

The Montague Reporter

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\$2

editor@montaguereporter.org

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

montaguereporter.org

Dam on Wendell Brook On Track for Removal

By SARAH ROBERTSON

WENDELL – Last week the Wendell conservation commission granted a variance that will permit the removal of the Bowens Pond dam, a private project backed by state funds that will drain the pond and restore continuity to the upper-most section of Osgood Brook.

Despite the unanimous vote, con com chair Ward Smith told the Re-

porter that it was a fraught decision.

“I don’t think anybody was happy about this decision, because I think everyone saw that there were two sides to this project,” Smith said. “We understand it’s for the trout, we understand restoring stream flows, but we also understand that it’s a fully functioning ecosystem right now as it is.”

Osgood Brook, a coldwater see **DAM** page A6

‘We Need to Start Thinking About’ General Strike, Says Congressman



Jim McGovern, the region’s representative in the US House of Representatives, told a crowd of 750 residents Tuesday night that the leverage in Congress to counter the Trump administration is currently limited, and recommended “out-of-the-box” strategies.

By MIKE JACKSON

GREENFIELD – Speaking at a packed town hall event at Greenfield Middle School on Tuesday evening, US representative Jim McGovern said he was “worried and anxious” about the Trump administration’s ongoing transformation of the federal government and “frustrated” with Democratic senators who backed down last week from a filibuster of a continuing budget resolution.

“There is no time to sugarcoat what’s going on in this country,” McGovern, who represents Massachusetts’s 2nd Congressional District and until this winter chaired

the House’s powerful Rules Committee, declared.

To an audience that largely agreed, he advised that critics of the administration should improve their communication strategies, reach out to influence voters in swing Congressional districts, prepare to use a budget reconciliation package in May as a point of leverage – and beyond that, to “start thinking about out-of-the box ideas, like a general strike.”

This suggestion brought resounding cheers from the auditorium, though when one member of the public later informed him that a general strike was currently being

see **THINKING** page A4

Salvadoran Eatery Soon Expanding to Avenue A



Cocina Lupita co-owners Josh Breitner (left) and Aleyda Romero are seeking donations to set up a second location, but say the opportunity was too good to pass.

By MIKE JACKSON

TURNERS FALLS – The storefront at 125 Avenue A, empty since last summer, is coming back to life this spring as a second location for a business many locals are already familiar with, the Greenfield-based Salvadoran restaurant Cocina Lupita.

Co-owners Aleyda Romero and Josh Breitner told the Reporter this

week that they are “trying to get open as quick as we can,” but don’t have much set aside to invest in the expansion, so a fundraiser is underway to defray the startup costs.

“We’re doing it on a shoestring,” Breitner said. “We’ve relied on community support since Day One.”

Day One was back in June 2020, early in the pandemic, when see **EXPANDING** page A5

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

No Housing Rehab Funds In Next Block Grant Round

By JEFF SINGLETON

At its meeting Monday, the Montague selectboard approved an application for a new round of federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. Brian McHugh of the regional housing authority, which administers the block grants for the town, said the maximum amount the town may apply for had been reduced this year from \$950,000 to \$850,000.

As a result the application will not include grants for low-income housing rehabilitation, as is the norm, but only streetscape improvements in Turners Falls and human services programs.

Originating in the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), CDBG funds are channeled through the states – in Massachusetts’s case, the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities.

The vote on the grant, which came after a public hearing, capped off a very brief meeting in which the town also renewed the lease for the Colle building in downtown Turners Falls, agreed to participate in a program evaluating the potential for

see **MONTAGUE** page A7

SCENE REPORT

McGovern Also Headlined Day Of ‘Peace, Love, and Protest’

By BEN GAGNON

TURNERS FALLS – In a fiery speech at Shea Theater last Saturday, US Representative Jim McGovern suggested a countrywide “general strike” may be necessary if president Donald Trump continues to “bulldoze through our democracy.”

About 55 people turned up at 1 p.m. to hear McGovern kick off the annual Mud Season music festival, organized by local musician Dave Bulley and billed as a day of “peace, love and protest.” Bulley asked each

of the 10 bands to include protest songs in their set list; six played on the main stage and four entertained in the lobby until 11 p.m.

“‘Peace, love, and protest’ is not just a slogan, it’s a road map,” began McGovern, a Democrat who represents Massachusetts’s 2nd Congressional District. “Music and protest have always been intertwined. In so many fights for justice, music has been the soundtrack of resistance. It lifts us when we’re tired and it reminds us we’re not alone. Anger

see **HEADLINED** page A6



Three days before his Greenfield town hall, McGovern boned his stump speech – including a suggestion of a general strike – before a small crowd at the Shea Theater.

Competitive Races Loom In Montague

By REPORTER STAFF

MONTAGUE – The deadline to take out nomination papers for this spring’s town election is Monday, March 31, and the deadline to return them is Tuesday, April 1. Not all residents who take out papers end up running, but it is often an early public indication of candidacy.

Two races in Montague might be competitive this year. For three seats on the Library Trustees, five residents have taken out papers: incumbent Will Quale, Susan Dorais, Tamara Kaplan, Ronald Michonski, and Jamie Simpson.

And Chris Boutwell, running for a sixth term on the selectboard, so far may face two challengers: Joshua Bell of Turnpike Road, and Edward Voudren of Stevens Street, a former Montague police officer and highway department clerk who served on the board from 1997 to 2003.

Con Com Updated on Farm’s Hard Road Ahead

By WILL QUALE

MONTAGUE – Last Thursday, March 13, Montague’s conservation commission heard a detailed presentation on erosion control measures to be taken on a small bridge project in Montague Center, and discussed with the project’s engineer and an abutting resident how potential damage to the wetland would be avoided. The commission also considered a power company’s offer to compensate the town in advance for tree work that may impact other wetlands.

But most members of the audience came to hear the commission respond to recent news about another wetlands site, where tree work carried out without such consultation apparently caused extensive erosion

see **FARM** page A8

Wasteful and Unproven Equinox Canceled

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OPEN LETTER

Letter from a Palestinian Political Prisoner in Louisiana

By MAHMOUD KHALIL

PINE PRAIRIE, LOUISIANA

– My name is Mahmoud Khalil and I am a political prisoner. I am writing to you from a detention facility in Louisiana where I wake to cold mornings and spend long days bearing witness to the quiet injustices underway against a great many people precluded from the protections of the law.

Who has the right to have rights? It is certainly not the humans crowded into the cells here. It isn't the Senegalese man I met who has been deprived of his liberty for a year, his legal situation in limbo and his family an ocean away. It isn't the 21-year-old detainee I met, who stepped foot in this country at age nine, only to be deported without so much as a hearing.

Justice escapes the contours of this nation's immigration facilities.

On March 8, I was taken by DHS agents who refused to provide a warrant, and accosted my wife and me as we returned from dinner. By now, the footage of that night has been made public. Before I knew what was happening, agents handcuffed and forced me into an unmarked car. At that moment, my only concern was for Noor's safety. I had no idea if she would be taken too, since the agents had threatened to arrest her for not leaving my side.

DHS would not tell me anything for hours – I did not know the cause of my arrest or if I was facing im-

mediate deportation. At 26 Federal Plaza, I slept on the cold floor. In the early morning hours, agents transported me to another facility in Elizabeth, New Jersey. There, I slept on the ground and was refused a blanket despite my request.

My arrest was a direct consequence of exercising my right to free speech as I advocated for a free Palestine and an end to the genocide in Gaza, which resumed in full force Monday night. With January's ceasefire now broken, parents in Gaza are once again cradling too-small shrouds, and families are forced to weigh starvation and displacement against bombs. It is our moral imperative to persist in the struggle for their complete freedom.

I was born in a Palestinian refugee camp in Syria to a family which has been displaced from their land since the 1948 Nakba. I spent my youth in proximity to, yet distant from, my homeland. But being Palestinian is an experience that transcends borders. I see in my circumstances similarities to Israel's use of administrative detention – imprisonment without trial or charge – to strip Palestinians of their rights.

I think of our friend Omar Khatib, who was incarcerated without charge or trial by Israel as he returned home from travel. I think of Gaza hospital director and pediatrician Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya, who was taken captive by the Israeli military on December 27 and remains in an Israeli torture camp today. For



Montague resident Lee Evers, 102, is happy to look into the creases of anyone's palm and give a reading about their life at the St. Kaz club in Turners Falls. He's there on Thursdays, generally, when he feels up to it. He has written a few memoirs, too. I'm currently reading Bronx Boy Goes to War, about how he almost died nine times during WWII, but he has also written a "marital wisdom kit" titled How to Be a Happy Husband. Find them online – or buy one from Evers at the bar!

Palestinians, imprisonment without due process is commonplace.

I have always believed that my duty is not only to liberate myself from the oppressor, but also to liberate my oppressors from their hatred and fear. My unjust detention is indicative of the anti-Palestinian racism that both the Biden and Trump administrations have demonstrated over the past 16 months as the US has continued to supply Israel with weapons to kill Palestinians and prevented international intervention. For decades, anti-Palestinian racism has driven efforts to expand US laws and practices that are used to violently repress Palestinians, Arab Americans, and other communities. That is precisely why I am being targeted.

While I await legal decisions that hold the futures of my wife and child in the balance, those who enabled my targeting remain comfortably at Columbia University. Presidents Shafik, Armstrong, and Dean Yarhi-Milo laid the groundwork for the US government to target me by arbitrarily disciplining pro-Palestinian students and allowing viral doxing campaigns – based on racism and disinformation – to go unchecked.

Columbia targeted me for my activism, creating a new authoritarian disciplinary office to bypass due process and silence students criticizing Israel. Columbia surrendered to federal pressure by disclosing student records to Congress and yielding to the Trump administration's latest threats. My arrest, the expulsion or suspension of at least 22 Columbia students – some stripped of their BA degrees just weeks before graduation – and the expulsion of SWC President Grant Miner on the eve of contract negotiations, are clear examples.

If anything, my detention is a testament to the strength of the student movement in shifting public opinion toward Palestinian liberation. Students have long been at the forefront of change – leading the charge against the Vietnam War, standing on the frontlines of the civil rights movement, and driving the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. Today, too, even if the public has yet to fully grasp it, it is students who steer us toward truth and justice.

The Trump administration is targeting me as part of a broader strategy to suppress dissent. Visa-holders, green-card carriers, and citizens

alike will all be targeted for their political beliefs. In the weeks ahead, students, advocates, and elected officials must unite to defend the right to protest for Palestine. At stake are not just our voices, but the fundamental civil liberties of all.

Knowing fully that this moment transcends my individual circumstances, I hope nonetheless to be free to witness the birth of my first-born child.

Mahmoud Khalil is a recent graduate of Columbia University and lawful permanent US resident held without charges by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in apparent retaliation for political speech.

This statement was dictated over the phone from ICE detention Tuesday, March 18, 2025 and released publicly by his legal team.

On Wednesday a federal district court judge in New York ruled that the legal case seeking to rule Khalil's arrest unconstitutional will not be dismissed, that he is to remain in the country while the case is pending, and that the case should be moved to New Jersey, where he was being held when it was initially filed.



SHROUDED

"The Spring freshet roars through the Taintor gates in the Gill side of the Turners Falls Dam," reader and local photo-documentarian Ed Gregory writes of this image.

"The water turbulence along with the warm weather condition brings the clouds down low and offers an ethereal look at a familiar location in our area. Samoset Island's tree canopy is shrouded in the mist."

Ed took this photo at 9:34 a.m. on Sunday morning. For a view of the river last Friday, see Page B1.

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PHONE: (413) 863-8666

EMAIL:

editor@montaguereporter.org
ads@montaguereporter.org
bills@montaguereporter.org
subscriptions@montaguereporter.org
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Compiled by NINA ROSSI

This Saturday, March 22 at 1 p.m., No Assault & Batteries and the Wendell State Forest Alliance are sponsoring a **walk in the woods to celebrate the last of winter** and the beginnings of spring. Participants can get better acquainted with some of the “non-voting residents” of the Wendell woods, and according to the notice, the guides “will be exploring some of the ways organisms manage to deal with winter conditions and prepare to burst forth in the spring.”

The walk will be led by naturalists Adam Kohl and Bill Stubblefield, and it is free, with donations encouraged to support the sponsoring groups. Gather at the Wendell State Forest Headquarters on Montague Road in Wendell. The rain date is Saturday, March 29.

This weekend, six new exhibits open at the **Brattleboro Museum & Art Center**, with a party at 5 p.m. on Saturday, March 22 featuring music by DJ Okyn, food by Amaru Gourmet, and a cash bar.

The biennial “Glasstastic” show features imaginary creatures dreamed up by kids in grades K through 6, brought to life by professional glass artists from throughout New England. The 21 creatures showcased in this seventh edition of Glasstastic were selected from among more than 1,000 submissions received from children all across the US.

The other exhibits include drawings by Danish illustrator, writer, and film director John Kenn Mortensen; contemporary Ukrainian folk art; a retrospective of work by Guyanese-born, Brooklyn-based artist Carl E. Hazlewood; paintings and sculptures by Yeon Ji Yoo; and the wildly creative, not-easily-categorized artwork of 92-year-old Brattleboro resident Nye Ffarrabas, who was once at the center of the Fluxus movement in New York City.

For more information, see brattleboromuseum.org.

Learn the basics about why and how to get started **planting native plants in your yard** this Sunday, March 23 from 11 a.m. to noon at the Erving Public Library. The announcement says Joyce Demuth’s informational talk comes “with a side of enthusiasm and encouragement.”

Demuth owns Checkerspot, a native plant nursery in Colrain, and has created a curriculum about native plants for younger students in grades K through 7 that is available for free online at fivehundredyardfieldtrip.com.

Make some **tiny books to hold your favorite haiku poems** at the Discovery Center in Turners Falls this Sunday, March 23 from 1 and 3:30 p.m. Denise Fontaine-Pincince will teach you how, using materials she will supply – just bring up to five of your

favorite haikus.

This workshop is designed for adults and young adults ages 16 and up, and registration is required: call the Carnegie Library at (413) 863-3214.

Astronaut Cady Coleman will share visuals from the International Space Station, along with stories from her book, *Sharing Space, An Astronaut’s Guide to Mission, Wonder and Making Change*, at Smith College’s Weinstein Auditorium next Wednesday, March 26 at 7 p.m. Steve Thomas will provide live musical accompaniment during the cinematic and educational presentation, which is touring under the moniker “Earth Music Theater Live.”

The event is free, and the public is invited.

Pick up a shopping bag full of art supplies for \$5 at the ArtSpace Community Art Center’s clean-out sale and fundraiser next Saturday, March 29, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. You can find paint, colored pencils, paper, fabric, yarn, art books, sheet music, and more.

The funds will go towards building a clay studio at the Greenfield arts center. Find out more about their programs and projects at artspacegreenfield.org.

The Community Action Family Center offers a **learner’s permit study group**, as well as access to driver’s education scholarships, for would-be drivers from Franklin County who are over 21 years old.

The study group starts on Monday, March 31 at 90 Main Street in Greenfield, and childcare and transportation support will be available along with meals during the sessions.

Find out more and apply for a spot online at tinyurl.com/drivehelp123.

Get ready for spring planting with workshops at the **Seeds of Solidarity Farm and Education Center in Orange**. They have 16 workshops scheduled in the near future, starting with a free mini-workshop on April 26 at 10:30 a.m. called “Grow Great Gardens.” During this one-hour event, participants can tour the no-till gardens at the farm as well as fields, greenhouses, and energy-efficient buildings.

Other workshops offer deeper dives into no-till gardening, garden altars, and the American Farmland Trust Soil Stewards program.

There are also **special workshops for women** of all income levels, offered for free or by donation as part of the Women Healing Women Healing Earth initiative. Topics include meditative painting in nature, visible mending, local to global cooking, water dowsing, “fables for a new world,” and more. Space in each is limited and pre-registration is required.

Find out more about all of these offerings at seedsolidarity.org.

“Plots are available at **Wendell Community Garden**,” our reporter Katie Nolan writes. “The garden abuts Wendell Town Offices. The garden receives full sun most of the day, and the soil has proven to be very productive. There’s a solar pump watering system. Garden tools are available.”

The fee is \$10 per plot per year, and applications are available on the Wendell town website. They can be submitted online or mailed to: Wendell Community Garden, Town Offices, 9 Morse Village Road, Wendell 01379. Applications should be submitted by Wednesday, April 30. Katie can be contacted at (978) 544-2306 for any questions.

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

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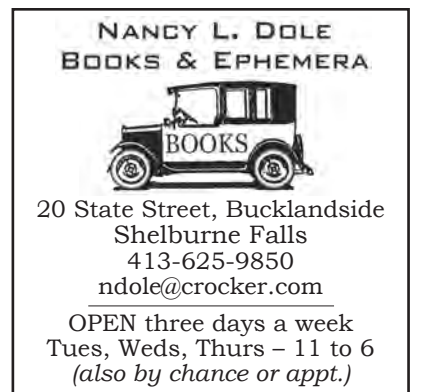
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Walk-In Service



OP ED

The Yard Sign Dilemma: Visible, But Not Performative?

By ALI WICKS-LIM

MONTAGUE CENTER – Maybe you’ve noticed the “Will Work to Stop Hate” signs showing up in Montague Center. Maybe you’ve read a poster at the Bookmill, the post office, or the library about the commitments attached to them. Are you wondering how this happened?

My wife Jeannette and I wrote a guest column in this newspaper in November about the community’s response to some very visible hate speech displayed in town. We were upset that the community appeared to be tolerating the hate. It made us feel unwelcome here.

The first response we received was an acknowledgement that the community’s response had been disappointing, and an invitation to talk. We decided to show up for what felt like a hard conversation with a small group of neighbors we hadn’t met before.

The conversation continued over months; in-person, online, and via email. People wanted to do something, do better. We recognized that the hate signs that appeared in October were a signal of what was to come, and that we as a community needed to think carefully about how we will respond when hate shows

up where we live. We acknowledged that the silence in October and November felt loud.

The conversations weren’t always easy. Some of us felt angry, some felt hurt, some felt confused or conflicted. We listened, at times we pushed back, at times we worked to meet one another. Sometimes we took time to think and center ourselves, and then circled back to one another.



The author is involved in an effort to distribute these yard signs.

At some point the topic of yard signs came up and we struggled a little. Yard signs can feel performative when people see them as the action. It can feel like someone is advertising a set of values they may not be practicing. Ideally yard

signs are symbols of the work you are doing – they are not considered the work itself. On the other hand, they are visible and can signal solidarity and safety.

So we started talking about how to make yard signs non-performative and came up with the idea of attaching commitments to them. We brainstormed and negotiated the commitments, and found four we could all agree on. They were made more powerful by the process that produced them and the people who will hold and amplify them together:

1. I will confront hate speech when I see or hear it and will not make people who promote hate comfortable in my presence.
2. I will actively look for alternatives so that whenever possible I am able to boycott businesses that promote hate.
3. I will think carefully about what it means to make this commitment to my community and how I want to put these commitments into practice.
4. I will talk to my friends, family, and neighbors about what these commitments mean to me.

We hope more people will want the “Will Work to Stop Hate” signs, and that any hate signs that show up will look more and more lost in

the midst of a community signaling that it will not tolerate hate. That feels right.

More importantly, though, there is accountability in placing one of these signs on your lawn. It becomes harder to let a comment pass or keep supporting a business that promotes hate when your neighbors know you’ve made these commitments. It is a call to action, a reminder to all of us that silence is complacency. We like to think it makes it easier for people to speak up.

We are inviting people to join us in setting norms and expectations in this small community. And maybe we’re onto something.

Maybe the way we’re going to get through these years ahead is mapped out in the way these signs got here. It felt vulnerable to write that guest column, and it made all the difference to be met with an acknowledgement and an invitation from a previously unknown neighbor.

When we needed to focus ourselves during hard conversations, we asked questions about what we want it to feel like for targeted people to live here or pass through our town. What about a trans kid coming home from school? What about immigrant, LGBTQIA+, and BIPOC neighbors and friends? There is so much vulnerability right

now. What if we centered the impact of our actions on vulnerable people in every conversation?

We asked ourselves to lean in when some may have wanted to shut down or run away. We found people whose core beliefs allowed us to work together even when our opinions about smaller details might differ. We showed up for hard conversations. We were vulnerable, honest and accountable. We were willing to be uncomfortable and committed to meaningful action and not performative virtue-signaling. We advocated, vigorously at times, and also let things go when it served the work to do so.

And now we are sharing the work so that it can grow.

We may not be changing the world, but we are changing the conversation. This is not the end of the work, it’s just the beginning, but for the first time in a long time it feels good to drive home.

If you would like to join us in these commitments and post a sign in your yard, please call (413) 367-2373 and set up a time to pick one up. We’re asking \$10 per sign to cover the cost of printing, but will waive the fee if it is prohibitive.

Ali Wicks-Lim lives in Montague Center.

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THINKING from page A1

planned on social media, McGovern clarified that the nationwide strike he was envisioning would require "much more planning than the one that's coming up," including "the participation of all the unions."

Tuesday's event was organized by Franklin County Continuing the Political Revolution (FCCPR), a local group that formed after the 2016 Bernie Sanders presidential campaign. Organizers circulated clipboards through the theater inviting residents to sign up for a "rapid response network" to meet anticipated immigration raids, and as he introduced McGovern, FCCPR coordinating committee member David Cohen said the organization was planning to send buses to an April 5 protest rally in Boston.

Cohen also announced that the auditorium was full to capacity at 750. At least 50 or 60 more would be turned away at the door, with some waiting outside and entering an hour or more into the event as attendees trickled out.

"You hear about some elected officials dodging town hall meetings," Cohen said, to laughter from the audience. "We asked the Congressman and he responded immediately, and said he would love to come here."

"I'm urging my colleagues to show up all around the country, because I think it sends a powerful signal when you actually show up at town halls and listen to people," McGovern said as he began opening remarks.

"A lot of people hear the word 'fascism' and they assume it means that everything suddenly all shuts down, or it requires an overt act of violence in order to get there — that somehow daily life stops, that the world stops spinning, and that there's some kind of official moment where democracy stops and fascism starts," he continued.

"But that's not how it works.... You have a slow erosion of rights and norms until democracy gradually, year by year, sometimes month by month, turns into something else. And that is what is happening right now in our country."

"This is the break the glass moment," he warned.

Throughout the town hall event, McGovern praised acts of "resistance" and criticized the impacts of money in elections, but also expressed hope that electoral approaches may bear fruit.

"What we need to do is make these Republicans more afraid of their constituents than [Elon] Musk," he said at one point. "That is possible. If you get four Republicans, four or five Republicans, we can stop this stuff. And there are a number of Republicans that have won their races by less than a percentage point."

Weighing In

Of the 35 members of the public who lined up to ask McGovern questions, only one identified himself as conservative. The majority used the opportunity of speaking into a microphone to offer their own reflections and analyses of the current political moment, sometimes at length.

The dominant tone of the discussion oscillated between enthusiastic support for McGovern, anger at the Trump administration's actions of the past two months, and impatience and frustration with the Dem-



After the event officially ended, McGovern took time to confer with a group that included a number of local high school students, several of whom had stood in line during the town hall but were unable to speak before time ran out.

ocratic Party.

As the event progressed — and as the scheduled end time of 8:30 p.m. approached — the event grew more frantic and chaotic, with seated audience members scolding digressing speakers to "Ask the question!" Connecticut River Conservancy executive director Rebecca Todd said that over \$13 million in federal grant funding her organization oversees has been "frozen" via executive branch impoundment.

"That's not money that's coming to the Connecticut River Conservancy," she said. "That's going throughout Western Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Vermont, helping private landowners to protect and preserve the environment. It's going to contractors for new dams. It's going to engineers. It's going to support our great river, and the great people who rely on the river."

"So we have been hamstrung with funding that was appropriated by Congress well before the new administration, and we need help to be able to get that money out to preserve and protect the Connecticut River. I'm curious what advice you have for us, and how we might help you."

McGovern told Todd he supported her "one million percent," and said thousands of similar stories were playing out around the country. He expressed hope for a judicial branch intervention in the impoundment of funding, but pointed out that "Congress can't file lawsuits against the president."

He added that his own daughter was diagnosed with a rare cancer, currently held at bay by an experimental clinical trial funded by a National Institute of Health.

"If you want to talk about saving money," he said, "polluting our rivers doesn't save money. Cutting back on medical research doesn't save money, gutting Medicaid doesn't save money. It's just more costly. And here's the really gross thing: all these things are being frozen and blocked to fund tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires."

Subsequent speakers said they were worried that the government

was trying to put small farmers out of business to facilitate a "land grab" by financiers, decried the detention and deportation of green card holders, and in one case, called for "blue states" to act to stop sending "tax money" to the "red states."

Rapid Responses

On the topic of immigration raids, McGovern praised efforts to organize communities into rapid response networks, and said he was a member of one such phone tree in the Worcester area. He told a story of being called to show up at a central Massachusetts Amazon workplace.

"When I got there, there were two other people there — ICE had already left," he said. "They didn't have a warrant to try to get in and search this place." Over the next few minutes, he said, 15 more activists had showed up, which "gives [him] great hope."

"The bottom line is that there are people in this community that are willing to stand up make sure people's rights are protected," he said.

"What I'm seeing is disappointment in Democrats, and government in general," Anne Jemas of Turners Falls told him. "We all saw Project 2025 — they knew what they wanted to do, they're not playing by the rules. We knew they wouldn't. And that the Democrats didn't get it together by now to have bold, dramatic things that you are doing... is also terrifying. Where we're at is such a crisis, and it seems like a Democratic leadership is playing by the rules when the rules aren't being played by."

This point brought an outburst of applause. Jemas, and others over the course of the event, suggested the party should be forming a "shadow" process to hold alternate hearings on legislative matters.

McGovern replied that his party had in fact held a "shadow" hearing on Medicaid, but it was ignored by the "mainstream press."

"You are right that we're not organized the way we should be," he told Jemas. "There's a lot to be disappointed about."

Later, McGovern suggested the

party could "do what they do in England and Australia," and form an entire shadow cabinet.

States of Collapse

Montague clean water facility superintendent Chelsey Little told McGovern that she was enrolled for her student loans under the federal Public Service Loan Forgiveness program, which has been terminated by the Trump administration.

"I was six years into a 10-year career," Little said. "I'm a working mother of three children who can't afford not to be under the [forgiveness program]."

McGovern promised to contact her after the meeting.


Four Rivers School student Quentin Jones, the first youth to clear the long speakers' lines at the end of the meeting, said he and some of his classmates had formed a political action club, and asked McGovern for advice on where to focus their efforts.

This drew fervent applause.

"It gives us great hope that your generation is stepping up to the plate and understanding what's at stake," the congressman told Jones. Younger activists, he said, "can be very helpful to all of us, to help people like me figure out how to better communicate with people like you. What platforms should we be on? What should we be talking about?"

As it became clear that mere minutes were left in the event and another dozen speakers stood waiting to address McGovern, the format turned to a lightning round. In the closing minutes, a young trans man told the representative that he did not have time to "wait two years until elections," another speaker asked how states can legally resist federal cuts, and another asked about the genocide of the Palestinian people.

"We gotta plan this stuff," McGovern said in a hurried conclusion, "and make sure that our resistance and our protest — even our civil disobedience — moves the ball forward, that people are actually paying attention...."

"Because otherwise, we're just doing things for the sake of doing things." 

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Town Builds Its Rainy-Day Funds, Updates Rules to Reflect Realities

By KEITH WATERS

The selectboard of Erving has a call out for members of the public to join a seven-person screening committee for the role of senior services director. Four people had expressed interest already as of Monday night, town administrator Bryan Smith reported, and he has been working to find the rest. He recommended that the board appoint the committee by March 31 and said he hopes it can start reviewing candidates on April 8.

Highway superintendent Glenn McCrory presented a set of proposed regulations to the board related to work involving cutting into roads. The document is called "Road Opening Regulations." McCrory explained that some other towns have regulations like these, and he saw it as a useful resource for the town.

The board gave the policy a "first read," and had a couple questions for McCrory, but were generally positive on the idea, which will go to a second read.

Water Regs

Peter Sanders, superintendent of water and wastewater, was at Monday's meeting to discuss new proposed amendments to the water department regulations. Selectboard member Scott Bastarache said he liked language related to limiting water shutoffs in favor of liens.

Chair Jacob Smith said he wanted to make sure that the town still maintained the ability to shut off a customer's water in case of last resort.

Board member Jim Loynd asked a question which led to an interesting issue: as it turned out, there is a regulation on the books the town has not been enforcing. The text requires all owners of water meters connected to pipes larger than one inch in diameter to get the meters tested annually and submit the results to the town.

Sanders confirmed this has not

been a required practice during the time he has worked for the town. Jacob Smith asked him to check what other towns do, and everyone present agreed to change the language in the regulations to match best practices.

Bryan Smith mentioned that he and Sanders also were trying to figure out how to add insurance requirements to the regulations, had not yet found a solution which fits the town well.

Jacob Smith said he felt the fees seemed too low across the board, and that they should be raised.

Very Stable

Bryan Smith said the town's working draft of its FY'26 budget assumes revenue numbers from the state are still correct. The town has not heard anything to contradict this yet, he reported.

Given that, the FY'26 budget of approximately \$15 million is only over currently projected revenues by about \$23,000, a very small discrepancy by percentage.

As the officials mentioned while discussing a contribution to the town's capital stabilization fund, 3% of the annual operating budget is about \$450,000. The capital planning committee has sought to clarify when and how the funds in capital stabilization may be used, and whether the town should have some regular mechanism to contribute to that fund.

The current town policy is to keep the equivalent of 50% of Erving's annual operating budget in a general stabilization fund. The account is currently funded closer to 90%.

A notable difference between the general and capital stabilization funds, Jacob Smith pointed out, is that the capital fund is invested as opposed to interest-bearing, so it has the possibility of growing more quickly – or perhaps shrinking, depending on what the markets do.

"We have at least five large proj-

ects that are multi-million-dollar that are on the docket, or in conversation already," he warned, listing parks, a school roof, bridge repair, infrastructure upgrades for senior housing on Care Drive, and a new cemetery.

More than a million dollars is also sitting in the Wastewater Enterprise Fund, a "retained earnings" account built up from sewer fees.

"People will say, 'Well, why've you got a million dollars sitting there in some account?'" said finance committee member Dan Hammock. "In the next 15 or 20 years, you're going to have \$30 or \$40 million worth of stuff that needs to be fixed.... You have this liability facing you – you don't know exactly what it is, but it's huge, and you have to plan for it."

Charter Tweaks

Bryan Smith delivered a letter from Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) executive director Linda Dunlavy. FRCOG, she wrote, is attempting to amend its charter for the first time in its 27 years, as its current leaders want to make the future as easy as possible in anticipation of a change of leadership in the next few years.

In addition to increasing the charter's legibility and bringing it into compliance with state codes, the amendments would also clarify how a town not currently a member could join FRCOG, as well as how towns can leave the organization. Another proposed change would reduce the vote needed to make changes to the charter from the current level of two-thirds of towns to a simple majority.

According to the present charter, FRCOG serves as the arbiter of unresolved dog hearings in its member towns. Echoing the change Erving hopes to make to its water meter regulations, the proposed amendments would eliminate this language, as in practice this has never happened.

EXPANDING from page A1

Romero and Breitner were both laid off from jobs at the People's Pint.

At the encouragement of friends and co-workers, the pair opened a food truck specializing in Romero's trademark dish, Salvadoran-style *pupusas*. "We wanted to do something on our own," the Greenfield resident explained in an interview through an interpreter.

Romero said she has been cooking food *siempre* – forever – including 13 years working for a family in her native El Salvador, and a stint at La Veracruzana in Northampton before she landed as a prep cook at the Pint. The truck was named in her honor – "Lupita's Kitchen," after a nickname of hers – and the business was an immediate hit.

By the end of that first summer, downtown Greenfield music venue Hawks & Reed invited Cocina Lupita to set up in their lobby space. The truck still makes cameo appearances at events, but five years later, the co-owners are seeking to expand again.

"We love the space at Hawks & Reed – that's like home," said Romero. "But there's always been size problems – people come with big groups and we can't accommodate them. And when the music's happening it's a big conflict: it's really loud for people who just want to come have lunch or dinner on a Friday afternoon!"

Besides the quiet, roomy, sit-down space

for meals, the move to Turners Falls comes with another perk: Montague currently has three open liquor licenses.

"The big thing is people want a bar, and we can't serve alcohol there," Romero said of the setup at Hawks & Reed. If all goes according to plan, margaritas and beer will join *horchatas* and *aguas frescas* on the beverage menu.

The food at Cocina Lupita is, above all, *autentico*. "It's the flavors of El Salvador – it's exactly how we cook at home," Romero told us. "We go all the way to Maryland to get the cheese for the pupusas, because you just can't get it around here – or sometimes, if family members are going to El Salvador, they'll bring some back from there."

Other mainstays include *pastelitos*, fried turnovers stuffed with potatoes, meat, or cheese, and of course tacos. The latter have a flavor profile completely distinct from the Guatemalan- and Mexican-style tacos available locally, which tend to come flavored with onion and cilantro; in Salvadoran cuisine, the move is *escabeche*, a tasty and ubiquitous pickled-jalapeno-and-carrot-based slaw.

"Sometimes we have chocolate-covered bananas," Breitner added. "Sometimes flan!"

Breitner said building owner Bob Obear, has been "great – he's really supportive, he wants this to work for us. He's been flexible with the terms of the lease, and he's offering to help us out building out the space."

For generations, that space was known as the home of Equi's Candy. Downtown fruit vendors John and Julius Equi first opened the shop in 1897, and the business remained a nostalgic downtown fixture until May 2012.

That fall, after five months of "painstaking" renovation, Pam Tierney launched the Black Cow Burger Bar, which enjoyed a 12-year run before shuttering last summer, citing the ongoing staffing impacts of the pandemic.

The renovation Cocina Lupita faces will again be painstaking, but Breitner said the business is not planning on "decorating or making big changes" before getting going. After Black Cow's closure the facilities were substantially reduced. The stove hood, walk-in, and grease traps remain, and Breitner said Obear has offered to put a top back on the bar.

A windfall clean-out at an expired Manchester, New Hampshire restaurant has provided benches, one dishwasher, triple sinks, and other assorted vintage equipment, but Breitner sighs when asked how the \$30,000 set as a goal on the business's online fundraiser – a GoFundMe titled "Help Cocina Lupita Expand and Thrive" – will be spent.

"A big commercial range," he begins. "A fryer, a grill, more tables and chairs, an ice machine, a sink for the bar, a cooler for the bar, another dishwasher for the bar, plates, forks, small wares for the kitchen, shelves, all the alcohol – just getting that in the door is pretty

expensive – health department permit, fire department permit, building inspection license, the common victualler's license, you've gotta get the hood inspected, you've gotta get the fire extinguishers inspected..."

"Restaurants are getting really expensive to operate," he concluded. "We don't have a lot of capital to start with, but this is such a good opportunity that we're willing to stretch ourselves to make it happen."

Cocina Lupita, he continued, has never before asked for donations: the truck was purchased on a loan, and Hawks & Reed's owners, the Goldsher family, have been "very flexible about the terms."

Raising the full \$30,000 "should be 100% of it," he said. "It's tight, but we ought to be able to do it if we can get there."

Tentatively, the co-owners told the *Reporter*, they are hoping for a mid-May opening.

"A lot of people have already said how happy they are that we're going to be over here," said Romero, who has worked part-time at the Brick House for five years and has plenty of friends in town.

Asked what her favorite part of running a restaurant has been, she lights up. "I love to work with the people in the community – everyone's so nice, and I've made so many friends," she said. "It's great to provide them with food, and to hear them say how much they like it!"

Tip of the week ...

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HEADLINED from page A1 alone is not enough. Joy has to be part of the resistance, because joy lifts us.”

McGovern talked about the avalanche of executive orders from Donald Trump and the firing of federal workers by the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), led by Elon Musk.

“Trump floods the zone with a million things until your head’s about to explode so people feel overwhelmed and powerless,” McGovern said. “He wants you to pull the shade and step back from it all so he can do whatever he wants to do. So we need to be disciplined and focused, and take care ourselves. He’s trying to bulldoze through our democracy.”

McGovern emphasized that it will be the power of individuals that will make a difference in the coming months.

“Showing up here is an act of defiance and we need to do this time and time again,” he said. “We can’t wait around for institutions to save us because it’s people who save people.”

Referring to the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, which was represented at a table in the theater lobby, McGovern said, “Hunger is a political condition. We have the money, and we have the food, but we lack the political will. We have to make sure people have enough to eat.”

From the audience, someone yelled, “Eat the billionaires!”

General Strike

McGovern described last Friday’s vote by the US Senate to approve a Republican-sponsored budget continuation resolution as “a dereliction of duty. I was incredibly disappoint-

ed. They turned a cold shoulder to people struggling in poverty, and I think they will live to regret that.”

The congressman said when the details of the proposed budget emerge as part of the reconciliation process in April and May, the widespread negative impact of cuts to social programs will become more clear to the American people, including reductions in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which helps about a million people in Massachusetts buy groceries.

“Right now our Republican friends are afraid of Trump and Elon’s money, but we have to make them more afraid of their own constituents,” McGovern said.

He recalled a meeting last year with the Dalai Lama, and spoke of his own anxiety about the current political climate.

“He gave me Tibetan prayer beads to help with anxiety, but right now they’re not working – I’ve never been more concerned about whether we’ll have a democracy that will survive,” he said, adding that the religious leader also offered a metaphor about the power of people’s voices. “He said if you ever think your voice is too small to make a difference, just think of trying to sleep in a room with a buzzing mosquito.”

McGovern also spoke of Musk’s links to far-right movements, saying the billionaire’s January speech in Germany reminded him of “the fascist movements of the 1930s.”

Although federal judges have recently ruled against the widespread firing of federal workers and the threatened closure of federal agencies, McGovern said he is worried Trump and Musk will ignore the judges’ orders, and unveiled a possible dramatic strategy that he said

may have to be employed by Democrats and others.

“People talk about winning back the House [of Representatives] in two years, but that’s not the way this is unfolding,” he said. “They want to make it so we can never bring [federal workers] back. What if he ignores the courts? If there’s a constitutional crisis where he’s ignoring the law, we may need a general strike that tells them, ‘enough is enough.’”

McGovern said a general strike of all workers in America would be similar to the strategy used by the Solidarity movement in Poland in 1980.

“We have to be thinking about the what-ifs,” said McGovern, in conclusion. “If he wants to fight, we’ll give him a goddamned fight.”

The crowd gave McGovern a standing ovation.

Creatures of Hope

Tara Tayyabkhar, a longtime fan of the Dave Bulley Band, traveled two hours from Elizaville, New York, to attend Mud Season. She said McGovern’s speech was “inspiring,” in contrast to her own senator, Chuck Schumer, who she said “rolled over” by voting in favor of the Republican budget resolution last week.

Referring to the metaphor for public protest offered by McGovern, she said, “It’s time to be mosquitoes!” before hitting the dance floor.

In his early afternoon slot, Bulley and Tobi Benay of Amherst sang the protest song “Stranger in a Strange Land,” by Leon Russell. After the set, Bulley sat for an interview and explained why he decided the Mud Season music fest, now in its fourth year, should include the politics of protest for the first time.

“The election was a huge let-



The Dave Bulley Band took to the Shea stage after McGovern’s speech.

down and when all the executive orders started coming out it felt overwhelming,” said Bulley. “So I wondered how we could turn this event into something more meaningful. I asked all the bands to play a couple of protest songs, and we offered space for the Food Bank to come in. I think people are reeling right now, but I’m a creature of hope. I try to find the bright side so I put on events like this. I love to play, and I love to listen to music.”

Bulley said he was surprised that McGovern brought up the idea of a general strike across America.

“I was dismayed to hear that it

might be necessary, but I’ll be inspired to take part,” he said.

Tayyabkhar wasn’t the only one to come a long way for Mud Season. Theo Nabut said he drove from Boston to meet up with his brother, Pete, of Southampton.

“It’s food for my soul,” said Theo, while listening to Valerie Newman play in the lobby.

Other bands playing at Mud Season this year were Space Bar, Adam S.Z. & The Inner Fiyah, Bow Thayer, Preemption Road, Petey’s Barn Rocket, Chica Fuego, Pumpkin Hollow Bluegrass, and Lee Totten.

DAM from page A1

stream, runs along Wendell Depot Road and into the Millers River. For over 200 years the stream has been dammed with earth and stone, just before it crosses beneath the road, to form Bowens Pond.

It is believed that Luke Osgood, the son of one of Wendell’s first European settlers, constructed the dam around 1790. Today Thomas Robinson of Hubbardston co-owns the dam, the pond, and an adjacent 225-acre property with his wife and brother.

“Our family, having owned this property since 1954, has voluntarily embarked upon this conservation project to restore natural riverine ecological functions along a segment of Osgood Brook and eliminate a potential public safety hazard of dam failure,” Robinson wrote to the *Reporter*. “The permitting process, conducted professionally and transparently, was lengthy, with several permits required.”

Over the last decade, the state Division of Ecological Restoration (DER) has overseen the project as the owners hired engineers and applied for state and local permits. The DER recently granted Robinson’s business, Bowen’s Pond LLC, \$20,000 to cover project permitting and construction bidding. It was one of 17 projects statewide that shared a total of \$2.1 million in wetlands restoration grants announced this week.

“Dam removal is one of the most effective ways to restore a healthy river and improve resilience to climate change,” DER dam removal program manager Chris Hirsch told the *Reporter*. “It can improve fish passage, water quality, and public safety.”

Removing the dam is expected to restore about five miles of coldwater fishery habitat for species such as the Eastern brook trout, sea lamprey, and American eel. According to the DER, restoring Osgood Brook is “among the most worthwhile dam removal projects in the Commonwealth,” ranking in the top



The brook is thought to have been dammed since the late 18th century.

10% of the nearly 3,000 dams prioritized by the agency.

The draining, dredging, and demolition must take place during periods of “low flows,” Smith said, which are typically in the late summer or fall. He said he was not sure whether the work will commence this summer.

The removal project has garnered the support of several environmental organizations including the Millers River Watershed Association and Mass Audubon, which manages the adjacent Whetstone Wood Wildlife Sanctuary.

At the owners’ expense, the con com hired the engineering firm Stockman Associates, LLC to review the removal plans submitted by environmental engineering firm GZA Environmental, Inc., which were found to be satisfactory.

At previous public hearings on GZA’s

application, some neighbors of the pond lamented the loss of a healthy ecosystem with historic and aesthetic value. Others said they were worried that once the waters recede, invasive glossy buckthorn will colonize the exposed mud.

In response to comments at a January hearing, GZA engineers wrote that they believed setting a criterion of coverage by at least 50% native species would be appropriate, “based on the existing presence of invasive species in the watershed.”

“[I]t would be unrealistic to assume that no or limited invasion would occur,” the firm argued, given that glossy buckthorn is already present in the “vicinity” of the pond.

The variance to the town wetland bylaw granted last week by the con com includes a condition requiring managers to hand-pull in-

vasive species for three years instead of two, as the engineers had recommended.

At the suggestion of Wendell resident and botanist Adam Kohl, the variance also includes the condition that the applicants work with the Native Plant Trust, a Whately-based conservation nonprofit, to relocate a rare hybridized water lily, *Nuphar x rubrodisca*, to another suitable habitat.

“To me it’s kind of a sad thing, but change is always a bit shocking,” Smith said. “My personal opinion is that it’s going to be somewhere between wonderful and horrible.... There’s going to be buckthorn in there, but there will be beavers, and it will be a natural ecosystem.”

The restoration plans include the conservation of the Robinsons’ adjacent 225-acre parcel, considered a “priority habitat” under the state’s BioMap program, connecting the Wendell State Forest with Mass Audubon’s Whetstone Wood property in a continuous corridor.

“Many thanks to all those who have supported this effort over the many years, especially the ecological restoration experts at DER,” Robinson said. “Support has also come from local organizations including the Millers River Watershed Council, Trout Unlimited, American Rivers, Mount Grace Land Trust, and Mass Audubon.”

Keeping the dam intact would also have required a variance. In 2020 the state Office of Dam Safety inspected the dam and determined it to be in poor condition and in need of repairs. If it were left to deteriorate and fail, the owners would be held liable for any potential damage.

“Personally, I have a bit of a philosophical problem with requiring the person to maintain the dam,” Smith said. “If we denied the application under the bylaw, we’re basically saying you have to come up with however much money it would be to maintain the dam, while there’s a state grant to take the dam out.”

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THE SPIRIT SHOPPE

MONTAGUE from page A1

more electric vehicle charging stations, and appointed former town clerk Deb Bourbeau as a part-time consultant.

Only two of the three members of the board – chair Rich Kuklewicz and Chris Boutwell – were in attendance.

As the block grant hearing began, McHugh explained that the main goals of the federal program were to serve low- and moderate-income residents and reduce “slum and blight.” A third goal, responding to a catastrophe when no other funding is available, is rarely used, he said.

McHugh described the social services component of the application, which is capped at \$100,000. The town’s CDBG advisory committee, which consists of McHugh, town administrator Walter Ramsey, and assistant town administrator Chris Nolan-Zeller, originally envisioned four programs receiving \$25,000 each, he said, but the town received five strong applications, so grants were reduced to \$20,000.

These included one from the Brick House Community Resource Center for youth education and support; two from LifePath, for a senior self-sufficiency program and a home-delivered meals program; one from the Heartwing Center, formerly Montague Catholic Social Ministries, for a literacy program for immigrant families; and one from the Wildflower Alliance for a new recovery program.

The hearing’s public comment period was dominated by social-service advocates, namely LifePath community resource director Susan White and nutrition program director Jane Severance. White estimated that between 500 and 600 people in Franklin County are supported each day by the meals program, which she said helps overcome the “isolation” experienced by many seniors.

“We often are the only person that someone sees,” White said, “maybe in a whole week.”

McHugh recommended the least costly option of the three, which would not entail the installation of any ramps: the northwest side of the Avenue from Fourth Street to Fifth Street.

Funding for ongoing improvements to the Avenue A “streetscape,” which totaled \$580,000, drew virtually no discussion. A draft of the application reviewed by the board listed three sections of the street for which the town had completed designs and which were ready for construction. McHugh recommended the least costly option of the three, which would not entail the installation of any ramps: the northwest side of the Avenue from Fourth Street to Fifth Street.

In the end the board approved an application totaling \$850,000. This included the recommended expenditures for the streetscape and social services sections, plus \$170,000, or 20%, for administration and oversight by the Franklin Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority. No housing rehab funding was included.

McHugh told the *Reporter* he had not seen any evidence that the state’s reduction of the cap on funding, which was announced in January, was a response to policies promoted by the Trump administration, but mentioned that staffing cuts at HUD may slow down the federal review of applications.

“It’s an unknown at this point,” he said, adding that the administration’s “Buy American, Hire American” policies may increase the cost of construction.

Officer Returning

Ramsey reviewed the status of the FY’26 town budget, which will be presented to the annual town meeting in May.

He began by noting the impact of the Gill-Montague school district’s plan to eliminate the school police officer position from its staff. The Montague police department, which is currently short-staffed, plans to add current school resource officer Dan Miner as a full-time employee, and the town would no longer receive a \$65,000 reimbursement from the district.

Ramsey reported that police chief Chris Williams was considering using Miner in the role of a “community policing officer.” Reached later for comment, Williams told the *Reporter* that a community police officer would focus on interacting with businesses, agencies, and the general public.

Spending Discretion

Ramsey then reviewed the joint meeting held last week with the finance and capital improvements committees. Three capital requests from the public works department (DPW), he said, were tabled because DPW superintendent Sam Urkiel was not present, and a separate request to replenish a “discretionary fund” the department uses for capital needs was not approved.

The purpose of the discretionary fund has been to give the DPW flexibility to buy used vehicles during the fiscal year without having to go to town meeting. Earlier this month the selectboard had voted to recommend replenishing it, though to a lower level than usual. At Wednesday’s session, however, member Matt Lord argued that the account should be sent to town meeting as a part of the department’s budget rather than as a standalone article.

Kuklewicz was not in attendance at that joint session, so the board gridlocked on a 1-1 vote.

This generated a lengthy discussion during Monday’s meeting – this time without Lord present – on the merits of the account and where it should be located. Ramsey said the issue would be revisited at another joint session Wednesday night, hopefully with all three selectboard members and Urkiel in attendance.

(Update as of press time: Lord was not in attendance at Wednesday’s meeting. The finance committee voted to recommend the standalone article by a 6 to 1 vote, and after hearing from Urkiel, recommended articles for the purchase of two large dump trucks and guard rail repair along Meadow Road. The selectboard is now expected to take up the matter of the discretionary account next Monday.)

Finally, Ramsey reported that contract negotiations with the United Electrical Workers (UE) and National Association of Gov-

ernment Employees (NAGE), two unions representing town staff, were “going well,” and that he would like to integrate their new contracts into the FY’26 budget, along with the recommendations of a recent wage study by the UMass Collins Center.

This would leave only the police union contracts outside the spring budget process. Ramsey said the outcomes of those negotiations may need to be approved at a fall special town meeting.

Kuklewicz and Boutwell voiced their agreement without taking a formal vote. The deadline for articles for the May town meeting was at the “end of the day” on Wednesday.

Historical Signage

The selectboard authorized Ramsey to apply for a grant from FirstLight Power to fund signage along the bike path about the area’s pre-colonial Indigenous history, as well as the massacre and battle at the Falls during King Philip’s War in 1676.

Any costs above the \$2,000 grant, Ramsey said, could be funded from the community development discretionary account.

He noted that previous grants from the power company had funded pollinator gardens and a painting of Indigenous people spear-fishing at the Falls, which hangs in the rear stairwell of town hall.

Other Business

Acting as the personnel board, Kuklewicz and Boutwell approved a proposal to hire former town clerk Deb Bourbeau as a part-time consultant in the clerk’s office through June 30. Ramsey said Bourbeau will assist interim clerk Tina Sulda during the hiring process for a new clerk, Kathern “Beanie” Pierce having left the position a month ago. Bourbeau’s rate – \$45.06 per hour, for “up to” 10 hours per week – will be the same as her rate during a previous transition.

The board appointed Jenna Petrovic, a co-op student at the Franklin County Technical School, to work for \$15 an hour for nine hours per day for the public works department, every other week until May 29.

Nolan-Zeller recommended a new three-year agreement with the Center For Responsive Schools, Inc. for the lease of the town-owned Colle building at Avenue A and Third Street. The agenda stated that the lease was for a “total rent value of \$28,896.00,” but Nolan-Zeller clarified that this figure was for each year of the lease. He also said the amount represented a 1.5% increase over the current rent, and that the lease will no longer include an annual escalator.

The selectboard approved the new lease.

The board also approved an agreement with Commonwealth Electrical Technologies, LLC for Montague to participate in a state program to investigate the need for new electric vehicle charging stations, and ways to make them affordable.

“I have no problem with the charging stations, as long as they don’t become a burden,” said Kuklewicz, who in the past has criticized the cost to the town of its current stations.

At the end of the meeting the board retired into an executive session to discuss negotiating strategy with FirstLight Power. Their next scheduled meeting will be held Monday, March 24.



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

Here’s the way it was on March 19, 2015: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Roots Just Grow

Just Roots, a nonprofit based at the Greenfield Community Farm, wants to increase public access to healthy, local food by connecting people, land, resources, and know-how. This summer the organization plans to offer 60 community-supported agriculture (CSA) shares in Turners Falls.

“It is expensive to grow healthy food, therefore it’s expensive to buy it,” Just Roots co-director Jessica Van Steensburg explained.

Jared Libby, director of operations at the Brick House in Turners Falls, which is offering pick-

up space free of charge, said 30 of the shares will be “donor-sponsored.” “This means that low income families can purchase a share at only \$10 per week,” Libby said.

Thawing Erving Out

The Erving selectboard approved spending \$2,400 to buy the Magikist jet de-icer/thawer recommended by water department supervisor Peter Sanders. Several properties in town have lost water service this winter due to freezing. Sanders explained that Montague has owned a Magikist for several years but has not had to use it until this year, when it has been used “over 20 times.” Montague will help Erving out for now, he added.

20 YEARS AGO

Here’s the way it was on March 17, 2005: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Nagging Problems at VY

On March 17 the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission will conduct its annual assessment of Vermont Yankee’s 33-year old reactor. Peter Alexander, executive director of the New England Coalition, which opposes plans to boost reactor power, said, “This meeting will give our staff and members of the public, who seem to have longer memories than the DC regulators, a chance to remind NRC of some long-standing and nagging problems at Vermont Yankee, as well as new ones, like the recent high

radiation readings, that seem to crop up almost weekly.”

Local Generosity

The devastation caused by the December 26, 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami has drawn an outpouring of support from all over the world, including Turners Falls. Triggered by a 9.0 earthquake, the deadliest tsunami in history killed around 270,000 people and displaced 1.7 million.

At the end of April, Hallmark Institute of Photography students’ work will be on display and for sale, with all proceeds donated to AmeriCares, a nonprofit disaster relief and humanitarian aid organization.

150 YEARS AGO

Here’s the way it was on March 17, 1875: News from the Turners Falls Reporter’s archive.

Turners Falls and Vicinity

Now for that sugar party. ‘Rah for the 17th of Ireland. How about that new cotton mill, over the river, Hance?

We’ll have some more sleighing, by the looks of the weather.

The farmers are a pretty fine lot of fellows, but we just hope the hens will “lay for ‘em” by Easter.

Dr. Field, of Pisgah, sold two tons of tobacco, bulk, last week, the purchaser taking it from the poles at his own expense.

There is no truth, we have the best authority to say, in the report published outside that the present civil engineer, Wm. P. Crocker, would shortly be replaced by a younger man.

A.W. Stevens is in Boston at the hearing on the new bridge before the legislative committee, representing its advocates, and R.N. Oakman appears in opposition.

The Turners Falls Company, fearing the heavy ice and proba-

ble heavy freshet would act disastrously on the stone work of the bulk head, have had fenders put up around it, and now there is not the least danger of damage.

Every Irishman at least should go to hear the lecture by Col. O.S. Burke of Cork, the last released of the Irish political prisoners, on “The Duty of the Irish in America” at Colle Hall, on Saturday evening next. The lecture is under the auspices of the Celtic Literary Society.

On looking back over the snow record, we find that the first snow fell on November 20, followed by two others in the same month. There were nine snow storms in December, twelve in January, four in February, and so far nine in this month, giving a total of thirty-seven storms. The ice went out last year on March 18.

Road Commissioner Adams would command the gratitude of a multitude if he would pay attention to that part of Second street between the Avenue and the Keith block, as soon as possible. It requires a pair of stilts to get along that street without getting up to the knees in slosh and mud.



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PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Wheatpaste Winners Named

MONTAGUE – RiverCulture director Suzanne LoManto announced Wednesday that three artists have been selected to install six large-scale, temporary paper murals in the town of Montague.

The winners were selected from 37 applicants and juried by a group of residents and town staff. Each will receive \$4,000 for their pair of designs, which will be commercially printed and installed with a simple mixture of flour and water.

Amherst artist Sophie Foulkes was selected to install work on two locations along the Canalside Rail Trail, Aaron Meshon of Great Bar-

rington for a pair of murals on buildings in downtown Turners Falls, and Ponnapa Prakkamakul of Cambridge for two murals in Millers Falls.

Foulkes, Meshon, and Prakkamakul showed particular interest in working with the community to finalize their draft designs. Public input will commence in April, with installation scheduled for late May.

Montague Wheat Paste Murals is funded by Making It Public for Municipalities, a program co-designed by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council's Arts and Culture Department and the New England Foundation for the Arts's Public Arts Team.

FARM from page A1

and sedimentation last summer.

Falls Farm, a 110-acre vegetable farm and planned orchard straddling the Montague-Sunderland border, has accepted findings by the state Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) that the farm altered wetlands in violation of the Wetlands Protection Act, and agreed to conditions and penalties the agency imposed.

MassDEP became involved in the property last July after initial investigations by both the Montague and Sunderland conservation commissions.

"Once the state took over, this is their ball game, not ours," chair Mark Fairbrother reminded the room. "Besides keeping them post-

ed of any concerns that we have, or that folks like yourselves bring in, we don't have much say in the matter anymore. So it's between the Falls Farm entities and the state."

Still, Fairbrother said, there was an "update" for the towns in the form of the consent order signed in January.

Town planner and conservation agent Maureen Pollock summarized the order, which describes in detail the work Falls Farm must complete to stabilize the soil against future stormwater erosion and to restore already-altered wetlands, with all work to be completed before December. Expert consultants hired by the farm must submit plans to MassDEP for review by April 1.

Mark Zinan, a member of Sunderland's con com, was in attendance. "And then DEP reviews the plans and may make changes, and eventually approves it – and then once that is done, the farm will start implementing the actions to mitigate the damages?" he asked.

Fairbrother nodded.

"Oh, my goodness," Zinan said. Pollock noted that MassDEP's order also requires Falls Farm to submit a plan by April 1 to establish a fire pond and non-pressurized dry hydrant, which would provide water to Montague and Sunderland's fire departments during emergencies.

"I know that they are going to do some test pits on the property – I think next week – to try to find a location for the fire pond," Pollock said, "and MassDEP will be present for the test pits."

Neighbors of the farm expressed concerns. Tim Rieman and Nell Wright, whose houses sit across Old Sunderland Road from the farm, wondered whether digging the pond could impact their wells, and Steve Gowa, a neighbor on Falls Road in Sunderland, sought clarification that the water would be strictly for fire department use and would not be available for irrigation.

Montague con com member Margaux Reckard confirmed that the order restricts the pond's use to fire departments.

In response to a follow-up question from Gowa asking whether the commission had insight into how MassDEP made its determinations regarding the fire pond and other public compensation, Pollock replied, "I think that question is best directed to DEP."

"Sorry," added Fairbrother. "You had a feeling that answer was coming."

"I knew it, and you knew I knew it," Gowa responded with a grin.

The farm did not respond to a request for comment.

Falls Farm manager Diane McClellan was present throughout the meeting, quietly taking notes. She arrived in time to hear the other discussions on the agenda: the robust sediment control measures to be taken at the Swamp Road bridge, should the town receive state funding to repair it in 2026, and a proactive offer by Eversource of compensation to the town to "mitigate" the impact of tree removal the company is planning alongside transmission lines that run through wetlands.



IT'S PANTHER-MONIUM!

PHOTOS AND CAPTIONS BY DAVID HOITT



DAVID HOITT PHOTOS



The triumphant Pioneer Valley Panthers received a warm reception Saturday as they returned to Northfield following a stunning 49-28 win over Hopedale for the MIAA Division 5 state basketball championship title. Clockwise, from top left: fans greet the buses home; Pioneer senior Kurt Redeker cuts the net in Messer Gymnasium as the Panthers celebrate the win; seniors and coaches display the 2025 championship trophy following the net-cutting celebration (left to right: Will Glazier, Alex McClelland, Brayden Thayer, Redeker, Ben Werner, assistant coach Fred Redeker, and head coach Scott Thayer).

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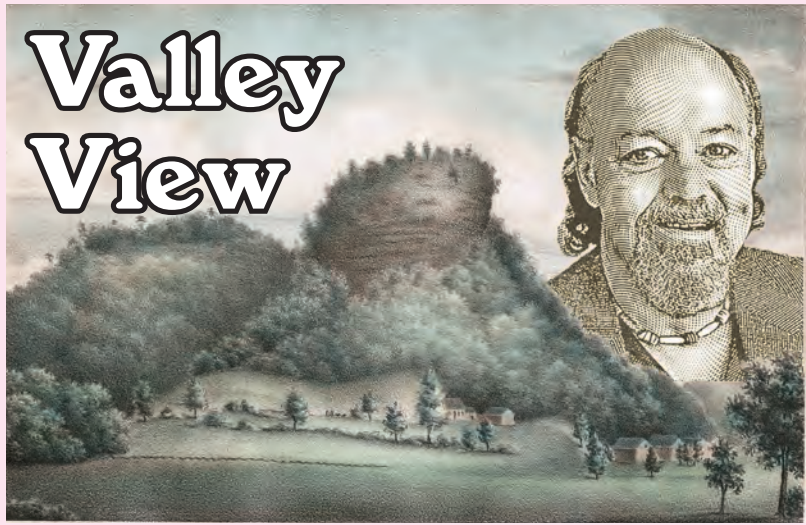
GARTH SHANEYFELT PHOTO

features@montaguereporter.org

OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER

MARCH 20, 2025

Above: The last of the season's ice floes lined up last Friday before crashing over the Turners Falls dam.



ORRA WHITE HITCHCOCK PRINT

Reinvestigating the Past

By GARY SANDERSON

GREENFIELD – Spring is in the air and I'm a bit on overload. Thinking. Always thinking. Reading. Absorbing a 24/7 news feed that can be frightening these days. Exhausting, too.

I tried to ignore cable news after the election, which is next to impossible without a change of address to some secluded ramshackle shack along a cold, clear, drinkable spring creek. You know the drill. Living off the grid. No modern devices or distractions. Quiet introspection. But what good does that do? And where, exactly, does it lead?

I'll begin this week with brief mention of two books I've read since I last appeared in this space. Then I'll circle back to a topic introduced a couple of weeks ago, when I trolled for reader insight about a gruesome scene I happened upon many decades ago in Turners Falls.

For those who missed it, I told of a mass dog grave uncovered by a Montague DPW bucket-loader operator cutting into a steep, sandy escarpment along the eastern edge of the old Montague landfill dump near Judd Wire. I was sitting in my dump truck, awaiting a load of sandy fill as I watched the scene unfold. Although I did ask around for information at the time, no one seemed to have a clue why it was there.

Keep that image in mind as we switch gears to a brief discussion of the two recently-published books I read. Most recently, Adam Plunkett's biography, *Love and Need: The Life of Robert Frost's Poetry*. Before that, Brian VanDeMark's *Kent State: An American Tragedy*. Both got good reviews in *The New Yorker* magazine.

I'm not a Frost fanatic or poetry reader; just knew there was an Amherst connection and figured why not take a closer look? I now know a lot more about the celebrated New England poet, who, according to Plunkett and biographers before him, had his warts. To be expected of artists, no?

I struggled with Plunkett's analyses of poetry style, rhythm, and form, focusing instead on the autodidactic poet's idiosyncrasies, his family life, and his path to literary immortality. Worth the read.

Before that, I breezed through Brian VanDeMark's *Kent State*, examining the unfortunate May 4, 1970 crowd-control fiasco I remember well. On that dreadful day, I was a rebellious 16-year-old nearing the end of my junior year at South Deerfield's Frontier Regional School. The previous summer I had wandered about sopping wet in the fabled Woodstock music festival's rain and red-tinted mud.

I guess I was biased, and had long ago passed personal judgment on *Kent State*. In my mind, I could find no justification for Ohio National Guardsmen who killed four and wounded nine unarmed students protesting the Vietnam War. I viewed it as an unjustifiable overreaction, but was curious what this new biographer had to say about it a half-century later.

I almost didn't follow through on my purchase when I looked into VanDeMark and found his Texas pedigree and current faculty status at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. Did I really need *Kent State* analysis by a Texas scholar teaching at a military college? I hesitated and swiped.

In retrospect, I'd say VanDeMark tried to play it fair but, in setting the stage, overstated the dangers presented by radical Sixties activists. Plus, I found him a little too supportive of the weary, inadequately trained, weekend-warrior Guardsmen who pulled the trigger, not to mention the commanding officers. Some of the soldiers faced criminal charges and were acquitted.

As I read, I couldn't help but wonder if we're not headed toward another similar occurrence in these hair-trigger times of deep political divides and animosity. In my day, plenty of right-leaning, love-it-or-leave-it citizens unequivocally defended the *Kent State* Guardsmen.

see **VALLEY VIEW** page B2

BOOK REVIEW

Father Stan Offers Four Key Values

By BELLA LEVAVI

TURNERS FALLS – After a near-death experience, Father Stanley Aksamit of Our Lady of Peace Church realized it was time to write a book.

His 180-page, self-published book, *Dying Wishes, Fullness of Life*, is now available on Amazon.

"It's a book that can be read in small chunks that will hopefully raise questions in people's minds and hearts," Aksamit said in an interview with *The Montague Reporter* in the Polish-knickknack-adorned front room of the rectory, where he lives with Galadima Goni, also a priest at Our Lady of Peace.

Each morning, they read the many local newspapers delivered to the house and discuss how these stories relate to the teachings of scripture. Aksamit's thoughts are clearly shaped by current events – mostly the tragic ones – which often find their way into his sermons and homilies.

"I write for people who want to grow spiritually," he said.

The book's chapters – meant to be read in any order, depending on the reader's interests or struggles – begin with ideas from Aksamit's sermons. He then explores each issue, considers why it is difficult to handle, and asks, "Where does the wisdom lie?" He answers each question with a variety of well-researched Biblical stories. Each chapter also includes stories from his experiences in the church, the surrounding community, and the news.

"It's not like a mystery novel, where you can read through it and come to a conclusion," he said. "You have to come to your own conclusion along the way."

A few years ago, after a series of infections, Aksamit found himself close to death in a hospital bed during Christmas. He is no stranger to death, having sat with

the families of his church members for decades as they lost loved ones – many of whom had been his teachers and neighbors throughout his life. In this near-death experience, he said, he thought about Jesus at the moment he knew the authorities were coming for him. "That made me ask, what did he consider to be the most important values he wanted to hand on?" Aksamit said.

Aksamit identified four values Jesus imparted, which guide his book. The first is *humble service*, represented in the Last Supper when Jesus washed the feet of his apostles – a value further exemplified by the

see **BOOK REVIEW** page B4



LEVAVI PHOTO

Turners Falls priest Stanley Aksamit says he has written a book "for people who want to grow spiritually," whatever their religion, by drawing on the Christian tradition, current events, and his own experiences.

Ainsworth On The Road: Part I

By CHIP AINSWORTH

JUPITER, FLORIDA – Charles Lindbergh took five ham sandwiches with him on his 33-hour flight from Long Island to

Paris, and I took three donuts and a large coffee on my 20-hour drive from Northfield to Florida.

The trunk, however, was loaded with non-perishables including five cases of water, soda, Gatorade,

cookies, cereal, and whatever else I could bring that would cost less up there than down here. The tally for my nine purchases at the Swanzy Market Basket in New Hampshire, for example, was \$39.71 compared to the \$56.12 it would cost at the Publix in Jupiter.

There's just so much you can do, though. In 1957, Arthur Frommer published *Europe On 5 Dollars a Day*; in 2004 it was updated to *Europe From \$85 a Day*. In Florida this year, one scoop of vanilla at Palm Beach Ice Cream cost \$6.32; two scoops was \$7.52 – "best deal," the board said – but you gotta buy that first scoop.

A postcard of the full moon rising over the Jupiter Lighthouse cost \$6 at the Blue Line Surf Shop in Juno Beach; pizza and salad at County Line Pizza in Juno was \$23 plus tip and tax, but first I had to get there.

The trip began on a typically blah afternoon in late February, that depressing time of year when the driveway transitions from being a slippery glacier to an ugly

see **ON THE ROAD** page B5



AINSWORTH PHOTO

Four years ago Crosby and Deborah Hunt drove from their home in Gainesville, Florida, to get a German shepherd pup they named Grace. The Hunts had just lost their own German shepherd, and they traveled through an ice storm to pick up Grace at their son's home in Brooklyn.

Pet of the Week

CARMODY COLLAGE



'PRETZEL & GRANOLA'

Meet these dazzlers, Pretzel and Granola, two five-month-old fancy rats. They are friendly, social boys who like interacting with people, and did well with the children in their home. They are playful, rambunctious, and easy to handle. When happy, they let out a cheerful sound that is similar to laughter.

Pretzel and Granola are active and love to play with toys. Rats will happily ride around on your shoulder, using their tails for balance.

Are you looking for smart, adorable, and interactive pets? Well, look no further. Rats are a social species. The company of their own kind is critical to their health and well being. Pretzel and

Granola need to go home together. The average lifespan for a rat is about two years.

Most housing sold at pet stores is too small for small pets. Pretzel and Granola are going to be spending most of their lives inside their cage. We can help with suggestions.

The combined adoption fee for both Pretzel and Granola is \$20.

If you're ready to adopt now and want to learn more about, meet, or adopt a pet, you can start the process by coming to the Dakin Humane Society in Springfield during our open adoption hours, Tuesdays through Saturdays from 12:30 to 3 p.m., calling us at (413) 781-4000, or visiting www.dakinhumane.org.

VALLEY VIEW from page B1

Reactionary supporters of Pres. Richard Nixon and Alabama segregationist Gov. George Wallace were congratulatory, willing to proclaim deadly force against hippie malingerers as long overdue.

Do you think today's neo-Nazis, KKK, Christian nationalists, Proud Boys, and other hard-right-wing activists think any differently? I'd honestly say these gun-toting, 21st-century vigilantes are even more hateful and violent, answering calls for action armed, dangerous, and with bad intentions.

But let's not get carried away with that. Back to that mass doggie grave on the sandy plain south of Turnpike Road. I knew the furry body parts cascading down the steep sandbank and dangling from the bucket loading my truck were primarily dogs. Roadkill? Veterinary burial place? Something else? Mum was the word when I made inquiries.

Now, nearly 50 years later, thanks to my media query, I'm confident we have the answer. It came via email from a professional Montague woman and longtime resident. There is no need to name her. She's lived in Montague for at least 50 years.

Rather than paraphrase what she had to say, I'll present it as it arrived last week in my inbox:

"I'm wondering if this is the same place I went to with my two children seeking our beloved missing dog about 1977. Pretty sure it is. Met the dog officer there and gave

him a full description of our unusual buff-colored blue-eyed husky. A beautiful, gentle dog. The officer denied seeing him and pointed to outside kennels holding a few dogs before going back inside. Ours was not there.

"As we were leaving, we heard a familiar howl coming from another outbuilding on the property. Entering, we found our dog tied up in this empty barn, hastily freed him, and left the property. Looking back, I wish I had confronted the situation more, but the energy was not comfortable. I still get chills wondering what fate was in store for our pet in that strange place!"

So, there you have it. I do believe we have our answer. That pathetic mass grave we accidentally exposed was on the old Montague dog pound site. Some such places marched to a different drummer back then, when stray dogs were captured, held briefly, and likely shot. Someone I asked that day at the town yard had to know, but decided to play dumb. Why open a smelly can of rotting worms?

Had my source not recognized the plaintive howl emanating from that out-of-the-way barn, I may have seen decomposed body parts of her family's "unusual buff-colored husky" dangling from the bucket or tumbling down the steep, unstable, sandy escarpment supplying me with fill.

Now it's history – the dog officer likely dead and gone. Who knows? He may have hated dogs – and loved his job.



Enough Is Enough!

By LEE WICKS

MONTAGUE CENTER – Of all the conversations I've had recently, the saddest story came from a friend who lives in Chevy Chase, Maryland, right outside of Washington, DC. She said that her friends were crying at choir practice. They were learning new music for church in the company of friends and under the influence of song, tears flowed, prompted by an unimaginable sense of loss.

I was going to write this time about what elders in Montague might lose in the months ahead, but I paused and got in touch with Roberta Potter, director of the Gill-Montague Council on Aging. We agreed that politics is too touchy a subject right now. We do not yet know how cuts at the federal level will affect elders locally, and there will be plenty of time to tackle all that and write about coping strategies as we learn more.

At that point, information and practical advice will be more useful to people than scary headlines – though I do want to urge people to join Montague Villages, the organization that connects neighbors and helps elders age in their homes. Local self-sufficiency has never been more important.

It's been a hard winter, and many people are worn out from the cold, but soon milder temperatures and longer days will change our focus. "Maybe it would be useful to write about the idea of 'enough,'" Roberta suggested. "People will be getting out more and thinking about exercising and chores."

"If you used to run two miles," she added, "maybe it's 'enough' to walk a half mile. If you used to tear your house apart every spring, maybe it's enough to do one room." She reminded me that perfection can be a cruel master, and that resonated.

It made me think about all the ways my friends and I accommodate age, how hard it can be to accept new realities, and how acceptance of those realities can enhance day-to-day life. I also went online and learned that the concept of "enough" is essential for mental health. Surprising to me, I also learned that even small amounts of exercise have lasting benefits. You do not need to walk miles or raise your heart rate by a certain amount to stay healthy. Just get out and move, and that will be enough.

I remember a time when I believed no pain meant no gain. Now I don't. I'm learning what's enough, and what's too much.

At the YMCA in Greenfield I enjoy a class called Silver Sneakers. As the name suggests, it's a comprehensive exercise class filled with silver-haired people trying their best. We are far from perfect. We are bent over from arthritis, healing from various surgeries, and many, like me, enjoy exercising in a group where there's no pressure or competition. There are 90-year-old twins who come three times a week, and they do all the exercises at their own pace.

It's heartwarming to look around the room and see everyone trying, working at their own level, and pushing themselves, but not too much. *If it hurts, don't do it*, the teacher says. I remember a time when I believed no pain meant no gain. Now I don't. I'm learning what's enough, and what's too much.

I once raised a skeptical eyebrow at chair yoga; now I am grateful for the support that allows me to stretch

and strengthen without getting down on the floor and wondering how I'll get back up. At the senior center I sometimes attend the Tai Chi classes, and again I appreciate the movements that are within my range. I once resisted the idea of going to the senior center or any class created for older people. Now I'm relieved that I'm not in a multi-generational class. I do not want to be surrounded by spandex-wearing athletes in their 20s.

I especially like Roberta's thoughts on spring cleaning. My mother embraced this annual event with relish. Everything got aired and polished. She swapped out heavy drapes for sheer curtains, and chintz slipcovers went on the chairs and sofa to protect the upholstery from sweaty children – but the fact that I remember it means she was still in her 50s when she took this on, not near 80 as I am now. I am off the hook. I forgive myself for having little enthusiasm for the task.

In any case, it would be futile because of Ziggy, the 115-pound Great Pyrenees who quietly sheds drifts of snowy white fur and leaves muddy footprints all over the house. If I insisted on a perfectly clean house, I'd lose out on the affection and joy he brings to our lives every single day.

I've written about Ziggy a lot. He has turned out to be my Zen master. With a lot of training, he has come far – he's not perfect, but he is good enough. Being with him and my husband, daughter, her family, and treasured friends is more than enough at this time in my life.

When I was a child, pouting or whining about something, my mother would lose her patience. "Enough is enough," she would say to end the conversation. We fought and struggled, but it turns out that much of what she taught me is useful. *Enough is enough*; and it can be more than enough, once you set realistic goals.

Senior Center Activities

MARCH 24 THROUGH 28

GILL and MONTAGUE

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

Monday 3/24

10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
3:30 p.m. Senior Tech Class

Tuesday 3/25

9 a.m. Chair Yoga
3 p.m. Tai Chi

Wednesday 3/26

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

Thursday 3/27

10 a.m. Montague Villages Meeting
1 p.m. Pitch

Friday 3/28

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. The next clinic is April 2. Call Katie Nolan at (978) 544-2306 for information or appointments. For Senior Health Rides, contact Nancy Spittle at (978) 544-6760.

LEVERETT

Chair Yoga classes are held Wednesdays at 10 a.m., hybrid, at the town hall and on Zoom. Foot care clinics are the third Tuesday of each month. Luncheons are the fourth Friday at town hall. For more information, contact (413) 548-1022 or coa@leverett.ma.us.

Please check the town newsletter or the LeverettConnects list-serv for more info.

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 3/24

9 a.m. Good for U
10 a.m. Seated Fitness
12 p.m. Pitch Cards
1 p.m. Yoga

Tuesday 3/25

9 a.m. Stretch & Balance
10 a.m. Line Dancing
11 a.m. Social Stringer

Wednesday 3/26

9 a.m. Interval Training
10:15 a.m. Chair Aerobics
11:30 a.m. Bingo

Thursday 3/27

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

Friday 3/28

9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Quilting, Open Sew

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MOVIE REVIEW

Unstoppable (Amazon MGM, 2024)

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – I have had a good streak of luck when it comes to enjoying movies based on true stories. That has continued with *Unstoppable*, a true story of a teenager who went on to become a very successful wrestler in college, which included becoming a high school state champion and a national champion, despite being born with one leg. His name is Anthony Robles, and this movie is on Amazon Prime Video to see.

Robles is played by Jharrel Jerome, and his mom is played by Jennifer Lopez. His high school coach is played by Michael Pena, who I had seen in another true-story movie called *A Million Miles Away*, about a man who finally fulfilled his dream of getting into space. Don Cheadle plays his college coach. Both appear in the movie to be good coaches for him.

One thing I should mention is that Anthony tells someone at a party he has no plans to be involved with wrestling beyond college. I mean, how much further do you think Anthony thought he could go, at that time, with the sport? His first choice for a college to go to is Iowa State, and they have no interest in him.

This wrestler manages to get two decent colleges interested in him. One is Drexel College, and another is a walk-on opportunity at Arizona State. He chooses Arizona to be closer to his family. After a match with that team that doesn't go well, he lucks out and gets to stay on it.

Then there are a couple more bumps in the road. One involves the cutting of Arizona's wrestling program, I believe. He does get back on



the team, but after that he has to deal with budget cuts affecting the program, and people having to be cut.

While that is going on, he and his mom lose their house due to a mortgage payment problem. The movie showcases that he has a very loving relationship with his mom.

His perseverance in the sport pays off in a couple of ways that were unexpected, in my book. But I should also point out that Arizona State's team has his back when people have to be cut. Around this time, he also gets an admirer or two in the form of letters sent to him. A kid says he is inspiring him when it comes to dealing with his asthma.

The admiration continues for some time after he wins the national championship. He continues in wrestling by becoming a coach, signing with Nike, and receiving an award from ESPN connected to the perseverance he showed. He ends up going very far with wrestling – and what athlete would not be happy with a sneaker deal to their name? Nike is a nice and famous one to have.

LIBRARY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Montague Libraries Announce Memorial Fund In Honor of Local Photographer Howard Karger

MONTAGUE – The Montague Public Libraries have established the Howard Karger Fund to celebrate the life of Howard Karger, a longtime Turners Falls resident and photographer who captured the vitality of the Connecticut River Valley's landscapes.

Howard dedicated much of his life to recording nature on film, often returning to his favorite sites to snap the perfect exposure. His painterly landscapes depict the valley's rushing rivers, vibrant fall foliage, and quiet snowy days. Howard's scenes of Franklin County, especially Mount Toby, will be familiar to anyone who has taken in the beauty of our

landscape during a walk in the woods.

Howard received numerous awards for his work, most notably from the Arthur Griffin Center for Photographic Art and the Hitchcock Center for the Environment, in categories that include nature appreciation, landscapes, flora, and designs in nature.

The Howard Karger Fund will support books on the subjects that Howard loved: photography and photographers, the environment, natural history, and the landscapes of western Mass.

The Montague Public Libraries are grateful for the generosity of Howard's brother, Louis, whose donation made this fund possible.

Are India and the US Going Down the Same Road?

WENDELL – Suraj Milind Yengde grew up in a Dalit slum in India among the people once called Untouchables. Through unflinching determination, he has emerged as a lawyer and scholar of caste and color.

Next Friday, March 28 at 6:30 p.m. at the Wendell Free Library, Dr. Yengde will show slides of his experience in India and around the world and reflect on the pitfalls of identity politics that have paved the way for the rise of right-wing movements. "Are India and the US Going Down the Same Road? A Conversation About Race, Caste, Democracy and Human Rights" is free and open to the public.

The political takeover of the state and civic institutions by ideological forces in India and the US offer striking parallels. At the same time, a new politics based on models of Dalit social and spiritual engagement can help us recover the promises of equality and freedom.

Dr. Yengde is a W.E.B. Du Bois Fellow at Harvard University. He has published nearly 200



Dr. Suraj Milind Yengde.

articles and the bestseller *Caste Matters*, on the struggle for human rights in India. His forthcoming book, *Caste: A Global Story*, documents the power of prejudice in 15 countries in North America, the Middle East, Europe, and Asia – and the Dalit and Black activism that is pushing back. See www.surajyengde.com for more information.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Suds in Tub; Bomb Squad; Circling Juvenile; Wandering Dad; Noisy Work; Winch-Out; No Room for Females at Shelter; Deer

Monday, 3/10

8:55 a.m. Massachusetts state police dive team will be entering the canal today for a search.

12:25 p.m. DCF supervisor requesting officer to provide support for one of their caseworkers who is having trouble with a juvenile client. Area checked; no one matching description located.

4:10 p.m. Walk-in from Federal Street reports someone took a bath in her hot tub. Husband noticed there were a lot of suds in it, and they found a used bar of soap next to it. Unsure who did this. Would like on record at this time.

5:02 p.m. 911 caller from Avenue A reports ongoing situation involving harassment and intimidation in his own home. Advised of options.

6:48 p.m. 911 caller from Walgreens reports she received an anonymous call from someone who stated the exact description of what she and her coworkers were wearing and said that there is an active bomb in the store. Officers advised. Walgreens has been evacuated. MSP and Greenfield PD contacted for assistance. MSP contacting their bomb squad. Officers evacuating other businesses in plaza. Greenfield officers en route to reroute traffic. TFFD responding to assist and stage. MPD officer advises command post

set up at bus stop in front of Food City. Officer advising bomb squad on scene. Initial K9 sweep negative; bodies entering to sweep now. Walkthrough completed; negative findings. Roads reopened. All units clear. Fusion Center still working on phone number. 8:11 p.m. Caller from Avenue A reports that five or six years ago, she was living in a shelter and a male stole money from her. He said he'd give it back to her for her pain meds. She gave him her pain meds and got her money back. States he is now threatening her. Advised of options.

Tuesday, 3/11

11:19 a.m. Detail officer reporting two-car accident on the corner of Canal and Third streets. Tow requested for both vehicles. TFFD responding for reported injuries. One driver transported to Baystate Franklin Medical Center. Officer providing other operator courtesy transport to Tech School. Report taken.

12:41 p.m. Caller from Sunset Drive would like to speak with an officer about a situation with an elderly tenant. Caller advises that the involved male party is going to be reprimanded for harassment.

5:08 p.m. Chief advises he is walking his dog in Montague Center and a vehicle is circling the area. Seems to be a juvenile learning to drive. No police service necessary.

6:24 p.m. Caller reports that people are burning in the Fourth Street alleyway after being told they can't do that. Shelburne Control notified. TFFD requesting PD assistance due to history with male party. TFFD captain advises male called in for cooking fire at 7 p.m. The container he is burning in is fine.

Wednesday, 3/12

12:08 p.m. Caller reports that the stop sign and speed limit sign near Montague Machine on Rastallis Street are lying on the ground. DPW advised.

2:26 p.m. Visiting nurse reports that around 12:45 p.m. she arrived at a male's house to find the door wide open and his Life Alert on the counter. She spoke to his son, who stated the male left the residence around 12:30, unknown direction of travel. Male was highly upset and has dementia and a suspended license. Caller states son did not seem concerned his father was gone. Party may be with a friend in the Wendell area. Son will call if he locates him. Shelburne Control and Greenfield PD advised to be on lookout. Son reports male has returned home.

10:23 p.m. Caller from Burnett Street reports ongoing harassment; same red vehi-

cle from previous calls has been pulling up in front of her house and leaving. Officer unable to locate vehicle; spoke with caller about pending court paperwork.

Thursday, 3/13

7:07 a.m. Caller from Grove Street reports that tree work woke her up. Would like DPW to be told they need to come back later. Officer advised. Caller called back stating they quieted down for a bit but are working again; she would like them to be fined and to come back after 9:30 a.m.

Friday, 3/14

12:27 a.m. Caller from Burnett Street states the people who have been causing a disturbance at his house for the last few months are back. Caller states the situation is currently being handled by MPD; he just wanted it on record that they were back tonight driving up and down the street at a high rate of speed and honking the horn. Caller states the people have been identified and a court date is coming up, but wanted to report this additional incident.

3:26 a.m. Tow truck operator states they received a call for a winch-out of a vehicle that went off Sunderland Road into a field; possible property damage. Caller requesting an officer to the scene before they tow the car. Investigated.

9:01 a.m. Officer conducting vehicle stop at Turnpike Road and Emond Avenue. A 43-year-old Turners Falls man was arrested on a default warrant and also charged with operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license, subsequent offense; operating a motor vehicle with a revoked registration; uninsured motor vehicle; and unregistered motor vehicle.

6:33 p.m. Caller states his tenant on Avenue A is in the hospital and a large group of people are in his apartment who shouldn't be. Looking for officer to go with him when he asks them to leave. Three people left and were advised not to return. Two were allowed to stay per the tenant, with whom officers spoke over the phone. Landlord advised of options.

11:56 p.m. Windsor Locks PD requesting MPD check area for a missing suicidal female from their town. Latest phone ping in area of Taylor Hill Road, with a 1,500-meter radius. Female has threatened to commit suicide by gun. Officer advises all roads within radius checked; unable to locate. Search can restart in daylight. Female located.

Saturday, 3/15

12:13 a.m. 911 open line from Avenue A; static heard. Phone doesn't ring on callback. Officer advised. Female party re-

turned to the property after being asked to leave; thought she lost her cellphone there. Cellphone not there. Officer requesting if Greenfield has room at shelter. Shelter contacted; no room for females at this time. Officer providing courtesy transport to Eleventh Street.

1 p.m. 911 caller from New Street reports that a male party in a pickup truck threatened him and a friend. Advised of options. 11:21 p.m. Caller reports that his car broke down on West Main Street; it's in the parking lot next to the dumpster. He will have it moved in the morning.

Sunday, 3/16

12:26 a.m. Checking on vehicle with back door wide open on G Street. Does not seem to have been gone through; just left open.

12:54 a.m. Caller reporting loud music playing from the bar at St. Stanislaus Society on K Street. Officer advises main door locked; kitchen unlocked. Advised of complaint. Leaving now.

3:53 a.m. Caller from Burnett Street reports her window was just smashed in. Officer downtown keeping an eye out for possibly involved juveniles. Second officer advises he spoke to the homeowner. He is going to attempt to locate the juveniles. White Nike sneaker thrown through the window.

10:08 a.m. Caller states that there is a blue Ford pickup truck near Bulkley and Dell streets and the people inside throw garbage outside of it and leave the area a mess. Involved party advised of complaint. Involved said they would clean up before leaving.

12:04 p.m. Caller from Central Street would like it on record that someone went through his vehicle last night. This is the third time. Nothing was taken.

5:19 p.m. 911 caller reporting car accident on Swamp Road. No injuries; no fluids or smoke. Eversource notified. No damage to pole. Vehicle drivable with minor damage. Report taken.

5:47 p.m. 911 caller from Subway reports a group of men are in the employee-only area playing loud music and refusing to leave. Males gone upon officers' arrival. No threats were made; nothing taken. Employees advised of options.

7:22 p.m. Caller reports she hit a deer on Federal Street. Damage to vehicle. No injuries or leaking fluids. Caller called back in stating she has to go pick up her daughter and can't wait around. Deer is in the road. Advised caller no accident report can be done if she leaves the scene. States understanding. Officer pulled deer off road. Message left for DPW.

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Montague Community Television News

'Customers' Debuts!

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – *Customers From Hell* is out! This colorful and kooky comedy was cooked up by MCTV producer Alexis Hott, with animations and production assistance from our board member Liz Walber.

If you've ever worked a service job, this show might hit home for you. Amusingly aggravating in their own ways, each customer at the cardboard café called "Tilly's" is spectacularly dressed, and performs a preposterous persona. Find it on our Vimeo page or tune into Channel 9 to find it on your local cable channel.

There you may also find the most recent recordings of both the

Gill and Montague selectboard meetings.

If *Customers from Hell* inspires you to make a movie, get in touch! Our station is equipped with a studio, cameras, lights and microphones, as well as friendly staff members who are available to help. Stop by the station at 34 Second Street in Turners Falls anytime between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., Mondays through Fridays, or contact us at (413) 863-9200 or infomontaguetv@gmail.com.

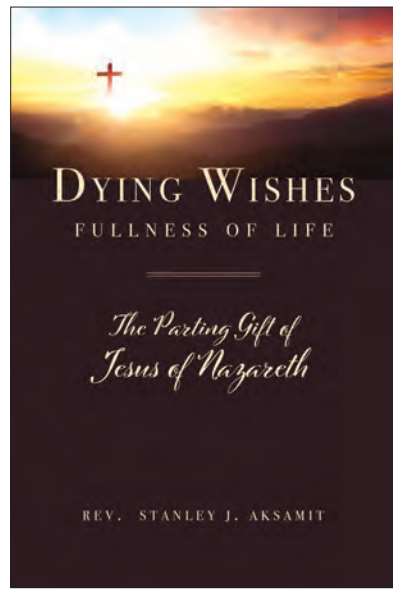
All MCTV videos are aired on Channel 9 and featured on the MCTV Vimeo page, and you can also follow us on Facebook or find us on Instagram @montaguecommunitytv. Find videos and more on our website, montaguetv.org.

BOOK REVIEW from page B1 actions of Mother Teresa.

The second value is *the communal meal*. "He [Jesus] gave us a way to be continually nourished," Aksamit said. "If you think about it, there is something very sacred about eating together... The best part of a funeral is the meal afterward." He also referenced the Polish *Oplatki* tradition, in which family members bless a wafer on Christmas and give it to their loved ones. Askamit remembers sending *Oplatki* to family members in Poland during his childhood, connecting with people he never met through food.

The third value is *forgiveness*. "A lot of people have the hardest time with this one," he said. As Jesus suffered horrendous pain from being nailed to the cross, he prayed for God to forgive those who had done this to him.

"It was so stunning and unexpected for Jesus to do that in the midst of agony," Askamit said. "It is extraordinarily powerful when

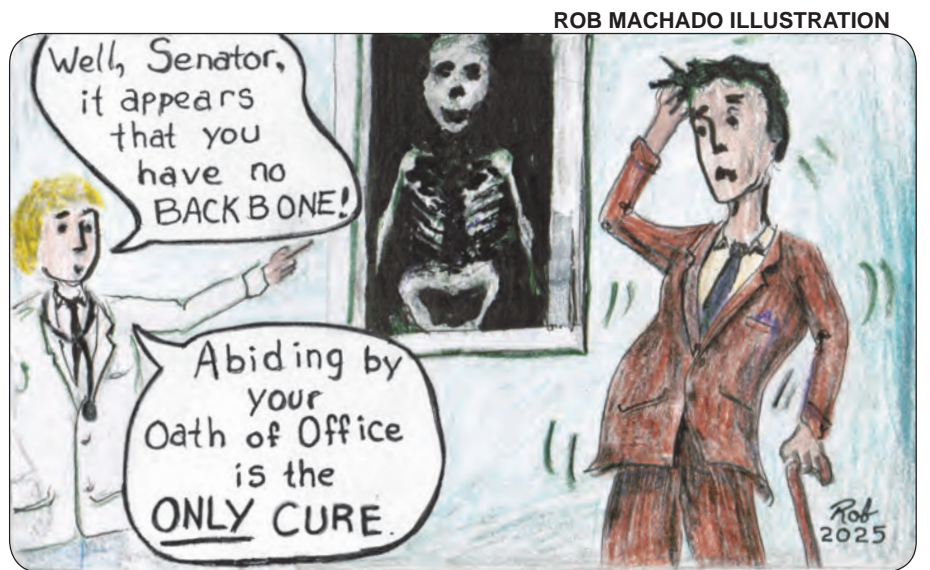
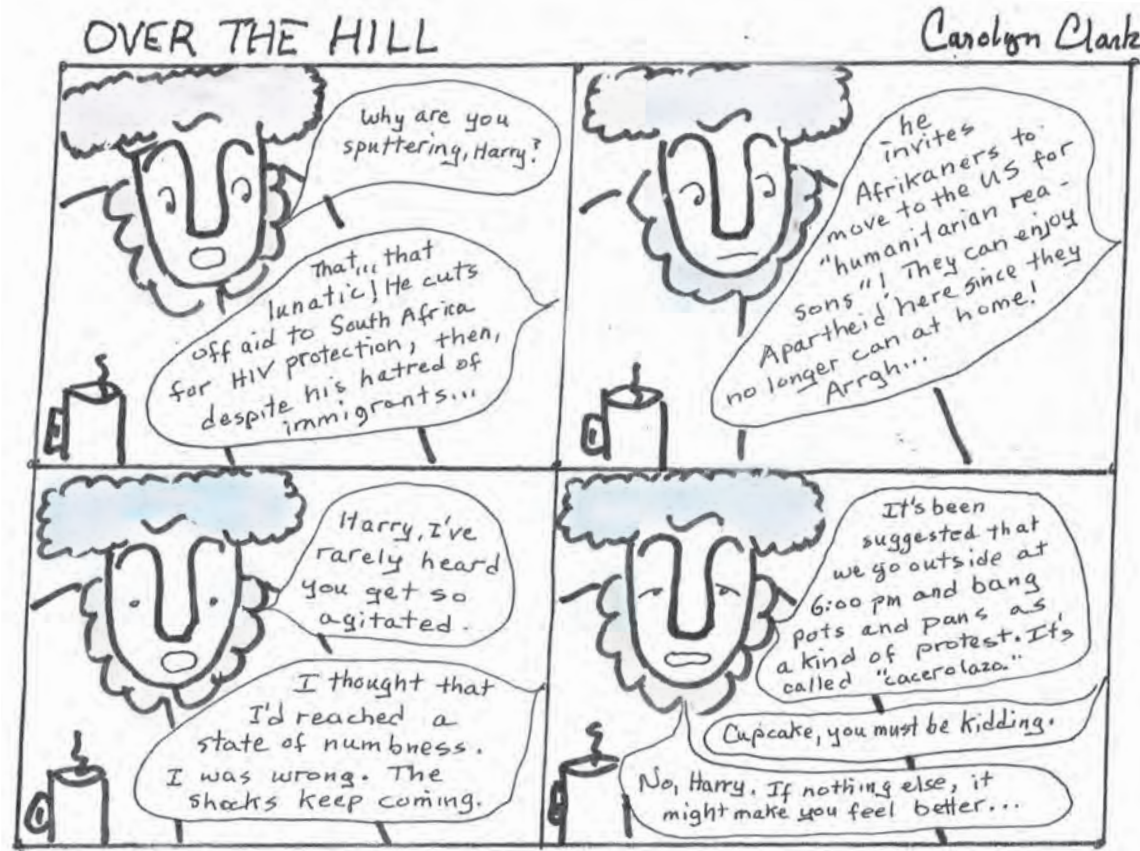


Askamit spoke fondly of the "What Would Jesus Do?" (WWJD) trend of the 1990s, saying that this is how one should act. He suggested universalizing the phrase to "What would love do?" as a way to guide everyone toward actions rooted in goodness.

The short book is divided into five sections: fundamentals – particularly helpful for this reporter, a Jewish person about to interview a priest who still misses blatant Christian symbolism in every book and movie – holidays, Christian beliefs, Mass, and current hot topics.

"After 46 years of priesthood, I finally felt I had something to say," Askamit said about writing the book. "Not everything is black and white. Let's sit down and talk about things and not be forever divided."

Readers may find the Rev. Stanley J. Aksamit's book, *Dying Wishes Fullness of Life: The Parting Gift of Jesus of Nazareth*, at Amazon.com.



Submit your comics (and puzzles) to editor@montaguereporter.org. Original & local creations only, please!

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PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Habitat for Humanity Taking Applications For New Affordable Home in Greenfield

GREENFIELD – Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity is pleased to announce that applications are available for a two-bedroom adaptable home in Greenfield. The application deadline is Tuesday, May 13, 2025. Eligible applicants will have incomes up to 60% of area median income, adjusted for family size.

People interested in submitting an application are invited to attend an information session to learn more:

- In-person info session Monday, April 14, 2025 at 6 p.m. at the Greenfield Public Library: RSVP at www.tinyurl.com/Habitat414.
- Online info session Sunday, May 4, 2025 at 4 p.m. via Zoom: register at www.tinyurl.com/Habitat54.

During the information sessions, potential applicants will learn about Habitat's selection criteria and how

to prepare a complete application. The selection criteria include housing need, ability to make mortgage payments, and willingness to partner with Habitat, such as participating in the construction of the home and other Habitat projects.

More information can be found at www.pvhabitat.org/apply/

The home to be built this year will be all-electric and built to Energy Star standards. The home in Greenfield will be one-story and will be adaptable for someone with mobility impairments. All Habitat-built homes are restricted to income-eligible buyers in perpetuity.

Since 1989, Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity has built decent, affordable homes with almost 60 families with low incomes in Hampshire and Franklin Counties.

We build our homes with volunteer labor and donations of material, supplies, land, and services.

At the onset of homebuilding, a family is selected and enters into a long-term partnership with Pioneer Valley Habitat. Future homeowners contribute 250 hours of labor during the construction of their home alongside volunteers from the community. Upon completion, the home is sold to the family with an affordable mortgage.

Habitat is a "hand-up, not a hand-out": the organization has a perpetual legacy in that all mortgage funds received are reinvested to build more homes. We are a housing organization helping to bring stability to families, bringing more stability into our neighborhoods and communities.



AINSWORTH PHOTOS

The Clark's Inn and Restaurant in Santee, South Carolina is an alternative to the cookie-cutter hotels for drivers seeking rest and repast on I-95.

ON THE ROAD from page B1

mud pit. I took I-91 to Hartford over to New York on I-84, picked up I-81 in Scranton, and stopped at a Country Inn & Suite in Frackville, Pennsylvania.

I was up before dawn and wanted to stay west of DC, but the GPS tricked me onto I-270 and its stop-and-go flow. I was going about 20 mph when my Providence friend Paul White called to say his plane had just landed in Palm Beach, and I hung up on him.

The gridlock finally loosened on I-95 north of Richmond, and the green flag was down for the next 400 miles, other than a series of radar traps in the Palmetto State. They use cameras these days, and I'm hoping there's not a pile of speeding tickets waiting for me when I get home.

Gas is always cheaper in the mid-Atlantic and I stopped at a Love's in North Carolina where a gallon was \$2.54 but coffee and sleeve of mini donuts cost \$5.42. While the cashier rang up the sale, a robot-generated voice said over the intercom: "Customer Ten, your shower is ready. Please proceed to Shower Four."

My black Subaru was covered with salt and grime and the passenger door was streaked in white. "Cow bird got you good," said the clerk.

The next stop was Clark's Inn off Exit 98 in Santee, South Carolina, a sturdy double-decker lodge with an adjoining restaurant and gift shop. The rooms are sturdy and quiet with comfortable beds and soft chairs and book shelves filled with reading material.

It's a favorite for the over-50 crowd who eschew the cookie-cutter hotels and their all-but-worthless loyalty points, the kind of place you can go for a walk and leave the room unlocked.

A couple from Stonington, Connecticut, was en route to Hutchinson Island in Florida. While the husband stretched his legs she took out all the suitcases, every last one of them. I thought it was foolish until I kept returning to my car for things I needed and had forgotten

where I'd packed them.

The restaurant opened in 1946 after Bubba Clark came home from the war and put his mess-sergeant skills to work. The menu offers regional entrees like catfish filet, chicken livers and bacon, and low country stir fry. I had the hamburger steak with mushrooms and gravy, mashed potatoes and green beans and pecan pie with whipped cream for dessert.

It reminded me of the meals John and Linda Carey served at the Shady Glen.

Unexpected Company

My first stop in Florida was Gainesville to meet Crosby Hunt, his wife Deborah, and their dogs. Gracie's a German shepherd and Dude's a part greyhound, part Lab.

Gracie was sired by my son Mat's dog Ike and his other German shepherd Ava. They hooked up the night before Ike was scheduled to be fixed, and Crosby and Deborah got one of their pups. They had just lost their own beloved German shepherd, and drove through an ice storm to get her.

But I digress. The day after I left, Mat left for a wedding in Florida. Christian Melnik of the Deerfield Melniks was marrying Savannah Slater, whose father Bobby Slater is the head trainer for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. "Really nice guy and family," Mat texted.

He left Deerfield at 8 p.m. to get through the cities before the morning rush hour. Eleven hours later, at 7 a.m., I texted him. "You still motoring?" I asked.

"Oh yea," he answered.

"Where are you?" I asked.

"South Carolina," he said.

"Mile 138."

"You're a half hour from me. Stop and have breakfast."

He parked his vehicle next to mine, came in and took a shower, and we went over for breakfast. It was an unplanned father-son thing, and we could not have timed it better.

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



A squirrel snacks on an apricot on the author's picnic table.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Stuck Vehicles; Flurry of Paperwork; Fake Bill

Saturday, 2/1
2:34 p.m. DoorDash driver stuck in Center Road driveway after making a delivery. Homeowner advised he will pull the car out with a chain.

3:28 p.m. French King Highway party complaining about a tractor-trailer parked in the middle of the road in front of the Gill Mill.

Sunday, 2/2
10:26 a.m. Tractor-trailer in the middle of the road, Main Road and French King Highway. Vehicle locked brakes and is waiting for them to cool down.

11:17 a.m. 911 open line with music in the background, Main Road and French King Highway. No response to emergency prompts.

12:30 p.m. Assisted Northfield PD, Mount Hermon Station Road.

3:19 p.m. Boyle Road 911 call. Technical difficulties with the phone.

4:47 p.m. Hoe Shop Road accident with no injuries.

Monday, 2/3
12:25 a.m. Dole Road disturbance.

11:45 a.m. Medical emergency, Mountain Road.
4:22 p.m. Medical emergency, West Gill Road.
11:29 p.m. Center Road 911 misdial. Caller advises she pressed the wrong button on her phone; denies needing assistance.

Tuesday, 2/4
9:09 a.m. Assisting probation office and regional health agent, Main Road.

1:06 p.m. Assisting Bernardston PD with motor vehicle accident, Brattleboro Road and Burrows Turnpike. No injuries.

4:43 p.m. Main Road manager reporting a counterfeit \$100 received last night.

8:58 p.m. French King Highway caller advises he is traveling westbound behind an erratic operator.

Wednesday, 2/5
6:17 p.m. French King Highway and Main Road party advises she was

rear-ended at the lights. No personal injuries, both vehicles drivable.

Thursday, 2/6
5:57 p.m. Medical emergency, River Road.

Friday, 2/7
6:16 p.m. Main Road citizen requested a callback. Returned call and advised he needs to contact Erving PD.

6:29 p.m. Paperwork service, Center Road.

6:36 p.m. Paperwork service, Munn's Ferry Road.
6:54 p.m. Paperwork service, Main Road.

Saturday, 2/8
10:49 a.m. Medical emergency, Riverview Drive.

12:22 p.m. Fire alarm, Boyle Road.

Sunday, 2/9
9:03 a.m. Assisted Bernardston PD. Officer wanted, Turners Falls Road.

Monday, 2/10
7:59 p.m. Cross Road caller advises her dog has taken off from the home.

Tuesday, 2/11
10:05 a.m. Welfare check, Mountain Road.

1:17 p.m. Suspicious vehicle, Hoe Shop Road.
2 p.m. Assisting citizen, Main Road.

2:42 p.m. French King Highway citizen reporting lost keys.
7:07 p.m. Unattended death on Pisgah Mountain Road.

Wednesday, 2/12
12:03 p.m. Assisting public health, Barney Hale Road.

1:32 p.m. Medical emergency, Main Road.
2:40 p.m. Two-car accident, Turners Falls-Gill Bridge. Caller was rear-ended. Green Tacoma versus black BMW.

7:39 p.m. Structure fire on Purple Road.

Thursday, 2/13
8:51 a.m. Trash truck stuck, Camp and Pisgah Mountain roads. Help reportedly en route.

12:46 p.m. West Gill Road 911 call with only static on the line.

7:24 p.m. Medical emergency, Barney Hale Road.
8:44 p.m. Medical emergen-

cy, French King Highway.

Sunday, 2/16
11:52 a.m. Main Road caller reporting a black SUV with its front end in a snow bank.

1:39 p.m. Caller reporting a party hitchhiking, French King Highway and Riverview Drive. Hitchhiker is wearing a gray jacket with the hood up; unknown if they are male or female.

4 p.m. Mount Hermon Road 911 hangup.

Monday, 2/17
3:09 p.m. Barney Hale Road caller advises someone stopped at her residence to tell her that a tree was down on the road. Unsure if wires are involved.

7:09 p.m. Assisted state police with pursuit on Route 91 northbound.

Tuesday, 2/18
11:23 a.m. Welfare check, Peterson Way.

1:51 p.m. Assisting Bernardston PD with disturbance on South Street.

11:01 p.m. Fire alarm, Elm Street.

Wednesday, 2/19
9:09 a.m. Medical emergency, Boyle Road.

Thursday, 2/20
7:47 a.m. Oak Street party locked out of the house.

11:20 a.m. License plate recovered for West Gill Road resident.

12:12 p.m. Caller will be soliciting for Trinity Solar, Riverside Drive area.

12:18 p.m. Two-car accident with injuries on Gill Road.

3:52 p.m. Assisting another agency with an injured owl, Lamplighter Way.

5:24 p.m. Disabled motor vehicle in a snowbank on the side of the road, French King Highway.

Friday, 2/21
12:34 a.m. Fire alarm, Elm Street.

9:17 a.m. Grove Street caller asking for an officer. He had a pack of cigarettes stolen from his vehicle overnight.

3:30 p.m. Assisting another agency on Main Road.

4:48 p.m. Main Road party advises he found an injured cat in the road.

Saturday, 2/22
5:07 a.m. Gilder Way caller advises she is stuck. She tried to use her four-wheel drive, but still got stuck.

2:22 p.m. Elm Street caller has a person who refuses to leave.

2:22 p.m. Center Road party found a small male mixed-breed dog.

Sunday, 2/23
9:17 a.m. French King Highway 911 misdial.

3:59 p.m. Main Road caller complaining that it sounds like a neighbor is throwing furniture around.

5:06 p.m. Main Road call complaining about noise.

10:39 p.m. Main Road party reports her upstairs neighbor is banging on the floors and making noise.

Monday, 2/24
8:41 a.m. Center Road caller reporting identity fraud.

8:54 a.m. Welfare check, Main Road.

4:44 p.m. Main Road citizen requesting assistance in getting his motor vehicle plates back.

4:48 p.m. Carbon monoxide hazard, Boyle Road.

11:10 p.m. Main Road party advised that they had called AAA looking for help in getting their car jump-started.

Tuesday, 2/25
12:23 p.m. Fire alarm, Boyle Road.

4:11 p.m. Boyle Road medical emergency.

Wednesday, 2/26
8:25 a.m. Medical emergency, Oak Street.

9:17 a.m. Disabled motor vehicle, French King Highway.

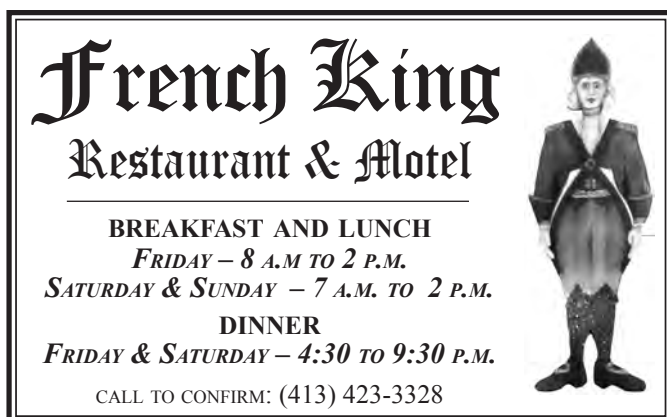
4:04 p.m. Assisting Montague PD with disturbance on Avenue A.

Friday, 2/28
2 p.m. Main Road 911 call. Caller states call accidental; they need to dial "9" to get an outside line.

7:02 p.m. Suspicious vehicle on Main Road.

9:03 p.m. Suspicious vehicle, French King Highway.

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SHOP HOURS
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THURSDAY, MARCH 20
Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: Trivia night. *Home Is Where the Heart Is*. Info on FRCOG's 2024 Regional Housing Plan, free pizza. 6:30 p.m. \$.

Wendell Town Hall, Wendell: *A Deep Presence, 13,000 Years of Native American History*, featuring Robert G. Goodby, professor of anthropology at Franklin Pierce University and researcher in Native American archaeology. 6:30 p.m. Free.

Easthampton High School, Easthampton: *The Performance Project* presents *Mother Tongue*. For ages 12 and up. 6:30 p.m. Free admission.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Curmudgeon Bingo*. 7 p.m. \$.

New Salem Public Library, New Salem: *Reading Aloud for Grownups*. Mira Bartok and Jo Boskind will read short stories. Refreshments available. See nsfriendsoflibrary.weebly.com/events for information. Zoom available. 7 p.m. Free.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Ye Vagabonds*. 7 p.m. \$.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Valley Voices Story Slam*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Sulis Studios, Florence: *Jetties, bobbie*. 8 p.m. \$.

FRIDAY, MARCH 21
Canalside Rail Trail, Turners Falls: *Nice & Easy Walk*. Easy-paced, one- to two-mile guided walk, geared for seniors, but open to all. Meet at the Great Falls Discovery Center. 1 p.m. Free.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Kidleidoscope Story Hour* for ages three through six, accompanied by an adult. Learn about salamanders through story, activities, and crafts. 1:30 p.m. Free.

NELCWIT, Greenfield: *The Strength We Share*, a "community release and renewal event." Readings, ceremony, and live music; hot chocolate and snacks provided. 5 p.m. Free.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *Theater of Ideas*, featuring Nina Gross presenting "Taking the Pulse." 6 p.m. Free.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Balkun Brothers, Jelly, Jatoba*. 7 p.m. \$.

Unnameable Books, Turners Falls: Readings, *Maria Damon, Alan Sondheim*. 7 p.m. Free.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Jacob Kordas*. 7 p.m. No cover.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *Surrealist Party Games* with Roger Clark Miller. 7 p.m. \$.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Liz Longley, Max Gomez*. 7 p.m. \$.

Clark Auditorium, Williamstown: *Flore Laurentienne*. 7 p.m. \$.

The Drake, Amherst: *Vapors of Morphine*. 8 p.m. \$.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *The Suitcase Junket, Cloudbelly*. 8 p.m. \$.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Taxidermists, Mal Devisa, B.L.I.X.* 10:30 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, MARCH 22
Ginger Garden, Amherst: *League of Women Voters of Amherst Annual Luncheon*,



Canadian orchestral soundscape project Flore Laurentienne plays at the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown this Friday evening.

with guest speaker *Jamie D. Hoag*, senior counselor to state AG Andrea Campbell. See www.lwvamherst.org for tickets; no one turned away for lack of funds. 12 p.m. \$

Greenfield Savings Bank, Turners Falls: *Crafting with Eveline MacDougall*. Upcycling art workshop; children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult. 1 p.m. Free.

Wendell State Forest Headquarters, Wendell: *A Walk in the Wendell Woods*, led by local naturalists Adam Kohl and Bill Stubblefield. Explore "some of the ways organisms manage to deal with winter conditions and prepare to burst forth in the spring." Dress for the weather. Rain date March 29. 1 p.m. Free.

Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: *Workshop and concert with Dr. Kathy Bullock*. Benefit for Stone Soup Café. Learn and sing African American songs of inspiration, hope and joy, 1 to 5:30 p.m.; community potluck, 5:30 p.m., concert including workshop participants, 7 p.m. By donation.

Brewery at Four Star Farms, Northfield: *The Hilltown Ham Hocks*. Benefit for FamilyAid. 5 p.m. No cover.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *Molten*, belly dance showcase. 5:30 p.m. \$.

Four Phantoms Brewing, Greenfield: *Ragged Blue*. 6 p.m. No cover.

Palladium, Worcester: *Mayhem, Mortiiis, Imperial Triumphant, New Skeletal Faces*. 6:30 p.m. \$.

Unnameable Books, Turners Falls: Readings, *Adam Tobin, Lori Shine, James Haug, Catherine Bresner, Brian Baldi*. 7 p.m. Free.

Jewish Community of Amherst, Amherst: *On The Lam, The No-Nos*. Benefit for ACLU of Mass. 7 p.m. \$.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Misty Blues, Alex Rohan*. 7 p.m. \$.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Heavy Trip, Modern Ego, The Azures, Craetor*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *RJ McCarty*. 8 p.m. \$.

EXHIBITS

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Atomic Dog: What I did to beat the blues*, paintings by Ryan McGinn, through April.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Where We Are, Together*, paintings by Cameron Schmitz, through May 26. Reception next Saturday, March 29, from 3 to 5 p.m., with an artist talk at 4:15 p.m.

Montague Center Library: *Ann Feitelson: Quilts*, through May 2.

Sawmill River Arts, Montague Center: *Jacqueline Strauss*, guest artist, soft sculpture creatures, through March.

Hallie's Comet Fine Jewelry by Christina Giebner, March 20 through May 20.

Leverett Library, Leverett: *Feathers and Fur*, works by Mary Schreiber, through April.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *New England Dreamscapes*, new paintings on slate by Sarah Adam, through April. *New Roots in Riverbanks*, exhibit about Polish and other Eastern European immigrants to the Connecticut River valley, through May.

Artspace Gallery, Greenfield: *Teen Art Show*, work by youngsters across Franklin County, through April 25.

Looky Here, Greenfield: *Kids' Art Show*, works by area youth, through March 28.

TEOLOS Gallery, Greenfield: *Peter Ruhf: Magical Surrealism*, 60 years of paintings, drawings, and prints. Next Friday, March 28 through April 26, with a reception from 5 to 9 p.m. opening night.

Fiddleheads Gallery, Northfield: *Annual Photography Exhibit*, 19 New England photographers exhibiting in black and white and color, through March 30.

Gallery A3, Amherst: *Sue Katz and Gloria Kegeles*, photographs, painted wood, and assemblage, through March 29.

Science and Engineering Library, UMass Amherst: *The Soil Beneath Us*, mixed media works by Malaika Ross about the rhizosphere. *Harvesting Color: A Seasonal Journal*, art about ecology and herbalism using a variety of green alchemic processes by Tonya Lemos. Through May 30.

Shelburne Arts Coop, Shelburne Falls: *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral*, paintings by Edith Bingham.

Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne: *Student Art Exhibit*, work by fifth- and sixth-graders at the Mohawk

school district, through April 27.

Borgia Gallery, Elms College, Chicopee: *For a Pair of Wings*, works by Hannah Hurricane. Through April 18, with a reception next Thursday, March 27, from 12:15 to 1:15 p.m.

CALLS FOR ART

Holyoke Art and Taber Art Gallery are looking for artists working with or on paper to show their work at the **Holyoke Paper Festival**. Submissions open for workshops or talks about the possibilities and significance of paper. Apply by April 14 at holyokeepaperfestival.com/enter.

Fiddleheads Gallery in Northfield is looking for naive, fanciful, humorous, or curious art for a show, "A Touch of Whimsy: art that makes you smile," from May 23 to July 13. Contact Marge Anderson at margedvaa@gmail.com by May 9 to submit work.

CALL FOR DRAMA

The **LAVA Center** is looking for playwrights and directors for a new play festival, "On the Boards." Deadline for play submissions and director applications is March 31. For more information, visit thelavacenter.org/on-the-boards.

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CALENDAR



looking forward...

TUESDAY, APRIL 1

Daily Operation, Easthampton: *Kool Keith*. 7 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, APRIL 5

All Souls Church, Greenfield: *The Legacy of Pete Seeger*, with dozens of performers, with dozens of friends of Pete." 3 p.m. Free.

MONDAY, APRIL 7

Greenfield Garden Cinemas, Greenfield: Silent film, *The Lost World* (1925), with live accompaniment by *Jeff Rapsis*. 6:30 p.m. \$

FRIDAY, APRIL 11

Great Falls Harvest, Turners Falls: *Prison, Gay Mayor, APIE, Gastric Lavage*. 8 p.m. \$.

FRIDAY, APRIL 18

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Ty Segall, Mikal Cronin*. 8 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, APRIL 19

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *Elephant Man, Ladies in the Radiator, Joshua Burkett*. 7 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, MAY 3

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

Mullins Center, UMass Amherst: *Tinashé*. 8 p.m. \$.

SUNDAY, MAY 4

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Immigrant Voices*, presented by Center for New Americans. 7 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, MAY 10

Hutghi's, Westfield: *Weegee, Red Herring, Ian St. George & The Emergency Index, Creative Writing*. 8 p.m. \$.

FRIDAY, JUNE 6

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Dean Wareham, Escape-ism*. 8 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, JUNE 14

1794 Meetinghouse, New Salem: *The Klines*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center, Great Barrington: *Steve Earle*. 8 p.m. \$\$.

FRIDAY, JUNE 27

The Drake, Amherst: *Deerhoof, Asher White*. 8 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, JULY 12

1794 Meetinghouse, New Salem: *John Gorka*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

SUNDAY, JULY 13

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Judy Collins*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Boys Go To Jupiter, bobbie*. 8 p.m. \$.

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

MASS MoCA, North Adams: *Angélica García*. 8 p.m. \$.

Bishop's Lounge, Northampton: *Carinae, Noah Kesey Magick Band, The Case*. 9 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Trans Inclusive Crime Syndicate*. 9:30 p.m. \$.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Bella's Bartok*. 10:30 p.m. \$

SUNDAY, MARCH 23

Erving Public Library, Erving: *Getting Started with Native Plants*, talk by Jocelyn Demuth. Free. 11 a.m.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Haiku Tiny Books*. Hands-on workshop to create a tiny book of haiku poems. Materials provided. Bring up to five favorite haikus. For ages 16 and older. Call (413) 863-3214 to register. 1 p.m. Free.

Great Falls Market, Turners Falls: Webinar viewing, *Pro-Palestinian Activism: The Road Ahead Amid Political Upheaval*, with *Rabbi Alissa Wise* and International Solidarity Movement co-founder *Huwaida Arraf*.

Local gathering and discussion to follow. 1 to 4 p.m. By donation.

Second Congregational Church, Greenfield: *Songs of Hope and Comfort*, presented by *Eventide Singers*. 3 p.m. By donation.

USDA Service Center, Hadley: *Farmer-Led Rally*, to protest recent cuts to federal agricultural funding and to show support for restoring local USDA offices and staff. 3 p.m. Free.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Ted Leo and the Pharmacists, Nova One*. 7 p.m. \$

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Rare Geese, Connect 4, rev. web, Zane Kanevsky*. 8 p.m. \$.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Arthur Buezo, Moon Hollow, Slow Pony*. 8 p.m. \$.

MONDAY, MARCH 24

Greenfield Garden Cinemas, Greenfield: Film, *Join Or Die* (2023), documentary on declining civic engagement, with Zoom Q&A with the director after the film. 6 p.m. Free.

Tori Town, Holyoke: *bobbie, PJPHJL, Silvie's Okay*. 7 p.m. \$.

TUESDAY, MARCH 25

Buoyant Heart, Brattleboro: *Mx. Andry, Analog Boy, Luminous Crush*. 7 p.m. \$.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26

Weinstein Auditorium, Smith College, Northampton: *Earth Music Theater Live*, with musician *Steve Thomas* and former NASA astronaut *Cady Coleman*, who will share videos and stories from her book *Sharing Space*. Visuals from the International Space Station with live music. 7 p.m. Free.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Charlie Parr*. 7 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *The Jesse Carr Trio*. 8 p.m. No cover.

Space Ballroom, Hamden, CT: *Horsegirl, Free Range, Pulsr*. 8 p.m. \$.



Portland, Maine rockers Red Eft headline at the Brick House next Friday.

FRIDAY, MARCH 28

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Nice & Easy Walk*. 1 p.m. Free.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Kidleidoscope Story Hour* for ages three through six, accompanied by an adult. Learn about frogs through story, activities, and crafts. 1:30 p.m. Free.

Four Phantoms Brewing, Greenfield: *Periscope Jazz Band*. 6 p.m. No cover.

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: *Are India and the US Going Down the Same Road? A Conversation About Race, Caste, Democracy and Human Rights*, with author and attorney *Suraj Milind Yengde*. 6:30 p.m. Free.

Brick House, Turners Falls: *Red Eft, Dinos, Rhubarb Duo*. 7 p.m. \$.

Prescott Tavern, Hampshire College, Amherst: *Bubble Scary, I Have No Mouth, Target Scammers*. 7 p.m. \$.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Leon Trout, Mono Means One*. 7 p.m. \$.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Montague Shakespeare Festival* presents *Macbeth*. 7:30 p.m. \$

Pink Edwards, Greenfield: *Wishbone Zoë, Hedgewitch, Matthew Thornton*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Adam S.Z & The Inner Fiyah*. 8 p.m. No cover.

Dream Away Lodge, Becket: *Voltage Box & Friends, Picnic Committee*. 8 p.m. No cover.

Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center, Great Barrington: *José González*. 8 p.m. \$\$

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

SATURDAY, MARCH 29

Montague Congregational Church, Montague Center: *Pancake Breakfast* with "real maple syrup, assorted meats, coffee, tea, and juice." Walk-in service. 8:15 to 10:15 a.m. \$.

Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environment Center, Northfield: *Birding Walk*, led by local naturalist and birder *Jacob Kordas*. Meet at the center and carpool/caravan to observation points in the area. 9 a.m. Free.

Artspace, Greenfield: *Clean-Out Sale* of creative art supplies, art and music books, and more. 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. By donation.

Second Congregational Church, Greenfield: *Sweet Spirit: Songs of Joy, Peace, and Freedom*, performed by the youth of *Música Franklin and Twice As Smart*. 2 p.m. Free.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: Artist reception, *Cameron Schmitz: Where We Are, Together*. 3 p.m. Free.

John M. Greene Hall, Smith College, Northampton: *Five College Choral Festival*. 5 p.m. Free.

Brewery at Four Star Farms, Northfield: *Houston Bernard*. 6 p.m. No cover.

Bombyx Center, Florence: *Anda Union*. 7 p.m. \$.

Robert Crown Center, Hampshire College: *Mutual Aid Benefit Show* feat. *Mybodywasfoundinahollow tree, Criticize, She, Cobalt Arms, Feeble Hands*. 7 p.m. \$.

Institute for Musical Arts, Goshen: *Dear Ella*. 7 p.m. \$.

Nova Arts, Keene: *Glenn Jones, Liam Grant, Helen Hummel Trio*. 7 p.m. \$.

Hutghi's, Westfield: *Slant of Light, Drawn, Sensor Ghost, Hollow Deck*. 7 p.m. \$.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Montague Shakespeare Festival* presents *Macbeth*. 7:30 p.m. \$

Vermont Jazz Center, Brattleboro: *Rhythm Future Jazz Quartet*. Benefit for the Windham County Heat Fund. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Brick House, Turners Falls: *Molto Ohm, Julia Handschuh & Anna Hendricks, Stella Silbert & Nat Baldwin, Rivka Nisinzweig & Charlie Iris*. 8 p.m. \$.

The O's Music Bar, Sunderland: *DJ Lucas, Papo2004, Subjxt, Paul, 22BB, Lil Souf, Slip and Slush, iAMPROFIT*. 8 p.m. \$.

The Drake, Amherst: *The Slackers, Some Ska Band*. 8 p.m. \$.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Gaslight Tinkers*. 8 p.m. \$.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Hardcar, Cop/Out, Radical Joy*. 8 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Girls to the Front*, drag show. 9:30 p.m. \$.

SUNDAY, MARCH 30

Finders Collective, Turners Falls: *Seed Swap*. Browse free seeds and bring some to share if you want. Make sure to label them and share their story if you do. Masks req'd. 12 to 4 p.m. Free.

Erving Public Library, Erving: *EPL Building Fifth Birthday Party*. Memories, photo booth, refreshments. 1 p.m. Free.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Montague Shakespeare Festival* presents *Macbeth*. 2 p.m. \$

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *French/Breton Jam Session*. Open to the public. 2:30 p.m. Free.

Hutghi's, Westfield: *Jokers Republic, Solgyres, Won Word Trend, Green Street Fiends*. 3 p.m. \$.

Second Congregational Church, Greenfield: *A Balm in Gilead: Songs of Resilience, Hope, and Healing* performed by *Twice As Smart* youth and the *LAVA Community Choir*. Program includes a multimedia discussion of the history and meaning of the spirituals. 4 p.m. Free.

Florence VFW, Florence: *Torture, Fatal Realm, Cross of Disbelief, Posthumous Obsession, Faceless Enemy*. 6 p.m. \$.

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

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CONCERT REVIEW

Suzanne Vega Fills the Shea With 'Old Songs, New Songs, and Other Songs'

By KARI K. RIDGE

TURNERS FALLS – On a blustery evening, Suzanne Vega began to sing to a packed house at the Shea Theater and, for two hours, the cold world outside was forgotten as the audience united over a shared appreciation for music, story and community.

Vega's songs span four decades and the crowd at the Shea reflected longtime fans and a few millennials, who perhaps just stumbled upon her latest album, *Flying With Angels*, her 10th studio album. Her new work maintains her style and smooth vocals, even on songs with titles like "Rats."

Joining Vega on stage for this "Old Songs, New Songs, and Other Songs" tour was her longtime guitarist Gerry Leonard – also known for his work with David Bowie and Roger Waters – and cellist Stephanie Winter, who added a haunting artistic dimension to Vega's songs.

The March 7 show began with Vega's earliest work and some fantastic spontaneous storytelling between songs, which made it easy to understand why she has always been a strong lyricist. Vega talked about a song she once wrote for a

young man she dated when they were camp counselors in the Adirondacks. She told us she poured out her heart to him in the song. And, in return, he gave her his bandana. Her rapt audience laughed along with her. Vega then shared that she ran into the man years later, while she was touring in England, and the two have remained friends ever since.

This story reminded me of a good friend I had in high school, when I was first introduced to Vega's work. Sherri and I were trying to figure out how we fit into the high school hierarchy when Vega's song "Left Of Center" was released. Her lyrics resonated with us, and her indie-folk style was so different from the punk and "hard rock" songs that dominated the airwaves:

*If you want me
You can find me
Left of center
Off of the strip
In the outskirts
In the fringes
In the corner Out
of the grip...*

Suzanne Vega was not another boy band singing about lust. Sherri and I felt as if she had walked our

high school's halls, eaten tater-tots alone in our cafeteria, and known what it felt like to be young and not yet sure where you belong.

At the Shea this month, Vega sang other hits including "Luka" – who still lives on the second floor – and "I Never Wear White" while the audience sang along. She donned a top hat and danced across the stage while singing "Tom's Diner" and appeared to be enjoying the show as much as her audience.

Vega thanked the audience several times for being there, for coming out on a cold night to share our love of music with her. My friend and I appreciated that the Shea brings well-known artists to town. Vega was gracious, energetic and entertaining, while continuing to weave personal stories with her repertoire. The evening began to feel more like a catch-up with an old friend than a crowded concert.

Toward the end of the show, as I looked around my seat and saw smiles, I had the sense that others felt the same. That we had grown up with Suzanne and now knew just where we belonged: at the Shea on a Friday evening, sharing the songs of our childhoods and all those memories.



Suzanne Vega (center) played the Shea Theater on Friday, March 7, accompanied by guitarist Gerry Leonard and cellist Stephanie Winter.

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