

# The Montague Reporter

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EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

MAY 2, 2024

## Leverett Town Meeting Probes Housing Spending, Endorses Gaza Ceasefire

By MIKE JACKSON

Nearly 120 voters settled into the Leverett Elementary School gymnasium, or audnasiun, last Saturday morning to constitute the town's highest sovereign body, the annual town meeting. Twenty-eight articles were on the warrant, and each one passed, though the very last took by far the longest, and in the end only 54 votes were cast on whether to non-bindingly urge the United States to support a cease-

fire in the Gaza Strip.

The meeting began in standard form, with microphone trouble and an acknowledgment that all the land in the town was taken by a process of colonization that displaced its native inhabitants.

"We need to learn and relearn to listen to Native voices as they teach us, guide us, and remind us how to live in balance and reciprocity," Sue Alexander read from the statement approved by town meeting one year

see LEVERETT page A7



A resident with a clear shot from half-court signals for a pass from the moderator.

### MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

## DPW Believes It Has Fixed Millers Falls Sewer Issue

By JEFF SINGLETON

The latest twist in the ongoing investigation of water infiltrating the Millers Falls sewer system – which will cost the town of Montague \$96,000 in "overage" fees to Erving this year – may have finally uncovered the source, public works superintendent Tom Bergeron told the selectboard at its Monday night meeting.

The Montague DPW has been investigating the source of the extra water, which has been flowing into the Erving treatment plant that processes Millers Falls' waste, for at least a year. The town originally

thought the inflow might be caused by sump pumps and storm drains illegally hooked up to the sewers, but recent analysis with specialized cameras revealed large water flows into two "lateral" pipes along Route 63, also called Federal Street, which enters Millers Falls from the south.

However, attempts to find the laterals – including digging up the front yard of a recently-purchased home at 12 Federal Street – failed to locate them.

At Monday's meeting, Bergeron said that the company that had performed the original camera investigation – Clear Water Plumbing, see MONTAGUE page A5

## Wendell Passes Battery Bylaw, Knowing State May Disapprove

By SARAH ROBERTSON

WENDELL – A new bylaw governing the scale and operation of battery energy storage systems, written by the local activist group No Assault & Batteries and brought by petition to a special town meeting, passed overwhelmingly Wednesday night.

The stated purpose of the bylaw is to protect the "health, safety and welfare of residents of Wendell and its natural and built environment," by mitigating the risk of chemical fires and preserving forest habitat. It bans the installation of battery energy storage systems (BESS) over 10 megawatts (MW), sets fire safety protocols, and establishes a licensing board to review proposed projects.

"We understand that the state is in a rush to build big energy projects, to help them catch up with their 2050 net-zero commitments," No Assault & Batteries (NAB) member Court Dorsey told voters in the packed town hall. "Our message with this general bylaw is that small rural communities are not just barriers to the development of industrial-sized energy sources that mostly serve big, out-of-area consumers – nor will we be sacrifice zones that

see BYLAW page A8

## Soapbox Race Registration Entering Its Final Month

By BELLA LEVAVI

MONTAGUE – After canceling last year's event due to lack of participants, the Montague Soapbox Race organizers are performing extra outreach this year to ensure the event will take place.

The event, wherein participants ranging in ages from 8 to 80 climb into their amateurly handcrafted soapbox cars to race down the hill by Unity Park, is scheduled to take place on Sunday, June 2, beginning at noon.

"It's a mix of engineering, creativity, and having a driver with enough guts to hurl themselves down the hill," said Dan Burke, a member of the organizing committee.

With about a month until the races begin, locals are being urged by organizers to take out their toolboxes and build their own soapbox cars to speed down the hill on racing day.

As a pitch to encourage people to sign up, organizer Mik Muller set the scene, stating, "It's a beautiful day, everyone is smiling and laughing at the ridiculous carts rolling down the hill, and then you win a trophy."

The races have encountered see SOAPBOX page A6

## Montague Officially Opens Its Ground to Green Burial



Attendees at last Saturday's dedication ceremony for the Highland Woods Natural Burial Ground walked together through its wooded "Path of Reflection."

By LEE WICKS

MILLERS FALLS – Anyone seeking community would have been rewarded by Saturday's dedication of Highland Woods Natural Burial Ground. About 65 people gathered to celebrate the occasion. Many already knew one another. Many have been volunteering for years with this vision in mind. Familiar faces and shared goals created a sense of joy and connection.

When everyone walked slowly through the burial ground's Path of Reflection – accompanied by the Montague Singers, a group that began singing on the Common every afternoon during COVID and has now been singing for 1,500 straight days – reverence and joy combined with a very practical impulse to ask about the cost of the gravesites. Why not rest for eternity in this beautiful place?

Yes, some have been sold, many are still available, and I'll get to those details later.

It has taken years of planning and countless hours of volunteer effort to provide this option for green burial – in which a body is

interred in its natural state without embalming chemicals or metal-lined coffins – in a town cemetery. Everything that goes into the ground must be biodegradable. In Highland Woods, there can be flat markers to identify gravesites, but no upright stones or plantings, so as not to disturb the forest setting.

Dina Stander was there with some of her handmade shrouds, and one of Mary Fraser's woven willow baskets was on display, along with a carrying cart made by Walker Korby.

Though some think of it as something new, green burial is as old as death itself, and can offer a more personal experience in grieving. The simplicity of a shroud, a woven basket, or simple pine casket and the peaceful woodland setting might be chosen for many reasons. Some make the choice because it is kind to the environment, some because it reflects the nature or preferences of the deceased person.

Suzette Snow-Cobb's father, Raymond Milton Snow III, is the first person interred at Highland Woods. He died on January 24 at see BURIAL page A4

## High School Sports Week: Softball Teams Log Losses

By MATT ROBINSON

TURNERS FALLS – With the Celtics and Bruins in the playoffs and the NFL draft taking place, the eyes of local sports fans were firmly on local softball. Three of the top four teams in Division V went head to head this week, and both Franklin Tech and Turners Falls High School lost their first games of the year.

In baseball, Turners beat Tech 9-1 to avenge their opening-day loss

to the Eagles, and for the schools' combined boys' tennis team, the rocky road continues.

**Baseball**  
TFHS 18 – Smith Academy 2  
Mahar 4 – FCTS 2

The Blue Thunder baseballers traveled to Hatfield last Thursday, benefiting from the Purple Falcons' inaccuracy on the mound as several players registered RBIs from

see SPORTS page A6



Turners Falls' Mia Marigliano gets the out at second as the Greenfield Green Wave hosted the Thunder last Saturday at Veterans' Memorial Field.

## SPRING'S BITTER SAP



With poisonous sap to deter squirrels and deer, daffodils, genus Narcissus, flourish with an eye-catching variety of corollas (petals) surrounding their coronas (cup or trumpet): yellow/orange, yellow/yellow, white/yellow, white/peach, white/white, and more. These were spotted growing near the Great Falls Discovery Center.

### Our 989th Attempt at Publishing a Real Newspaper

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# The Montague Reporter

"The Voice of the Villages"

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Arthur Evans Harry Brandt David Detmold  
August 2002

## Guilt By Decree

While managing to keep a fairly low profile on the national stage, our local towns' representative in the US House of Representatives, Jim McGovern, has been voting fairly sensibly through these insensible times. Looking through recent roll call votes bears this out: he is seldom among a group of only 12 or 15 dissenters in the entire chamber, but it is not uncommon to see him make breaks with the majority of his party that we assume are guided by consistent principles.

We were dismayed, however, to see him among the 'YEA' votes for H.R. 6408, *To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to terminate the tax-exempt status of terrorist supporting organizations*. Jim wasn't alone in this – the bill passed earlier this month by a whopping 382 votes to 11, with the conservative libertarian Thomas Massie of Kentucky the sole Republican joining the so-called Squad (plus Jan Schakowsky) in the 'NAY' column.

But who wants to sound like they're protecting terrorists? What's this bill about?

*Reason*, interestingly enough, was the first high-profile publication to sound the alarm on H.R. 6408, which is heading to the Senate as S.B. 4136 (it's currently before the Committee on Finance). The generally right-leaning libertarian magazine was blunt about the bill's contents:

"A bipartisan bill would give the secretary of the treasury unilateral power to classify any charity as a terrorist-supporting organization, automatically stripping away its nonprofit status...."

"Financing terrorism is already very illegal. Anyone who gives money, goods, or services to a U.S.-designated terrorist organization can be charged with a felony under the Antiterrorism Act and the International Emergency Economic Powers Act.... Although

the label is supposed to apply to supporters of designated terrorist groups, nothing in the law prevents the Department of the Treasury from shutting down any 501(c)(3) nonprofit, from the Red Cross to the Reason Foundation."

Oh, and: "Supporters of the bill do seem to have pro-Palestinian student organizations in mind."

Given the current political climate, which includes the Biden administration's alarming roll-over on the UN Relief and Works Agency based on accusations against a small number of its employees, it's not irrational to wonder how this would be used.

"After initially trying to finger TikTok for the rampant radicalization of American youth on Middle Eastern politics, leaders on the right are tracing it to the machinations of sinister nonprofits," Chris Lehmann writes in *The Nation*.

Lehmann quotes Lara Friedman of the Foundation for Middle East Peace as saying that the bill "looks like almost dictatorial power given to a single political appointee".

And *The New Republic* offers a different insight: "This Bipartisan Bill Could Give Trump Huge Power Against His Enemies," their headline reads.

Which is getting to the real heart of the matter: Why hand that kind of unilateral authority over to the executive branch at all?

"You might not think that climate or environmental groups would fall into this category," Kate Aronoff writes in the *TNR* piece. "But Republican legislators in 19 states have already significantly enhanced penalties for protesters challenging pipelines and other 'critical infrastructure.'"

So... Why did Jim vote for H.R. 6408? If you see him, ask him. And please let our senators know that S.B. 4136 won't slip under the radar the same way, either.



The Cielito Lindo food truck has been serving authentic Mexican meals on the French King Highway in Gill for about five years. Carlos Ovalle, who manages the business for his uncle, reports that the birria tacos and pizza are very popular menu items.

## Letters to the Editors

### Voluntary Land-Back Effort

On Saturday, April 27, I had the honor of accompanying my friend Teegrey Iannuzzi to a meeting with the tribal council of the Chaubunagungamaug Band of the Nipmuc in Dudley, MA. Teegrey, who lives in Shutesbury, is a founding member of the Franklin County-based Reparations Collective.

We were invited to the council meeting to discuss the Collective's proposal to establish a direct way for people living in this part of the Connecticut River Valley to give voluntary reparations to the Chaubunagungamaug Band, one of the state recognized tribal nations living closest to us geographically.

Last year, the Reparations Collective began collecting and distributing funds to two Black-led organizations: Kibilio (Refuge) Community and Farm and the Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust.

Recognizing that the relative wealth and privilege of white people in our society has been built over generations and derives not only from the forced labor of millions of enslaved African Americans but also from the violent dispossession of 98% of the land in America from its original inhabitants, the Indigenous Nations of this continent, the Reparations Collective has decided to expand its focus this year to include local reparations to the Chaubunagungamaug Band, if their tribal council were willing to accept them.

For many years, tribal council member Liz Coldwind Santana Kiser has been returning to this part of the Nipmuc's original homelands to build relations with people who live here now on her ancestral homelands, through cultural events sponsored by Franklin County's own Nolumbeka Project.

At the tribal council meeting on April 27, she reminded us that her ancestors were also – like Black Africans – forcibly enslaved, their families broken up, and their relatives shipped overseas to work in infernal conditions on plantations in the West Indies, building wealth for colonial settlers and their descendants.

Teegrey emphasized that the essence of the word "reparations" is the concept of repair. "It might take 500 years to repair the violence that has been done to your people," she told the tribal council. "But we are taking a first step," she said. "We are planting a seed."

We are very thankful that the tribal council agreed with the Collective's proposal, and that now, voluntary reparations can be made easily to the Chaubunagungamaug Band of Nipmuc via the Reparations Collective's website.

This year the Reparations Collective will focus contributions for two groups – in addition to the Nipmuc band mentioned, they are inviting people to contribute to Crossing the Waters, an international, Black-led non-profit organization dedicated to healing the wounds of slavery, which maintains a local base in Amherst.

If you would like to make a contribution to this growing effort of repair, please go to [thereparationscollective.org/reparations-you](http://thereparationscollective.org/reparations-you) to learn more, and, if you are so moved, make a contribution today.

Ella Ingraham  
Turners Falls

David Detmold  
Montague

## Not a Good Time for 'Non-Mandatory' Costs

I am concerned about increasing Town budgets for services that are desirable, but perhaps not necessary, and that require taking on debt. For me, building a new Town library falls into this category even though I personally visit libraries regularly.

For the Town, certain increased costs are mandatory such as the ongoing costs of improving the Clean Water Facility. Doing something about school buildings and staffing is another potential increased expense. As is addressing the deteriorating mills on the canal.

The April 26 *Week* publication extracted in-

formation from *The Wall Street Journal*. It stated that nationwide, property taxes jumped 4.1% in 2023 from a year earlier to an average of \$4,062 for a single family home. In Montague the increase in property tax is driven by higher assessments for properties because of higher sales values. My assessment rose by 11.4% from 2022 to 2023.

Other costs associated with owning real estate are also rising. In October 2023, the *Boston Globe* reported that home insurance rose by 15% from May 2022 to May 2023 after rising 11% the year before, or an increase of 26% over

the two-year period.

Town government relies on property taxes and money from the state and federal governments for revenue. Massachusetts is experiencing its own budgetary issues and the federal government is debt-ridden. Declining tax revenue at the state and federal levels may result in decreases in funds funneled down to towns.

I believe it's time to be very careful about increasing town budgets unless mandatory.

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Compiled by NINA ROSSI

The Turners Falls Water Department's **semi-annual water bills** were mailed this week. Payment is due by June 1 to avoid a \$20 late charge. Payments can be made at 226 Millers Falls Road, by mail, or online at [turnersfallswater.com](http://turnersfallswater.com).

It's another **"First Friday" night in Turners Falls** this Friday, May 3 from 5 to 8 p.m.

The Upper Bend hosts a **Vegan Pizza Land** pop-up from 5 to 7:30 p.m. – get there early before they run out of pies! The Avenue A Market next to the Upper Bend has hung up a new sign, and we hear there is a slight chance they will be able to open the market on Friday evening as well.

Down at 83 Canal Street, **Sadie's Bikes** is hosting another Gumball Takeover. This month Casper Lucia curates the gumball machine with "Dream Seeds" – little poetic catalysts for dreams – and bobbie. plays ambient guitar.

**Waterway Arts**, the new gallery at 102 Avenue A where Buckingham Rabbits used to be, is going to be open at 5 p.m. for a "sneak peak" at the renovated space and a studio sale featuring the work of Elende Connor.

And head down to **LOOT** to see the handmade artist books created by members of the Rotation Book Club. Twelve members have swapped books every month for a year, contributing pages to each other's volumes. Each book reflects a different theme.

Historic Deerfield opened for the season on Wednesday, and its Flynt Center of Early New England Life has important exhibit called **"Unnamed Figures: Black Presence and Absence in the Early American North."** These 97 artworks, previously hosted by the American Folk Art Museum in New York City,

include paintings, needlework, and photographs revealing Black history in the North between the 1600s and early 1800s.

The show will be there until August 4, and there's an opening celebration this Saturday, May 4 from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. with demonstrations of powder horn carving, oyster pickling, and printing, as well as hands-on activities. View the schedule at [historic-deerfield.org](http://historic-deerfield.org).

Add to your library this Saturday, May 4 by scooping up some deals on used fiction, paperbacks, kids' books, DVDs, CDs, and audiobooks from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Carnegie Library in Turners Falls.

It's also **Free Comic Book Day** at the library: grab a couple of comics and make a button from 1 to 3 p.m.

If the gumball event on Friday wasn't enough, Nik Perry of Sadie's Bikes is cleaning out his warehouse for a **huge tag sale** in the parking lot of the 83 Canal Street shop this Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. There'll be plenty of bikes and bike parts, but also typical yard sale stuff like household goods and action figures.

Public historian Tom Goldscheider has turned his **research about labor conflicts in Greenfield during the early 1950s** into a one-hour radio documentary. Hosted by New England Public Media (NEPM), *At Sword's Point* will air at noon this Saturday, May 4 on 88.5 FM, with a repeat broadcast at 3 p.m. Sunday.

The film covers the history of the machine tool industry in Greenfield and the formation of the United Electrical Workers Union using reenactment and commentary. Ian Coss is the producer and sound designer. The documentary will also be available on demand at [nepm.org/swordspoint](http://nepm.org/swordspoint).

Join **Great Falls Books Through Bars** for a free book and media swap at 104 Fourth Street in Turners Falls this Sunday, May 5 from 1 to 4 p.m. Bring any books, zines, CDs, records, DVDs, et cetera that you'd like to swap with other folks.

This is a free event, but any monetary donations will go toward mailing and supply costs for the group.

Books Through Bars is also hosting a volunteer day next Saturday, May 11, from 1 to 5 p.m. in the same space. Stop by to respond to letters written by incarcerated people, and pack up books to send to them. If it is your first time coming to a volunteer day, let someone know and they'll be sure to show you around.

The space is ramp-accessible, and masking is required while indoors. You can also sign up for a library card for the Finders Collective library – follow them on Instagram [@finderscollective](https://www.instagram.com/finderscollective).

Celebrate student musicians at a **youth ensembles concert** at the Turners Falls High School auditorium this Sunday, May 5 at 4 p.m.

The Pioneer Valley Symphony Youth Orchestra, directed by Nell Wiener and featuring Zoë Ballou on violin, will perform, as will the Turners Falls High School band under the direction of Alyssa Coe-meau. A reception is planned following the concert.

No tickets are required, and admission is free.

Next Friday, May 10, **Mark Mandeville and Raienne Richards** will perform at the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls.

The musically talented couple have contributed over 17 albums within their first decade and toured throughout the US and Canada. Accompanying themselves on guitar, harmonica, ukulele, penny whistle, and clarinet, their live performances are reported to be "musically captivating and spiritually uplifting" with a mixture of serious songs and humorous commentary.

The couple are famous for their annual Massachusetts Walking Tour, a journey on foot with their instruments and voices from stage to stage and town to town throughout the state since 2010.

Doors open at 6 p.m. and the concert starts at 7. Coffee, tea, and

homemade baked refreshments are available. There is a suggested donation of \$6 to \$15; children are free.

Learn how to **create your own pollinator-friendly meadow** with landscape designers Tom Sullivan and Peter Wackernagel, and take a short walk to see pollinator gardens in downtown Turners Falls. Meet in the Great Hall at the Discovery Center at 11 a.m. next Saturday, May 11.

This event is free, and geared towards adults and children over 12 years old.

**Música Franklin's sixth annual Fun Fest** is coming back to Unity Park in Turners Falls on Saturday, May 11 from 12:30 to 4:30 p.m.

This free festival features music, entertainment, and crafts for the whole family. Performers include The Afro-Semitic Experience, The RapOet with special guests the Bap Pack, Música Franklin students, the Expandable Brass Band, and Balloon Ben.

View the schedule and details at [musicafranklin.org/fun-fest](http://musicafranklin.org/fun-fest).

The **Montague Common Hall Open Mic** series continues next Saturday, May 11, at 6:30 p.m. This month's featured performers are Sisters of the Circle, a trio bringing together singer-songwriters Sarah Pirtle, Christy Grecsek, and Hana Zara. With guitar, mountain dulcimer, flute, and frame drum, they celebrate stories of inspiring people, changing seasons, and rising hope.

Open mic performers should sign in at 6:15 p.m. Donations are welcome.

The **Pioneer Valley Symphony** closes their 85th season with "Visions of Hope" on May 11 at 7 p.m. at Greenfield High School.

The concert, led by Tianhui Ng and Dr. Allegra Martin, features the music of three African American composers looking with hope toward a just future.

The symphony's resident musicologist, Dr. David Schneider, Georges Lurcy Professor of Music and History at Amherst College, gives a pre-concert talk at 6 p.m. Get tickets at [pvsoc.org](http://pvsoc.org).

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

#### MORE NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

## Town OKs Roadmap for Digital Inclusion

By JEFF SINGLETON

**MONTAGUE** – Ted Harvey of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) came before the Montague selectboard Monday night to review a digital equity plan for the town, funded by a federal grant channeled through the Massachusetts Broadband Institute. Harvey said the plan will be a chapter in the town's comprehensive plan, but is first a "separate thing" that must be submitted to the state for approval.

Using a definition developed by the National Digital Inclusion Alliance, Harvey said "digital equity" was "a condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy and economy." The Montague plan, developed by a steering committee over the past nine months with a good deal of public input, is intended to guide local decision-making and help the town apply for grants.

More specifically, equity plans are designed to encourage fast and affordable internet connec-

tion, to increase access to devices such as computers and routers, and to promote "literacy" in the use and potential dangers of the technology.

Specific recommendations in the Montague plan include expanding the Carnegie Library's "hot spot" access program, which allows members to check out devices to connect to the internet, and establishing broader public hot spots downtown in places such as Unity Park and Peskeompskut Park.

Montague Community Television director Dean Garvin asked about the relationship between the equity plan and the impending negotiations with the cable company Comcast, which provides the town with internet service.

"The scope of what is legally permissible in the context of the cable relicensing and digital equity are definitely not aligned as wholly as we might like," said town administrator Steve Ellis, noting that Comcast's internet service "is not the focus of the [cable] relicensing process."

Ellis called the cable relicensing process "rather maddening."

Town meeting member Ariel Elan said she felt the concept of "access" should include the availability of customer service, describing a personal experience in which replacing a defective modem had taken a year and a half of attempts to contact and negotiate with Comcast.

Harvey was asked if the company's service in Montague was defined as "broadband," a distinction that arose during a controversy several years ago about the creation of a high-speed fiber-optic system in town.

Harvey explained that "broadband" was defined in terms of specific upload and download speeds available to residents able to pay for them. "Access to broadband is available, yes," he said. "Does that mean everybody has it? No, definitely not."

The selectboard endorsed the digital equity plan, which will be sent to the state Broadband Institute for approval.

The board also approved an agreement with Epstein & August LLP for legal assistance in negotiating the town's new agreement with Comcast.

Memorial Hall Theater  
**POTHOLE PICTURES**  
May 3 & 4 at 7:30 p.m.  
**THE THIN BLUE LINE**  
*This 1988 documentary tells the story of Randall Dale Adams, a hitchhiker falsely accused of killing a police officer. Directed by Errol Morris.*  
Music at 7 p.m.: Friday, Indian Ragas; Saturday, The Uncles  
51 Bridge St., Shelburne Falls 625-2896

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**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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**PAPER**  
Week of May 6  
in Montague



more info? call: 863-2054

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66 AVENUE A • TURNERS FALLS

**BURIAL** from page A1

the age of 86, and was buried on January 27.

"My father never expressed specifically what he wanted to do with end-of-life care," Snow-Cobb, a Turners Falls resident, told me. "And then, with his progressive dementia, he wasn't able to talk about it in the last five or so years. But my sister and I decided that given his life-long love of the woods, natural environment, and desire to live a healthy life - he was a vegetarian/vegan since his late twenties - it made sense that green burial would be a continuation of what he'd want to do with his body."

Suzette and her sister Cynthia attended Saturday's dedication, and brought anyone who was interested to the slight mound and rock that marks their father's grave.

"He was quite a joker sometimes," Suzette said. "The only answer he ever gave me when I asked many years ago about how he thought he'd handle his death was 'I'll just go out in the woods and lie down.' He didn't know about the idea of a green burial."

Saturday's dedication ceremony began with a "circle of reflection," with comments by David Brule of Millers Falls. Four generations of his family are at rest in Highland Cemetery.

Brule talked about the original inhabitants of the land, the Native tribes that lived and died right where we were standing. "This is indigenous land," he said, "and the Pocumtuck people are still here, in air and spirit." He also offered thanks for the trees, and for creatures both furred and feathered that grace the land.

"This natural burial ground," said cemetery commission chair Judith Lorei, "would not have happened without the support of the town - by town meeting members agreeing to transfer Highland Cemetery to the town, and by all of the support that Montague residents have provided throughout this process."

The five members of the commission are Lorei, Annie Levine, Mary Kay Mattiace, Jo-Anne Prescott, and Jamie Fuller. Former commissioner Jeri Moran continues to work with them as a volunteer.

The commission had been looking for a parcel to establish a natural cemetery going back five or six years with no luck, Lorei explained prior to the dedication. "The board of the Millers River Cemetery Corporation approached the town in 2020 asking if we would be interested in taking over Highland Cemetery," she said. "The commission was happy to consider it, because the town didn't have an active cemetery, and it had three acres of woods where we could establish a

natural burial section."

Lorei had been working as a green burial advocate and educator for 15 years. The original idea for a green burial site at the Millers cemetery was hers, but her fellow commission members were in enthusiastic agreement.

"It takes a lot of time to work through the town meeting system. There were no obstacles, but it was a long process," Lorei told the Reporter. "We are so proud to be able to provide a natural burial ground in Montague. People have been asking about this option for years, so it is satisfying to see it materialize."

Lorei also said she is delighted to be working with Amber Korby, appointed by the selectboard on April 1 to the new position as the town's cemetery sexton.

Prior to applying for the position, Korby had been a volunteer at Highland Cemetery and Highland Woods: consulting and deciphering handwritten records to locate deeded plots, marking them for burial prep, developing relationships with Snow's excavation crew and local funeral directors, coordinating with families seeking family-led services, helping with mandated paperwork and records, and assisting with burials.

Korby is also involved with the non-profit group Green Burial Massachusetts, and she and her husband Walker are deeply imbedded in the local community. (Many will always remember their wedding in Montague Center - firefighters grilled burgers and hot dogs for anyone passing by, so a whole village ended up embracing them!)

"It's an honor to be serving my town and entering civic service," Amber Korby said. "The women on the cemetery commission are so knowledgeable and passionate about this work, and it's a privilege to be learning from them."

Snow-Cobb was willing to share some advice for end-of-life decisions. "Plan ahead!" she said. "Buying a plot, reserving a woven tray, working with the funeral home on the details... We put into place the things we could, and I had been gathering information for years. I knew about Mary [Fraser]'s basket weaving, and had been following her work. I knew a bit about green burial from a friend involved with the Funeral Consumers' Alliance of Western Mass."

Some of the people at the dedication seemed to be doing just that as they walked the Path of Reflection. A day later my neighbor and her husband said they are buying plots. I imagine many are having the same thoughts, inspired by the profound sense of connection Saturday's dedication provided.



Amber Korby has been hired as the town's cemetery sexton.



SUZETTE SNOW-COBB PHOTO

In late January, mourners interred the body of Raymond Snow at Highland Woods.



WICKS PHOTO

Dina Stander of Shutesbury, who crafts biodegradable shrouds, was on hand Saturday.



WICKS PHOTO

The Montague Singers sang at the burial ground's dedication ceremony.

**The Simple Facts...**

- Highland Cemetery is 7.3 acres, and the wooded section is about three acres. The natural burial section is low-density, so it can accommodate approximately 150 plots. The cemetery commission started selling plots in May 2023 and 17 have sold so far.
- Plots are \$700 for Montague residents and \$1,000 for non-residents, plus \$100 at the time of burial which goes to the sexton, and opening and closing fees set by Snow's.
- The town has a \$30,000 maintenance budget for all eight town cemeteries. The cemetery commission contracts out the mowing and spring and fall cleanups, but volunteers do lots of other work.
- The cemetery commission recommends that families use a funeral home for paperwork and transport, but legally they can do it all themselves. Even with using a funeral director, the commission encourages families to get as involved as they feel comfortable.
- For more information about Highland Woods, contact Amber Korby at (413) 775-3328 or [CemeterySexton@Montague-Ma.gov](mailto:CemeterySexton@Montague-Ma.gov), or visit the town website, which has a cemetery commission page with news about meetings and events.

Courtesy of Montague cemetery commission member Judith Lorei.

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**SOAPBOX** from page A1

many hurdles throughout their decade-plus-long history. The Montague Soapbox races began in 2010, sponsored by Montague Community Television, and continued for four years until the organization decided it no longer wanted to host the event. The races went on hiatus until 2019, when Montague town administrator Steve Ellis organized a group to revive the event.

Unfortunately, the year the race was supposed to return it was derailed by the COVID-19 pandemic. A couple of years later, in 2021, the group held the races once again, but two years after restarting the beloved event, organizers decided to cancel the 2023 race at the last minute due to having only 13 registered racers.

The event serves as a fundraiser for the Montague recreation department, with all the money raised going to scholarships for department programming. In past years, the races have raised as much as \$4,850.

"We are hoping to raise that much again, if not more," Muller said.

In an attempt to better align with students' schedules, the organizers, according to Burke, have moved the event from August to June.

A month out from the big race, they have seven registered participants, with the hopes of having at least 20 by racing day. Muller noted that much of the registration often takes place in the final week before the races, making it difficult to gauge the level of participation in advance.

"This year we will accept fewer racers just to get it off the ground again," Muller said.

Organizers conducted outreach at Franklin Technical High School, hoping to engage students in the community event. They are also using radio ads, lawn signs, email blasts, posters on the streets and in businesses, and Facebook ads.

"The biggest struggle is getting people to sign up," Burke said.

One registered participant, Muller noted,

thought they were signing up for the race near their hometown of Montague, New Jersey, but were surprised to learn they had signed up for a race in Massachusetts. Despite the mix-up, Muller said, the participant decided to come up to Massachusetts, for the race regardless. This mix-up occurred last year, which was then canceled, but the racer is still excited to come a year later.

Many soapbox race events that take place across the country have strict rules and require racers to purchase a kit to construct their vehicle. Montague's race differs from traditional races in that each racer is required to make their own soapbox car from scratch. Rules for the construction of carts can be found on their website [montaguesoapboxraces.com](http://montaguesoapboxraces.com).

"The easiest way to do it is out of bicycle parts," Muller said. Designers sometimes get creative with their cars. Muller described carts in the past looking like they come from Dr. Seuss books, and one made to look like an octopus.



RYNE HAGER PHOTO

Myra Glabach raced in the Kids' division in 2011.

"The committee is always there for support if someone is looking for advice or help building their cart," Burke said. In previous years, the racing committee has hosted a gathering to encourage racers to help each other build carts for the big day.

"There is no feeling in the world like building your own vehicle from scratch, climbing in, and racing down the hill with cheering fans," Muller said.

**SPORTS** from page A1

bases-loaded walks. Within two innings the Thunder were up 12-1 on their way to an 18-2 pummeling.

Blue only needed 12 hits to score those runs, because they were gifted 16 walks. Alex Quezada, Kainen Stevens, and Cam Burnett had two hits each with Quezada hitting two doubles and Burnett blasting a homer. Dylon Richardson, Joey Mosca, Deven Sloan, Jackson Cogswell, Brody Girard, and Jonathan Ainsworth also hit safely for Turners.

Mosca pitched three innings, allowing four hits, two walks, six strikeouts, and one earned run, and Girard and Stevens also pitched for Blue.

The same day, the Franklin Tech baseball team dropped a game against Mahar in Orange. Tech placed nine hits in the loss, but couldn't string them together, and had to settle for just two runs.

Hunter Donahue had two hits including a double, and Tyler Yetter, Gavin Crossman, Kyle Begos, Mason Lehtomaki, Dylan Young, Brody Hicks, and Zaydrien Alamed all notched hits for Tech with Maxon Brunette scoring an RBI walk. Begos pitched a complete game, allowing 12 hits, three earned runs, and no walks and striking out four batters.

*TFHS 16 – Smith Academy 1*  
*FCTS 11 – Lenox 6*

The Smith Falcons had the misfortune of playing Turners again on Monday, this time at the Thunderdome. Powertown scored all their runs in four innings before the game was stopped via the mercy rule. Quezada and Stevens parked home runs and Cogswell clocked a double.

The Eagles, meanwhile, used a strong first inning to defeat the Millionaires in Lenox. Franklin scored nine runs in the first and held on to win by five runs.

Donahue led Tech with five hits, two RBIs, four runs, and a homer, Crossman had three hits and three RBIs, and Young, Hicks, and Kaleb Betit had a hit apiece. Thistime Crossman, Lehtomaki, Begos, and Hicks shared pitching duties.

*TFHS 9 – FCTS 1*

On Wednesday the teams went bat to bat at Franklin Tech. For the Eagles, it was a chance to continue their winning ways. For the Thunder, it was an opportunity to avenge their opening day loss.

The game remained a scoreless tie until the third inning when Bur-

nett hit a deep shot into the outfield to send two Turners runners home. Mosca then placed a hit into left field, scoring the third run of the inning.

In the fourth inning Cogswell reached on an error and was batted home by Richardson, another Turners run crossed the plate in the fifth, and the team added four more in the seventh.

Tech's lone run came in the sixth inning when Donahue stole home on a face-first slide. Richardson and Mosca had two hits each for the Thunder, and Burnett had the team's fifth hit. Mosca pitched 6.67 innings, striking out 11, walking four, and giving up three hits; Julian Kaiser came in in the seventh and struck out the last batter.

Tech ended with three hits from Donahue, Alamed, and Jacob Martin while Lehtomaki, Crossman, Martin, and Tucker Hicks shared pitching duties for Tech.

**Boys' Tennis**

*Pioneer Chinese 5 – TFHS 0*  
*Frontier 4 – TFHS 1*

Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion defeated Turners Falls 5-0 on the tennis courts last Thursday, for the second time in three days. This match was played at Hampshire College.

Noah Kolodziej won one game in second singles, and Vaughn LaValley and Mario Pareja (first dou-

bles) and Lucas Black and Khalifa Sack (second doubles) each won two games in their matches. Michael Boyle and John Carmichael were swept 6-0, 6-0 in first and third singles, respectively.

On Monday the Frontier Red Hawks came to town and downed Blue 4-1. Boyle won the first singles match 6-1, 6-1, but Kolodziej and Carmichael lost in second and third singles while LaValley and Pareja and Sack and Patrick Andrews dropped first and second doubles.

**Softball**

*TFHS 1 – FCTS 0*

In softball, the Thunder crossed Millers Falls Road last Thursday and won a squeaker against Franklin Tech. It was a classic case of an irresistible force versus an immovable object. By the second inning, Tech's Hannah Gilbert and Turners' Madi Liimatainen had already combined for 11 strikeouts. This pitching duel led to only a single unearned run crossing the plate in the entire game.

In the first inning Gilbert struck out the first two batters, but the third, Holly Myers, swung her bat and it hit the catcher's mitt. A catcher interference was called, and courtesy runner McKenzie Stafford took first base. She eventually scored on a wild pitch.

And that was it. For the next six and a half innings the defenses

took over, but Turners held on to win it by a run.

Liimatainen allowed one hit, no walks, and no runs and struck out 16, while Gilbert allowed one hit, three walks, and no earned runs, and K'd 12. Gilbert also had Tech's sole hit, Madisyn Dietz had Turners' sole hit, and Stafford scored the run.

*FCTS 20 – Athol 1*  
*TFHS 6 – Frontier 3*

On Friday, the Eagles rebounded from this first loss of the season by devastating the Athol Red Bears, 20-1. By the second inning the Lady Birds were already on top 18-0, giving some of the reserve players some playing time.

Gilbert and Cordelia Guerin had three hits each, both hitting doubles, and Kyra Goodell hit a home run. Lilly Ross, who pitched all five innings for the Eagles, let up one earned run on five hits, struck out eight batters, and gave no walks.

The Turners team, meanwhile, went into the seventh inning against the Frontier Red Hawks behind 3-1. They rallied to score five unanswered runs, stole the victory, and kept their record unblemished.

Janelle Massey finished with three RBIs, two hits, and a home run while Ella Kolodziej and Addison Talbot both had hits. In the circle, Liimatainen struck out nine, walked five, and gave up nine hits and two earned runs.

*Greenfield 3 – TFHS 2*

Turners' undefeated streak came to a halt on Saturday in Greenfield, as they couldn't reproduce the seventh-inning rally that decided the Frontier game.

Blue got runners on base in every inning, but were unable to score in the first six. In the seventh, down 3-0, Dietz was walked with one out, and Liimatainen hit a two-out single to advance her. Myers batted Dietz in, and then Massey sent Liimatainen home to make it 3-2.

But that was it. The next batter struck out, stranding the runners and giving Green the victory. Myers, Massey, and Kolodziej made off with hits for Blue, while Liimatainen allowed two earned runs on two hits, walked nine batters, and struck out five.

*FCTS 15 – Mohawk 0*

On Monday the Tech Girls defeated the Mohawk Trail Warriors up in Shelburne in another mercy-shortened contest. This one was a little different, as Franklin needed to score 10 runs in the sixth to clinch the mercy.

Jenna Petrowicz had a home run in the victory, Gilbert hit a triple, and Kylee Gamache finished with a double and a triple. In the circle, Gilbert gave up one hit, walked three batters, and struck out 14.

*FCTS 16 – Pioneer 2*  
*Greenfield 11 – TFHS 2*

On Wednesday evening the Tech Eagles outslug the Pioneer Panthers up in Northfield by a score of 16-2. The mercy rule didn't kick in, though, so Brayleigh Burgh pitched all seven innings. She gave two walks and struck out nine, allowing two earned runs and three hits. At the plate, Trudeau and Gilbert scorched triples.

That night the Green Wave came to Mullins Field at Turners High and held Blue hitless for the entire game.

Well, almost. In the seventh inning, Turners was down 2-0. Three batters walked, but two got out. Facing a full count with two outs, Ella Kolodziej got the Thunder's first hit of the game, sending two runners home, and forcing the game into extra innings.

But it all unraveled for Blue in the eighth, as nine additional runs crossed the plate to give Green an 11-2 lead. Turners was unable to cut into the lead, and after four-plus hours the game finally ended, giving Greenfield a regular season sweep.



DAVID HOULT PHOTOS



A pitching duel: Two excellent pitchers, Hannah Gilbert (left) and Madi Liimatainen (right), faced off last Thursday as the Franklin Tech Eagles hosted the Turners Falls Thunder.

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**LEVERETT** from page A1

ago. "What will we do with what has been given? Acknowledgment is not enough...."

Alexander is a member of the On Native Land study group, part of the town's 250th anniversary commemoration process. Next Susan Mareneck and Patricia Duffy said they had found commemorative coins from the town's 200th anniversary in the town vault and presented them as gifts to two dozen members of the anniversary committee, though only five seemed to be in attendance.

Moderator Larry Farber ushered in the main event with **Article 1**, in which Leverett voters, as if they were in Vermont, directly elected the town's officers. Jed Proujansky was the only nominee to fill a seat on the selectboard Melissa Colbert is vacating, and after he was elected he announced his own resignation from the finance committee. His seat will be filled at the whim of Farber and the selectboard as no volunteers stepped forward.

Two seats on the school committee were filled by Racheal Ozereko and Marnie Stern, and two on the planning board by Kimberly Van Wagner and Greg Tuzzolo.

**Article 2**, temporarily raising the cap for assessments to the secondary school district from 4% growth to 8.2% growth, was amended at the direction of the selectboard, fin com, and school committee to 6% growth. The 4% growth level was included in the main town budget for FY'25, **Article 3**, for \$7,496,395.

As Farber rattled off the lines on the proposed town budget, only one was flagged by voters for discussion: police salaries. The line's significant increase reflected the addition of a fourth full-time officer to the department, which also covers the neighboring town of Wendell.

"This came up last town meeting," said Shannon Gamble. "I just want to hear more about this."

Chief Scott Minckler said the force once had nine part-time officers, but as statewide police reform efforts have done away with the training academy and other supports, the part-time labor pool has collapsed and the town now only has four, soon to be three. By reallocating most of his part-timer fund and assessing some of the cost to Wendell, Minckler said, the town would only need to spend \$12,500 more on the new position.

The town budget passed with only a few stray Nay votes voiced, salaries for officials were approved next, and **Article 5** then tested whether voters had been paying attention during Article 2. The text was for an additional \$64,721 for the secondary school district, but selectboard chair Tom Hankinson moved that this be cut down to \$31,819.

"[That] doesn't sound like a decrease of about 2.2%, from 8.2% to 6%," said a befuddled Martin Pittman. "Can I have an explanation for the math?"

It took a couple times to explain to enough people that the baseline in the main budget already reflected a 4% growth in the assessment, but after that the article passed.

**Articles 6 through 10** fixed a dump truck, bought new software for the assessors and a copy machine for town hall, patched a \$4,853 hole in the "bulletproof vest account," and funded rain gutters for the library.

**No 'Affordable' Houses Left**

**Article 11** took \$4,500 from free cash to pay preservationists to inspect three town cemeteries formerly refurbished using Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds.

"Why is this coming out of free cash, when you can go back to the [Community Preservation Commission]?" Tom Wolff asked. "There's money sitting there."

"We actually started at the CPC," Mareneck, chair of the historical commission, told him, "but they have declined to consider it."

The motion carried, as did **Article 12**, setting aside \$11,000 to get ahead of the mosquitoes, and **Article 13**, shifting money from free cash into stabilization, but the table had been set for a larger discussion over **Articles 14 through 17**, which dealt with CPA funding.

As it is every year, the town was asked to put the equivalent of 3% of real estate tax receipts into the CPC's reserves, where it is matched nearly dollar for dollar by the state; while about a tenth of the sum is earmarked for "community housing," nothing has been funded for years in this category.

"We are quite anxious to have some funding [proposals] for housing come before us, but we can't act unless it's there," said CPC member Steve Freedman.

"There's over a million dollars, and we don't know how to spend it," Tom Ewing complained.

Mareneck said that if the town opts out of and then back into the CPA program it will lose almost all of the state-level match, and Dan Williams pointed out that in the two other eligible categories – historic preservation and open space improvement – funding has been forthcoming.

The issue came to a head with Article 17, which clawed back unspent CPA housing money from two

2017 programs intended to subsidize first-time homebuyers, allowing it to be used instead for any goal of the town's Affordable Housing Trust (AHT).

"We haven't been able to use most of this money," AHT member Barbara Carulli lamented. "The inventory that had been here previously in Leverett of what might be considered, at that time, affordable homes dried up. Disappeared."

Talk went on for some time, with some voters questioning why the town needed both the CPC and an AHT to vet requests for the money, but eventually the question was called and passed by a voice vote.

Farber then went on a rampage, orchestrating the passage of **Articles 18 through 27** in a total of 12 minutes – most were simple "housekeeping" items – and leaving only one more on the warrant, with 14 minutes to go before a scheduled lunch break.

**Ceasefire Supported**

Voters, perhaps realizing that this was the citizen-petitioned article calling for a ceasefire in Gaza or perhaps just hungry, began to flee the audnasium, the town's newly elected selectboard member among them.

"This is an important moral and political article," said Ann Ferguson. "I'm hoping we can take a break and have some lunch, and then come back and discuss [it]?"

That motion was fervently rejected, and the ensuing debate lasted an hour.

**Article 28**, while "recognizing the right of Israel to defend itself and to exist in safety," ran through some of the basic impacts on civilians in the Gaza Strip of Israel's response to the October 7 attacks led by Hamas, the stateless territory's *de facto* civil authority: "more than thirty thousand people now noted as deceased," nearly half children; 1.9 million displaced; rampant disease and burgeoning famine.

"In this case of Israel and Palestine, points of view are very polarized among people," GurujiMa, a spiritual teacher at the Village of Light Ashram on Shutesbury Road, said as she explained her group's decision to petition for the article. "But in the heart – the human heart cries out to say that the threshold was crossed of human life being taken and destroyed, that something has to be done."

Ferguson proposed an amendment stating that a ceasefire "will help free a large number of Israeli hostages who remain in custody." This was approved by a voice vote.

Martin Klein spoke in opposition to the article, asking why Leverett was not calling for an end to the imprisonment of Uyghur people by the Chinese government.

"Myanmar has documented genocide against its people," Klein added. "The article itself lacks any notion of reciprocity.... My ethical and moral compass says that this article is not valid, it's not fair, and it does not respect the pain and suffering of both people."

Millie Thayer proposed another amendment, adding a provision calling for "the release of all hostages and detainees on both sides." This, too, was approved.

Leverett school committee member Tilman Wolf condemned the article. "The UN reports that there's over 100 armed conflicts in the world today," he said. "You should make a motion that addresses all of those, and not single out one particular country."

"My government is funding what is going on in Palestine right now," Louise Antony responded.

"Hamas started this. They are the killers," said Sue Pacheco. "They make it look like it's Israel doing some harm.... Israel and the Jewish people [are] God's people, and I would not want to see the United States go against God's people."

Joshua Goldstein, a "retired international relations professor and lifelong peace activist," moved to amend the article by striking the entire text save the phrase "Be it resolved that the Town of Leverett, Massachusetts," and then adding "grieves for the loss of life in the current war in Gaza and urges all parties to quickly reach a just and durable end to the war."

This caused some procedural consternation, and Farber briefly receded to consult with the town meeting rule book, but it was declared a valid parliamentary maneuver.

Danielle Barshak said she did not think a "handful of people" should be making a statement on behalf of the town on an issue "as divisive and frankly painful for all sides," but said she would support the suggested substitution, as it was "anodyne enough that probably everyone could approve that."

Goldstein's amendment, however, was defeated by a voice vote.

Jim Staros said the article was "terribly imbalanced," and Richard Nathorst said he did not "consider this appropriate for town meeting," criticizing Leverett's "long history of virtue-signaling."

Eventually the question was called, and the votes were counted by raising hands. The article was approved, 31 votes to 23.

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

*Here's the way it was on May 1, 2014: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.*

**School Reconfiguration**

On Tuesday, the Gill-Montague school committee voted in favor of superintendent Michael Sullivan's proposal for a revised configuration for Montague elementary schools.

Sullivan proposed to return to two separate schools, to be divided along the same grade levels as currently housed in Hillcrest – pre-K

through first grade – and in Sheffield – second through fifth grades. Hillcrest serves about 160 students and Sheffield 250.

Hillcrest would have its own principal; Sheffield would have a new principal as well as an assistant principal.

Sullivan said he hoped the increased administrative presence would allow a stronger in-school culture and sense of community, as well as "a clear and collective sense of purpose" to develop among students and parents.

**20 YEARS AGO**

*Here's the way it was on April 29, 2004: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.*

**Two Years for Bridge Work?**

On Tuesday area residents gathered at MassHighway's design hearing for the reconstruction of the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge.

The project, which will be put out to bid in late 2005 or early 2006, would utilize the full 24-foot width of the bridge for traffic, replacing the current three-foot sidewalk with a five-foot one cantilevered off the side of the bridge.

Some skepticism was expressed about the proposed 24-month timeline, summed up by Montague resident John Fox, who said "I'll bet \$20 the bridge

won't get done in 24 months."

Unfortunately for Fox there were no takers.

**No Condos in Gill**

Plans for a 60-condominium complex on Main Road in Gill hit a snag Monday when the selectboard informed potential developers Kyle Scott and Layne Floyd that the town was planning on exercising their right of first refusal over the 12-acre site.

The selectboard's intent came as a surprise to both Scott and Floyd, who were already under contract with the current owners to purchase the property for \$271,000, nearly \$100,000 more than the property had been independently assessed for.

**150 YEARS AGO**

*Here's the way it was on April 29, 1874: News from the Turners Falls Reporter's archive.*

**Local Matters**

Some nice shad have recently been taken at Turners Falls – from Randall's fish market.

N.D. Allen has opened a Boot and Shoe store in the post office.

They had quite a social sugar-eat at the M.E. Chapel last Monday evening.

Capt. Albert Smith has commenced the erection of another block at Riverside.

There will be a necktie festival on Thursday evening at the Baptist Church. A pleasant time is anticipated.

If you want good eggs for hatching, packed as they ought to be, send to C.C. Holton, Hinsdale, N.H.

The snow was only six inches deep last Sunday – the mud can discount that one-hundred percent to-day.

Have the committee appointed to investigate and report upon the subject of a Cemetery all departed this life or town, or are they only lazy?

In the Northfield Farms items in the *Times* is the following important announcement – "The Suspension bridge at Turners

Falls is all right." Got caught!

Seward & Willard are determined to take advantage of the long drawn out sweetness of Winter. They have secured a cutter of the latest styles.

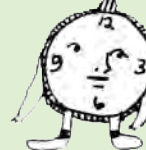
Owners of dogs will have a chance to contribute quite liberally to our library fund after to-morrow. The law requires the license to be taken on or before April 30th.

Friday night is election of officers at Silver Spray Lodge, remember. If you don't want to be suspended, pay your dues now.

Starbuck & Co. have sent us a coffee pot – they knew we had a teapot. Now who is going to send the coffee? If the coffee is only as good as the pot, then we'll have the best thing out. Don't tell us to "go to pot," but heed our suggestion.

Real Business Men know the value of advertising. Note our columns well. A mean firm never spends a dollar they can keep, and they make a dollar when they can be sure of that.

For the benefit of the correspondent who addressed us, let us insert the following extract from the Hon. Geo. Sheldon's note, to whom we had to refer the questions asked. "The Indian name for Turners Falls is *Squamachit*. For falling water – *Cochatuate*, for a roaring brook *Nauyang*."



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**BYLAW** from page A1

are stamped or ignored in the rush to get projects permitted.”

The bylaw was drafted largely in response to a 105 MW project proposed on Wendell Depot Road by the solar development company New Leaf Energy, formerly Borrego Solar. At Wednesday's meeting there was some discussion about whether it would apply to the New Leaf project, as the company had already applied for local and state permits.

Moderator Katie Nolan repeatedly reminded voters to keep discussion to the bylaw, the only item on the meeting warrant, and not any specific project.

“It's totally not cool if someone applies to something under existing regulations, then you run in and say, ‘Oh, we're going to change those,’” road commission member Alistair MacMartin warned. “I mean, that's not good.”

NAB member Anna Gyorgy said the town “can make” the New Leaf project subject to the bylaw. “It's not permitted,” she said.

In 2022, the Wendell conservation commission denied New Leaf a permit on the grounds that noise and light pollution would negatively impact wildlife. In January 2023 New Leaf petitioned the state Department of Public Utilities to be exempt from Wendell's zoning and wetlands bylaws, a decision which is still pending.

Wendell biologist and activist Bill Stubblefield said he thought the bylaw would likely not affect the New Leaf project, but said there was uncertainty, as the company had withdrawn its local application. He argued that there was an urgent need to regulate energy infrastructure at the local level in any case, as state legislators are considering a bill to expedite siting by bypassing municipal zoning laws.

“This is a steamroller that's coming after us,” Stubblefield said. “There are better technologies, safer technologies, and distributed energy that are options and should be considered first. Further, this should be a democratic decision, not a top-down, force-it-down-your-throat decision from Boston. This is the people — our future, the way we live — and this should not be outsourced to the financial oligarchs.”

After about an hour of discussion and one minor amendment, the bylaw passed nearly unanimously. Finance committee co-chair Thomas Richardson, who cast the single dissenting vote, warned against banning projects that could potentially contribute to Wendell's future tax base.

“The town is not in a very good financial position,” Richardson said. “I think this is a potential opportunity to bring industry into Wendell where we have not had any in many, many years.... There's a very real possibility that we're going to be in some very, very hard times, where some of the things that we all love

right now are going to have to be cut or taken away completely.”

Selectboard member Gillian Budine asked whether the New Leaf project would be tax-exempt. Planning board chair Molly Doody told her that it was unclear. “Anytime we have spoken with New Leaf or Borrego, they have always refused to give us any answer about any tax money that the town might make,” Doody said.

**Bigger Batteries Banned**

NAB collected over 111 signatures to bring its bylaw to a special town meeting vote, despite advice from town counsel that parts of the bylaw may be invalidated by the state attorney general's office.

“In my view,” attorney David Doneski wrote to selectboard members in February, “the proposed bylaw contains a number of elements that constitute land use regulations, so that even if it were approved by Town Meeting as a general bylaw it would likely be disapproved by the Attorney General's office as a zoning provision not adopted in accordance with the state Zoning Act, G.L. c.40A.”

The law cited by Doneski includes the so-called Dover Amendment, which prohibits the “unreasonable regulation” of solar energy systems and associated technology, including BESS. Last year, citing that section, the state struck down a provision of a new solar zoning bylaw in Wendell that would have banned all standalone BESS.

The new bylaw, if it stands, will regulate BESS between 1 MW and 10 MW. Projects under 1 MW, about the size of a 20-foot shipping container, would not need licenses.

“We as a group allow and encourage solar installations and battery systems, especially those that are in people's homes, in a basement, or in a garage,” said Debbie Lynangale.

The new bylaw states that BESS cannot exceed five acres in size or remove more than one-half acre of forest land, and should be prioritized on landfills or repurposed industrial sites. Construction on undeveloped land may not exceed 25% of a site's total square footage.

The town's new BESS licensing board will be coordinated by a member of the selectboard, and include representatives of the planning board, conservation commission, board of health, finance committee, zoning board of appeals, energy committee, and municipal light board. Wendell will be allowed to hire a consultant to review application materials at a BESS applicant's expense, and require that the applicant set aside the cost of decommissioning the facility in an escrow account.

BESS installers will be required to provide annual training to local first responders, and a description of all the battery components and their chemical and physical makeup. They must also document that

the town has the emergency response capacity to handle an event in which half of the battery units in the installation experience a “thermal runaway” fire.

“Thermal runaway is a chemical reaction that is very difficult to disrupt using traditional tools and tactics, and even when flames are extinguished the batteries have a tendency to reignite until the reaction is complete,” Massachusetts Department of Fire Services spokesperson Jake Wark told the *Reporter*. “They also create toxic and flammable gases such as hydrogen as a product of combustion, generating another level of life/safety risk and fire/explosion hazard.”

In Massachusetts, stationary BESS are regulated by the state's Comprehensive Fire Safety Code, which includes safety metrics for different types of electrochemical batteries, such as spacing requirements, maximum storage capacity, fire suppression systems, and water supply requirements.

“[A]s we see all too frequently, even small lithium-ion batteries pose significant fire safety hazards when they go into thermal runaway,” Wark said, “and the hazard grows with size.”

**Solar Bylaws New Spring Fashion**

At selectboard meetings this spring, NAB members argued for bringing the proposed bylaw to town meeting, rather than a “watered-down” version edited by town counsel, even though it might be rejected in order to demonstrate the opinion of Wendell voters to the state.

“Perhaps there's a coalition of cities and towns that will join with us in trying to protect local bylaws if they are rejected by the attorney general,” Dorsey said during the discussion Wednesday night.

Over the weekend Sunderland and Shutesbury also passed BESS bylaws at their annual town meetings, and Hadley will vote on one this Thursday evening.

Sunderland's new zoning bylaw restricts BESS to commercial districts, and prohibits any standalone battery system larger than four acres.

Shutesbury's general bylaw addresses the town's emergency response capacity and desires to preserve water quality and forest land. The bylaw is similar to Wendell's in that it disallows installations over 10 MW, sets fire safety standards, and establishes a licensing board.

If Hadley's bylaw passes, “large-scale” installations with over 150 kilowatt-hours of capacity would be prohibited in the town's “aquifer district overlay zones,” but still allowed in most other districts.

A number of BESS systems are currently under consideration by state regulators. In the next 12 to 18 months, Massachusetts is expected to provide guidance to municipalities on local regulation of large-scale energy projects.



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AT LARGE

**Northfield's ATM**

By CHIP AINSWORTH

**NORTHFIELD** — Northfield's annual town meeting is May 6, followed by the local election on May 7. The Slimey Legrees of the world are always prowling for towns with lax bylaws, and two items on this year's warrant would help keep Northfield a right-to-farm community.

Indeed, it's hard to drop a plow on earth that's covered with solar panels. Anyone who's driven on I-81 in Pennsylvania has seen the creeping infestation of gigantic warehouses and solar fields, and the impact they've had against the backdrop of scenic farmland. The L'Etoile family's deal with BlueWave Solar of Boston means the landscape on scenic Pine Meadow Road will be incontrovertibly altered by 26,000 solar panels, and another solar array will be installed on nearby Cross Road near John Buxton's home.

In March, Buxton submitted a citizens' petition to the town clerk that will appear as Article 27 on the warrant. If passed, it will keep solar developers at bay for the near future.

Meanwhile, Article 26 proposes to change zoning bylaws and thereby prevent energy companies from storing batteries and related equipment, “including but not limited to inverters, transformers, switching gear and/or a project substation.”

Most of the other articles read like a Christmas wish list: \$528,069 to operate the town sewer, \$400,000 for a new highway truck, \$113,572 for

a new police cruiser, and \$225,000 for a fire rescue truck. A new cruiser might be more palatable if voters hadn't already approved \$28,000 for digital radar signs. Flashing frowny faces have about as much impact on speeders as the calorie counts on McDonald's menu boards.

Most names on the town ballot are candidates for re-election. One newcomer is David McCarthy, a caucus nominee who will fill Alex Meisner's seat. McCarthy, a New Jersey native and a carpenter by trade, is a relative newcomer to Northfield who is on the finance committee.

Planning board chair Steve Serebinski has come to the end of his term and isn't actively campaigning. His name's on the ballot, but he hasn't put out lawn signs or responded to phone calls and email messages. He's opposed by caucus nominees Joe Stacy and Victoria Luksha.

Stacy's a Navy veteran and benefits manager who ran for selectboard and lost to Bea Jacque in 2020.

Luksha is a “historic preservation specialist” and conservationist. As such she will likely pay heed to a warning in the 2014 Master Plan that has turned out to be prescient: “Much of Northfield is undeveloped and unprotected from future development. Controlling future development will become an increasingly important priority.”

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

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Amanda Gorman, *The Hill We Climb*

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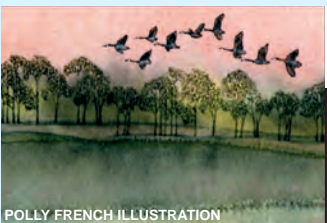


WILLIAM HAYS PHOTO

FEATURES@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER

MAY 2, 2024



WEST ALONG THE RIVER

SPRINGTIME COMES TO THE RIVER ISLAND

By DAVID BRULE

**THE FLAT, ERVINGSIDE** – There are mornings in early May when I step out from the house and walk to the edge of the yard, where the ancient river floodplain terrace drops off. The yard overlooks the most recent terrace, say only 10,000 years old, spreading out over yonder, fifteen feet below.

Eons ago, the river flowed over our modern-day house and began boring down to the next plain, stretched before me to the river, flowing and gleaming just beyond the border of alders and birch.

I open the gate and head down the path to the brimming frog pond. Pollywogs are wriggling in the dark waters, flailing their question-mark tails.

When the bear visits, he takes the same path down past the pond and passes under the towering white pines out to the rushing river. He doesn't open the gate, though. He goes through it – I mean *through* it – or clambers over it. He was here last week, just passing by, taking the old bear pathway his forebears took.

But I'm alone today, heading out to my island in the stream. Not much of an island, really, just a point of land, maybe three acres in all, cut off from the riverside woods by a small creek and spring-fed pools welling up from the aquifer of the Montague Plains.

Former generations of the family kept open these pasturelands along the river, before the flood of 1938 cut through the field and separated the southwest pasture corner from the rest of the farm. The fields were stripped by that flood and abandoned as pasture. Nearly 90 years later, the land has healed itself and turned to woodland, which I'm all too happy to preserve as it evolves.

Once I've crossed the creek and threaded through the trees, I find my chair stashed behind an old oak

and settle in, facing the river. I've reached my writing camp out here in the heart of my island. It's on a small rise above the woodland floor, a few feet above the spring freshet high-water mark.

A few boards for a dry and slightly raised floor, and a sort-of-comfortable Adirondack chair, and I've got my vantage point. I fancy myself some minor Hemingway character, writing in an open tent somewhere in East Africa in the last century, with maybe looking at Mount Kilimanjaro across the savannah.

My island is in the southwest corner of our little riverine republic. This is the warmest spot of our woodlands; the sun reaches it all day long and well into the evening. The river rushes past pell-mell every day, but especially today after last night's soft and steady rainfall.

The west-flowing *paguag*, or Millers, surges up against the rocky sandstone cliffs of Mineral Mountain and is forced to turn a sudden ninety degrees as it flows north along the steep and rocky shore, formed by an ancient upheaval of the Eastern Border Fault. From here it heads north to meet the Connecticut, a mile away.

At this time of year the woods around me are bare, a few evergreens contribute their hemlock color, but otherwise, if any green there yet be, it is tender and pale. Trout lily sheaves poke upwards, offering an occasional bloom.

Maple and oak saplings await the sudden impulse to leaf out, when a signal is given to pop open like an umbrella. Spring is sudden around here.

The other green is provided by the invasive and prickly barberry bush. Today the barberry shelters a sudden swarm of white-throated sparrows, moving through the protective thicket of thorns.

Other than the occasional see **WEST ALONG** page B3



LOUIS AGASSIZ FUERTES ILLUSTRATION

Northern waterthrush, *Parkesia noveboracensis*.

**Keeping a Community Center Open and Thriving: Reflections on the Montague Common Hall**

By KATE O'KANE

**MONTAGUE CENTER** – While living in Wendell for many years, I discovered how valuable it was that there were several community centers/spaces for residents to use. After I moved to Montague Center seven years ago, I looked around at what community spaces existed and found that there was a lot happening at the Montague Common Hall: yoga classes, a meditation group, dances, open mic nights, and a tai



ERICA MARTENSON PHOTO

Five of the Board members of the Montague Common Hall – from left to right, Will Quale, Naomi Brave, Nicole, Neme, Chris Wise, and the author – at a recent clean-up day.

chi class, among other things.

People could rent the space for private events at low cost, and with its beautiful wood floor, soaring ceiling, and tall, antique windows, the Hall was a lovely space indeed.

So, out of my desire to support a local community center, I joined the Board of the Common Hall. The Board was a welcoming and cheerful crew, fun and easy to be with. But I've learned over time just how many challenges confront a group trying to keep a historic building like the Common Hall open. (When you see that word "historic," think "old and in need of a lot of work!")

Dealing with maintenance and upkeep of the physical plant is, in fact, close to overwhelming, and every bit of work done on an old building is super expensive. Plus, there are a lot of other tasks: maintaining a website, getting insurance, showing the facility to prospective renters, cleaning the building, and maintaining the grounds.

I've been amazed to see how devoted the members of the Board are in doing that work, all still with that positive attitude and sense of humor that I encountered at the first meeting I attended. While professionals do cleanups each fall and spring and remove snow in the winter, all the interior cleaning and other grounds work are done by volunteers.

There are usually two work days a year, each spring and fall. Last fall, a crew of about 12 folks showed up and worked for hours vacuuming and mopping the interior, cleaning the kitchen, and putting the garden areas to bed for the winter. A similar spring work day is being scheduled as I write this.

As for the maintenance of the building, a lot has gotten done over the past five years, thanks to a number of grants and many generous donations: a new roof, an exterior paint job, insulation of the interior, new exterior doors on the back of the building, repairs to the connection to the town sewer system, and reglazing and painting of the windows. Yet despite all the work that's been done, it only takes a few moments at the Hall to realize that there's a lot that remains to be done, see **COMMON HALL** page B8

RECIPES

**Connecticut River Valley Asparagus!**

By CLAIRE HOPLEY

**LEVERETT** – Pointy heads are poking out of the chilly ground. Soon they'll grow tall enough to be cut, and farmstands and farmers markets will be displaying local asparagus.

It's the year's first vegetable crop, and though the corn of July, the tomatoes and peppers of August, and the pumpkins and squashes of fall are all terrific, none is more welcome than asparagus. It trumpets the arrival of spring and announces that rhubarb, strawberries, and other lovely crops will soon be marching to its song.

Asparagus is alluring. It invites you to pick it up, to admire its finely shaded point and firm stalk, then to savor it, perhaps dipped in melted butter one luxurious nibble at a time, so you can revel in the firm

stem and the delicate folded tip.

The rich soil of the Connecticut Valley is ideal for growing asparagus – so ideal that from the 1930s to the 1970s it was America's premier asparagus region. Road signs hailed motorists with "Welcome to Hadley: Asparagus Capital of the World."

Then fusarium struck. This fungus makes asparagus wilt. Many dispirited growers turned to other crops. A few hung on, though. They planted newly developed fusarium-resistant varieties. Now their asparagus no longer travels to distant places, but there's plenty for Valley residents from late April until early June.

Jonathan Swift, author of *Gulliver's Travels*, wrote of asparagus "O, 'tis a pretty picking with a tender chicken." He could well have see **ASPARAGUS** page B4



HOPLEY PHOTO

Asparagus for sale last Saturday at a Hadley farmstand.



# Pet of the Week



SUBMITTED IMAGE

## 'MARTHA'

"I am a sucker for a sad story and big Martha needed a home to call her own," Janis Doyle, founder of Montague's avian sanctuary Duckworld, posted on social media in May 2022. "What a sweet old soul she is!"

"Other than some turkey dementia she is doing great," Doyle reported the next year.

"I swear Martha has a Lionel Richie obsession," she posted in 2023. "She freezes and stares whenever she hears his voice."

That fall, Martha entertained Duckworld's followers by posing for a Thanksgiving meal (above)

and with a sign reading "Eat Ham!"

Doyle shared tough news this week. "Sadly Duckworld lost our beloved turkey," she wrote. "Martha has been struggling for a while. We are so blessed that she lived out her final years as our queen. Fly high old girl."

Riley Smith brought Martha's passing to our attention. "She was loved in the community," he wrote. "Rest in peace to Martha - Love, Duckworld."

We are honored to highlight Martha as our Pet of the Week this week, and extend our condolences.

## Senior Center Activities MAY 6 THROUGH 10

### 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 5/6

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

#### Tuesday 5/7

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 5/8

Foot Clinic by Appointment  
10:45 a.m. Outdoor Yoga  
4:15 p.m. Mat Yoga

#### Thursday 5/9

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

#### Friday 5/10

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

### 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 5/6

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

#### Tuesday 5/7

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

#### Wednesday 5/8

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

#### Thursday 5/9

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

#### Friday 5/10

9 a.m. Quilting & Open Sew

## MAY LIBRARY LISTING

### Montague Public Libraries

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

Erving Public Library (413) 423-3348

Gill: Slate Library (413) 863-2591

Leverett Public Library (413) 548-9220

Northfield: Dickinson Library (413) 498-2455

Wendell Free Library (978) 544-3559

### MONTAGUE

**Multiple days: Grab & Go Bags.** Craft: craft stick superhero. Free kits at all branches while supplies last.

**Every Wednesday: LEGO.** Carnegie, 3 to 4:30 p.m.

**Wednesday, May 1: Knitting Club.** All ages welcome. Montague Center, 4:30 p.m.

**Every Thursday: Bilingual Music & Movement.** Sing and move with Tom & Laurie. Montague Center, 10 a.m.

**Friday, May 3: Kiddleidoscope Story Hour.** Learn about our wildlife neighbors. Ages 3 to 6 with caregiver. Discovery Center, 10:30 a.m.

**Saturday, May 4: Used Book Sale.** Fiction, paperbacks, kids' books, DVDs, CDs, audiobooks. Carnegie, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**Saturday, May 4: Free Comic Book Day.** Stop by to grab a comic and make a button. Carnegie, 1 to 3 p.m.

**Sunday, May 5: The Listening Ear.** Discovery Center, 12 noon to 3 p.m.

**Mondays, May 6, 13, and 20: Makerspace Mondays.** Explore STEAM concepts. Ages 8+ with caregiver. Carnegie, drop-in 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.

**Saturday, May 11: Make Your Own Meadow.** Discovery Center, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**Saturday, May 11: Sashiko-Inspired Visible Mending Workshop.** Ages 12 and up. Email to register, [kmartineau@cwmar.org](mailto:kmartineau@cwmar.org). Montague Center, 2 p.m.

**Monday, May 13: Friends of MPL Meeting.** Email for info, [vgatvalley@gmail.com](mailto:vgatvalley@gmail.com). Carnegie, 5:30 p.m.

**Sunday, May 19: Wild and Cultivated Edible Plants.** Discovery Center, 11 a.m.

**Friday, May 24: Homeschool Hangout.** Montague Center, 1 p.m.

**Thursday, May 30: Graphic Novel Book Club.** Ages 7 to 11. Joe Latham, *Haru*. Email to register, [gracem@montague-ma.gov](mailto:gracem@montague-ma.gov). Millers Falls, 3:30 p.m.

**Thursday, May 30: Book Club.** Crystal Wilkinson, *Praisesong for the Kitchen Ghosts*. Montague Center, 7 p.m.

### ERVING

**Thursday, May 2: Mister G!** Outdoor concert. 5:30 p.m.

**Sundays, May 5 and 19: Sensory Storytime.** Ages 0 to 6 with caregiver. 10 a.m.

**Wednesday, May 8: Teen Media Club.** Pizza party with door prizes for ages 11 to 19. 3:30 p.m.

**Sunday, May 12: Genealogy**

*Drop-In Help.* 1 to 3 p.m.

**Sunday, May 12: Puzzle Swap.** All ages, no puzzle required. 1 to 3 p.m.

**Wednesday, May 15: Community Conversation for Neurodivergent Patrons.** Snacks provided. Two gatherings with same content, 2 to 3 p.m. and 5 to 6 p.m.

**Sunday, May 19: Sculpture Fest.** Unveiling, demo, food truck, local vendors. Noon to 3 p.m.

**Monday, May 20: All-Abilities Social.** Food provided, signup req'd. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**Tuesday, May 21: All-Abilities Social.** Food provided, signup req'd. 4 to 6 p.m.

**Thursday, May 30: Book Club.** Graphic novels. 5:30 p.m.

### LEVERETT

**All Month: Art Exhibit,** Pastels from Ruggles Pond by Rema Boscov.

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

**Every Wednesday: Playgroup,** ages 0 to 5 with caregiver, 10:30 a.m. *Tinker Playgroup*, ages 3 to 5 with caregiver, 1:30 p.m. Email to sign up, [budine@erving.org](mailto:budine@erving.org).

**Every Thursday: Play Mahjongg.** Beginners welcome. 1:15 to 3:30 p.m.

**Every Saturday: Tai Chi.** Free, all welcome. Intermediate to advanced 10 a.m., beginners 11 a.m.

**Saturday, May 4: Tool Care and Plant Share.** Supplies provided. 12:30 p.m.

**Thursday, May 9: Arty Boxes.** Ages 7 and up. 4 p.m.

**Saturday, May 18: West African Drumming Class.** For teens and adults. 1 p.m.

### NORTHFIELD

**Every Wednesday: Musical Storytime.** Lively, enriching, multicultural. Ages 1 to 5 with caregiver. 10 a.m.

**Wednesday, May 1: Readers' Choice Book Group.** David Grann, *Killers of the Flower Moon*. Pick up at library. 10 a.m.

**Wednesday, May 1: Tech Help.** Bring your device and ask your questions. 1 to 3 p.m.

**Thursday, May 2: Spice Club pickup starts.** This month: celery seed. Sample and recipes while supplies last.

**Thursdays, May 2, 9, 16, and 23: Mindfulness** with Jeannette Eaton. 1 p.m.

**Friday, May 3: New In-Library Kids' Scavenger Hunt.** This

month: guitar-playing animals.

**Friday, May 3: Coffee and Tea Social.** 10 to 11 a.m.

**Saturday, May 4: Puzzle Swap.** For info, email [friends-ofdml01360@gmail.com](mailto:friends-ofdml01360@gmail.com). 10 to 11:30 a.m.

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

**Wednesday, May 8: Readings Group.** Jane Kenyon, *Otherwise* poetry collection. Pick up at the library. 3 p.m.

**Thursday, May 9: Trivia Night,** Four Star Farms Brewery, 6 p.m.

**Thursday, May 9: Environmental Book Group.** Jennifer Ackerman, *What an Owl Knows*. Pick up at the library. 6:30 p.m.

**Friday, May 10: Take-and-Make.** This month: cupcake-liner flower bouquet. While supplies last.

**Friday, May 10: Kids' Author Visit.** Diana Renn, *Trouble at Turtle Pond*. 4 p.m.

**Thursday, May 16: LEGO.** 3:30 p.m.

**Thursday, May 16: Birds of Our Meadows.** 6 p.m.

**Thursday, May 30: Book Group.** Erving Library, 5:30 p.m.

### WENDELL

**All month: Art Exhibit.** Illustrations by Sylvia Wetherby.

**Every Wednesday: CNC playgroup.** 10 a.m.

**Every Wednesday: Movie.** 4 p.m.

**Every Friday: LEGO.** 4 p.m.

**Every Saturday: StoryCraft.** Picture book read-aloud and connected craft. Story at 10:30 a.m., drop-in crafting until 2:30.

**Every Sunday: Yoga.** All levels, pay what you can. 10 a.m.

**Every Tuesday: Art Group.** 5 p.m.

**Thursday, May 9: Fiber Night.** 6:30 p.m.

**Friday, May 10: Homeschool Hangout.** 10:30 a.m.

**Friday, May 10: Office Hour** with state representative Aaron Saunders. 1 p.m.

**Saturday, May 11: Book Launch** with local author Sylvia Wetherby and Percival Porcupine. Stories, original artwork, finger puppets, food, door prizes. 2 p.m.

**Wednesday, May 15: Tech Help.** By registration, 4 and 4:30 p.m.

**Sunday, May 19: Birds of Prey Demo** with Monadnock Falconry. Swift River School, 2 p.m.

**Tuesday, May 28: Local Author.** Cathy Stanton, *Food Margins: Lessons from an Unlikely Grocer*. 6:30 p.m.

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**WEST ALONG** from page B1  
sparrow chirp, the only sound is the constantly rushing water, rolling and roiling over river stones and boulders. I do have a lone bumblebee for company, who visits my page briefly and, noting nothing of interest to him, moves on to other more promising finds.

Redwings from over in the ox-bow beaver pond call out on their way to my backyard, where they gather for the easy pickings of hand-outs at the backyard feeder. They spend their waking hours flowing back and forth from my yard to the marshy territory on the other side of the river, where their mates will soon fashion fine grass-woven nests among the cattails.

In the distance, heard over the riversound of the rapids, a northern waterthrush calls out a loud and persistent, multi-noted song. The first real music we've heard down here, other than the equally musical song sparrow. That sparrow and his kin have spent the winter here with us

though, and he's been signing since mid-February. But the welcome waterthrush warbler is different – he has just arrived. We can celebrate with him as he proclaims his return to his summer home to anyone who cares to listen.

In my own little wilderness down here, haunts of the bear and bobcat, mink, beaver, and otter, I remind myself that the village less than a mile upstream is just getting into gear. The coffee is on in the Whistle Stop Café, the brewers checking the balance of their hops and malt in the Element Brewery. The comforts of civilization are just a few minutes away while I linger downstream in my wilderness camp, writing about bumblebees and birds, waiting for something to happen.

For now, I'm a lone watcher on my secret island, waiting to capture the unfolding season, waiting to see what another month of May along the river will bring.



## MOVIE REVIEW

# Madame Web (2024)

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

**GREENFIELD** – I have seen the *Spiderman* movies made for the big screen, and am not a fan of them, or any other of the related movies that have been made with connections to that universe. The two characters in other movies that have connections to *Spiderman*'s universe are Morbius and Venom.

I am a fan of superhero movies, though, so I developed an interest in seeing *Madame Web*.

*Madame Web* is played by Dakota Fanning, and this is her origin story. It starts in 2003 with a woman named Cassandra, who works as a paramedic saving lives. She is a caring person, but not exactly a social one. She ends up briefly encountering three girls that she appears to be destined to save, just before her future-seeing powers are kickstarted through a near-death experience.

*Madame Web* starts to figure out how to use these powers, and they appear to get stronger with anything involving the girls. They are each meant to become a version of *Spiderman*. What figures into that is a concept called the Spider People, a tribe in Peru, and a spider with special powers including seeing the future. Ezekiel Sims, played by Tahar Rahim, wants to learn his future through the spider, and comes to believe based on one destiny he sees is that the girls are going to defeat him. He is like an evil *Spiderman*.

Cassandra keeps seeing things

about the girls that make it appear she is destined to help them. They don't really have anybody else in their lives. This whole set-up nicely provides the building blocks that lead to them becoming a team, like Ezekiel saw his vision. I believe someone once said the future is never what it appears to be. Ezekiel may have made some of this a self-fulfilling prophecy. He ended up finding these two young girls together more than once – if that isn't some kind of sign, then I don't know what is.

I don't want to spoil this entire movie, but by the end of it, we see Cassandra use her ability quite well, and the young girls learning CPR comes in handy.

They will also be happy to stay by each other's side in the future. They are connected to each other like a web. Also, we learn there will be a fourth member of the group the girls are going to form. It's a good origin story!



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## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

# Cannabis Impact; Stolen Sign; Stolen Safe; Noise Fight; Dog Problems; Broken Car Windows; Speeding Motorcycle

### Tuesday, 4/23

7:42 a.m. 911 call reporting two-car accident on Turners Falls-Gill Bridge. No injuries; no fluids leaking from vehicles. Involved vehicles moving to Gill Mill to get off bridge; both able to be driven away.

1:40 p.m. Caller states he owns a building on Third Street and some kids must have thrown rocks at one of the windows on the alley side. It's not broken, but there are dings in it. Wants on record. Will look into getting cameras for the building.

3:17 p.m. Caller left a message in the general mailbox stating that he saw a parent smoking a joint while pulling into Hillcrest Elementary School for student pickup. Gone on arrival.

### Wednesday, 4/24

3:04 p.m. Caller requesting assistance with getting a loose dog to the shelter; she is unable to get it into her vehicle. Grey pitbull at Vladish and Nadeau Avenues. Dog secured at shelter.

6:13 p.m. GPD requesting assistance in Sunderland with TFFD and the gator.

11:20 p.m. Shelburne Control contacted directly by a 911 caller for a fire alarm on the second floor of an Avenue A building. FD dispatched; officer advised.

### Thursday, 4/25

1:03 a.m. Concerned caller reports that a dog is currently outside of a Park Street location, and has been for roughly 30 minutes, barking the entire time; caller concerned about noise level and dog's safety. Officer advises he stood outside the location for a handful of minutes; no noise heard; no dog located outside building.

2:35 p.m. Caller from Meadow Road states that his girlfriend's dog got out about an hour ago and they cannot locate it. Dog described as a small white pitbull with brown spots named CoCo.

Dog does not have a collar and is just over a year old. Caller requests to speak to an officer and states that he is agitated about this situation. Officer advises party wanted to speak about the dog getting out and vented his frustration. Caller requests assistance checking area for his dog; called back inquiring if dog had been located. Advised caller we would let them know if the dog was found.

12:11 p.m. Detail officer reporting two-car accident with fluids, possible injury, on Greenfield Road near the bike path crossing. Officer requesting Rau's to tow. Courtesy transport provided to station.

4:43 p.m. Caller states she had an item stolen from the Five Eyed Fox and she knows who has it. Caller states item cost about \$900. Officer spoke to caller, who

will drop off a statement. Advised of options.

5:56 p.m. Report of vehicle driving fast in the area of Quarry Road. Caller did not see the vehicle but could hear it. Officer advised. Caller called back stating the vehicle drove by again revving its engine. Officer sat in the area for a while; nothing observed.

6:54 p.m. 911 caller from Avenue A states that he had someone staying in his apartment and now his safe is missing. Caller states that it contained \$5,600. Second caller states he saw involved female parties walking around with a lot of money in their hands. Officer unable to make contact with female parties.

8:03 p.m. Caller states there is a large bonfire in the "grassy area" at Unity Park. Officer advised; TFFD contacted.

8:14 p.m. 911 open line from Avenue A; can hear party yelling that whoever stole his money is spending it right now, and could hear female yelling in the background. Referred to officer.

8:23 p.m. 911 caller from Avenue A states that she needs an officer, but cannot communicate what for. She will be outside the building. Officer spoke with caller; her concern was in regard to the previous call from her boyfriend. Party called 911 again requesting an officer for the same situation.

Friday, 4/26  
8:38 a.m. 911 caller states that the defendant of a harassment prevention order of which the caller is the plaintiff is yelling and swearing at them through the walls. Investigated.

10:12 a.m. Caller would like to speak to an officer about her dog being hit by a car on Fifth Street; the driver took off. Footage from the bank next door showed the incident, but inconclusive as to what happened.

10:38 a.m. Caller from Park Street would like on record that yesterday her neighbor's dog got loose again and attacked two dogs that were walking by. Referred to other agency.

10:42 a.m. Property manager from Avenue A reporting that they found suspicious items after a tenant moved out. Officer heading over to the Rendezvous for a follow-up. Report taken.

1:46 p.m. 911 caller states her roommate is harassing her and just grabbed her. Parties agreed to separate for the night.

3:10 p.m. Caller reports harassment by ex-boyfriend. Advised to contact GPD.

6:28 p.m. Officer conducting motor vehicle stop on Avenue A. Passenger, a 37-year-old Montague Center woman, was arrested on two default warrants.

Saturday, 4/27  
1:08 a.m. Caller from Ave-

nue A reports noise coming from the involved apartment and disturbing his sleep; possibly a TV that was left on. Officer spoke to resident about the noise complaint; female advised she would turn it down.

5:36 a.m. Greenfield PD transferred an E-911 caller from Wentworth Congregate Housing, who reports that an apartment there is playing loud noise. Noise heard over phone. Units advised. Officer advises both parties are involved in this noise dispute. Both parties talked to and advised.

9:12 a.m. Caller from Keith Apartments reports his car window was broken overnight.

10:34 a.m. 911 caller from Wentworth reporting loud music from a neighboring apartment. Music was not loud. Officer spoke to the other resident, who advised that the caller has been disrespectful toward him due to skin color and believed he is trying to upset him by calling the police.

2:48 p.m. Caller from Fifth Street reporting that the back window of her vehicle was smashed overnight in the alleyway.

4:07 p.m. 911 caller from Wentworth states that loud music is playing from a neighboring apartment and he doesn't feel safe. Advised of options going forward.

6:08 p.m. Caller reports a vehicle at Unity Park with five adults in it, all smoking and drinking. Officer advises he spoke to vehicle owner and there was no alcohol or drugs inside the vehicle.

6:18 p.m. 911 caller from Wentworth states that the neighbor did not turn down his music and it's too loud. Officer previously explained his options going forward. Neighbor's music is within appropriate listening levels and he is not violating any town laws. Reporting caller advised again of options; tenant advised of complaint. If further issues arise, caller can go to Housing to discuss further actions. Advised caller that further complaints would be kept on record.

7:25 p.m. Caller from Canal Street states he believes someone shot his windshield with a BB gun five times around 1:30 this morning. He noticed tonight. Would like on record.

7:53 p.m. Caller from Fourth Street states her car window was broken last night. Report taken.

8:17 p.m. Caller from Third Street reporting her downstairs neighbor slammed the door when he left the building. Officers advised.

11:33 p.m. 911 caller from Grand Avenue requests officer respond to location and check on a vehicle parked nearby; unable to provide description, but states it would "make his

night" if someone went. Officer located vehicle; owner advises they were catching up with a friend. Advised to move along.

### Sunday, 4/28

5:54 a.m. Caller from Bridge Street reports that a male party stated to him "I'm going to fucking kill you" and was outside near a neighbor's car when he said this. Caller believes male was going to vandalize the car, based on a history of male vandalizing their and other neighbors' vehicles in the past. Caller states that he told the male to stop and that he was going to call the police; indicated party started to yell hateful comments at him regarding his sexual orientation. Caller indicated there was an HPO against the involved party. Caller unsure if male party returned inside the building or was still outside after this confrontation. Officers advised.

1:10 p.m. 911 caller from Meadow Road reports she was assaulted by her brother's girlfriend and needs her removed from the household. They are attempting to flee the house now in a vehicle. Officers advised. Vehicle not on scene.

3:11 p.m. Caller from Walgreens reporting that a party outside the store appears to be selling drugs. Referred to an officer.

3:32 p.m. Caller states that a white sports car and a motorcycle have driven by her house at a high speed. Referred to an officer.

5:03 p.m. Caller from Millers Falls Road states that motorcycles are driving by her house at a high speed. Referred to an officer.

7:17 p.m. 911 caller reporting unattended brush fire at Green Pond Road and Federal Street. Call transferred to Shelburne Control.

9:14 p.m. Caller states that his ex-wife has been harassing him; a vehicle that looks like hers has been driving by his house honking the horn, then it pulled into his driveway playing loud music. Caller stated that he couldn't see the driver's face, so he couldn't be 100% sure it was her, but it is the same car that she drives. Requesting to have on record.

10:59 p.m. Caller from L Street reporting that her small white Chihuahua got loose. Party called stating that they found a dog matching the description. Caller notified; she will go pick it up.

11:46 p.m. Caller from Avenue A states there is a female causing a disturbance slamming her door and banging on multiple other doors while screaming in the hallway. All quiet upon officer's arrival. Female is walking to the store.

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## ASPARAGUS BISQUE WITH SALMON



about 16 stalks asparagus  
1 medium leek  
2 Tbsp. butter  
one 6-inch stick celery  
4 stems parsley  
sprig of thyme  
salt, pepper, and sugar to taste  
four 4-6 ounce salmon filets  
1½ cups fish or vegetable stock,  
or water

Wash the asparagus and discard the woody bottoms. Cut off the tips and put them in a pan with 2 cups of boiling water. Simmer for 2 minutes, then drain, reserving the liquid. Chill the tips in cold water, pat dry, and set aside.

Cut the asparagus stalks into 2-inch pieces. Slit the leek long ways and rinse to remove any grit, and cut it into matchsticks.

Melt the butter in a large saucepan and stir in the leeks. Season lightly with salt and keep them over low heat for 2 to 3 minutes. Add the asparagus stalks, cook for another 2 minutes, and then add the celery, 2 stems of the parsley, the thyme, and the reserved asparagus liquid, plus salt to taste. If the liquid doesn't cover the vegeta-

bles by 2 inches, add more water. Simmer for 10 minutes, or until the asparagus is soft. Discard the celery and thyme. Pour the mixture into a food processor or blender and process until completely smooth, or sieve through a strainer. Return to the pan and set aside. Place the salmon in a lidded frying pan with the stock or lightly salted water and the other 2 parsley stems. Cover and simmer for 5 to 7 minutes, or until it has cooked through.

Meanwhile, bring the asparagus mixture back to a simmering point. Also reheat the asparagus tips for 30 seconds in a microwave or in boiling water.

Remove the salmon pieces to the center of warmed pasta or soup bowls or soup plates, and keep warm. Strain the liquid from the salmon into the asparagus mixture and stir it over high heat. Season with salt, pepper, and a pinch or two of sugar. Simmer for 1 or 2 minutes, and then ladle it around – not on – the salmon. Garnish with the reheated asparagus tips.

Serves four.

## ASPARAGUS WITH CHIVE-BLOSSOM VINAIGRETTE

1 tsp. Dijon mustard  
2 Tbsp. olive oil  
1 tsp. cider vinegar or white wine vinegar  
salt to taste  
6 chive blossoms, plus extra for garnish  
1 Tbsp. snipped chives  
1 bunch asparagus

Whisk together the mustard, olive oil, vinegar, and a pinch of salt. Taste. For a saltier or sharper dressing, add a tad more salt or vinegar.

Trim the woody ends off the asparagus. Drop the stems into a shallow pan of boiling salted water and

cook for 3 minutes. Check for doneness by testing them with a knife tip. Don't let them get limp. Remove from the water, pat off excess moisture with paper towel, then place on a shallow serving dish.

Tear the petals from six chive blossoms and add most of them to the dressing, along with most of the snipped chives. Pour it over the warm asparagus, turning the asparagus gently in it. Sprinkle the remaining petals and chives on top. Cool to room temperature. Serve garnished with whole chive blossoms.

Serves four or five.

### ASPARAGUS from page B1

added that it's also pretty delicious with ham, with eggs, with salmon, with veal and lamb. It's good with pasta and risotto too, and perfect in pastry dishes such as quiches.

The best way to enjoy asparagus is to be picky-picky, eating it only when the local crop arrives; it's the freshest and best. When it's here you can have your own asparagus festival and eat it in as many meals as possible.

For breakfast dip a few spears into a soft-boiled or poached egg, or fold steamed tips into scrambled eggs. For lunch, spread hummus or whipped cream cheese on a bagel and top with cooked and cooled asparagus. At supper, wrap it in thin-sliced ham and cover with a cheese sauce.

In Italy asparagus stars in Pasta Primavera. Local restaurants often serve this with whatever vegetables the chef lays hands on, including summer crops such as peppers and zucchini. But *primavera* is Italian for "spring," so Italians make it with only spring vegetables: always asparagus, perhaps the first artichokes, and something leafy such as spinach.

Or try the French *asperges mimosas* – asparagus dressed with vinaigrette and served sprinkled with sieved, hard-boiled egg yolks to mimic mimosa flowers.

Locally, the specialty is asparagus-and-ham suppers, often served by churches or clubs to celebrate spring. The recipe below for Asparagus and Ham Rolls in Cheese Sauce highlights the similarly mag-



HOPLEY PHOTOS

Jackie Pliska hawks asparagus last Saturday at Wanczyk's farmstead in Hadley.

ical affinity of asparagus and ham with cheese.

The recipe for Asparagus Bisque with Salmon is a main-dish version of asparagus soup, while Asparagus

in Chive-Blossom Vinaigrette pairs asparagus with the earliest local herb, including its mauve pom-pom flowers, which bloom in mid-May.



## ASPARAGUS & HAM ROLLS IN CHEESE SAUCE

8 thick stems asparagus  
12 thin slices flavorful deli ham, such as Black Forest  
3 Tbsp. butter  
3 Tbsp. all-purpose flour  
1½ cups grated extra-sharp Cheddar  
3 Tbsp. grated Parmesan  
1 tsp. dry mustard powder or tiny pinch cayenne  
1½ cups milk  
salt and pepper to taste



Preheat the oven to 350 degrees; wash the asparagus and trim the bases off. Drop them into a shallow pan of boiling salted water and cook for 3 minutes or until just tender. Remove and let cool.

Roll each one in a ham slice. Lightly grease a rectangular baking dish into which your rolls just fit and arrange them side by side.

For the sauce, mix the Cheddar and Parmesan. Mix the flour with the mustard or cayenne. Melt the butter in a saucepan over moderate heat. Off the heat, stir in the flour

to make a smooth paste. Stir in a quarter of the milk, then return to the heat, and stirring all the time, gradually add the remaining milk to make a smooth sauce.

Set aside 2 tablespoons of the mixed cheese, then stir the remainder into the sauce. When it melts in, season with salt and

pepper to taste. Pour it over the rolls.

Sprinkle the reserved cheese on top and bake for 15 to 20 minutes or until the top is golden. Rest for 5 minutes before serving.

Serves four.

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**PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Free Wednesday Matinee Movies**

**WENDELL** – Every Wednesday at 4 p.m. at the Wendell Free Library, 7 Wendell Depot Road, we will be showing critically acclaimed and award-winning feature films for adults, ranging from light comedy to intense drama, including both classic and recent films.

All are welcome, and friendly informal discussions after the movie are encouraged.

May 8: *Double Indemnity* (1944, NR), a star-studded classic film noir

murder mystery.

May 15: *Edward Scissorhands* (1990, PG-13), a modern fairytale with social messages about difference and acceptance.

May 22: *Mrs. Harris Goes to Paris* (2022, PG), a delightful story of a cleaning woman who goes to Paris for a Dior design.

May 29: *Stand and Deliver* (1971, G), a viciously funny screwball farce starring Walter Matthau and Elaine May.

**EXHIBITS**

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

**Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls:** *What's On Your Plate?*, a community arts exhibit about the entanglement of food, time, commitment, and ecology. May 5 to June 29; opening reception this Sunday, May 5 from 2 to 4 p.m. with a presentation by Exploded View at 3 p.m. Closing reception Saturday, June 29, from 2 to 4 p.m.

**LOOT, Turners Falls:** *Rotation Book Group: 12 artists+12 books+12 months*, a show-and-tell of artists' books created by a local group, this Friday, May 3 from 5 to 8 p.m.

**Sawmill River Arts, Montague:** *Caroline Wampole*, guest artist showing abstract paintings. Through June.

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

**Greenfield Library, Greenfield:** *ServiceNet Community Art Exhibit*. Paintings, photography, and other art works by more than 20 artists from the ServiceNet community. Through May.

**LAVA Center, Greenfield:** *Indi-Visible*, photos by Alfonso Herrera-Neal and Lindy Whiton documenting migrant and immigrant farm workers in Western Mass, including field interviews. May through July, with an opening reception this Friday, May 3 at 5 p.m. Opening on May 4 will be *Tom Swetland*, collage art, assemblage, mixed media, *papier-mâché* and junk sculpture around the themes of surrealism, psychedelia, dreamscapes, and conspiracy. Through June 29; reception this Saturday, May 4, from 3 to 6 p.m.

**Looky Here, Greenfield:** *Inside, Outside*, paintings by Emily Gia-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

*Lisa Winter's My House will be on exhibit at the Wendell Meetinghouse this Sunday, May 5 at 4 p.m. Winter, a multimedia artist from Wendell, has been working with miniatures for decades. My House began several years ago as a personal reaction to trauma and turmoil. Winter handcrafted the 1:12-scale tabletop-sized structure and populated it with characters, fixtures, and objects of personal and cultural significance. She will discuss its evolution, the craftwork of its fabrication, and its use as a therapeutic intervention.*

mari, through May.

**Gallery A3, Amherst:** *Stories I Tell Myself*, mixed media by Diane Steingart. Through May, with a reception this Thursday, May 2 at 5 p.m.

**Shelburne Arts Coop, Shelburne Falls:** *Splash of Color*, group show by member artists. Through May.

**Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne:** *Jeremy Sinkus*, glass sculpture; through June, with a reception this Saturday, May 4 from 2 to 4 p.m. *Unpleasantly*

*Beautiful*, sculptural pieces with etched glass panels by Annaleah Moon Gregoire.

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

**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 Friday, May 24 from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

**PATRONS THANKED**



SUBMITTED PHOTO

*Left to right: Local musician William Blatner, Shea Theater manager Linda Tardif, Anubuchon Hardware owner Steve Valeski, Greenfield Cooperative Bank (GCB) president Tony Worden, GCB branch manager Matthew Welcome, GCB senior vice president Jacqueline Charron, Montague parks and rec director Jon Dobosz, musician Wes Brown, and Suzanne LoManto enjoy a large check. "Greenfield Cooperative Bank is the 2024 Turners Falls Summer Events Sponsor," LoManto, Montague's assistant planner and director of RiverCulture, explained as she strong-armed us into printing this photo. "This donation will be used to enhance cultural programming in the Turners Falls Cultural District from May to September." Check riverculture.org and this newspaper next week for a schedule of said events!*

**Great Falls Middle School/Turners Falls High School 3rd Quarter Honor Roll**

**– Grade 6 –**

**FIRST HONORS**  
Abigail Billings, Jonathan Bones, Andrew Eichorn, Audrina Gexler, Jazelle Gonzalez, Lailah Jenks, Page Katsoulis, Eva Lareau, Silas Lively, Nethanel Martin, Daisha Ovalle Perez, Liam Pielock, Kyle Porter, Fiona Ribeiro, Leith Sadoway, Johnathan Sicard

**SECOND HONORS**  
Lylah Brocklesby, Lydia Cadran, Eliza Carew, Ava Laffey, Axel Martin Ovalle, Genevieve Otero, Alexis Parker, Gracie Jo Philip, Mya Ramos, Rhiannon Smith, Taelynn Supernault

**THIRD HONORS**  
Samuel Choleva, Kylie Collazo, Tyler Girard, Braden Hurlburt, Elijah Miller-Chamberlin, Cameron Smarr, Azariah Stebbins, Leon Tomas Mejia, Steven Velasquez Berdugo

**– Grade 7 –**

**FIRST HONORS**  
Kaylee Adamski, Lucas Black, Noah Blanchard, Santiago Buri Rosales, Connor Glennon, Ellis Holmes, Lilyana Jette, Adelaide Kolakoski, Tyler Newton, Asiah Parker, Myaa Reed, Viviana Rosa, Taylor-Marie Scanlon, Bethany Whitney

**SECOND HONORS**  
Max Briere, Davis Burnett, Bryan Cordero Lopez, Matthew Guilbault, Colby Hebert, Ella Larouche, Adrianna Lemerise-Reinking, Austin Platek, Axel Richardson, Jayden Weber, Owen Zilinski

**THIRD HONORS**  
Kamden Keene, Ameliya Laramie-LaClaire, Romeo Ruiz Scott, Autumn Thornton, Kevin Tomas Mejia, Maximus Tucker

**– Grade 8 –**

**FIRST HONORS**  
Kenzie Alicea, Sato Bazemore, Shelby Beck, Jameson Betters, David Chagnon, Kairi Chubb, Allan Cordero Lopez, Grady Deery, Joseph Disciullo, Everett Eichorn, Samuel Eichorn, Reese Ewell, Ameliya Galbraith, Madison Haight, Alaina Halla, Jonathan Holmes, William Hutchison, Bennett Lanoue, Carter Leete, Addison Lively, Trevor Lyons, Ashton Marshall, Chase Maynard, Braeden Moore, Lynx Petraccia, Nicole Porter, Scarlett Pouliot, Emmett Spriggs, Kendra Steiner, Ava Taylor, Keith Warger, Landon Warger, Olivia Wolbach, Chloe Wonsay, Kamden Zagame

**SECOND HONORS**  
Jakira Leno

**THIRD HONORS**  
Brayden Archambault, Sawyer Cadran, Cameryn Carner, Isabel Cottrell-Bouchard, Kourtney Cummings, Jackson Day, Kayahna Eaton Soto, James Edson, Jazzylyn Gonzalez, Hannah Holst, Kylee Jenks, Weston Jones, Jocelyn Ovalle Roblero, Connor Pacheco, Vinicio Palazzo, Evalynn Parra, Genesis Pereira, Edward Walsh

**– Grade 9 –**

**FIRST HONORS**  
Rachel Juarbe, Gianna Marigliano, Layla Mathieu, Leo Reiber, Kaya Shipley-Aja, Brayden Slauenwhite, Addison Talbot

**SECOND HONORS**  
Jonathan Ainsworth, Trinitii Barre, Johnny Bartolon, Jacob Broga, Ethan Damkoehler, Keira Feeley, Julian Kaiser, Ophelia Little, Evelina Parpalov, Brianna Preston, Kimberly Ramirez Martin, Rain Sanborn, Stella Shipley-Aja, Brayden Sloan, Marketa Vachula-Curtis, Derek Wilson

**THIRD HONORS**  
Patrick Andrews, Yashiro Bagen, Davian Bala, John Burt, Caeden Cottrell-Bouchard, Robert Goff, Ivy Lopez, Angel Ruiz Scott, Paige Simmons, Llewyn Toomajian, Thomas Underwood

**– Grade 10 –**

**FIRST HONORS**  
Michael Berdugo, Jackson Cogswell, Ella DeLorenzo, Lily DeLorenzo, Ethan Eichorn, Elsee Galvez Martin, Cameron Johnson, Allister Kolakoski, Noah Kolodziej, Vaughn LaValley, Shayly Martin Ovalle, Janelle Massey, Yolvin Ovalle Mejia, Mario Pareja, Catherine Salls, Khalifa Seck, Nathaniel Trinque, Michael Waite, Naomi Wilson-Hill

**SECOND HONORS**  
Trinity Davis, Kai Dennett, Madisyn Dietz, Rojelio Galvez Mendez, Brody Girard, Alexander Golembeski, Clara Guidaboni, Michaela Klempner-Siano, Curtis Kretchmar, Estes Lemerise-Reinking, Cole Marshall, John O'Malley, David Ortiz, John Ramirez Martin, Kainen Stevens, Alexis Truesdell

**THIRD HONORS**  
Moises Borrays Velasquez, London Ferrer, Christopher Hall, Ciana James, Caleb Lincoln, Alejandra Morales Gonzalez, Oliver Norwood, Kevin Perez Cueto, Yelisabel Perez de Leon, Jenna Sanford, Jessica Therrien, Christopher Ulloa Abarua, Abigail Wickline

**– Grade 11 –**

**FIRST HONORS**  
Marilyn Abarua Corona, Samantha Carr, Tatiana Carr-Williams, Elliot Cook, Ripley Dresser, Pamela Gomez, Kiharieliex Huertas Hernandez, Kailey James-Putnam, Madison Liimatainen, Mia Marigliano, Sofia Moreno, Bricelidy Ovalle Perez, Gary Smith, Ledwin Villafana Abarua

**SECOND HONORS**  
Darrian Burnett, Ella Guidaboni, Zane Niedzielski, Sheni Ovalle Roblero, Gabriel Page, Alexander Quezada Abarua, Elizabeth Reipold

**THIRD HONORS**  
Cameron Anderson, Teagan Lavallee-Finch, Linnea Macek, Anthony Prizio, David Therrien

**– Grade 12 –**

**FIRST HONORS**  
Ian Bastarache, Kamryn Berry, Grayson Bowse, Michael Boyle, Cameron Burnett, Noah DeLorenzo, Kyleigh Dobosz, Jaade Duncan, Fiona Hutchison, Syna Katsoulis, Anne Kolodziej, Ella Kolodziej, Audrey Lapinski, Cody McDonough, Joseph Mosca, Jacob Norwood, Ayleen Ovalle Perez, Dalver Perez, Ricky Pareja, Raygan Pendriss, Madison Sanders, Deven Sloan, Avery Tela, Jack Trombi, Isabella Vachula-Curtis

**SECOND HONORS**  
Kiri Corbin, Elliot Cox, Taylor Greene, Katelyn Grise, Logan Johnson, Aiden Kelly, Owen LaValley, Megan Leveille, Jasmine McNamara, Ella O'Keefe, Jacob Reich, Dylen Richardson, Geovannie Shand

**THIRD HONORS**  
Otilia Bartolon, Khrystynalyn Gomez Thorne, Regan Marshall

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## MEDICINE

# Obesity and Intermittent Fasting

By CATHERINE DODDS, MD

**TURNERS FALLS** – Over the past few decades, obesity has become an increasingly common and serious public health problem. Prevalence of obesity in the US reached 42% in 2020, up from 30.5% in 2000. This reflects tens of millions of people who developed obesity during the past 25 years.

Obesity is more common among Black and Hispanic individuals compared to White and Asian individuals. Obesity rates are highest among adults aged 40 to 59, but rates are similar (around 40% to 45%) for all adult age ranges, and obesity also affects nearly 20% of children in the most recent population-wide data.

This increase in obesity is scary, but in hindsight it's not really surprising based on how our lives have changed during this time period. Up until around 25 years ago, it was easier to maintain a healthy weight in the United States. Few people had home computers or mobile phones, TV shows were limited in availability, food portions were smaller and foods were less processed, advertising for food was less frequent and less targeted, and more people worked and played outside and were more physically active throughout their day.

These changes are causing worsening health, after over a century of prior public health gains.

When we eat three meals a day, and especially when we also snack outside of meal times, and then spend most of our time either sitting or sleeping, we're meeting our metabolic energy needs directly from those frequently consumed calories and never getting around to burning our existing stored fat. When we consume more calories than we need, even more fat gets stored.

And that stored fat makes us sick. Medical conditions that have been linked to obesity include heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and cancer. Medical costs related to obesity in the US are estimated at \$175 billion per year, or around \$1,800 more per person per year for someone with obesity than for a person of the same age who maintains a healthy weight.

Many approaches are used for the treatment of obesity, and in general, a combination of approaches is best. Treatments for obesity include eating plans, exercise regimens, high-quality sleep routines, adequate hydration, stress management, medications, and surgical procedures. These treatments are all aimed at maintaining a healthy weight as defined for an individual person.

While BMI – the ratio between

a person's height and weight – is a simple and therefore widely used way to define obesity, not all people will be healthy at a particular pre-defined BMI, so other measures such as waist circumference, body fat percentage, insulin resistance, visceral fat, and cardiovascular endurance should also be factored into one's healthy weight.

Today's medical feature will focus on a particular eating plan known as *intermittent fasting*. Intermittent fasting describes a pattern of eating that reduces overall calorie intake by restricting the time during which calories are consumed.

This differs from a standard low-calorie diet, in which a goal number, such as 1,200 calories, are eaten per day. It also differs from specific food diets such as a low-fat, Atkins (low-carb), paleo, or ketogenic diet. With intermittent fasting, the restriction is on the time of eating, not specific foods or calorie goals.

However, a regular balanced diet such as the Mediterranean diet – leafy green vegetables, healthy fats, lean proteins, and complex, unrefined carbohydrates – should still be followed. None of us are likely to lose weight or be healthy if we consume large amounts of processed junk foods with high fat, salt, and sugar content, even if we're eating only once a day, during a limited time period.

The theory behind intermittent fasting is that humans evolved to have times of feast and famine – times when food was readily available, and times when our ancestors would go hungry. Whether recreating this pattern in modern society leads to better health remains controversial, but intermittent fasting has been gaining in popularity during the past 10 to 15 years due to its relative safety and effectiveness.

There are two basic approaches to intermittent fasting:

1) **Alternate-day, or 5:2, fasting.** In these patterns, eating varies between "feast days" – eating a usual but not excessive amount of calories – and "fast days," eating no calories, or else eating one small meal that has up to 25% of usual daily calories. In alternate-day fasting, feast and fast days vary every other day. With a 5:2 pattern, one eats regularly five days per week, and eats only 500 calories on two other, non-consecutive, days per week.

2) **Time-restricted eating.** All calorie intake occurs during a restricted period of time, usually six to 10 hours. For example, the 16:8 plan involves consuming all planned calories for the day during an eight-hour stretch and then fasting for the remaining 16 hours each day. This could look like eating only

between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., with no calorie intake after 4 p.m. until the following morning at 8 a.m.. This pattern is essentially skipping one meal daily, but also eliminating any snacks or calorie-containing drinks during the fasting time.

For any eating plan approach that includes fasting, plenty of water – or other minimal-calorie, unsweetened drinks such as black coffee or black tea – should be consumed throughout the day to prevent dehydration. Longer periods without food, such as 48 hours or longer with no calorie intake, are not healthy and can be dangerous. Going too long without eating can trigger the body to actually start storing *more* fat as hormone signals change in response to starvation.

Intermittent fasting has been shown to cause a 3% to 8% overall weight loss from baseline during a 12-week study period, which is considered a moderate reduction in body weight. This level of weight loss is similar to other types of low-calorie diets, so intermittent fasting is one approach to help individuals reduce their calorie intake, but it's certainly not the only way.

Intermittent fasting has been shown to reduce inflammation and insulin resistance. It's generally safe and well-tolerated, though studies of prolonged fasting – such as religious fasts during which one only eats once per day for a month – show an increased rate of migraine headaches during the initial days of fasting, with over 50% of migraine sufferers reporting a headache on the first day of fasting, though headaches were less frequent after 10 days of fasting.

In addition, patients who have been diagnosed with fatty liver disease should not skip breakfast as part of their eating plan, as this has been shown to increase risk of death from heart disease. Certain groups of people including children, pregnant or breastfeeding women, people with diabetes, and people with a history of eating disorders should use caution and consult with their healthcare provider when considering fasting as a part of their eating plan.

Like all forms of calorie restriction, intermittent fasting is only effective for maintaining healthy weight if the eating plan is continued long-term, but unfortunately it can be difficult to get started with fasting. It can take up to four weeks for the body to get accustomed to intermittent fasting, and hunger, crankiness, and mood swings are a common experience while adjusting to the new schedule.

In my anecdotal experience from working in primary care clinics, people who are able to make it through the initial adjustment period tend to

## FRONTIERS

# Comparing Energy Storage Technologies

By SPENCER SHORKEY

**MILLERS FALLS** – As Massachusetts transitions to wind and solar power generation, there is a need for more energy storage assets in order to fully utilize these intermittent power sources. There is mounting pressure and disagreement on which energy storage assets should be deployed, and how.

Traditional methods, like the hydroelectric storage at the Northfield Mountain Pump Station (NMPS), have been the backbone of energy storage over the past century. Hydroelectric power stations, however, are well known for impacts on their environments, and their growth potential is limited by suitable geography.

Chemical energy storage encompasses a wide range of systems, including lithium and sodium ion electrochemical batteries, and iron-air and iron-flow reduction-oxidation ("red-ox") systems.

The economics of energy storage in general hinges on the ability to buy electrical power at low prices during periods of over-supply, and sell most of it back at higher prices during peak demand. All energy storage methods suffer from some amount of energy loss.

The hydroelectric storage at NMPS has reported an average storage and transmission – so called "round-trip" – efficiency of 74%. Chemical energy storage, such as lithium and sodium ion batteries, can have efficiencies of 90% or better. Iron-rust based red-ox systems have relatively lower efficiencies of between 40% to 70%.

Though it is difficult to estimate the development costs for new hydroelectric storage, they are likely to be well over \$1,000 per kilowatt-hour (kWh). Utility-scale lithium battery projects in the state, meanwhile, have cost around \$300 to \$400 per kWh. Oregon company ESS Tech and Massachusetts-based Form Energy are both developing iron-rust red-ox systems, targeting \$25 and \$20 per kWh respectively.

Besides efficiency and cost, there

are the issues of discharge rates and energy density. Rates are compared by dividing a facility's maximum generation rate in watts (W) by its total storage capacity in watt-hours (Wh); the resulting factor being known as the "C" for short.

The NMPS, for example, has a discharge rating of 1,168 megawatt (MW), and a total capacity of 8,725 megawatt-hours (MWh), meaning NMPS operates at 0.13 C while discharging. New Leaf Energy's proposed project in Wendell would be 105 MW, and store an estimated 420 MWh, making it a 0.25 C project.

Energy density, meanwhile, is a way to think of the land use allocation for a given amount of storage. NMPS's upper reservoir sits on 300 acres, yielding a density of 29 MWh per acre, while New Leaf's batteries would sit on about 10 acres, making it a 42 MWh per acre project.

Comparing these with emerging technologies, ESS Tech is currently building an iron-flow battery system in Davis, California which will be a 200 MW, 2,000 MWh facility, a 0.1 C rated battery. Form Energy is building a 10 MW, 1,000 MWh, 0.01 C rated iron-air battery in Becker, Minnesota. ESS's system will achieve a density of 90 MWh per acre, while Form Energy's system will fit 200 MWh per acre.

An ever-expanding array of energy storage technologies is in development, and the best ones will rise to the top in the coming decades as their competitive advantages and appropriate niches become clear. For example, new cold-hardy and high-efficiency sodium ion battery modules could be deployed at existing solar installations, to carry the day's energy into the night at a high efficiency. It might similarly make sense to place iron red-ox batteries – less efficient, but cheaper – near offshore wind terminals in order to store excess wind power that might otherwise be wasted.

Other energy storage technologies to keep an eye on include liquid hydrogen, compressed air, carbon ultracapacitors, and thermal storage in sand.

stick with the intermittent fasting eating plan for months or even years, in large part because they notice that they feel so much better. By changing their habits, they make lower calorie intake the new normal for their bodies. While data about the long-term effects of intermittent fasting are limited, overall it seems to be a

safe and effective eating plan to help maintain a healthy weight.

If you have questions about intermittent fasting, or the management of obesity, please consult with your healthcare provider. A licensed dietitian or nutritionist can also be a good resource, when available.

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# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



looking forward...

### THURSDAY, MAY 2

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

### FRIDAY, MAY 3

Sadie's Bikes, Turners Falls: *13th Gumball Machine Take-over* feat. *Casper Lucia, bobbie*. Free; bring quarters. 5 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Drew Paton*. No cover. 6:30 p.m.

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.

Unnameable 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.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Sgraffito Kill, Showgirl, Wax Input*. \$ 8:30 p.m.

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

### SUNDAY, MAY 5

The Drake, Amherst: *Orchid, Sinaloa, Thou, I Have No*

*Mouth*. \$ 8 p.m.

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

### TUESDAY, MAY 7

Nova Arts, Keene: *Flock of Dimes*. \$ 7 p.m.

### WEDNESDAY, MAY 8

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Falltown String Band*. \$ 8 p.m.

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.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Vinyl Night*, hosted by Breakdown Records. \$ 9 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.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls:

*Mystic Warrior*. \$ 9:30 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.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Karaoke*. \$ 9 p.m.

### TUESDAY, MAY 14

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

### WEDNESDAY, MAY 15

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Wes Brown and Friends*. \$ 8 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, Kate Lee, Wes Buckley*. \$ 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.  
Nova Arts, Keene: *The Messethetics, Marc Ribot, Prefuse 73, Wadada Leo Smith, Jim White/Marisa Anderson duo, Myriam Gendron, Forbes Graham*, more. \$ 2 p.m.

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

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Satisfaction, Rolling Stones* tribute. \$ 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Vimana, The Fawns, DJ Andujar*. \$ 8 p.m.

Ashfield Lake House, Ashfield: *Stoner Will & the Narks, Cowperson*. \$ 8 p.m.

### SATURDAY, MAY 18

Nova Arts, Keene: *Earth, J. Pavone String Ensemble, The Huntress and Holder of Hands, Sunburned Hand of the Man, The Leafies You Gave Me*, more. \$ 2:30 p.m.

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

Mt. Toby Friends Meetinghouse, Leverett: *Antje Duvokot*. \$ 7 p.m.

Cold Spring Hollow, Belchertown: *SickFit, Rear Window, Brujo, Taxidermists, Swamp God*. \$ 8 p.m.

### SATURDAY, MAY 18

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Abysal, King Bastard, Necrelant, Warm*. \$ 8 p.m.

### FRIDAY, MAY 24

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Home Body, Roost, World, bobbie*. \$ 8 p.m.

### SATURDAY, MAY 25

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

### FRIDAY, MAY 31

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

### SATURDAY, JUNE 8

1794 Meetinghouse, New Salem: *Rani Arbo & daisy mayhem*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

### SUNDAY, JUNE 23

Lunder Center, Williamstown: *Garcia Peoples, Mountain Movers*. Free. 5 p.m.

### TUESDAY, JUNE 25

Treehouse Brewing, Deerfield: *Silversun Pickups*. \$ 8 p.m.

### SATURDAY, JUNE 29

Dream Away Lodge, Becket: *Rick Maguire (of Pile), All Feels*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

### TUESDAY, JULY 23

Tanglewood, Lenox: *Beck with the Boston Pops*. \$ 7 p.m.



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**COMMON HALL** from B1 both cosmetically and functionally. At the top of our wish list is our desire to make the building more accessible. As the parent of a mobility-impaired daughter, I understand how important it is that buildings be accessible. However, in this case, it's not as simple as installing a ramp. The landing needs to be reworked, and the driveway and parking area need a complete overhaul so that someone can park and get from their car to where a ramp would start.

A new member of the Board is a professional landscape designer and has been developing a plan for the Common Hall's specific needs, but the extensive nature of the work involved means it will not be cheap to implement this plan.

Looking ahead, the Board is also aware that the building's furnace is 50 years old and may need replacement at any time. We're hoping to eventually install mini-splits that can heat the building in tandem with the furnace, but in a more environmentally friendly way. A dedicated dehumidification system is needed for the basement, which tends to be wet, bringing an excess of moisture into the entire building.

It seems almost impossible to imagine raising the necessary funds to do these projects, all of which have big price tags associated with them. So how will it happen? Can it happen?

I've learned that, by prioritizing needs and proceeding step by step and with patience, more has been possible than I could have imagined. Our devoted treasurer Chris Wise continues to seek out and apply for more grants. Support from the surrounding community has been enormous in terms of financial contributions, as well as volunteering at work days. In fact, without the support of the local community, the Common Hall would not sur-



The onetime Unitarian church, and onetime Grange hall, is now run by a non-profit as a space for the whole community.

vive in its present form.

And it's undeniable that the Common Hall is fortunate to have many local supporters who have the financial wherewithal to contribute to the Hall's ongoing needs. Not all community and arts centers in our area are as fortunate.

What have I learned from my experience on the Board? First, our community centers are local treasures, vulnerable and needing much support. Second, devotion and hard work is required to keep these centers open, and financial

support is particularly important.

So I'd like to urge everyone to do whatever they can to support their local community centers. And if you haven't ever been to the Montague Common Hall, come by for an open mic, a family square dance, a swing dance or other event. (Keep an eye on the *Local Briefs* column on Page A3.) If you're already a fan of the Common Hall, come to a work day or consider donating something toward one of the exciting projects mentioned above.

Tip of the week ...

With more people outside during the warmer weather, please exercise extra caution while driving and watch out for children, runners, bicyclists, and motorcyclists. Remember to look twice and save a life.



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**PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**

## May 19: Center for New Americans Showcase Returns to Shea Theater

**TURNERS FALLS** – *Immigrant Voices: A Celebration of Arts* returns to the Shea Theater Arts Center in Turners Falls on Sunday, May 19 at 7 p.m. The event, a fundraiser for Center for New Americans, highlights the diversity of artistic traditions represented by immigrants in Western Massachusetts.

This year's performances include dances from Zimbabwe, Afghanistan, Cameroon, Ukraine, and Nepal, poems read in Spanish and English, and songs from Haiti, El Salvador, Belarus, and Cameroon.

This year's performers range from teenage dancers who are newcomers to this showcase to veteran performers who seem to have been born on stage. Biani, who studied English and became a US citizen with support from Center for New Americans, returns this year as one of the show hosts. She has taken on the added role of director and stage manager, positioning dancers and coaching singers.

At a tech rehearsal in April, students appreciated

seeing one of their career advisors, a native of Argentina, take the stage to read a poem. Several students arrived in traditional dress, including a student from Afghanistan.

Christopher "Monte" Belmonte, president of the Shea Theater Arts Center board, says he envisions the Shea Theater as a community performance space. Center for New Americans has helped to fulfill this mission every year for the past eight years by filling the theater with a broad cross-section of community members who appreciate music and dance from around the world.

Performers may be tentative learners in class, but they are experts in their own culture on stage, and reflect the community's tremendous diversity.

Tickets are priced at \$10 and can be purchased in advance through Center for New Americans' website, [www.cnam.org](http://www.cnam.org). Additional donations create a bank of extra tickets for students, performers, and their families.

**Montague Community Television News**

## Rollers & Bathers

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

**TURNERS FALLS** – The Solar Rollers were riding and singing and rallying all over the place on Saturday, April 20, and we have a near-complete collection of their speeches and performances, from Greenfield's Court Square to Unity Park at the Great Falls, all the way up to Northfield.

We also have an "off-campus" video from a special performance in Maine featuring locals Kurt Weisman and Ruth Garbus, as well as Toronto band Bernice, playing music by candlelight in a beautiful bathroom. If you have videos from here or anywhere that you want to share with your community, please do!

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 [infomontaguetelevision@gmail.com](mailto:infomontaguetelevision@gmail.com) for a link to the Zoom.

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

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