of ham, a slice or two of sausage, or some other tasty little thing. Naturally,

see **TAPAS** page B5



Serving free tapas – *papas aliñas*, specifically – at the Cádiz Carnaval.

## Valley View



ORRA WHITE HITCHCOCK PRINT

# The Rivers' Ancient Bounty

By GARY SANDERSON

**GREENFIELD** – As daffodils, forsythias, and magnolias brighten neighborhoods, and anadromous fish rev their Long Island Sound engines for annual Connecticut River spawning runs, my imagination often swells with invigorating freshets of spring-time thought.

I'm there. Early morning. Nestled into my winter writing nook. Soapstone stove burning. Ideal for reflection.

I'm still stuck on our fish migrations, past and present, and the three local, surviving Terminal Archaic and Eastern Woodland Indian fish weirs recently discussed in this space – one on the Ashuelot River in West Swanzey, New Hampshire, another on the upper Chicopee River, and yet another on the lower Westfield River.

These permanent, ancient, dam-like stone structures built across manageable riverbeds would have been accompanied by repairable, replaceable wooden structures, maintained annually to maximize harvests of spring shad, salmon, lamprey eels, sturgeon, striped bass and small herrings, not to mention outgoing fall harvests of American eels. One can only imagine the immense scope of runs before Europeans first laid eyes upon our New World.

For nearly 50 years I have studied these fish runs – evaluating restoration and conservation efforts, successful and not; comparing and contrasting annual numbers and trends; and bracing for an uncertain future, our planet heating at an alarming rate. Global warming has already negatively impacted our spawning runs and will absolutely continue to do so.

Recently, quite out of the blue, a lady from the not-so-distant past came to mind as I poked around in new fisheries data. Her name was Janice Weeks. She was from Greenfield: born 1924, died 2011. I got to know her as fellow Greenfield Historical Commissioner (GHC) appointees during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Then elderly and spirited, she was fully engaged and more than capable of performing

her historical-steward duties.

Our first meeting occurred on the streets of Greenfield, slightly less than 10 years before I moved from South Deerfield to Greenfield in 1997 and long before my GHC days. Then cranking out daily sports sections and a weekly *On the Trail* outdoor column for the *Greenfield Recorder*, I can't recall why I happened to be out of the office that day. All I know is that we met in front of World Eye Bookshop.

The encounter was memorable. Recognizing me in passing from my column sig's mugshot, Ms. Weeks approached to introduce herself. She had been following with interest my pessimistic stance toward our federal and state Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Restoration Project, and knew I'd be interested in her scholarly UMass Amherst friend's cutting-edge research.

Anthropology doctoral candidate Catherine Carlson had created quite a stir, Weeks said, with her "Where's the Salmon? A Re-evaluation of the Role of Anadromous Fisheries in Aboriginal New England," a chapter in husband George P. Nicholas' 1988 hard-cover compendium titled *Human Holocene Ecology in Northeastern North America*.

I furnished my home mailing address, and promptly received a copy.

Carlson had reviewed the archaeological record from dozens of known pre-contact fishing sites along New England rivers, including our Connecticut, and found a stunning scarcity of Atlantic salmon remains. The finding supported vague information I had pieced together from many published town histories up and down the Connecticut Valley.

With the 1990s looming, I had been a lonely – if not *the only* – public voice challenging the viability of the Connecticut River salmon restoration effort. That is not to say I hoped the program would fail. Quite the contrary, nobody wanted a local salmon sport-fishery more than me. I just didn't believe it was going to happen, based on a troubling string of

see **VALLEY VIEW** page B3



# Exploring California's empty Central Coast.

**SOUTH DEERFIELD** – A few weeks ago, when the mornings were still chilly here in the Valley, I hopped on a plane to San Luis Obispo, California for some time on the uncrowded coast.

When I stepped off the plane in the sun outside of San Luis Obispo's airport terminal, it set the scene, with a comfortable sunny outdoor seating area complete with a small stand selling local wines and microbrew beers. Welcome to California's Central Coast!

California has always been my favorite place to visit in the cold winter months, and this area of the coast, between Gorda and Morro Bay, is stunning because it is so undeveloped. Miles and miles – about 68 miles of coastline – is simply open grasslands, mountains, and the Pacific Ocean.

To be able to drive this far and avoid what we usually find along the ocean anywhere is a refreshing experience. We have the Hearst Corporation to thank for preserving the 83,000 acres they own here, 17 miles in either direction from the Hearst Castle's entrance.

As we traveled north about a half hour from SLO, we headed to the Vina Robles winery in Paso Robles, a building with a sweeping, modern design. My hosts, Mike and Noreen, were excited to show me the rolling

see **TRAVELS** page B8



HARTSHORNE PHOTO

Ragged Point, north of San Simeon on Highway 1.



# Pet of the Week



CARMODY COLLAGE

## 'BUBBLES'

Looking for a big ball of fluff and companionship? Bubbles is your girl! Bubbles likes to spend her days lounging around the house, window gazing, and occasionally approaching her humans for some love and pets.

Bubbles is on the shy side toward new people and does take a bit to come out, so she would benefit from visitors going extra slow with

her when they come into the home.

She does prefer to be the queen of her castle, so other feline underlings are not her thing.

Are you interested in adopting? 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](http://www.dakinhumane.org).

## Senior Center Activities APRIL 29 TO MAY 3

### 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](mailto: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 4/29

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

### Tuesday 4/30

9 a.m. Good For U Workout  
10 a.m. Line Dancing  
11 a.m. Social Stringers  
7 p.m. Senior Housing Presents

### Wednesday 5/1

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

### Thursday 5/2

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

### Friday 5/3

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 4/29

10:15 a.m. Aerobics  
11 a.m. Chair Exercise  
1 p.m. Ice Cream Social  
3:30 p.m. Tech 4 Seniors Class (pre-register)

### Tuesday 4/30

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 5/1

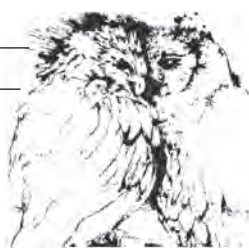
9 a.m. Veterans' Help Hours  
10:15 a.m. Aerobics  
10:45 a.m. Outdoor Yoga  
11 a.m. Chair Exercise  
12 p.m. Bring Your Lunch Bingo  
4:15 p.m. Mat Yoga

### Thursday 5/2

9 a.m. Senior Help Hours by Appointment  
10:30 a.m. Brown Bag  
1 p.m. Pitch  
3:30 p.m. Tech 4 Seniors Class (pre-register)

### Friday 5/3

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



## Sex Matters

a sex-positive health column

by STEPHANIE BAIRD

**GRANBY** – 1. “Spend three days alone.”

2. “Take yourself seriously.”

3. “Whenever caught in a situation, where you are made to feel girlish and helpless, bitchy and aggressive, or any other stereotype, leave immediately and do any action which you enjoy and which is yours.”

4. “Rely on your own financial resources at all times.”

5. “Enjoy yourself a lot.”

I begin this article with these instructions for “not being a stereotyped creation of your society,” originally expressed by Shere Hite in the 1970s, to show that so much of what feminists have been fighting for, going back even to the first wave of feminism in our country in the 1850s, continues to persist today.

The above blueprint was gleaned from the riveting documentary, *The Disappearance of Shere Hite*, originally released theatrically last November and now available to stream via Amazon Prime. Shere Hite was a prolific researcher, writer, and feminist activist who produced stereotype- and myth-shattering data about both women and men, in a time before computer data analysis. I found this film so agitating and galvanizing that I could barely sleep afterward.

Hite was born in the Midwest in 1942. Her mother divorced thrice, and Hite was mostly raised by her grandparents. After completing a master's degree in History from the University of Florida, she entered into PhD History studies at Columbia – “studying history because I couldn't understand the present” – only to be met with her first “overt class and gender prejudice.” Esteemed professors questioned whether she wrote her master's thesis herself, and if the books she cited were even available in Florida.

After experiencing this overt sexism, Hite, an out bisexual, serendipitously became acquainted with early 1970s feminist activism and protests, particularly with the National Organization for Women (NOW), who were protesting sexist and gender stereotypical depictions in advertising – including an ad that Hite herself had been paid to appear in. NOW also protested the Museum of (Un)Natural History, as it only depicted women with cooking apparatus or babies while men were shown hunting, building, etc.

Hite coordinated her questions and efforts with NOW resources, resulting in the development and initial distribution in 1972 of her first open-ended questionnaires for the “feminist sexuality project.” This questionnaire included many questions about how, why, and how often women masturbate, and how many orgasms they find sexually fulfilling, among many other very personal and specific questions. Many thousands of questionnaires were sent all over the United States, and a bit over 3,000 were returned.

The major finding of the resulting *Hite Report on Female Sexuality* was that around 70% of women respondents easily had orgasms via clitoral stimulation masturbation, but rarely had orgasms from penis-vagina intercourse alone. Hite and her data were questioned during press conferences, articles, and TV interviews. Geraldo Rivera raised the “fear that masturbation will become the ultimate sex act and men will become obsolete.” A defender at a NOW press conference gave the analogy, “What if men were expected to only orgasm by stimulation of the testicles, not the penis?” Men were staggered to learn that clitoral stimulation was much more important than vaginal penetration.

After years of gathering questionnaires answered by men, she then published her *Hite Report on Male Sexuality* (1981) based on over 7,000 respondents. Some of the radical conclusions included how the majority felt

“pressured” to perform sexually. In the documentary the male editor said, “When the [men] started answering questions about their emotional lives, I haven't had many sadder experiences as an editor in my life.”

Many of the respondents mentioned the lack of acceptance and virtual denigration of showing sadness, and a lack of connection with their own fathers. This book, by virtue of the answers, demonstrated a very early critique of toxic masculinity, in the voices of men.

Both the book on *Male Sexuality* and Hite's third book, *Women and Love: A Cultural Revolution in Progress* (1987) pointed out the rampant rates of affairs amongst both married women and men – both around 70% within the first five years of marriage – as well as huge amounts of emotional dissatisfaction among women (84%), and reported emotional psychological harassment by men (95%). Again, these findings were questioned and scoffed at by the general media and academia.

For me it was disheartening to see this history lesson as so many of the equalities that women and feminists have fought for over the centuries, such as universal and free or low-cost abortion access, accurate anatomical information – realistic diagrams of the internal clitoris have surfaced and disappeared since at least the 17th century – and the elimination of anti-LGBTQ laws, continue to be elusive. Activists at the NOW Convention in 1977 held signs stating “Keep your laws off my body.” The editor of a magazine for the female gaze (“*Gaze*”) said she found it “troublesome that perhaps young women coming along [today] will have to fight the same battles over again.”

Some of Hite's other radical ideas mentioned in the documentary include: “Equality doesn't seem dangerous to me” and the notion that if “each individual decides how to share their body with another person, then I think we have to imagine people will love people of the same sex, also.”

One of Hite's peers noted that she “cared passionately about a better world for everyone, without labels, without repression. It's hard to express just how revolutionary that was at the time.”

Another radical observation made by Hite occurred while she was a guest on *Oprah*, in an audience entirely composed of men. As she sat between men in the first row, Hite said, “Look at our body language, it's very different. You live in a world in which power gives you the right to sit with your legs apart, and you go like this, and look at me,” pointing to herself sitting with legs closed, arms within the seat space.

The man next to her responded, “I've never heard being able to sit with your legs apart is a privilege.” We didn't see widespread discussion of this body language privilege again until #MeToo.

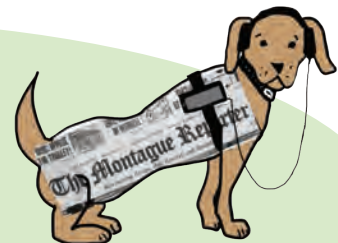
Hite eventually had to sue Macmillan to get her full earnings. Despite receiving more than 15,000 anonymous surveys for her research, seeing her books selling 5 million copies, translated into 14 languages, and banned in eight countries, and her original *Hite Report* being named the 30th bestselling book of all time by *Newsweek*, Hite felt forced to flee the US for Europe due to overt hatred and censorship, renouncing her citizenship in 1995 and passing away at the age of 77 in 2020.

I truly hope she was living her last years “enjoying [her]self a lot.”

*Stephanie Baird is a certified OWL facilitator and an EMDR psychotherapist and consultant who encourages her clients towards thriving sexual health. She is the author of the book EMDR Therapy and Sexual Health: A Clinician's Guide (2023). She welcomes feedback and suggestions at [sexmatters@montaguereporter.org](mailto:sexmatters@montaguereporter.org).*

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**VALLEY VIEW** from page B1 disappointing migration numbers that were heading in the wrong direction.

Carlson's work buttressed my argument against pie-in-the-sky true-believers – some paid, some not – blindly dedicated to salmon restoration.

Who could blame them for their loyal commitment? They had cushy government fisheries-management jobs to protect, with fat salaries and generous pension plans. Their goal was, at all costs, to let the good times continue to roll.

So, what was I supposed to do from my perch as a card-carrying New England outdoor writer penning weekly newspaper and monthly Connecticut Valley freelance columns? Could I continue publicizing discouraging salmon numbers, along with officials' caveat that they didn't matter? Or was it time to call out their blind optimism and push back?

I chose the latter, unwilling to play the gullible public fool. It had become clear to me that numbers from scientific experiments *did* indeed matter, and could not be ignored. The boldfaced handwriting on the wall indicated that the altruistic restoration effort was doomed to fail.

Then, finally, the plug was pulled on the 46-year venture in 2012. With its budget no longer justifiable, the restoration grape withered on the vine.

I can't say I felt told-you-so vindicated. No. To me the news was sad... yet predictable.

Nonetheless here I sit, more than a decade later, with an active interest in our anadromous fish migrations. Salmon weren't our only migratory fish worth protecting. Thus, I continue to monitor the river's anadromous and catadromous (American eel) runs, often pondering what they, and those of vanquished salmon, looked like during unrecorded millennia of indigenous fishing stations below main-stem falls and along suitable tributaries. Fish was important food for ancient man worldwide, and our fertile valley was no exception.

"Where's the Salmon" wasn't Carlson's final word on salmon. Four years later, her 1992 dissertation *The*

*Atlantic Salmon in New England Prehistory and History: Social and Environmental Implications* was completed. I promptly purchased the monograph in hardcover from a Michigan repository. It only added fuel to a fire salmon-restoration leaders wanted to smother.

Too late. The cat was out of the bag as numbers plummeted. Yet, still, the program endured for 20 additional years.

Over time, as I've reviewed new information and discussed the possibilities with archaeologist friends, my opinions about prehistoric Connecticut Valley salmon runs have changed a little. It has always been clear to me that salmon were here during historic and prehistoric times. They were still being written about and sold, along with cheaper shad, in the Connecticut Valley marketplace during the first two decades of the 19th century – after the construction of dams at Holyoke and Montague. Which is not to say salmon numbers, even during the best years, ever rivaled those of shad and smaller herrings.

In my own experience, waist-deep in chest waders while fishing the tailrace exiting Holyoke Dam's Barrett Fish Lift, I witnessed historic runs of the 1980s and early 1990s. The shad numbers in the river between 1980 and 1993 averaged a million, and the two best salmon runs on record occurred in 1981 (529) and 1992 (490). Today shad numbers have dwindled into the 300,000 range, and the salmon have disappeared.

Despite what a limited archaeological record reveals, I wouldn't be surprised if the best deep-time Connecticut River shad runs neared 10 million, with steady salmon runs in the tens of thousands. Maybe even better than 100,000 in the best years.

Those were ancient times, however, when indigenous fishers catching, preserving, and festively feasting on fresh fish – including succulent, pinkish-orange Atlantic salmon flesh – could reach down to quench their thirst from the same rivers they fished.

Gary Sanderson lives in Greenfield. Questions and comments welcome at [gary@oldtavernfarm.com](mailto:gary@oldtavernfarm.com).



## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

# Diaper Dumper; Undercover Boss; Strong Accent; Bus Vs. Pole; Shard Spill; Possible Leg; Abnormal Gun

**Monday, 4/15**

7:56 a.m. Alarm company requesting FD for a reported fire on top of a stove on Park Villa Drive. Transferred to Shelburne Control.

9:26 a.m. Dispatch is receiving multiple calls from a 911-only phone with a child on the other end. Contact made with parent; calls will cease.

**Tuesday, 4/16**

7:55 a.m. Caller from Turners Falls Road states that there is some sort of unattended fire with heavy smoke coming from a backyard. House is not on fire. No one is at the residence. Shelburne Control notified.

8:32 a.m. Walk-in requesting to speak to an officer; states that the neighbor who called the PD/FD for the smoke investigation (previous call) has been harassing her and her mother for years, and she would like to file charges if possible. States the smoke was coming from a pellet stove within the house, and this neighbor often calls the PD about issues he has with their household. Officer advised party of options.

10:36 a.m. 911 caller from West Main Street states he believes the oil burner in the basement is possibly on fire or has something burning off of it. Heavy smoke in basement and garage. Transferred to Shelburne Control. Officers advised. Evacuating building.

11:19 a.m. Caller states that there is a manhole cover steaming or smoking, isn't sure which, in the area of Federal and West Main Streets. DPW advised; working in the area.

12:55 p.m. 911 caller reporting hit-and-run accident on North Leverett Road. Shaken up; no injuries, fluids, or flames from vehicle. Referred to an officer.

1:24 p.m. Caller states that on Main Street and Turners Falls Road there are construction vehicles and tractor-trailer trucks driving by every ten minutes and using their engine brakes. He would like an officer to let them know they aren't allowed to do this, then call him back and let him know the issue is taken care of as it's "disturbing his peace." Referred to an officer.

2:22 p.m. Caller states he was at St. Kazimierz Society and an unknown vehicle was parked at the dumpster. He asked the male what he was doing, and he said "Getting rid of my diapers," then ran back to his car and drove away. Reporting party is not the dumpster owner. Advised of options. If the owner of the dumpster wants to report the incident, they are able to.

**Wednesday, 4/17**

4:10 a.m. 911 caller from East Main Street would like it on record that the upstairs neighbor was being loud again, which is a violation of the nighttime rules of the building.

2:56 p.m. Caller states her son was at Unity Park and an older gentleman went up to him, asked for his phone number, and offered him a job; she thinks this is very inappropriate and wants the man talked to and removed from the area. Described as in his 70s, wearing a hat, jeans, and a navy jacket, and having a blue backpack, a fishing pole, and a bicycle. Referred to an officer.

**Thursday, 4/18**

3:41 a.m. Caller reporting some kind of alarm sounding on Second Street; not sure if it's a car alarm or not. Officer advises audible fire alarm on Second Street. Control advised. Officer clear; advises TFFD located the alarm

and have deactivated it.

10:52 a.m. Caller from Lake Pleasant Road would like it on record that last night around 7:30 p.m., an older, beat-up van, tan in color, pulled up to her house and the driver started asking her questions about how to connect water and electricity to houses there. The man had a strong accent and left after her husband came outside. Services rendered.

12:11 p.m. Employee reporting that an FRTA bus struck a pole on the Park Villa Apartments property and damaged it. The bus is currently stuck there and blocking the main entry to the property. Report taken.

1:43 p.m. Report of a disturbance on Second Street; mother of caller's daughter's ex-boyfriend showed up on caller's porch and was yelling about getting her son's property back. Caller did not go outside, and involved party eventually left. Advised of options.

2:31 p.m. Employee at Connecticut River Liquor and Wine found video of a shoplifting incident that occurred on April 14. Male party took a liter of vodka. Officer dropped off statement forms for employees. Male party located outside of Walgreens and advised that he is no longer welcome inside the involved store; also advised of pending charges.

4:17 p.m. Caller states that yesterday her son and his two friends were at Unity Park and an older male in his 50s was trying to get them to come to his house to play video games; he also offered to pay them money to clean his house. Referred to an officer.

5:33 p.m. 911 caller from West Mineral Road states that his neighbor has a chimney fire. No smoke in the house. Call transferred to Shelburne Control.

6:18 p.m. Burglar alarm activation at Music Connection on Avenue A. Upstairs neighbor was able to get in and disarm the alarm.

**Friday, 4/19**

8:44 a.m. Caller from Fourth Street states that her four-wheeled wagon/cart has gone missing from behind her apartment. Unable to locate.

12:07 p.m. Caller states that there are little pieces of sharp metal all over the road near Lightlife Foods, Ja'Duke, and the Tech School. Three employees have gotten flat tires. DPW notified. Officer reporting hundreds if not thousands of small, sharp metal fragments covering the road. Road may need to be partially shut down.

Trail of metal debris appears to start at a company called Duravent. Large amount of same metal

pieces in the road near the corner of Millers Falls Road and Industrial Boulevard. Investigated.

3:35 p.m. Caller from Central Street states that he had a package delivered by UPS and it was just stolen. Unsure if there are any cameras in the area; states it was a \$30 item and he just wants this on record.

**Saturday, 4/20**

3:44 p.m. 911 caller reporting hit-and-run accident at 253 Farmacy. No injuries or fluids leaking from vehicle. Caller knows both involved parties. No damage to vehicle. Was discussed in the parking lot prior to their leaving the scene. Report taken.

5:24 p.m. Walgreens employee reporting drug activity throughout the day in front of the store; unsure of names of involved parties. Would like parties moved along as customers are complaining. Officer spoke to the caller; advised of options.

7:26 p.m. Caller from the library lawn on Seventh Street reporting that there is something in the middle of the road, orange in color, covered by a blanket with a possible leg sticking out from underneath it. Officer advises it is a jacket.

**Sunday, 4/21**

5:38 a.m. 911 caller states involved party is putting his hands on her and attempting to take away her phone. Officer requesting ambulance for evaluation.

5:44 a.m. Commercial burglar alarm at Music Connection. Units tied up on other call. Officer advised.

10:30 a.m. Caller from Turners Falls Road reporting that her neighbor is shooting some type of gun; advised it doesn't sound like a normal gun; states it is much louder and is echoing through the whole neighborhood. Report taken.

11:47 a.m. Alarm company reporting general burglar alarm at Silvio O. Conte Anadromous Fish Research Center; fish lab kitchen interior. Alarm company called back to cancel.

12:50 p.m. Caller reporting that a red motorcycle has been parked in the same spot on Fourth Street for months. Caller states plates are expired by two years and believes it might be abandoned. Officer contacted registered owner, who states she will renew the registration and move the motorcycle off of the roadway.

5:44 p.m. 911 caller reporting a silver Kia operating at a high speed, weaving between cars, and passing unsafely on Turners Falls Road. Passed on Unity Street; attempting to catch up to vehicle now. Lost vehicle over Turners Falls-Gill Bridge.



## 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 contributions in the Connecticut River Valley. Through April 28, followed by *What's On Your Plate?*, a community arts exhibit, from May 5 to June 29.

**LOOT, Turners Falls:** *Auto Partitas*, twelve little trios of mixed-media works inspired by automotive parts, by Nina Rossi, through April. *Rotation Book Group: 12 artists+12 books+12 months*, a show-and-tell of artists books created by a local group, on Friday, May 3 from 5 to 8 p.m.

**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, land-

scapes, 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 next Wednesday, May 1 from 1 to 4 p.m.

**LAVA Center, Greenfield:** *Pauline Star*, photography exhibit, through April. Followed by *IndiVisible*, photos by Alfonso Herrera-Neal and Lindy Whiton documenting migrant and immigrant farm workers in Western Mass, including field interviews. On view May through July, with an opening reception next Friday, May 3 at 5 p.m.

**Looky Here, Greenfield:** *Inside, Outside*, paintings by Emily Giamari, through May.

**Wendell Meetinghouse, Wendell:** *My House*, multi-media art installation by Lisa Winter, on view Sunday, May 5 at 4 p.m. with an artist's talk.

**Leverett Crafts & Arts, Leverett:** *Bill & Dianne Dolan*, painting and pottery, through April.

**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 Pelion fabric of the Popocatepetl volcano. By chance or appointment: [redtide-bluefire@gmail.com](mailto:redtide-bluefire@gmail.com).

**APE Gallery, Northampton:** *Platitude*, a look at contemporary queer life in America through the form of ceramic serveware created by nine artists. Through May 26, with a reception on May 24 from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

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## Montague Community Television News Many Flavors

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

**TURNERS FALLS** – Tour a local cemetery with the “Gravestone Girls,” honor such local elders as Everett Ricketts, learn about chickens and factory farming with Nayana Marmaras and Isaac Larkin-Harmon, enjoy the Montague Shakespeare Festival’s performance of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, celebrate favorite local business the Country Creemee, and keep up to date on local politics with the Montague selectboard meeting from April 22.

If it’s local TV you’re after, look no further than MCTV. And if you like what you see, get involved!

All community members are welcome and encouraged to submit their videos to be aired on Channel 9, as

well as featured on the MCTV Vimeo page. That means you! If you have any ideas for films, MCTV is always available to assist in local video production as well. Cameras, tripods, and lighting equipment are available for checkout, and filming and editing assistance can be provided.

And if you’re looking for more ways to get involved, consider joining the MCTV Board. If you would like to stop in for a meeting, even just to check the vibe, email [infomontaguetv@gmail.com](mailto:infomontaguetv@gmail.com) for a link to the Zoom.

Contact us at (413) 863-9200 or [infomontaguetv@gmail.com](mailto:infomontaguetv@gmail.com), follow us on Facebook, or find us on Instagram @montaguecommunitytv. Find videos and more on our website, [montaguetv.org](http://montaguetv.org).

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

## May 1: Law Day Event!

**GREENFIELD** – A Law Day 2024 event will be offered at the Franklin Justice Center next week with a public presentation on the topic “Preserving Democracy.” School groups have registered to attend, and the public is invited.

Constitutional law scholar and voting rights advocate John Bonifaz, co-founder and president of the national non-profit Free Speech for People, will be the keynote speaker at the Wednesday, May 1 event, which is scheduled to start at 9 a.m.

Bonifaz will be joined by his daughter, Marisol Bonifaz, an Amherst High student and founder of Generation Ratify Amherst, now the Amherst Young Feminist Party.

Law Day is organized and promoted by the American Bar Association to celebrate and educate the public about the rule of law and its role in a democracy. The first Law Day event was held in 1958.

Following the presentation, student groups will participate in a guided tour of the courthouse.

## May 1: Community Concert!

**GREENFIELD** – Join Música Franklin on Wednesday, May 1, from 5 to 6 p.m., for a student performance and family-friendly concert with Rev. Floyd L. Williams, PhD.

Dr. Williams is a world-renowned jazz pianist and composer. He has performed in countries across the globe including Germany, India, Argentina, Russia, Japan, and France. A professor of mathematics at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, he has published over 100 publications on mathematical physics and

has been inducted into the Lincoln University Hall of Fame and as a Fellow of the American Mathematical Society. He has been an ordained minister since 1990.

This concert will take place at the First United Methodist Church, at 25 Church Street in Greenfield, and is free and open to the public. This program is supported in part by a grant from the Greenfield Local Cultural Councils, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

# FACES & PLACES



JOE R. PARZYCH PHOTOS

Janis Doyle of Duckworld (center) shares her new baby ducks. She said she has rescued 37 ducks and geese so far, and welcomes everyone to visit. Duckworld is located at 11 West Chestnut Hill Road in Montague. Thanks to Joe R. Parzych for the photos!

## MONTAGUE CRYPTOJAM !!!

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BIHVAQGE LGTZZS EIGQH'O  
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## Artist Profile: David Andrews

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

**GREENFIELD** – I saw something of David Andrews’s artwork at the LAVA Center in Greenfield, and I liked it enough that I wanted to write about it. I was able to talk with him for an interview the same day I saw his artwork there.

Andrews lives in Sunderland, and has been making his art for 15 years. He told me he is “self-taught” when it comes to making art. His first show, in 2012, was called *What Do You See?*, and his current show is titled *Perceptions and Perspectives*. “I have an exhibition going on right now at 50 Arrow Gallery in Easthampton, in Suite 136 in the Eastworks building,” he said.

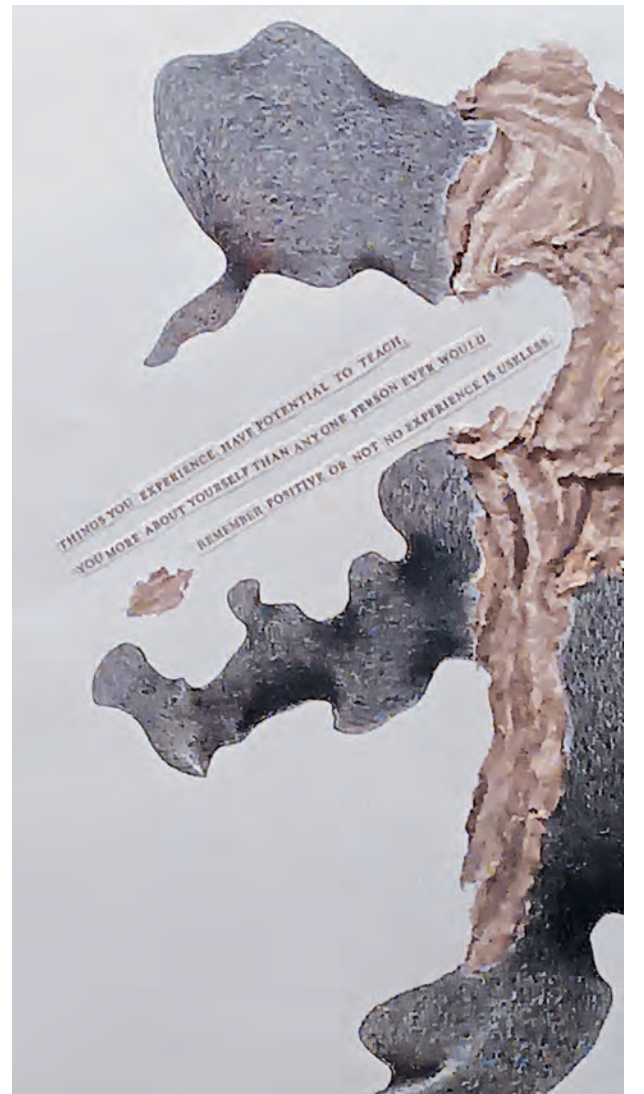
He also mentioned that a current project has him “working with a hornet nest, putting it on the paper with texts, and shading it in with graphite.”

Andrews’s art is a release for him. That is why he creates what he does. I would describe the piece I saw at the LAVA Center as a drawing that features what looked to be words on paper, pasted to a canvas. His own description of his work is taking a two-dimensional drawing on paper and turning it into a three-dimensional piece of sculpture, and adding text to enhance the feeling of the work.

It’s certainly what could be called interesting-looking art. Some of the reviews of his art say things like “extremely popular” and “extremely thought-provoking.”

Since starting with his art, Andrews said, he has done a lot of shows and been at a lot of galleries. He mentioned that he has shown at the Forbes Library in Northampton, and Nolen Art Lounge at Smith College.

Andrews said his friends and family love his art, and according to him, when it comes to buying his art it has



Detail of David Andrews, *Living*, mixed media.

been popular. I personally think his work at the LAVA Center will have a nice large group of people coming to see it. The comment of his art being “extremely thought-provoking” is the perfect thought to have about his art. This is perhaps what will draw crowds to see it.

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## AT LARGE

## The Rite of Spring: Guarding the Henhouse

By CHIP AINSWORTH

**NORTHFIELD** – Last spring my neighbors John and Aja decided to get chickens. The reasons were threefold: to show their children, to gather their eggs, and to let them eat ticks in the yard.

One by one the chickens got picked off by a fox. If they failed to come home to roost they were goners. In the middle of the night I awoke to an awful squawking sound. The next morning I followed a trail of feathers to my favorite chicken, the one I called Whitey, which was now just half a chicken.

The fox and its kits lived under the porch of a small cottage called the Dollhouse on the Thomas Aquinas College campus. Despite its ability to wreak carnage, we agreed it was a beautiful creature with its rusty red coat, black legs, pointed ears and nose, and long white-tipped tail.

This spring John and Aja got 14 more birds – nine hens and five roosters – and to protect them their three boys built a wood fence around the coop. It didn't matter. Any bird that wasn't locked safely inside the henhouse by dusk was a goner.

Aja's favorite rooster and a



Even this fence was no match for a possum – or possums.

hen were the first to go missing. Aja asked me to join the search. We stood by the fort looking around and John spotted one of the doomed birds lying in the bushes

near an old barn.

"A possum got it," he said. "They'll bite off the head, wait for it to cool and come back for it." John walked over and picked up the dead

bird and put it in a Havahart trap.

A few nights later, the possum – or possums – returned and made off with the rest of the brood. "The trap didn't work?" I asked.

"It went in and got it, but the spring-loaded door didn't shut," said John.

It reminded me of a fox encounter I'd had when I lived in Wapping with my wife and two children. The corn fields north of Old Deerfield have a history. In late autumn people would look west from Route 5 and see a trail of dust streaking toward Pine Hill, a small tree grove where my grandfather searched for arrowheads.

The locals knew the dust storm was being caused by Charlie Belford, a veterinarian who was training his sled dogs on the desolate dirt farm roads. One day while I was plodding along between the fields a red fox slunk past me and disappeared into the corn rows.

The next morning I saw Chuck Ciesluk at his family's farmstand. "Hey, I saw a red fox down in the meadows yesterday," I exclaimed.

"Yeah," he replied, smiling laconically. "We pounded him yesterday."

I was shocked, but now realize that to farmers like Chuck a fox is only a varmint, as ugly as a possum.

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

## TAPAS from page B1

businesses began competing with each other over who offered the most generous tapas.

Nowadays some bars specialize in tapas, displaying arrays of many sorts. They include fish and seafood choices such as garlic shrimp,

octopus salad, fried sardines, and tuna with potatoes. Meat selections range from simple roasted chunks, for spearing on cocktail sticks, to portions of meat stews and mini-meatballs braised in sherry or served with tomato sauce.

Fancy delicacies may appear,

too. One example is pheasant stuffed with dates. And there are scores of vegetable and bean tapas: potatoes in many forms; strips of roasted red pepper with honey and almonds; tomatoes stuffed with rice or cheese; sticks of lightly-fried eggplant trickled with strings of molasses, which is deliciously better than it sounds.

Many regions and towns take pride in local specialties. The serrano and Iberico hams produced in the western provinces feature in local tapas, sometimes twisted around potatoes or asparagus, more often proudly presented in the finest possible slices.

In the northern Basque country baby eels are a great (and expensive) luxury; *piperade* made from eggs and peppers is a tasty and cheaper favorite. Barcelona's contribution, now served all over Spain, is *patatas bravas* – roasted potatoes in a spicy red sauce.

In Cadiz they have their own potato dish *papas aliñas* – literally potatoes and red onion dressed with the local sherry vinegar and parsley. It's simple but so popular that long queues line up for free platefuls when they are distributed at the February Carnival. Another favorite Cadiz tapa is *tortillas de camarones* – three-inch fritters made from tiny shrimp, a flavorful local algae or herbs, and chickpea flour, which makes them extra crisp. A serving usually has six or eight of them, so this is a dish to share.

Indeed, however the tapas tradition started, it is now synonymous with fun: everyone sharing in a collection of mini-dishes. There's even a verb, *tappear*, which means to go out to enjoy tapas with friends, sometimes wandering from one good place to another in the tapas equivalent to a pub crawl.

Of course, people also make tapas at home, perhaps to entertain friends but often simply in larger portions – *raciones* – to serve as a main dish or side. Indeed, many favorite tapas

## LEMON AND GARLIC CHICKEN

*4 boneless, skinless chicken thighs  
(or 3 chicken breast halves)  
salt to taste  
1 medium-large onion  
6 large garlic cloves  
2 lemons  
4 tsp. olive oil  
1 Tbsp. chopped parsley*

Cut the chicken into chunks – each slightly larger than a mouthful, because they shrink while cooking. Sprinkle with salt.

Grate the onion or chop it very finely. Slice the garlic cloves thinly. Using a zester, scrape the zest off one lemon in thin strips, then squeeze out the juice. You should have at least a quarter cup. Juice half the other lemon if necessary, and cut the rest into wedges for serving.

Heat the oil in a heavy pan over moderate heat. Add the onion, stir for a minute, then add the garlic and cook gently without browning for 3 minutes. Move to one side. Add the chicken chunks and

cook for about 3 or 4 minutes a side until lightly golden. Sprinkle with half the lemon zest and the juice. Stir everything together, and cook for another 2 or 3 minutes. Season and stir in the parsley.

*Serves 6 as a tapa,  
3 or 4 as a main dish.*

## MUSHROOM AND SPINACH TORTILLA

*½ cup sliced almonds, toasted or regular  
8-ounce bag washed spinach  
10-ounce box baby bella mushrooms  
2 to 3 tablespoons olive oil  
2 large shallots or 1 small-medium onion  
5 eggs, beaten  
1 tsp. dried thyme  
salt and pepper to taste  
½ cup grated Parmesan*



If the sliced almonds are not already toasted, do the job by scattering them over a heavy dry 9- or 10-inch frying pan on medium heat. Cook for about three minutes, shaking the pan from time to time until they're golden brown. Watch so they don't burn. Tip them out and set aside.

Wash and dry the spinach, discarding coarse stems or battered leaves. Rinse the mushrooms, dry with a paper towel, and slice thickly. Set both aside.

Chop the shallots or onion, add 2 tablespoons of oil to the frying pan, and gently cook them for about 4 minutes until tender. Now add the mushrooms, and cook until they release some liquid. Add the other tablespoon of oil if the pan is dry, then add the spinach. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally to mix. Meanwhile, turn on the broiler.

Pour the beaten eggs into the pan, sprinkle with thyme, and season with salt and pepper.

Cook over moderate heat for 4 to 5 minutes. As it cooks, run a spatula round the edge and gently lift so any uncooked eggs reach the bottom. When the surface looks dry except in the very middle, turn off the heat and run the spatula underneath the tortilla to loosen it.

Scatter on half the almonds. Mix the rest of them with the cheese, then scatter over the top. Put the pan under the heated broiler, and cook for 3 to 4 minutes or until golden, but not brown. Serve hot or at room temperature.

*Makes 5 to 6 full servings, or 8 tapas.*

started out as family dishes that bars and cafés adopted for tapas.

A good example is the many meat tapas served as either chunks for spearing with forks or cocktail sticks or strung on skewers with bits of pepper or bacon. Lemon and Garlic Chicken exemplifies this: in a bar it's a tapa, at home it's more likely a meal served over rice or pasta.

The recipe is above, along with one for Mushroom and Spinach Tortilla. This doesn't produce Mexican-style tortillas for tacos, but rather a crustless quiche. In a tapas bar it would be cut into smallish wedges or rectangles; at home a bigger wedge with a vegetable – green beans, squash, or asparagus – is perfect for supper.



A typical tapas special....

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# Aquí se habla español

Esta es la página mensual en español del *Montague Reporter*. Aquí podrá encontrar cuestiones acerca de la comunidad hispana en el área, eventos de interés, curiosidades, y noticias mundiales en español. Si quiere participar o compartir alguna sugerencia, envíenos un correo electrónico a [spanish@montaguereporter.org](mailto:spanish@montaguereporter.org).



## Noticias internacionales: Asalto a la embajada de México en Quito

Por VICTORIA MAÍLLO DE AGUILERA

**GREENFIELD** – El lunes 5 de abril, el presidente de Ecuador, Daniel Noboa, ordenó asaltar la embajada de México en Quito ya que en su interior se encontraba Jorge Glas. Pero muchos de ustedes se preguntarán, ¿y quién es Jorge Glas? ¿Por qué Noboa tomó esta decisión en contra de las leyes internacionales del convenio de Viena?

Jorge Glas fue vicepresidente de Ecuador entre los años 2013 y 2017 con Rafael Correa y Lenin Moreno como presidentes y perteneciendo al partido Movimiento Alianza PAÍS. En 2017 se le acusó de estar implicado en la trama de corrupción y recibir sobornos de la constructora Odebrecht por lo que más tarde fue condenado a ocho años de cárcel.

En el año 2018, el presidente Lenin Moreno, después de una votación, informó al parlamento que Glas dejaría el cargo de vicepresidente debido a las acusaciones. Ante esto, Jorge Glas decidió entregarse a las autoridades, ya que sabía que acabar en prisión no iba a ser tan fácil. Y razón tenía porque en el proceso se produjeron diferentes errores judiciales y como colofón consiguió un *habeas corpus* que le permitió salir en libertad condicional sin haber cumplido la totalidad de su condena.

En noviembre de 2023 fue llamado de nuevo a juicio ya que todavía tenía cargos pendientes y aún otro nuevo por corrupción al ser acusado de usurpar fondos que fueron destinados a los problemas causados por el terremoto de Manabí.

Glas en las entrevistas concedidas declaraba que se trataba de una persecución política en su contra y no dudaba en decir que era inocente de todos estos cargos.

Por todo esto, en diciembre de 2023, Glas decidió refugiarse en la embajada de México buscando un juicio limpio y sin interferencias del estado. Glas estaba dentro de la embajada a la espera de su estatus de refugiado político que le fue concedido justo un día antes del asalto. Jorge Glas tenía como modelo al ex-presidente Correa que consiguió salir del país sin enfrentarse a causas pendientes y



vive exiliado en Bélgica.

A partir de que el ex-vicepresidente Glas entrase en la embajada de México, el gobierno ecuatoriano comenzó una serie de conversaciones con el gobierno mexicano para que el acusado fuera devuelto a las autoridades ecuatorianas y se enfrentará a los juicios pendientes. Las conversaciones no dieron fruto ya que el gobierno mexicano se amparaba en las leyes internacionales.

En vista de ello, el gobierno de Noboa realizó la maniobra ofensiva que rompió las relaciones diplomáticas entre los dos países ya que el presidente de México, López Obrador, decidió la suspensión de las mismas por violación de la soberanía del estado mexicano.

**Glas estaba dentro de la embajada a la espera de su estatus de refugiado político que le fue concedido justo un día antes del asalto.**

Las fuerzas de seguridad ecuatorianas entraron en el edificio de la embajada de México escalando las verjas y rompiendo los cristales de las ventanas. Recorrieron todo el edificio consular usando la fuerza hasta encontrar las dependencias en las que se encontraba el vicepresidente Glas. El propio jefe consular de México, Roberto Canseco, fue objeto de la violencia de los soldados.

Hasta ese momento la presidencia había sido un camino de rosas

para Noboa que no había contado con ninguna oposición para sacar adelante diferentes leyes que se había comprometido a promulgar durante su campaña electoral. La oposición no se había enfrentado a ninguna de sus propuestas parlamentarias, ni siquiera a algunas controvertidas como la subida de impuestos. La carrera política de Noboa iba viento en popa hasta el momento en que el presidente toma la decisión de entrar en una embajada, algo que va contra las leyes internacionales que protegen el suelo de la embajada como espacio inviolable.

A partir de ese momento se ha iniciado una guerra política dentro del propio Ecuador.

Y por supuesto los estados adyacentes declararon su malestar antes los hechos comandados por el Presidente Noboa. La Organización de los Estados Americanos (OEA), el presidente de Chile, Gabriel Boric, el de Colombia, Gustavo Petro, e incluso el derechista Javier Milei mostraron su postura a favor del presidente mexicano, López Obrador al considerar que el asalto a la embajada era un delito contra las leyes internacionales.

Jorge Glas fue llevado desde la embajada a una cárcel de alta seguridad llamada La Roca en Guayaquil donde se encuentran cumpliendo condenas miembros de bandas traficantes de drogas que habían sido objeto de persecución bajo el mandato del propio Glas.

Jorge Glas ha enviado cartas desde la prisión a los presidentes de México, Colombia y Brasil con objeto de conseguir su libertad. En las

misivas les explica que se encuentra en huelga de hambre.

Por su parte México ha llevado a Ecuador ante el Tribunal Internacional de Justicia, y así mismo solicita que Ecuador sea suspendido como miembro de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas (ONU). Un buen número de países se están sumando a esta petición.

### Otros asaltos a embajadas.

Ha habido otros asaltos a embajadas en el mundo, aunque vamos a centrarnos solamente en las de países que hablan español, el más grave fue el que ocurrió el 30 de enero de 1980 en la embajada de España en Guatemala. Ese día soldados pertenecientes a las fuerzas de seguridad del régimen militar de Guatemala que estaban dirigidas por Romeo Lucas decidieron asaltar la embajada española en la que estaban refugiados estudiantes y campesinos mayas que protestaban contra la brutal represión del gobierno militar en zonas rurales contra los indígenas. (Fuente: *Comisión de la Verdad, Informe Guatemala*.)

El resultado del asalto y posterior incendio de la embajada resultó en el asesinato de 37 personas que murieron quemadas, incluidos 7 funcionarios españoles, incluido el cónsul español. También fallcieron en el brutal asalto Vicente Menchú y Francisco Tum, padre y primo respectivamente de Rigoberta Menchú, activista guatemalteca reconocida con el premio Nobel de la Paz en 1992.

Uno de los supervivientes del asalto fue el embajador español, Máximo Cajal. El gobierno guatemalteco había dado la orden de no dejar testigos y por ellos se temía por la vida del embajador Cajal en el hospital. Embajadores de países cercanos y de otros países en Guatemala se turnaron para protegerlo durante su estancia sabiendo del peligro que corría por ser uno de los únicos testigos del asalto que permanecía con vida.

Y así ocurrió, al día siguiente al asalto las fuerzas policiales del gobierno entraron en el hospital y secuestraron a Gregorio Yujá, un campesino que era otro de los supervivientes de la masacre. Cuando entraron en la habitación de Cajal

con la idea de secuestrarle también se encontraron que en ella se encontraba el embajador de Costa Rica en Guatemala, así que se dieron a la fuga. El cuerpo de Yuya fue encontrado en la calle horas después con un papel en el que se decía que Máximo Cajal sería el siguiente.

Después de esto se toma la decisión de trasladar al embajador a la embajada de los Estados Unidos que era la única que se consideraba segura en aquel momento.

La justicia de Guatemala juzgó los hechos 35 años después en un tribunal de acuerdo a las leyes internacionales y dictó sentencia condenatoria contra el único responsable que pudo ser juzgado llamado Manuel García Arredondo, que tenía el cargo de jefe de policía. El acusado fue condenado a noventa años de prisión y a una multa de un millón de dólares destinado a los familiares de las víctimas como indemnización. Este ya había sido condenado en 2012 a 70 años de prisión en 2012 por la desaparición forzada de un estudiante en 1981.

**El asalto a embajada más grave fue el que ocurrió el 30 de enero de 1980 en la embajada de España en Guatemala.**

Por estos hechos, se realizó también un informe de la Comisión de la Verdad de las Naciones Unidas que comprobó la excelente actuación del entonces embajador de España en Guatemala, Máximo Cajal.

Otro asalto a una embajada ocurrió en 1961 cuando policías armados venezolanos irrumpieron en la embajada de Perú en Caracas. Civiles y ex-militares venezolanos se habían refugiado en ella y las fuerzas policiales querían detenerlos. Se produjeron heridos y el encargado de prensa de la embajada fue también detenido. El gobierno peruano presentó sus quejas ante la ONU.

Las embajadas y consulados de Cuba en diversos países han sido también atacadas por parte de activistas anticastristas. La más famosa es la que ocurrió en el consulado cubano en Montreal en 1966.

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Amanda Gorman, *The Hill We Climb*

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# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



## THURSDAY, APRIL 25

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

## FRIDAY, APRIL 26

Unnamed Books, Turners Falls: Film night: *Dogtooth, Man Rots from the Head, Outer Space*. No cover. 7 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Two Step Night with Les Taiouts, The Honky Tonk Angels*. No cover. 7 p.m.

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.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Bluegrass and Beyond Session*. \$ 9:30 p.m.

## SATURDAY, APRIL 27

Four Star Farms, Northfield: *Ch'Chunk*. No cover. 5:30 p.m.

Buoyant Heart, Brattleboro:

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

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

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

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

Asbestos Farm, Hadley: *The Cradle, Pearl Sugar, Mibble, Lucy*. \$ 8 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: *Wheatus, Gabrielle Sternbenz*. \$ 8 p.m.

## WEDNESDAY, MAY 1

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

Daily Op, Easthampton: *R.A.P Ferreira, Cavalier, DJ Quills*. \$ 8:30 p.m.

## THURSDAY, MAY 2

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

## FRIDAY, MAY 3

The Drake, Amherst: *Les Derailleurs, Gold Dust, Magick Lantern*. \$ 8 p.m.

## SATURDAY, MAY 4

Four Star Farms, Northfield: *Jared & John*. No cover. 5:30 p.m.

Unnamed Books, Turners Falls: *Ramon & Jessica, Mare Berger*. Free. 7 p.m.

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

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Sarah Jarosz, Le Ren*. \$ 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Gnarly Sacs*. \$ 9:30 p.m.

## SUNDAY, MAY 5

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *Meg Duffy & Greg Uhlmann*. \$ 8 p.m.

## WEDNESDAY, MAY 8

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Sunset Mission, Anjali Rose, Mutineer*. \$ 8 p.m.

## THURSDAY, MAY 9

Parlor Room, Northampton: *Lucy Wainwright Roche & Suzy Roche*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

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

## FRIDAY, MAY 10

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

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Fishbone's Angelo Moore, The Agonizers, Threat Level Burgundy*. \$ 8 p.m.

The Drake, Amherst: *Frankie*

*Cosmos, Katie von Schleicher*. \$ 8 p.m.

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Martin Barre*. \$ 8 p.m.

## SATURDAY, MAY 11

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *Lakeside Drive*. No cover. 7 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Gaslight Tinkers*. \$ 7 p.m.

## SUNDAY, MAY 12

Palladium, Worcester: *Cattle Decapitation, Carnifex, Rivers of Nihil, Humanity's Last Breath*, many more. \$ 4 p.m.

## TUESDAY, MAY 14

Holyoke Media, Holyoke: *Bonnie Kane*. \$ 7 p.m.

## THURSDAY, MAY 16

Nova Arts, Keene: *Paper Castles, Stoner Will & The Narks, Jake McKelvie, Rick Rude*, more. \$ 4:30 p.m.

Mystery Train Records, Amherst: *Kath Bloom, Golden Bough*, more. \$ 5 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Gift, Carinae*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

City Space, Easthampton: *Nate Wooley's Columbia Icefield with Susan Alcorn, Ava Mendoza, and Ryan Sawyer*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

## FRIDAY, MAY 17

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Erin McKeown, SPOUSE*. \$ 7 p.m.

### looking forward...

## SATURDAY, MAY 18

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Jeopardy, SLOBDROP, Epicenter, Wargraves*. \$ 6:30 p.m.

## TUESDAY, MAY 21

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Coral Grief, The Upstairs District, Big Destiny*. \$ 8 p.m.

## SATURDAY, MAY 25

Unnamed Books, Turners Falls: *Open Mic feat. Noah Britton, Gracious Calamity*. No cover. 6 p.m.

## SATURDAY, JUNE 1

Three County Fairgrounds, Northampton: *Sheer Mag, Indigo de Souza, Dehd, Butcher Brown, Thus Love, Sun Parade, Lucy*, more. \$ 12 p.m. See [field-day.rocks](http://field-day.rocks).

## SATURDAY, JUNE 8

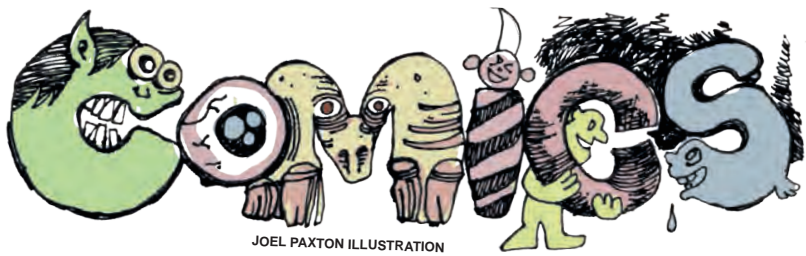
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Greenfield Records BIG 15 feat. Noise Nomads, Old Pam, Willie Lane, The Eye, Stella Kola, Creative Writing, Big Destiny, Moth's Frog, DJs*. \$ 1 p.m.

## THURSDAY, JUNE 27

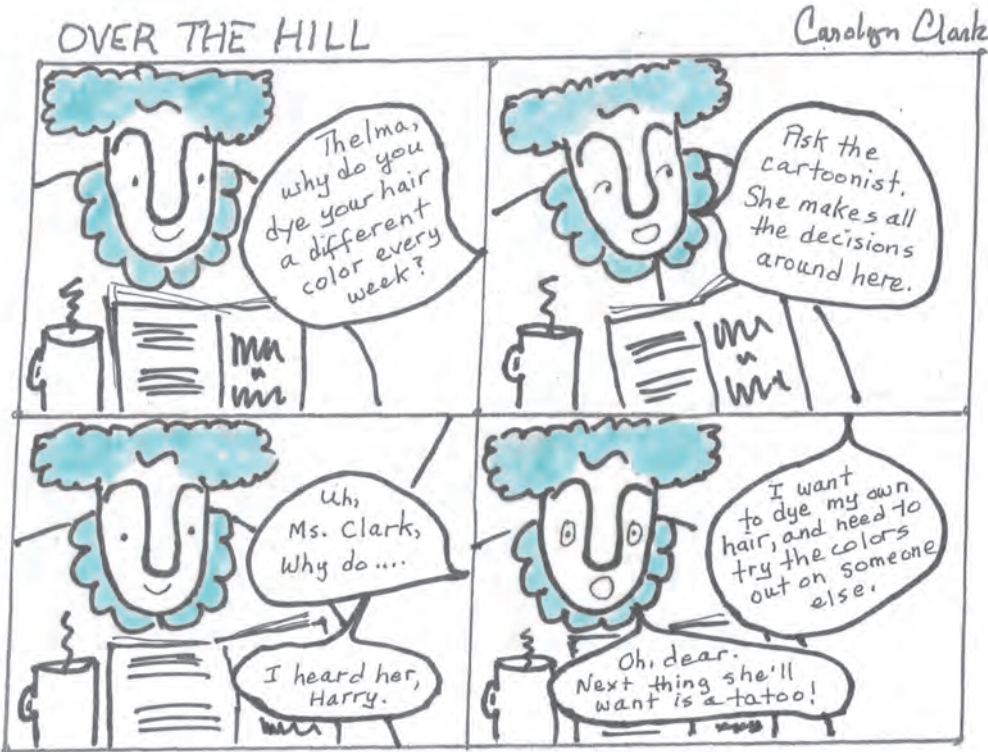
Tanglewood, Lenox: *Boyz II Men*. \$ 7 p.m.

## SUNDAY, JUNE 30

Daily Op, Easthampton: *Os Mutantes*. \$ 7 p.m.



JOEL PAXTON ILLUSTRATION

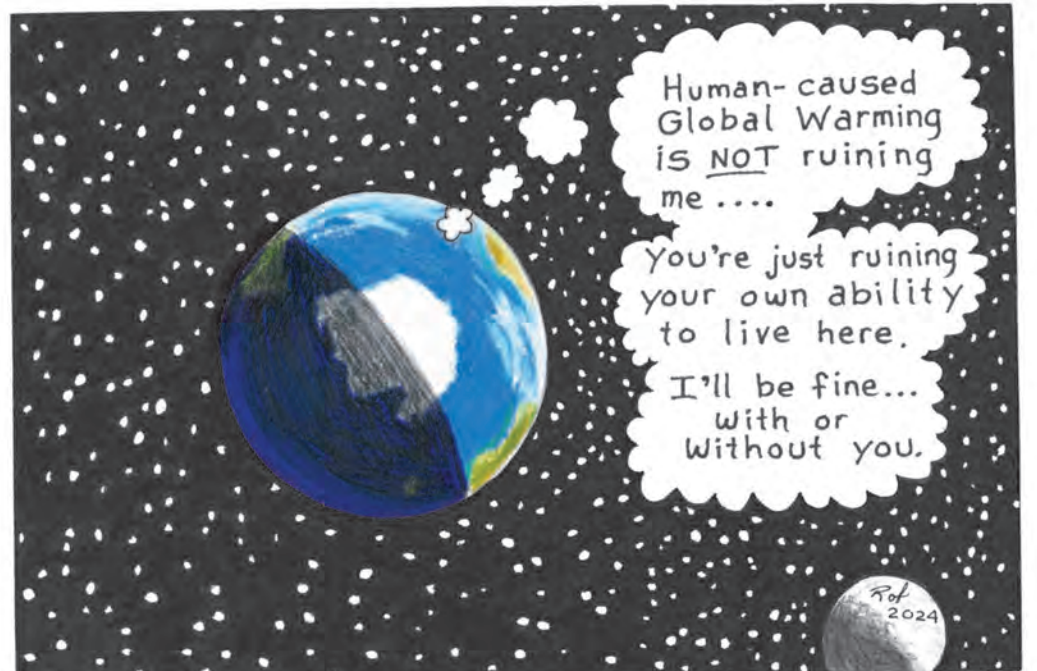


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**TRAVELS** from page B1

hills in the back of the winery where a new house site was planned. Their house would be the first in an area with no other buildings. They would enjoy wide open spaces with a magical view of wine grapes on one side, and farmland on the other. Mike explained that he and his wife Noreen wanted to get out of crowded, traffic-choked San Diego and this nearly empty part of the coast was to be their new home.

For our visit we stayed in a moderately priced hotel, the Cavalier Oceanfront Resort. Each room had views of the Pacific and a little wood stove, adding to the comfort and ambience. We would spend the trip rolling up and down this scenic stretch of Highway 1, or the Cabrillo Highway, which in 2024 goes no farther than the small town of Gorda, about 12 miles north.

Just this year the highway department had repaired a major mudslide, and were about to reopen, but the damage recently got worse so the road – the only one heading

north to Big Sur and the San Francisco peninsula – remains totally closed. Locals say that there is no way to travel any farther north and ongoing repairs are going to take many months.

**Lazing Goliaths**

Ragged Point, about as far as most travelers go, affords an incredible view of the ocean, looking at cliffs as the ocean crashes into the desolate shoreline here. Some of California's most expensive gasoline can be found at this last gas station on this part of Highway 1: prices hover just below \$6 a gallon!

A worthy stop on Highway 1 in San Simeon is the Piedras Blancas Northern Elephant Seal colony. Its turn-off and parking area are just across from the entrance to Hearst Castle.

The best advice here is to find the local seal experts in the blue windbreakers. These local naturalists can rattle off interesting facts about these strange-looking mammals, including that they swim thousands of miles at very deep depths in their

annual migration. This is their rookery, where they have their babies before taking off again for the waters of the Arctic Ocean.

It's fun watching them laze around and interact, and their numbers have never been higher, owing to their being protected from hunting. Bulls can weigh up to 8,800 pounds, yet they can swim and dive down to 2,000 feet, according to the seal-loving experts we met on the cliffs.

This is a place where some people can spend hours and hours watching these goliaths do just about nothing all day long.

**Lazing Goliaths II**

Across from Piedras Blancas is the long driveway that takes you to a large shopping mall... no, wait, that's the visitor's center for the famous Hearst Castle, called Casa Grande by the builder, William Randolph Hearst. The selection of castle tours here ranges from simple – visit the upstairs suites and see the movie, \$30 for adults – to fantastic, all-day private tours that can set you back \$2,500 per person. But whatever way you see this remarkable castle, built starting in 1929, you take the 15-minute winding bus ride up the former bridal path and see for yourself.

If you want the chance to swim in the castle's famous Neptune outdoor pool, you can join the Hearst Foundation, attend a gala, and have an expensive dip!

Some of the rooms at the Castle bend the mind, like the bedroom suites including the impressive Gothic Suite of Casa Grande that showcases beautiful three-dimensional ceilings. Visitors on the Upstairs Suites Tour will enjoy the 14th-century ceiling in Mr. Hearst's bedroom with its panels of medieval figures. This man's collection was so impressive that most of the treasures were kept in storage... he simply had too much to show it all, even in Casa Grande!

You'll take more time than you think seeing the castle, and you'll be glad you did. Seeing W.R.H.'s private airfield and the blue Pacific from high up at the top of Casa Grande makes you want to go back in time and snag an invite to one of the legendary parties he held in the castle's elegant ballrooms.

**From Mining to Dining**

Along the Cabrillo Highway there are small towns with local



Hearst Castle in San Simeon.



The boardwalk at Moonstone Beach.



Elephant seals relaxing at the Piedras Blancas sanctuary, on the beach across from Hearst Castle.

shops and cafés with old posters, antiques, and fun fashions.

One of them is Cambria, population 6,000, which got its start as a mining town in the mid-19th century. A dining highlight here is Robin's Restaurant, which features seating in a lovely green outdoor garden and in a charming greenhouse featuring Indian-themed

dishes and fresh local seafood.

On our last evening in California, we set out from our hotel to the popular Moonstone Beach in Cambria. This one-mile boardwalk winds along the coast and the rocks below, and we spotted pelicans and other seabirds relaxing in their nests.

As the sun set over the Pacific, this walk was the perfect way to enjoy the smell of the ocean and to contemplate another seafood dinner in Central California, until we return again.

Max Hartshorne, a local travel editor, writes about traveling around our region and a little beyond. Max is the editor of GoNOMAD Travel and hosts the short-form GoNOMAD Travel Podcast, which you can hear at anchor.fm/max-hartshorne.

**WEBSITES**

Central California's coast  
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Visit Hearst Castle  
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