

The Montague Reporter

STERN WARNINGS

If We Are Not More Careful, Our Streets Will Be Shadeless

By **MICHAEL MARCOTRIGIANO**

MONTAGUE – You may have noticed many young trees on the streets of our town. We all know that they benefit our neighborhoods in many ways. For example, they provide cooling shade, promote animal biodiversity, remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, and increase property value.

Almost all of the newly planted town trees were the result of a successful grant awarded to the town by the state Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). We were given permission to select and locate about 800 trees, but COVID-19 and staffing issues limited the planting to about 600, still an impressive number.

Future generations of Montague residents will benefit from the hundreds of trees that were planted – if we can stop ourselves from killing them. To date, most of the new trees are faring well, but one problem, described in this article, needs to be addressed.

Before doing so, a very quick biology lesson is in order. Many of you may be unaware that the most important part of a tree’s future lies just under its bark. For a tree to gain girth, there is a special layer of cells in the trunk and limbs called the *cambium*.

The cambium is a thin formative layer located between the wood and the bark that gives rise each spring to new cells and is responsible for secondary growth. The new cells are formed into tubes that run up and down the trunk and stems. One type of tube the cambium produces conducts water – and minerals, from fertile soil – up from the

see **CAREFUL** page A5



Above: A maple tree recently planted on the town’s tree belt was killed by a contractor’s employee using a weed whacker, completely girdling the tree and killing the cambium.

High School Sports Week: Spring Finds Its Footing

By **MATT ROBINSON**

TURNERS FALLS – The Turners Falls hybrid boys’ tennis team finally showed up in full this week, and won their first match of the year.

In baseball, Franklin Tech lost a one-run affair out in the Berkshires, while Turners Falls High School pitcher Kainen Stevens came in just one walk shy of a perfect game.

In softball, Tech bounced back after losing to Hopkins, while Turn-

ers Falls lost to the best team in the state, then edged out Frontier with some seventh-inning theatrics.

Boys’ Tennis
TFHS 4 – Palmer 1
Springfield Int’l 4 – TFHS 1

Several different teams from Franklin County Tech and Turners Falls High were in action last Thursday. I headed to the tennis courts before I went to the Tech/Hopkins softball game.

see **SPORTS** page A4



Turners Falls’s Mario Pareja returns a serve during his win in second singles as the Thunder earned a 4-1 victory over the visiting Palmer Panthers last Thursday.

LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Regional School Assessment Begrudgingly Sent Along to Town Meeting

By **GEORGE BRACE**

At Tuesday’s meeting, Leverett’s selectboard finalized preparations for the annual town meeting on Saturday, May 3 and signed the warrant of articles to be voted on by residents. The only substantial decision to make concerned an article funding Leverett’s portion of the Amherst-Pelham regional school budget, which the board endorsed by a split vote.

The district’s four towns, Amherst, Pelham, Leverett, and Shutesbury, have struggled over the years to agree on a method for assessing each town’s contribution, seeking to replace the state’s “statutory” formula – weighing factors of community wealth and enrollment – with an agreement that better reflects local needs. In recent years this agreement has included a “guardrail” against large increases.

This year no agreement was reached, so the towns will default to the statutory method, and Amherst, the largest contributor to the budget, unilaterally capped its own increase at 4.81% over the current year.

The regional school committee therefore drafted three budget options keeping the state’s assessment

see **LEVERETT** page A7

GILL SELECTBOARD

Million-Dollar Grant Sought to Build Greener School Roof

By **LUKE DEROY**

Representatives of the Gill energy commission, Vicky Jenkins and Claire Chang, met with the selectboard Tuesday night to inform them of a grant application in progress for up to \$1 million through the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC)’s Green School Works program. The funds would support insulation, roof replacement, and possibly a metal roof at Gill Elementary School.

With a fast-approaching deadline of April 30, challenges remain. Unpredictable material costs, exacerbated by tariffs, make budgeting a “juggling act,” Chang said. The commission has also been looking into the feasibility of adding solar panels to the school roof.

Town administrator Ray Purinton suggested submitting a “prioritized menu application” with contingency plans for different budget outcomes.

The Gill-Montague regional

see **GILL** page A6

State Grants Approval Of Hydro Relicensing

By **MIKE JACKSON**

TURNERS FALLS and NORTHFIELD – A process that began in October 2012, when what was then the GDF Suez subsidiary FirstLight Hydro Generation Company filed a notice of intent to renew its licenses to operate hydroelectric plants on the Connecticut River, entered its final stretch on Tuesday as the state Department of Environmental Protection (Mass-DEP) granted the proposed licenses a water quality certification.

FirstLight Power is seeking new 50-year licenses to run the pumped-storage station at Northfield Mountain and the Turners Falls dam, canal, and power plants. The original licenses expired seven years ago this month, but have been extended repeatedly by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) as the process drags on.

The proposed new licenses were substantially shaped in 2023 under settlement agreements the company reached with local towns, state and federal agencies, and environmental and recreation groups.

At that time, the company agreed to allow substantially more water to

see **HYDRO** page A8

Public Again Gives ‘Input’ On Montague City’s Future



A small crowd turned out to discuss their wishes for the village’s redevelopment.

By **JEFF SINGLETON**

TURNERS FALLS – “Tonight’s community input workshop will help drive decisions about the layout of the Farren site – types of buildings allowed, adaptable reuse, options for the historic buildings on Rod Shop Road, and options for building site design,” Montague town planner Maureen Pollock told a group of about 50 people gathered at the Great Falls Discovery Center last Thursday.

The event was billed by the town as a “Community Workshop for the Montague City Village Center Re-

zoning Project,” the latest phase of the project to redevelop the site of the former Farren Hospital in Montague City.

The former hospital and long-term care facility was closed in 2021 and demolished in 2023, and the owner granted the land to the town. After it was identified that its redevelopment may benefit from a change in zoning, the focus has grown to include nearby Rod Shop Road, the site of a former fishing rod factory.

“We really have not started drafting anything yet,” said Emily Innes, president of Innes Associates, a

see **INPUT** page A5

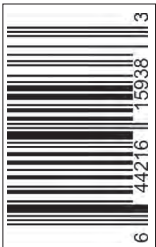
SUGAR RUSH



As prophesied, many of the region’s four-to-six-year-olds stampeded last Saturday across the Unity Park ballfields in a collective bid to pick clean the park’s seasonal crop of candy-filled plastic eggs. Beyond the fence, seven-to-ten-year-olds did their part.

Your Weekly Surf Through The Froth

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The Montague Reporter

“The Voice of the Villages”

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Founded by
Arthur Evans Harry Brandt David Detmold
August 2002

NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION



Tom Mann spends much of his retirement refinishing used furniture to sell for modest prices to people on a budget at his workshop on South Street in Bernardston. He donates the proceeds to local charities and organizations like the regional dog shelter. Mann will take donations of items for charitable commissions – donate the piece and specify where you’d like the proceeds to go! He invites people to call him at (413) 770-4077.

Open Letter: ‘Forum Shopping’

After Maryland senator Chris Van Hollen traveled to El Salvador to meet with Kilmar Abrego García, his constituent said to have been erroneously deported to a detention center there, our own US representative Jim McGovern joined his colleague Ayanna Pressley and US senator Ed Markey in Louisiana this week to meet with Rümeysa Öztürk and Mahmoud Khalil, two graduate student political activists being detained in that state without charges. Pressley, Markey, and senator Elizabeth Warren also sent this letter to federal immigration officials on Tuesday...

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary of Homeland Security
Todd M. Lyons
Acting Director, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement

Dear Secretary Noem and Acting Director Lyons:

The recent apprehension in Somerville, Massachusetts of Rümeysa Öztürk, a Turkish national and fifth-year doctoral student at Tufts University, by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and her subsequent transfer to an ICE detention facility in Louisiana, raises serious questions about the fairness and integrity of our immigration enforcement system.

Based on news reports and court filings, the evidence suggests that ICE did not transfer Öztürk to a Louisiana detention facility due to a lack of bed space in New England, as the government has claimed, but instead deliberately relocated her to a jurisdiction more favorable to the Trump administration’s deportation agenda.

We demand answers about this apparent judicial forum shopping.

On March 25, 2025, six plainclothes ICE agents wearing masks to conceal their faces arrested Öztürk near her residence in Somerville, Massachusetts, as she was walking to an Iftar dinner. Surveillance footage shows that the agents surrounded her without immediately identifying themselves, handcuffed her, placed her in an unmarked vehicle, and moved her on a circuitous route through Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont, before placing her on a flight to Louisiana the following morning.

Her legal team, unaware of her location at the time, filed a *habeas* petition in US District Court in the District of Massachusetts at 10:02 p.m. the night she was detained, but by then she had already begun her journey out of the state.

Öztürk’s counsel, family, and friends were unable to locate the student for more than 20 hours after her arrest, despite multiple inquiries by Öztürk’s counsel to the government.

ICE has claimed there was no

bed space available for Öztürk in New England. But officials at various jails in the region that contract with ICE have stated otherwise.

The Cumberland County Jail in Portland, Maine, had 198 available beds. The Strafford County Jail in Dover, New Hampshire, also had capacity of more than 100 beds, including at least 16 open beds for female detainees. Other facilities in the region that house female detainees include the Wyatt Detention Facility in Rhode Island and the Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility in Vermont. According to a Massachusetts immigration lawyer, ICE is also able to hold female detainees for short-term or overnight detention in its local offices, including at the ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations (“ERO”) Boston Field Office in Burlington, Massachusetts.

Yet, ICE asserts that no bed space was available anywhere in the region, raising serious questions about whether the agency is intentionally misrepresenting facts to justify strategic relocations.

In court filings, immigration lawyers described ICE’s treatment of Öztürk as irregular, declaring they had never seen or heard of an ICE detainee arrested in Massachusetts being so quickly shuttled out of Massachusetts and to multiple separate locations. This quick movement – coupled with the government’s delayed notice regarding a detainee’s whereabouts – risks frustrating the filing of *habeas* petitions.

The government has since argued that Öztürk’s legal challenge must be heard in Louisiana, within the Fifth Circuit, where she is currently detained – a jurisdiction known for its strict immigration rulings.

According to Mary Yanik, a clinical associate professor of law at Tulane University, in Louisiana the majority of ICE detention centers are within the jurisdiction of Louisiana’s Western District, which is the “slowest moving” of the district courts in the state, very conservative, and whose release of detainees by formal order is “exceedingly rare.” Decisions from federal district courts and im-

migration courts in Louisiana can eventually be appealed to the US Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, which the Center for American Progress has described as “arguably the most right-wing federal appellate court in the country.”

Legal experts and immigrant rights advocates have noted a troubling pattern in which ICE transfers detainees to jurisdictions with stricter immigration enforcement – such as Louisiana – thereby increasing the likelihood of deportation and limiting detainees’ access to legal representation and family support.

Further compounding concerns, Öztürk is currently being held at the South Louisiana ICE Processing Center in Basile, Louisiana – a facility operated by the for-profit GEO Group, rather than the federal government. Numerous reports, including a 2024 review by Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights and others, have documented human rights abuses at ICE detention centers in Louisiana, including medical neglect, unsanitary conditions, and lack of access to legal resources.

These organizations have described these facilities as “a black hole,” given their remote locations and limited transparency. Öztürk herself has experienced asthma attacks while in the Louisiana detention center and lacked access to medications.

Öztürk is not alone. At least two other students – Mahmoud Khalil of Columbia University and Alireza Doroudi of the University of Alabama – have also been arrested and transferred to remote detention centers in Louisiana. ICE detained all three students near their homes and swiftly relocated them to a state where immigration rulings are more likely to favor the government.

These actions suggest a systematic effort by ICE to remove individuals from their communities and place them in legal environments where their rights are more difficult to defend.

In light of these serious concerns

about ICE’s conduct, we request written responses to the following questions by May 6, 2025:

1. What specific criteria led ICE to determine that no bed space was available for Öztürk in New England?
2. Why was Öztürk transported to New Hampshire and Vermont before being flown to Louisiana, rather than being placed in a nearby facility in Massachusetts? Why was Öztürk transported to three separate locations in three different states before being flown to Louisiana?
3. When was the decision made to transport Öztürk to Louisiana? Who made this decision? What steps and protocols were undertaken in this decision-making process?
4. What is the total cost incurred by the government for Öztürk’s transportation from her arrest to her arrival in Louisiana, including flights and other logistical expenses?
5. Did the jurisdictional implications of placing Öztürk in Louisiana, within a federal judicial circuit known for its pro-government immigration rulings, factor into ICE’s decision to transfer her there?
6. What policies and procedures are in place to prevent forum shopping by ICE in detainee transfers?
7. Given the documented history of abuse and inadequate legal access at ICE detention facilities in Louisiana, what justifications does ICE have for continuing to send detainees there?

The transfer and detention of Ms. Öztürk – along with other students – raises urgent concerns about due process, transparency, and judicial forum shopping, threatening to undermine public trust in our immigration system. We urge your prompt and thorough response to these inquiries.

Sincerely,

Edward J. Markey
United States Senator
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator
Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress

Letter to the Editors



Have Hopley Write More

I have long been a fan of Claire Hopley’s taste and judgment about current fiction. As a new subscriber to the *Reporter*, I was very pleased to see Claire’s byline in your “Book Reviews” of April 17.

I hope to see and learn more from Claire in future issues. She’s an avid reader and an ace reviewer.

Jim Leheny
Amherst

“What’s happening to Rümeysa Öztürk and Mahmoud Khalil is a chilling and dangerous violation of their human rights. They’ve committed no crimes, they’ve been charged with no offenses, and they’ve broken no laws. Let’s not mince words: They are political prisoners – held in detention by a government which seeks to punish them for their views and silence their speech. That is immoral and wrong. Their arbitrary detention and deprivation of due process is a violation not only of their constitutional rights, but also their rights under international human rights law. This starts with Rümeysa and Mahmoud – but it ends with you. Now is the time to speak out before it is too late.”

– **US Rep. Jim McGovern**, upon his return from Louisiana on Wednesday, after the delegation met Tuesday with Öztürk and Khalil.

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TURNERS FALLS AND VICINITY.

(Temporary title!
We'll come up with
something better..)

Compiled by MIKE JACKSON

Another day! Another week.

We notice in this week’s Montague police log that we weren’t the only ones annoyed by that 3:30 a.m. **street-sweeping** and leaf-blowing extravaganza last week. (Do they do that where the selectboard members sleep? Honest question!) The Avenue looks great, though; good work to those leaf-blowing early birds. Maybe a warning could be made next year, so all the other night shift workers can bring earplugs.

Our namesake paper, the *Turners Falls Reporter*, featured a column in its first two years (1872-1874) titled “**Local Matters**,” into which editor Addington Welch dictated and some wretched orphans typeset news from the immediate proximity of the newspaper’s offices.

(Sample item: “One would fancy from the numerous holes along K street, that a young graveyard was being started.”)

Welch threw in the towel suddenly at the end of 1874, and the paper was rescued by a young man named Cecil T. Bagnall, who would go on to oversee its weekly publication until shortly before his death 48 years later. Bagnall immediately renamed this odds ‘n’ sods column “**Turners Falls and Vicinity**,” and kept up the practice. Abid readers will recognize this title from our own “150 Years Ago” column.

(Sample item: “Frank Dagle had

his pocket picked of a \$35 watch and a sum of money, last week, by a Frenchman named Grannil, at a house of a friend at South End. Policeman O’Keefe spotted the chap and arrested him, when the watch was found on him. Justice Dana sent Grannil to jail to await trial at the November court.”)

From April until November of 1905, the column ran with *no* title, and in December 1905 it regained its original one, “**Local Matters**.” It would remain that way until the paper’s end in 1922. We find it likely that in the paper’s final decade its composition was supervised at least in part by Bagnall’s assistant and lieutenant, Antonia J. Stemple. (Sample item: “Mrs. Steiger of First street had the misfortune to fall on the ice one day recently, and break her arm.”)

The short-lived *Turners Falls Herald* (1940-1942) didn’t have a closely comparable column, but it did something similar with a section titled “The Week In Review In Turners Falls.”

The *Montague Reporter* (2002-) began our existence without such a column, but on October 29, 2009 our distribution manager, the late and sorely missed Don Clegg, debuted “**Local Briefs**.” The first week was accidentally labeled “Montague Briefs” but that got straightened out quickly.

“We will invited you, the reader,” the column’s introductory note read, “to mail, call or email us with tidbits of news and items if interest

pertaining to the people and events that make up the daily life of our community. They don’t need to be earth shattering. Entertaining stories are always welcome.”

When Don fell ill in 2018, Local Briefs was compiled briefly by “Reporter Staff” and then, more transparently, by yours truly; after Don’s death Chris Pellerin compiled it for a year, and when she was finished the task landed on the shoulders of our features editor, the irrationally helpful Nina Rossi.

Nina became our distribution manager last year, and has been asking if someone else could take over Briefs. Long ago, the column devolved into a dumping-ground for event announcements.

A few squeaky wheels in the community have been very persistent in accessing the free, front-of-paper promotional opportunity. I didn’t want to take it on, and I didn’t want to hand it over as is to a new volunteer, either.

The solution we came up with this winter was to expand our old “Arts & Entertainment” listing into a two-page “**Events Calendar**” – see pp. B6 and B7 – and we have been working to scale that project up. If you’re looking for an event to be listed there, send the details to events@montaguereporter.org and we will be happy to include it.

Having accomplished that, I’ve been daydreaming about what this Page A3 space could be used for.

Nina is away on honeymoon this week, so we may as well start...

It will be an experiment, but I would like to try taking it back to something closer to the original “Local Matters” / “Turners Falls and Vicinity” columns: short *news* briefs – for when we have caught wind of something interesting but don’t have a stringer ready to spin it up to an 800- to 1,200-word article – and perhaps some friendly *commentary*.

Here’s a real example:

The search for the man who **fell into the power canal** in February is finally over.

“I can confirm that on the morning of April 15, a body was found in the canal and that it is assumed to be Cameron Leamy, 35, of Greenfield,” Northwest District Attorney’s Office spokesperson Laurie Loisel told us when we asked. “No foul play suspected. This is connected to an incident on Feb. 10 when Montague Police were called to the canal after it appeared someone had gone into the water but no body was found that day or subsequent days.”

We offer our gravest condolences to Mr. Leamy’s friends and family, and hope the culmination of the search brings some peace of mind.

On a much lighter note, we offer this **blind item**: A certain reporter of ours who has been *busy with other jobs* a lot this year is now away on a long road trip.

“How’s TX?” we asked.

“Fine but our exhaust fell out between Galveston and Houston,” they reported, and then, being a great and real reporter, sent in a pic to accompany the text:



That about sums it up. We look forward to having them back in the Vicinity, as there’s an awful lot of news to cover here. Still, this spring has brought in several new neighbors interested in news-gathering.... Another day!

Send your little bits of news to editor@montaguereporter.org. They don’t need to be earth-shattering.

EVENT ANNOUNCEMENT

Newt Guilbault Community Baseball Kicks Off 2025 Season

TURNERS FALLS – The Newt Guilbault Community Baseball League is set to kick off the 2025 baseball season with its highly anticipated Opening Day this Sunday, April 27. Players from five majors teams and two rookie teams will come together to compete following exciting opening-day festivities.

The event will begin at 11 a.m. with the traditional Opening Day parade in which all teams will march through the streets of Turners Falls, showcasing their team pride and enthusiasm for the season ahead. Following the parade, teams will gather at the Newt Guilbault fields on Montague Street. Players and teams will be introduced, followed by the ceremonial first pitch and the performance of the national anthem by Turners Falls High School student talent.

The day will be packed with thrilling matchups, family-friendly activities, and opportunities to support the league through raffles and concessions.

The league’s success is driven by its dedicated board members, coaches, and volunteers, who put in countless hours to ensure every player has a positive experience. As the newly elected president of the Newt Guilbault Community Baseball League, PJ Malone is enthusiastic about the league’s future.

“We’re thrilled to kick off another great season of baseball,” said Malone. “Newt Guilbault has a long standing tradition of excellence, and I’m honored to help lead it into an exciting new chapter. This league is about more than just baseball – it’s about teaching kids teamwork, confidence, and love for the game.”

Kristin Malone, newly elected secretary, also shared her enthusiasm for the upcoming season. “It’s an honor to be part of such a dedicated organization,” she said. “The energy and excitement surrounding Opening Day reminds us why this league is so important – not just for the players, but for the entire community. We’re looking forward to a

fantastic season ahead!”

This league has been a cornerstone of youth sports in our area for many years. With the continued support from our generous local sponsors, the league has been able to continue upgrades to the concession stand, field updates including a new convertible 50/70 field, and general club maintenance. Its ongoing success would not be possible without the generous support of local businesses and sponsors, including but not limited to Greenfield Savings Bank, Travel Kuz, the Turners Falls Athletic Club, St. Stan’s, the Montague Elks, Booska’s Flooring, Pipione’s, and Turners Falls Pizza House.

Everyone is encouraged to come out and support the teams as they begin their season. Whether you’re a longtime supporter or new to the league, Opening Day is the perfect time to experience the excitement and camaraderie of community baseball. For more information, visit newtguilbaultleague.org.

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Congressman, Residents Discuss Library Program

By EDGAR SOARES

GREENFIELD – On March 17, Jim McGovern took a little field trip to the Franklin County Jail to visit us over the library program that we have in this jail. Jim McGovern, for those of you who don’t know, is a Democrat who first ran for Congress in 1996 to represent Massachusetts’s 2nd District and has been serving since then, being reelected every two years.

His role is to represent the people of his district, and we fall under his district. One of their jobs is to introduce bills and amendments that are meant to support the people in his district.

While here, he took great interest in the library programs that we have here. Chelsea and Sara come to the institution every first Tuesday of the month to bring us books, as well as requested books. They also set us up with library cards and, as much as they can, wipe out our library debt so we can start anew.

McGovern was impressed with this, as we also expressed our appreciation for having this service so as to have an unlimited selection of books to expand our knowledge and interests.

Over coffee and blueberry muffins, every one of the D-Pod residents who came was heard individually by Jim McGovern about our personal lives, what we are doing, and have accomplished in the jail.

He shared with us some experiences he had as a Congressman,

some jokes, and a little about himself. The atmosphere was very amicable. The staff also presented themselves and their work within the jail. We raised a lot of questions including Trump shutting down the Education Department, which he assured us that it’s not that simple for him to do so.

Pictures were taken, some already posted on FCSO website, and we ended with him telling us how to contact him with any questions or concerns that we may have about the district, food insecurity in the community, homelessness, or any other concerns for our betterment.

All in all, it was a pleasure to have a Congressman take interest in what is happening behind the wall, and we look forward to seeing him again, and especially the idea of setting up a town hall-style meeting in the jail with him involved.

This article first appeared in The Light, a newsletter by Franklin County Jail and House of Correction (FCSO) residents.

Some of the writers join The Light already devoted to writing, while others discover love for writing through their participation. The students engage in process-oriented work to create stories and art, including personal essays, op-eds, recipes, poems, research articles, and other explorations of interest to them and their peers, coalescing into a new issue every eight to 10 weeks.

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ALSO ACCEPTED
IN PERSON OR
IN MAILBOX

SPORTS from page A1

As his boys were warming up, I asked tennis coach Steve Toulountzis about his team's outlook. "Well, this is the first time all seven top players are in action," he explained. He went on to recount previous absences, and anticipated future absences during April vacation.

As it turns out, his top seven did enough to win their first match of the season. Noah Kolodziej (6-2, 6-1) and Mario Pareja (6-1, 6-0) swept first and second singles, while Max Briere won by forfeit on the third singles court.

In doubles play, Vaughn LaValley and Lucas Black dropped first doubles (6-1, 6-1) while Philipp Tischleder and Nethanel Martin won a three-set match in second doubles (6-3, 3-6, 10-7).

On Monday, vacation was in full swing and Coach T. had to shuffle his players, and Turners was bested by Springfield International.

This time Pareja was the lone winner for Powertown, taking the second singles match in a three-set contest (6-3, 2-6, 10-7). Kolodziej (first singles), LaValley (third singles), Black and Noah Blanchard (first doubles) and Briere and Martin (second doubles) all dropped their respective matches.

Girls' Tennis
Frontier 4 – TFHS 1

That same day, the visiting Frontier Red Hawks defeated the Turners girls 4-1.

Olivia Wolbach won in first singles for Turners (6-1, 6-1), but Gianna Marigliano and Izzy Decker lost in second and third singles, while Shayly Martin and Keira Feeley and Lily Sumner and Kenzie Flaxington dropped first and second doubles.

Baseball
McCann 6 – FCTS 5
Lenox 7 – TFHS 4
TFHS 6 – Mahar 0

Last Thursday, Franklin Tech's baseball team headed to North Adams to challenge the McCann Green Hornets.

Tech shot out to a two-run lead, but Green scored six unanswered runs to make it 6-2. The Eagles made one last stand in the seventh, plating three runs, but it wasn't enough as the Hornets held on to win it by a run.

Brody Hicks and Gavin Crossman shared pitching duties for the Eagles, while at the plate George Gutierrez hit three singles, Tyler Yetter had a double, Caleb Dillensneider cranked a triple, and Wayde Bardwell and Levi Clark hit singles.

On Friday, the visiting Lenox Millionaires took advantage of five Turners Falls errors to defeat the Thunder 7-4. Lenox took a three-run lead before Turners scored their first run, then extended it to 5-1. Blue rallied in the sixth to make it a 5-4 game, but the visitors scored twice more in the seventh to ice the win.

On the mound for Turners, Julian Kaiser let up three earned runs on five hits and a walk and K'd 12. Offensively, the Thunder had seven hits by Cam Cogswell (2), Julian Kaiser (2), Freilyn Jose Abarua Corona (2), and Trevor Lyons, and stole six bases.

Turners came back on Monday, blanking the Mahar Senators 6-zip as Kainen Stevens threw a near-perfect game. He allowed no hits, struck out 11, and gave one base on balls. Trevor Lyons (3), Jackson



Turners Falls's Lucas Black steps in for a return stroke, competing with doubles partner Vaughn LaValley against the visiting Palmer Panthers last Thursday.

Cogswell (2), Brody Girard, Julian Kaiser, and Liam Kerivaughn all hit singles for Turners, and Ledwin Vilafana cracked a double.

Softball
Hopkins 5 – FCTS 3
Wachusett 8 – TFHS 4
FCTS 5 – Blackstone Valley 0
FCTS 18 – Mahar 0
TFHS 3 – Frontier 2

Last Thursday afternoon the Hopkins Golden Hawks outpaced the Tech Eagles 5-3. It was the second straight win for the Yellow Birds against a team from Turners Falls.

Franklin took an early lead as Hannah Gilbert scorched a double, advanced on a fielders' choice, and was batted in by Sandra Johnson. In the home second, Shelby O'Leary drew a walk and was driven in by Kylee Gamache.

Unfortunately, Tech couldn't hold that two-run lead, as Hopkins scored once in the fourth and three more times in the fifth, to take a 4-2 lead.

In the home fifth Gilbert hit another double and scored on an Alison George sacrifice to make it a one-run game, but the Hawks scored again in the seventh to seal the victory 5-3.

In the circle, Gilbert let up four

earned runs on seven hits and three walks and struck out 10. At the plate she had a single and two doubles while Johnson (2), Gamache, and Gianna DiSciullo all hit singles.

On Saturday the Wachusett Mountaineers came to Mullins Field. The buzz on the sidelines was all about how good Wachusett is – some even bragged that they are the top-rated Division 1 team in the state.

The challenge notched up a bit as one of the Turners starters was riding the bench. This forced Coach Gary Mullins to shuffle his players around, pulling an outfielder in to third base while a reserve player went to right field. This led to two costly errors, translating to two runs for the visitors.

Wachusett shot out to a strong start, plating three runs in the first inning, though Madison Liimatainen belted a home run over the fence in the home first to make it 3-2. The visitors scored three more in the third, and in the Powertown third Liimatainen answered with another 2-run dinger to make it 6-4.

Wachusett scored a run in the fourth, though, and another in the seventh to make the final score 8-4. Liimatainen allowed six earned

runs on nine hits and one walk, whiffing seven batters. She also finished with four RBIs on two home runs. Marilyn Abarua finished with a single and a double while Kaiya Adam (2), Mia Marigliano, and Ivy Lopez all hit safely for Blue.

On Tuesday the Tech Eagles headed out to Upton and used their long ball to top the Blackstone Valley Beavers. Kylee Gamache finished with a home run and a double, Gilbert hit two doubles, Cordelia Guerin hit one double, and Lindsey Taylor and DiSciullo hit singles. In the circle, Gilbert finished with two hits, a walk, and 13 strikeouts.

The very next day, Tech decimated Mahar in a mercy-shortened 18-0 game. Joe Gamache rested most of his starters, but in the end, it didn't matter as the reserves scored 18 times in four innings. To prevent piling on runs, Coach Gamache held runners on base, and the last two innings ended when Gamache told them to leave base just so they would get called out.

O'Leary led Tech with four hits, and Brayleigh Burgh hit a home run. DiSciullo had three hits including a triple, Taylor hit a single and a triple, and Kendra Steiner clocked a double while Samantha Duncan (2), Skylei LaPan, Breanna Kempf, and Chloe Kendrick-Redner all placed singles.

In the circle, Burgh pitched a five-inning shutout.

Later on Wednesday, Turners Falls hosted the Frontier Red Hawks in a bid to avenge their single-run loss back on April 9. The game was a scoreless tie until the sixth inning when Red scored two runs off a double.

Powertown couldn't answer in the sixth, and came to bat in the seventh down by two runs. The leadoff batter, Marigliano, slapped a base hit. Liimatainen came to bat next. After hitting a couple fouls, one of which cleared the fence, she skied one over the fence and fair to tie it at two.

Janelle Massey then drew a walk, and was replaced at first by McKenzie Stafford. Then Abarua hit the ball into the outfield and Stafford raced past second base. The throw to third trailed high, and Stafford raced home to seal the victory.

The Thunder visit Greenfield this Friday, while the Eagles head to Northampton to take on the Blue Devils.



Payback! Turners Falls's Mia Marigliano (at right) scores the Thunder's first run against the visiting Red Hawks Wednesday night, driven home by Madi Liimatainen's two-run homer in the seventh inning. Base runner McKenzie Stafford would soon plate Turners's tie-breaking third run, mirroring Frontier's 3-2 win in the teams' last meeting in South Deerfield.

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INPUT from page A1

consulting firm the town recently hired to assist with the rezoning process. “We haven’t started to think about the draft yet. We want to hear from you all first.”

There may have been a sense of *déjà vu* among many of the residents at the April 17 event, as many had attended similar “public input” meetings over the previous two years organized by another planning firm, Vanasse Hangen Brustlin (VHB).

Those efforts had produced a “vision,” described in a January 2024 report, of a “dense, mixed-use hub that unites the surrounding community and unlocks new housing and economic opportunities in Montague.” VHB illustrated this vision with three suggested scenarios of low, medium, and high density development on the Farren parcel, all focused on addressing the lack of housing, including affordable housing, in the town as a whole.

At times Thursday night it appeared that Pollock and Innes were seeking public input on the core vision for the Farren property as if the VHB process had not already happened; at others, it appeared they were seeking input as to what potential zoning changes would allow for the vision or visions produced by VHB.

But there was no question that this was a meeting to discuss zoning. Innes Associates was hired due to their expertise on the issue, and the current goal is to send a package of zoning changes to a fall special town meeting. A new working group was appointed to oversee the process, and nearly all of its members were in attendance.

Innes began with a presentation titled “Zoning 101.” While zoning tends to be complicated, she said, and most members of the public do not get involved in rezoning until decisions have been made, it can greatly restrict or encourage what can be done on a particular property: “the uses you can have, how much of those uses, how high, how wide, how that can be broken up... where the building can be placed on the lot...”

These questions, she said, were rooted in broader issues such as the desired mix of uses in the neighborhood and the proximity of shopping, schools, and workplaces to homes.

Zoning, she explained, also determines the approval process for any new building: is a developer allowed to construct a building “as of right,” or will it require a building permit with conditions set by the town?

Innes showed a map of the area. The Farren lot and the west side of Rod Shop Road are both zoned for “Central Business,” with the industrial area on the east side of Rod Shop Road zoned “Historic Industrial,” continuing south along the bike path; in the middle, an established residential area is zoned “Neighborhood Business.”

Innes did not explain what kinds of development are allowed in these zones, and whether they could satisfy the “visions” for the neighborhood already on the table.

“We have a chart that we’re not showing you today, but you will see again later, that breaks down what is allowed, and how,” she said. “For today, we want you to be a little more flexible in your thinking, and just assume a blank zoning.”

Montague’s Central Business zoning does not allow for single- or two-family homes. By right, it allows “mixed-use” buildings with commercial first floors and up to four upstairs apartments; offices; clubs; and shops up to 5,000 square feet. By special permit it may allow larger shops, mixed-use buildings with five or more upstairs

apartments, workshops, hotels, and parking garages.

Other zones are less restrictive of housing. General Business, for example, allows single- and multi-family housing by special permit as well as manufacturing and other uses.

After a brief discussion, attendees headed out of the Great Hall into a nearby room overlooking the Turners Falls power canal. There, several large boards illustrated examples of residential and commercial buildings of various scales. Attendees could place colored stickers representing the Farren and Rod Shop areas on these charts, indicating their preferences for the prevalence of different sorts of building in each area.

Another chart listed 18 specific examples of land use ranging from “daycare” to “3D printing” to “three unit dwelling,” which attendees could mark as either “Love It” or “Not Appropriate” using more stickers. The attendees were then divided into four groups, and each group was given a map of the area and colored rectangles with which they could site potential construction of different categories.

After these exercises the group returned to the Great Hall for a final discussion. The input they had provided, the organizers explained, will be analyzed and presented at a meeting in June.

“I have a problem with the process,” said Peter Hudyma, a Montague City resident and an outspoken critic of the VHB’s past proposals for the Farren. “I think it was paint-



Montague City resident Peter Hudyma (left) complained that the rezoning event felt “preconceived” in favor of seeing high-density housing built on the Farren lot.

CAREFUL from page A1

roots to the leaves. Other tubes of cells move the sugar synthesized during photosynthesis down to be distributed to all parts of the tree. Trees, unlike humans, make their own food.

There are other important terms to know: A tree’s *critical root zone* (CRZ) is determined by taking a measurement of its trunk at a level four feet above the ground, and then measuring outward from the trunk a minimum of 1.25 feet for every inch in diameter.

Girdling is defined as pinching off or cutting through the cambial layer of a trunk or stem.

Now to the main point of this article. Either through ignorance or carelessness, some of the new trees planted in Montague are being killed. People tidying up the tree belt by ridding it of tall grass and weeds with weed whackers and mowers are destroying the cambium of the trees.

If you see workers or neighbors doing this, please inform them that it is destructive, and will likely kill the tree within a year after the damage. If it is a commercial maintenance company, take note of who it is so we can enforce the bylaws described below. You should notify the tree warden and/or the chair of the Montague Tree Advisory Committee.

This week, let’s celebrate Arbor Day in Montague by making an extra effort to protect all the newly planted trees from suffering an untimely death by weed-whacking.

If we have a dry summer, please water any young trees near your residence.

In preparation for the previously mentioned DCR grant, the Montague Tree Advisory Committee authored a Montague Public Tree Protection Bylaw, which was approved by town meeting in 2021. The document is on the town website.

I have excerpted a section of it that is important to read so that you are aware of the Town’s efforts to protect the trees, a precious resource for the future. The text refers to a tree’s “drip line,” which is defined as the diameter of the canopy of the tree.

The entire document can be accessed by searching online for “Montague Public Tree Protection Bylaw,” or by going directly to www.tinyurl.com/montaguetreeelaw.

Excerpt from the Town of Montague Public Tree Protection Bylaw

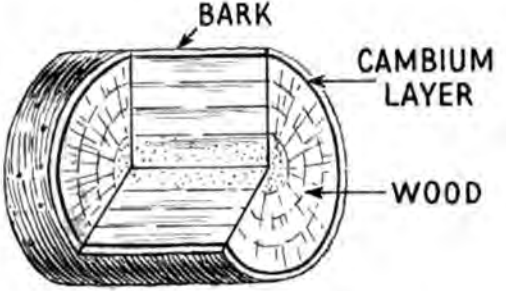
Any person who removes, or causes to be destroyed, a non-hazardous public tree without a duly advertised hearing, permission from the Tree Warden, and the approval of the Selectboard if an objection is made to the removal, shall pay a fine of up to \$500 or the appraised value of the tree, whichever is greater, to the Montague Tree Fund.

Any person who cuts, trims, prunes, damages or removes any part of a public tree, including the roots within the drip line of

the tree, without written permission, or who fails to comply with the conditions of their permission, shall pay a fine of up to \$100 per tree to the Montague Tree Fund.

This provision is inclusive, but not limited to the following prohibited acts:

- Mutilating (e.g. driving in nails or screws), girdling, carving into, or topping a tree;
- Damage to the root system by trenching, digging, or other excavation;
- Tapping a publicly owned sugar maple;
- Removing any tree guard, tree stake, watering bag, or other device or material intended for the protection or to support the health of a public tree;
- Covering or obstructing any open land at the base of a public tree designed to permit access of air, water and fertilizer to the root system;
- Applying or sweeping road salt onto the CRZ of a public tree;
- Securing, fastening or running any rope, wire, holiday lighting, unprotected electrical installation, or other device or material to, around or through a public tree, or attaching any sign, poster, notice or other object to any public tree, except that the Tree Warden may authorize tying temporary signs to such trees as necessary;
- Causing or encouraging any fire or burning within the drip line of any public tree. This includes the grilling of food below a public tree, within the drip line, unless the



PUBLIC DOMAIN IMAGE

grill is provided in a public park and is permanently installed under the tree;

- Paving over the tree belt and/or over the CRZ on public land;
- Parking a vehicle on the CRZ of a public tree;
- The application of chemicals including, but not limited to, pesticides and herbicides on public land.

I hope that this article taught you things that you did not know about tree structure and health. As old trees die, it is critical that the replacements thrive so that our children have the shade, beauty, and environmental benefits that trees bring to our neighborhoods.

Michael Marcotrigiano is a former member of the Montague tree advisory committee, a retired professor of plant biology and genetics, and the retired director of the Smith College Botanic Garden. He lives in Montague Center.



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As many as 300 people convened on the Montague Center common last Saturday to “Raise a Ruckus for Democracy,” complete with a marching band, and several sent us photos of the rally after the fact.

“I talked to people there from Montague City, Montague Center, Wendell, Leverett, and Gill,” reports Center resident Sally Pick. “It’s likely that people from other Montague villages and nearby towns attended to join the thousands across the country in another day of action to stand up for freedom of speech, a fair and thriving country, a day in court if arrested – not random detention to terrorize and punish valued members of our community – a functional government with workers who provide our people with safety networks and essential services like Social Security, healthcare, meals for children in school, and help during and after disasters, education for all, clean and affordable energy that protects our climate...”

Organizers also sent along word of a similar rally planned for next week in downtown Turners Falls: “Timed to coincide with 50501’s (www.fiftyfifty.one) call for a national day of protest in solidarity with our allies in organized labor on International May Day,” they write, “on Thursday, May 1, the Rallying Joyful Ruckus will convene at Peskeompskut Park at 5 p.m. and march down the sidewalk on Avenue A to the Discovery Center lawn. Speakers are being lined up now.”

GILL from page A1

school district was approved this year by the Massachusetts School Building Authority to be reimbursed for most of the cost of replacing the school’s roof.

Selectboard members expressed their support for the MassCEC application, and said the town is exploring additional alternative revenue sources. Final decisions will be made at this Thursday’s joint budget meeting between the selectboard and finance committee, after which the town would be prepared to submit the grant application.

School Trip

Gill Elementary School’s request to use the Quintus Allen Fund for its end-of-year field trip was unanimously approved by the selectboard. The \$4,065 available in the fund will cover transportation and admission to Look Park in Northampton.

Gill Elementary principal Walter Huston noted that while the school usually funds this trip through its own budget, a current districtwide budget freeze has made that impossible. The Quintus Allen Fund, established through the will of Quintus Allen and designated “to be used toward schools of the town,” can be used as long as it benefits as many students as possible, according to Purington.

Board members emphasized that while the fund is appropriate for this special circumstance, trips like this should be built into the school budget annually. “It should be funded every year,” said selectboard chair Greg Snedeker.

Huston added that he hopes to eventually expand the field trip to include all elementary schools in the district.

Riverside Building

Bob Perry, representing the Gill historical commission, updated the selectboard on ongoing renovations at the Riverside Municipal Building. The improvements aim to increase accessibility and transform the space, which is no longer being leased to a school, into a rotating exhibit and community hub. Plans include areas for public meetings, guest speakers, and private research.

The board praised the updates and encouraged collaboration with Gill Elementary and other community groups to expand the building’s use.

A new sign will mark the renovated space, with the town agreeing to split the \$900 cost with the commission.

Other Business

The selectboard approved the appointment of the fire board of engineers, and Miles Chattman was officially named a junior firefighter.

A memo from Upper Pioneer Valley Veterans’ Services District director Chris Demars recommended that towns adopt two recent expansions to their property tax exemptions for veterans, which would mean an estimated cost of about \$10,000 to \$20,000 for Gill.

While typically manageable, the town is currently awaiting state certification of its free cash available to use in next year’s budget. “We don’t know how much money is in play,” said Purington.

The board agreed to postpone the discussion of the exemptions until Thursday’s budget meeting due to unresolved financial questions.

National Prescription Drug Take Back Day is this Saturday, April 26. Residents may bring unused and unneeded prescription medications to their local police station and drop them in the return box any time from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Clean Sweep Bulky Recycling Day will be held Saturday, May 17.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Town Hall Turnover Continues; Building Inspector Reportedly AWOL

By JOSH HEINEMANN

The Wendell selectboard’s April 16 meeting was Gillian Budine’s final scheduled meeting in her second term as a member of the board. She is not running for a third term, and only one person, Adam Feltman, has submitted papers for selectboard in the May 5 town election.

Budine said the school committee and the planning board each have two open seats, with no one yet stepping forward to run.

Budine had taken on several additional responsibilities that she needs to pass to someone else. She is willing to work on the next town newsletter with the person taking that on. She also will continue operating the CodeRED emergency message system until new town coordinator Kelly Tyler and new fire chief Matt O’Donnell are trained on it.

She also will help Tyler move into the role of contact person with the town’s tech support firm, Entre Technologies. Entre says Wendell is using two terabytes of storage and costing the town money; they suggest replacing it with a hard drive kept far from the office building.

Finally, Budine has been working with librarian Miriam Warner on uses and possibilities for Wendell’s digital equity grant.

Ascendant Chief

O’Donnell, newly hired as shared fire chief with the New Salem fire department, and Wendell treasurer Carolyn Manley were there as the meeting opened.

Manley had two letters, one from retiring fire chief Joe Cuneo and one from Jennifer Fair, O’Donnell’s present supervisor in the US Department of the Interior Eastern Ecological Science Center. Both supported cred-

iting O’Donnell with five years of relevant service towards benefits in Wendell, Cuneo citing his service as a firefighter and fire captain and Fair his managing and supervising experience in the Ecological Science Center.

Manley recommended allowing him five years’ equivalent, rather than ten, in considering his benefits. The board agreed.

O’Donnell said he is not currently interested in health insurance, but does want as much vacation time as is allowed for family trips. The board agreed to allow him two weeks of vacation during June, his time of overlap employment with Cuneo, and allowed themselves time to consider, in consultation with the finance committee, three weeks of vacation as tenure allows, or four as he wishes in FY’26.

O’Donnell’s pay will be split with New Salem. New Salem fin com chair Gabriele Voelker said the maximum that town can pay with their cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) is \$31,800.

The Wendell fin com is allowing a higher COLA this year, which would make Wendell’s salary share \$32,645. The selectboard voted to approve a salary of \$33,000, with the hope than New Salem would increase its share.

Absent Warden

Project coordinator and highway commission chair Phil Delorey, attending via Zoom, asked the board for access to the tree warden’s expense account so the road crew can start to trim and cut branches that lean over the roads. Some of the branches, heavy with rain or snow, hit passing trucks.

Delorey said he had asked tree warden Cliff Dornbusch to attend the meeting, but that Dornbusch has not answered or returned his calls.

Delorey said the situation was not a crisis yet: the highway crew can trim trees for \$900 a day, he said, and an outside crew would cost twice that. In the past the tree warden has overseen this work, allowing the highway crew to use tree warden expenses for tree work.

“We don’t know if Cliff has a plan,” said Budine. She advocated exercising due diligence.

Selectboard chair Laurie DiDonato said she would be happy to call Dornbusch. Delorey said Dornbusch had indicated to highway supervisor Al Frost that he would approve the use of his expense account for the road crew.

The tree warden is elected annually. A town meeting vote can change it to an appointed position, allowing someone from out of town to hold it, and giving the selectboard authority to hire or fire the person.

Misplaced Router

Leverett police sergeant Steven Gould asked the selectboard to purchase a new encrypted router for his department’s Wendell police station. The first router, supplied by the state of Massachusetts, disappeared during the building’s renovation, and without it the station cannot work as it should. The state says Wendell already has an encrypted router, and will not provide a replacement unless the town pays a \$5,580 penalty.

Budine found \$9,000 in Wendell’s Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) account. The DARE program is no longer active, and board members agreed that some of that money can be repurposed within police spending to have the police station router replaced.

Water Protection

Leverett Don Stone and Mass Audubon land protection specialist Dave Rothstein approached the selectboard with a proposal to put 11 acres of Stone’s property, not including his house and barn lots, under a water protection restriction.

The area is in the Swift River and Quabbin Reservoir watershed, and mostly wetland. It abuts Whetstone Wood and other state Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) land also held for water protection.

Board members approved the proposal, but the documents need to be signed in the presence of a notary, so they will have to return to sign them when town clerk Anna Wetherby has office hours.

Other Business

Manley said building inspector Justin Gale was still not doing his job, and that the board had sufficient cause to let him go. Budine said his mailbox in the office building was full.

DiDonato suggested inviting Gale to a selectboard meeting.

Selectboard member Paul Doud said he would talk with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) to see if they can fill in as Wendell’s building inspector through the end of FY’25.

The board voted unanimously to terminate Gale with a week’s notice, provided FRCOG can start immediately to do Wendell’s building inspection. FRCOG receives inspection applications online, but there is someone at the office who can help people who still use paper.

DiDonato said she had spoken with Nancy Graton about the trash left in previous weeks at the town hall, and that Graton said Good Neighbors creates little trash. Doud said he had spoken with Warner, who told him that trash from the library was also minimal.

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PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Celebrate Trees in Montague!

MONTAGUE – The public is invited to celebrate Arbor Day this year by showing up with work gloves to help members of the Montague Tree Advisory Committee plant trees in various locations throughout town on Friday, April 25 and Saturday, April 26.

On Friday, April 25 at 9 a.m., please join us in planting a tree at the Fairway Avenue Cemetery in Montague City.

On Friday at 10 a.m. a tree will be planted at the Highland Cemetery, 398 Millers Falls Road, in Millers Falls.

On Friday at 11 a.m. three trees will be planted on the Patch, to replace young trees that were accidentally killed last year by weed-whacking too close to the trees, cutting a circle in the bark and girdling the cambium (*see article, Page A1*). Meet at 25 Eleventh Street to help plant a tulip tree, a scarlet oak, and a crabapple tree.

On Friday at 3 p.m. a scarlet oak will be planted in

memory of Gabe Rice at the corner of Fifth and L streets.

And on Saturday, April 26, at 10 a.m. a shadblow will be planted across the street from 29 Main Street, near the town common in Montague Center.

“As global mean temperature continues to shatter previous benchmarks for the hottest year on record in 2022, 2023, and 2024, everyone, everywhere in the world needs to plant more trees, and protect young trees so they will grow to reach maturity,” said David Detmold, member of the Montague Tree Advisory Committee. “Trees are our first and best line of defense against climate chaos and global warming.”

Please come help the Tree Advisory Committee plant more trees in Montague to beautify our neighborhoods, provide shade for our homes, and grace the graves of departed loved ones in public cemeteries in town.

For more information, call Montague Tree Advisory Committee chair Bill Coddington at (413) 863-5674.

LEVERETT from page A1

method and Amherst’s growth cap in mind.

On March 31, they voted 7 to 2 in favor of an option that would entail a 14.08% increase for Leverett – from \$1.63 million to \$1.86 million – along with a 22.97% rise for Pelham, 7.65% for Shutesbury, and the 4.81% increase in Amherst, to \$19.74 million.

Leverett selectboard chair Tom Hankinson and member Jed Proujansky voted to include the article on the warrant and endorsed it, while member Patricia Duffy voted against it.

Duffy read a statement criticizing the budget process and outcome, particularly the “last possible hour” vote by the regional school committee, the inability of town officials invited to the March 31 meeting to comment or ask questions, and state oversight of the four-town process used in prior years to apportion costs.

Duffy condemned a statement at the March 31 meeting by a Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) representative that the towns had been “getting it wrong” in drafting their own agreements. “The word ‘illegal’ was used more than once,” she said.

The fact that the department had not taken any action to correct the process had “caused harm,” Duffy continued, and meant that communities were ultimately “unable to anticipate budget trends.”

Resident Matt Boucher commented that he understood the town was between a rock and a hard place this year and that there was no short-term solution, but suggested it would be “fiscally responsible” for Leverett to look into sending students to other nearby schools for secondary education, rather than Amherst.

Hankinson said that he believed the other three towns were likely to vote in favor of the regional budget, leaving Leverett no choice in the outcome, but also said the towns have made a commitment to improve the process in the future.

Politics-Free Zone

Some of the other financial articles on the warrant include \$250,000 to repair the Leverett Elementary School sprinkler system, a \$75,000 capital expenditure for a new police car, and Community Preservation Fund outlays of

\$374,000 for a “pocket park” at the Leverett library, \$265,000 for the Rattlesnake Gutter Road restoration project, and \$176,000 toward renovating the Amherst Regional High School track and athletic field.

Also on the warrant are several zoning bylaw changes concerning dog kennels, mobile homes, and ground-mounted solar electric facilities.

Other articles include one deciding whether to accept a gift of land for the purpose of creating a town forest and another seeking residents’ opinions as to whether part of Dudleyville Road should be paved.

Town administrator Marjorie McGinnis noted that this will be the first year “in a long time” that no political petition is presented at town meeting.

A copy of the warrant with all 37 articles is available on the town website.

Candidates’ Night

Only three people running for town office took advantage of the selectboard’s “candidates’ forum” to present their views and qualifications.

Tim Shores announced he was running for school committee. Shores said he has lived in Leverett since 2018 and has been a vocal school supporter from the beginning. He also noted that his wife, Jya Plavin, is currently chair of the committee.

Shores commented that there was a “statewide education budget crisis, and federal and local instability – or at least volatility” that need proactive attention, including the regional agreement discussed earlier. He added that he agreed with many of Duffy’s criticisms, and was “taken aback” by the process. If elected, he said, he would ask to be appointed as Leverett’s representative to the regional school committee, a position he said many see as an “undesirable post.”

Shores listed several reasons he felt he was a good fit, saying that he has learned a lot about Leverett’s politics, budgets, and administration in the last five years and would bring experience to the committee that others may not have.

“Public schools deliver necessary services,” Shores said, and “prepare our children for democratic citizenship,” for which there is a “severe need we need to pay attention to.”

Phil Carter announced he is running for re-election to the finance committee. In a brief statement, Carter said he has been a town resident for 25 years and a member of the fin com for almost 10, and hopes that he has “done a good enough job folks will want me to serve for another three years.”

Duffy also spoke briefly, announcing she was running for re-election to the selectboard. She said that although the past year has been “really, really, rough” she enjoys the work, and believes that the most important work residents can do is on the local level.

She added that she has been humbled by the opportunity. “A day doesn’t go by when I do not engage in some work for the town,” she said.

Other Business

The selectboard unanimously approved a “creative solution” suggested by fire chief Brian Cook to address staffing shortages by appointing highway department workers as firefighters during daylight hours.

Cook said that Leverett has done this in the past, and that other area towns currently use this approach. He also noted that two highway employees have extensive fire service experience, with one serving in the Bernardston department for 17 years and another currently the deputy chief in Shelburne Falls, so a minimal amount of training would be required.

Boucher, speaking now as highway superintendent, said that one three-hour evening training session each month could be funded through comp time, which presents a cost in workers having more time off, but would not amount to much over the course of a year.

The board appointed Fay Zipkowitz and Kimberly Van Wagner to the town’s affordable housing committee.

The board voted 2-0 to fund hydro-raking of aquatic vegetation at the public boat launch on Leverett Pond. Hankinson, a member of the Friends of Leverett Pond community group, abstained.

The board voted to support Massachusetts House bill H.1405 and Senate bill S.860 calling for Medicare for all, and to ask Leverett’s representatives in Boston to help push the legislation through to a vote.



LOOKING BACK:
10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here’s the way it was on April 23, 2015: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Curbing Graffiti

A proposed bylaw going before the May 2 Montague town meeting would ban the sale and possession of spray paint by any person under the age of 17, and limit possession to when the minor is using it in a job setting. It would also require the owner of any building with graffiti to remove it or face a fine of \$20 per day until the graffiti is remediated.

“All these efforts are meant to

help the community stay a nice place we’re proud of,” said police chief “Chip” Dodge. “What concerns me is that gangs use graffiti to mark turf and spread messages. If you leave graffiti unattended, it attracts more.”

Building inspector David Jensen questioned the proposal. “It makes property owners victims twice. It doesn’t sound very well thought out.”

Director of public health Gina McNeely said, “I don’t think the board of health will be involved; it’s really a police matter... It’s unpleasant, but it’s not a public health issue.”

20 YEARS AGO

Here’s the way it was on April 21, 2005: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Costly Sewer Line Improvements

Sewer users will see rates rise by two-thirds within five years if they are forced to foot the entire bill for planned improvements to Montague’s sewer lines and wastewater pollution control facility. Improvements will cost the town \$5.7 million, raising an average annual bill from \$350 to \$570 by 2010.

The town is under notice from the state and the federal Environmental Protection Agency to correct ongoing violations of the Clean Water Act resulting from the discharge of raw sewage directly to the Connecticut River. Town planner

Narcotics Sting

District attorney Elizabeth Scheibel announced the completion of Operation Slow Burn, a large-scale undercover narcotics operation involving more than 100 personnel in Greenfield and Montague. Officials said drug dealing leads to increased crime as well as to a negative impact on business and town facilities.

Undercover officers made multiple purchases from 64 individuals involving heroin, crack and powder cocaine, oxycontin, mushrooms, and marijuana.

150 YEARS AGO

Here’s the way it was on April 21, 1875: News from the Turners Falls Reporter’s archive.

Turners Falls and Vicinity

Hail, rain and snow, gentle Spring!

The water was higher on Saturday than at any time this spring. It has fell over three feet since.

The freshet has bothered the Montague Paper Company to some extent, rendering the river water too muddy for bleaching purposes.

Sickness is again prevalent, many of the business men being laid up.

Quite a number of Turners Falls people were in attendance at the Concord centennial anniversary the first of the week.

Alonso Richardson, who is rebuilding the Millers Falls dam, is getting along finely with the work, under the circumstances. The coffer-dam will be in position in less than a week.

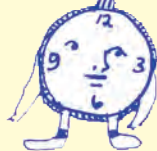
Deacon Chamberlain came near going over the falls the other day. In crossing his boat was carried as

far as possible without being fatal but after some pretty hard work he gained the shore, to his great relief.

Two men tried to steal a sleigh from the stable of A.C. Lewis, Riverside, but were prevented by Albert Field, who caught them in the act. He pursued them for near’y half a mile, but failed to capture them.

Commodore Smith is running the ferry for Mr Goss till another ferryman can be secured. The faithful manner in which he served the public while he had the contract, causes a general desire to see Mr Smith in charge of the ferry during the whole season.

The Legislative Committee on roads and bridges decided Thursday to report a bill ordering that the Turners Falls bridge shall be built within two years, but that the county shall not be required to pay more than ten per cent, of the cost of building, the remainder to be paid by the towns benefited. This bill, should it become a law, will be decidedly unsatisfactory to the petitioners, as the burden of taxes will fall heavily on Montague and Gill.



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HYDRO from page A1
flow over the Turners Falls dam throughout the year into the so-called “bypass stretch,” rather than into the canal for generation at its Cabot Station and Station No. 1 plants, and to make a series of investments aimed at helping spawning fish pass the dam, and preventing fish and larvae from being dragged into the pumped-storage station at Northfield.

One major party to the talks, the Connecticut River Conservancy (CRC), did not sign onto the agreements, and in the last two years grassroots environmental protest against the facilities has intensified, with lobbying aimed at final steps including MassDEP’s required water quality certification (WQC). At riverbank rallies and public hearings, some activists have urged the agency to deny the WQC outright.

In January, after nine months of study, MassDEP issued a draft of the WQC placing 34 special conditions on the new licenses. Though this was met with a range of mostly negative feedback at public input events, the final WQC issued Tuesday included mostly minor changes, keeping the same 34 conditions.

The stipulations about flows through the river’s bypass stretch match the March 2023 agreement on

Flows and Fish Passage. These include a minimum flow of 400 cubic feet per second (cfs) over the dam from mid-November through March, unless less is coming down the river. For the last half-century there has been no winter minimum flow.

From April through mid-June, when anadromous fish such as shad spawn, the minimums are 4,290 and then 2,990 cfs, or else at least two-thirds of the river’s flow, over the dam; the old license requires 200 and then 400 cfs. The lower threshold would then be brought down to 2,280 cfs in late June and 500 cfs from July through mid-November, whereas the old license requires 120 cfs for this entire period.

MassDEP also left intact FirstLight’s proposal to replace the fish ladder at the dam with a fish lift nine years into the license term. However, while the company proposed installing a fish barrier net at the Northfield Mountain intake at Year 7, MassDEP would require it by Year 5.

Another condition pertains to the level of water in the “impoundment,” the segment of the river between the dam and Northfield Mountain. By filling the upper reservoir at the pumped-storage station and the power canal at the same time, the company has been known to draw

the impoundment low. The WQC stipulates that it may go down to one foot below a lower threshold under certain circumstances, but “for no more than 168 hours per year and no more than 12 hours per event.”

Significant changes since the January draft pertain to public notices and erosion control. FirstLight will be required to post extensive real-time data on river height – “[c]ontinuous hydrographs showing hourly impoundment levels” – and summaries of its discharge below the dam, and to keep local towns, recreation groups, the CRC, and the Chaubunagungamaug Band of Nipmuck Indians apprised of a range of notices.

Though MassDEP agreed with studies concluding that the operation of the Mountain and dam are responsible for only a small amount of overall riverbank erosion, the WQC requires the company to make detailed erosion assessments every five years and to stabilize 10% of the affected shore, up from 5% in the draft.

FirstLight will also be required to test river temperature for the first five years of the license, to determine whether water heating up in the upper reservoir at Northfield has a warming impact when returned to the river, and to include the CRC in its “team” planning around the canal’s annual maintenance drawdown.

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As of press time, the CRC did not respond to a request for comment on the final WQC.

At least some environmentalists have announced they plan to hold a rally this Friday at 6:30 p.m. at Turners Falls to continue their opposition to the hydro projects.

“The Connecticut River Defenders and others believe that Northfield Mountain should be shut down immediately,” wrote spokesperson Priscilla Lynch. “The overwhelming negative environmental impact on the river, its life forms, Indigenous peoples and all those who care about the earth’s survival far outweigh the gains of a dirty fossil fuel

energy project designed to enrich a multi-national conglomerate.”

A FirstLight spokesperson replied to an inquiry with a short statement praising MassDEP for “facilitating a comprehensive... process,” and saying that the company “is reviewing the Final 401 WQC and can offer more detailed comments once that review is complete.” She did not directly respond as to whether the company plans to appeal the conditions.

If it does not, the next steps are expected to be a review by FERC of the WQC, and then a final decision process by the federal commission before new licenses are issued.



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

<p>– Grade 6 –</p> <p>FIRST HONORS Ryker Bray, Erick Castellanos, Rowan Deery, Carter Greene, Konrad Henry, Hanna Kyselyova, Rylee Malek, Blake Minckler, Aaron Neupane, Ryan Newton, Madison Phillips, Lilith Sumner, Jacob Torres, Malcolm Tyler, William Tyler, Anthony Warren</p> <p>SECOND HONORS Evelyn Galvez Mendez, Lukas Gexler, Brenna Guilbault, Liam McGuigan, Aerilyn Perez</p> <p>THIRD HONORS Makhi Doyle, Carter Flagg, Ivy O'Donnell, Yoreli Ovalle Mejia, Emmanuel Quezada Abarua, Alannah Renaud, Sincere Sumlin</p>	<p>– Grade 7 –</p> <p>FIRST HONORS Jonathan Bones, Kaleb Briggs, Mikayla Cormie, Kaelynn Dudek, Andrew Eichorn, Jazelle Gonzalez, Josephine Hayman, Page Katsoulis, Jo Licata, Silas Lively, Amber Marcy, Nathanel Martin, Anna McCarthy, Daisha Ovalle Perez, Gabriel Palazzo, Alexis Parker, Gracie Jo Philip, Liam Pielock, Eleni Reipold, Fiona Ribeiro, Janessa Sadler, Ella Shaw-Jarvis, Johnathan Sicard, Rhiannon Smith, Maria Solano, Taelynn Supernault</p> <p>SECOND HONORS Makenzie Angove-Disciuollo, Lydia Cadran, Nevaeh Call, Braedyn Firth, Audrina Gexler, Isabella Griffith, Ava Laffey, Cooper Malone, Axel Martin Ovalle, Zoe Powling, Mya Ramos, James Sanchez</p> <p>THIRD HONORS Samuel Choleva, Tyler Girard, Jamison Johnson, Mariah Larson, Nicholas Nelson, Kyle Porter, Azariah Stebbins, Westin Tela, Leon Tomas Mejia</p>	<p>– Grade 8 –</p> <p>FIRST HONORS Lucas Black, Santiago Buri Rosales, Bryan Cordero Lopez, Matthew Guilbault, Ellis Holmes, Liliyana Jette, Adelaide Kolakoski, Tyler Newton, Brielle Perez, Isabella Pfisterer-Hill, Myaa Reed, Viviana Rosa, Sofia Sinclair, Jayden Weber</p> <p>SECOND HONORS Kaylee Adamski, Max Briere, Chloey Bucinskas, Connor Glennon, Ella Larouche, Melody O'Donnell, Austin Platek, Allison Raymond, Axel Richardson, Emely Sanchez Abarua, Taylor-Marie Scanlon, Mckenzie Stafford, Sylar Torunski, Owen Zilinski</p> <p>THIRD HONORS Kaiya Adams, Noah Blanchard, Liam Kerivan, Teagan Mercier, Asiah Parker, Romeo Ruiz Scott, Bristol Stevens, Bethany Whitney</p>	
<p>– Grade 9 –</p> <p>FIRST HONORS Freilyn Abarua Corona, Tori Chagnon, Madison Haight, William Hutchison, Trevor Lyons, Ashton Marshall, Chase Maynard, Braeden Moore, Jocelyn Ovalle Roblero, Lynx Petraccia, Nicole Porter, Scarlett Pouliot, Rain Sanborn, Jakhia Williams, Olivia Wolbach, Chloe Wonsey, Kamden Zagame</p> <p>SECOND HONORS Sergey Alexeyenko, Ella Argy, Lachlan Banister Potter, Sato Bazemore, Shelby Beck, Jameson Betters, Cameryn Carner, Kourtney Cummings, Morgan Deluca, Ameliya Galbraith, Jaclyn Galvez Martin, Michael Johnson, Bennett Lanoue, Jakira Leno, Addison Lively, Daniel Morales Gonzalez, Alyssa Nelson, Genesis Pereira, Aiyana Simmons, Emmett Spriggs, Troy Thomas</p> <p>THIRD HONORS Vinicio Palazzo, Athena Willor</p>	<p>– Grade 10 –</p> <p>FIRST HONORS Jacob Broga, Keira Feeley, Gianna Marigliano, Layla Mathieu, Yashiro-Pape-Donatone, Brianna Preston, Angel Ruiz Scott, Paige Simmons, Andrew Sinpunpakt, Brayden Slauenwhite, Brayden Sloan</p> <p>SECOND HONORS Johnny Bartolon, Caeden Cottrell-Bouchard, Ethan Damkoehler, Jaydon Gary, Robert Goff, Rachel Juarbe, Julian Kaiser, Ophelia Little, Ivy Lopez, Kimberly Ramirez Martin, Kaya Shipley-Aja, Addison Talbot, Rihanna Thompson, Marketa Vachula-Curtis</p> <p>THIRD HONORS Mary Adams, Davian Bala, John Burt, Makayla Fournier, Derek Jean, Rhielle Reese</p>	<p>– Grade 11 –</p> <p>FIRST HONORS Trinity Davis, Ella DeLorenzo, Lily DeLorenzo, Kai Dennett, Elsee Galvez Martin, Rojelio Galvez Mendez, Clara Guidaboni, Cameron Johnson, Michaela Klempner-Siano, Allister Kolakoski, Noah Kolodziej, Shayly Martin Ovalle, Janelle Massey, David Ortiz, Mario Pareja, John Ramirez Martin, Jenna Sanford, Khalifa Seck, Nathaniel Trinqué, Toby Wilson-Hill</p> <p>SECOND HONORS Michael Berdugo, Jackson Cogswell, Madisyn Dietz, Ethan Eichorn, Brody Girard, Yolvin Ovalle Mejia, Kainen Stevens, Jessica Therrien, Angelina Tidlund, Christopher Ulloa Abarua, Michael Waite</p> <p>THIRD HONORS Curtis Kretchmar</p>	<p>– Grade 12 –</p> <p>FIRST HONORS Ella Guidaboni, Madison Liimatainen, Mia Marigliano, Sofia Moreno, Jacob Norwood, Ledwin Villafana Abarua</p> <p>SECOND HONORS Pamela Bartolon-Martin, Kamryn Berry, Samantha Carr, Avery Cook, Khiairielix Huertas Hernandez, Kailey James-Putnam, Zachary Keeney, Teagan Lavallee-Finch, Logan Leblanc, Linnea Macek, Avery Miner, Gabriel Page, Gary Smith</p> <p>THIRD HONORS Jazilyn Boyer</p>

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WEST ALONG THE RIVER
POSTCARDS FROM
THE EDGE OF SPRING

By DAVID BRULE

THE FLAT, ERVINGSIDE – Just as eagerly as we do in December waiting for that first snow, some of us get impatient with the way Springtime takes its time to reluctantly show itself.

We get a tease here, a tease there. The first tree swallows arrive like those coming back to legendary Capistrano. You can get a leap in the heart that day, then get yanked back a season when the cold cruel wind blows. Maybe you, like me, get worried about how the swallows have been fooled once again by that babbling idiot April.

I have the same worries for the phoebe, who first arrived this year around April Fool’s Day. This bird calls incessantly one morning, then shudders in the gray cold the next. Our phoebe scavenges for early insects along the river shore and on the red rocks of the cliff face, especially when there is a chill in the morning sun. Maybe this bird knows what he’s doing, but I can’t help worrying for him.

I go through the same anxiousness every spring, but by May all the familiar summer residents are here, and the early arrivals have made it through the caprices of April.

A rare treat this year has been the fox sparrow’s song. Four of them lingered here for a month, long enough for the males to be motivated by spring fever to sing. They nest far to the north where they will soon be singing their territorial song, to warn other male fox sparrows to stay away.

I don’t have the means to travel far to hear them sing on their northern site, so they kindly sang their spring song for me down here along the river before leaving one night.

Black fur glistening blacker than black ink, bear broke through the fence a few nights ago. She didn’t find anything – we all take

the feeders down in the evening – but now we know she’s up, awake, and looking for something to eat.

She surely woke up hungry. We can’t tell yet whether she had cubs with her. She likely ate some skunk cabbage for a spring laxative, needed after a three month’s sleep. I imagine she then figured she’d come down here to the Flat to have a look, to see what she could see.

Bright blue scillas bloom every year at this time. They flower over the grave where our beloved Siberian Enya is buried, after I put them in the ground with her one April over 20 years ago. They come up now every year over her resting place, blue as were her eyes.

You may know, you never get over losing a lovely dog companion.

April 18, Good Friday, dawned a bright sunny morning, unlike that Friday of Biblical imagery. Our Irish grandmother often reminded us that this particular day was always foreboding and stormy, or so she maintained.

Today, in spite of that mystical belief, the day is bright and sunny, birds call, and early spring flowers show their faces. I take my time and savor these sparse and austere New England mornings. April is frugal, even cheap, with her rare offerings of color here and there.

Here a daffodil, there a hyacinth. I do respect the solemnity of the day, however, by putting on the disc of cello pieces by Marin Marais, Couperin and Monsieur de Sainte-Colombe. They composed laments suitable for these few days of religious mourning. The cello’s voice, almost human, expresses the deep sadness felt by some at this time.

Yet out of doors, all of nature seems to be anticipating and declaring new life and rebirth. The phoebe calls, the wren darts into her nest

see WEST ALONG page B3



Fox sparrow (Passerella iliaca).

LOUIS AGASSIZ FUERTES ILLUSTRATION

Above: Yabba-dabba-doo: Engineering marvels can be seen on the grounds of Fleming Stonework, next to the canalside bike path in Turners.

Montague Center Fire Chief Retiring

By DONNA PETERSEN

MONTAGUE CENTER – Your smoke and carbon monoxide detector goes off at 2:13 a.m. one night, or you trip on a couple of steps and maybe you broke something. *Who you gonna call?* Well, you start by calling 911, and the call goes out to Shelburne Dispatch, and soon two big red vehicles are parked in your driveway and there are folks at your door all geared up for action.

Dave Hansen, Montague Center fire department chief, has been answering these calls for over 38 years, and his nine-and-a-half-year tenure as fire chief is about to end. Dave retires June 30, and will move on to new experiences in retirement as a new chief takes the reins.

Some background on the Montague Center Fire Department (MCFD): The MCFD was incorporated in 1941, and covers the villages of Montague Center and Lake Pleasant. Both it and the Turners Falls department are governed by “fire districts,” bodies independent of Montague’s town government, unlike departments in towns such as Leverett that are part of the town government.

MCFD operates as a call/volunteer team, funded by fire district tax bills that property owners pay each year. Team members get small stipends for all their work, and Dave gets a small salary. MCFD currently has 23 active members; of those, three are strictly EMTs while three other firefighters also have EMT certification.

Dave has worked in the emergency response field in numerous capacities, including in the Athol FD, the Orange FD, and at Shelburne Dispatch. He retired a while back from his “real job” at Baystate Health. He’s been a busy guy!

Dave and I had a wide-ranging discussion about



Chief Dave Hansen is moving on after nearly a decade as chief in Montague Center.

his experiences with the department, and his and the MCFD’s futures.

The old cliché of the cat up a tree? Yeah, well, once Moe the cat was stuck up in a tree, and Dave did rescue him. “Moe was ready to come down,” and jumped on Dave, who thankfully was wearing protective gear.

see CHIEF page B8

MONTV / MUSIK / MOUNTAIN

Interview by J. BURKETT and TROY CURRY

TURNERS FALLS – So, it’s time for our column again... and here’s another fun interview with yet another great local band! Sister Xmas is all Turners Falls-area ladies, Maggie, Trish, and Desi, and their band is...well, impossible to describe, so we asked them to take over and do the introduction:

“Sister Xmas is turning heads with its original blend of interdimensional sound, dark whimsy, and manic creative drive. Swirling together eclectic influences and personal histories, this band has cultivated a singular style that frustrates categorization. Here’s a look into how Sister Xmas came to be and where they’re headed next.”

Check them out at local venues like the Rendezvous, and listen to them on Bandcamp (sisterxmas.bandcamp.com) or on their Instagram page.

This interview was done via “group chat”...

MMM: Hi Sister Xmas! What are some of your earliest music memories?

SX: The group’s members recall many early moments of contact with the music dimension, chief among them being: kicking a piano in a fit of childhood rage, then spending days after feeling guilty for “hurting” the piano, a steadfast friend; sitting at an uncle’s drum kit in Albuquerque in 1986 and having a welcome experience of inverted body dysmorphia,

going from feeling so small to feeling – suddenly and breathtakingly – colossal; playing a grandmother’s organ with cutlery; being serenaded by a boy singing the *Free Willy* theme song and thinking “this is so boring, I want to play Sega”; Lilith Fair 1999; mimicking bird calls in the Virginia sticks; and one member peeing their pants in sixth grade marching band practice, the simultaneous humiliation and thrill she felt in doing this.

see MUSIK page B4



LXXIX: Sister Xmas

Pet of the Week



‘VENICE’

Venice is a gentle 6-year-old 40-lb husky in foster care in Greenfield. His foster parents say Venice is an absolute sweetheart who bonds closely and prefers to be in close proximity of his caregivers.

He is pack-oriented and friendly with other dogs, but does not get along with cats. He’s playful, adventurous, and energetic, and would be an excellent fit for someone who is very active.

Venice can get quite anxious about food, separation, or understimulation. What he needs most

right now is stability, routine, and lots of love and attention.

Venice’s adoption fee is \$150. He is neutered, current with shots, and microchipped. His foster parents are working on basic training, but that work needs to continue. An experienced adopter would be best.

To apply to adopt Venice, visit www.dakinhumane.org and find “Available Community Animals” under the “Adopt” menu. A potential adopter must submit an application, interview and meet the pets, and sign an adoption contract.



Time to Lace Up Those Shoes...

By LEE WICKS

MONTAGUE CENTER – It has occurred to me while writing this column that the title, *Elder Connect*, raises questions, the first ones being: who is an “elder,” and what does it mean?

Is this status marked by retirement, collecting Social Security benefits, gray hair, senior center attendance, or activity level? Maybe it’s wisdom. There are societies where elders are revered for their experience. Younger people rely on them for wise counsel and whatever else they can contribute to a community’s well-being.

There are also elders who are lonely, living far from family, perhaps mourning a spouse and looking for meaningful things to do. And there are elders still working, because they must, or because they want to fill the days which can feel very long in the absence of work.

There are grandparents raising grandchildren, allowing the parents to work without exorbitant daycare costs, and grandparents rocking grandchildren a couple days a week, offering respite to exhausted parents. During a recent visit with a friend who is grandmother to a grown grandson, I learned that he’s being treated for addiction, and she is caring for his cat. It gives her great pleasure to offer this so that he can have peace of mind and focus on his recovery.

It’s also true that some elders are taking to the streets with protest signs, urging legislators not to cut programs that are important to our quality of life and to our community. Those who live locally might remember Frances Crowe. She was actively working for peace and protesting nuclear power plants, and was arrested in Washington, DC at the Veterans for Peace demonstration at the age of 91. Her final arrest took place in 2017 when she was 98.

What I’m trying to say here is that there isn’t a single image of what it means to be an elder, and for many it looks nothing like those retirement-community brochures that feature people playing golf in the sunshine, or walking happy dogs on woodland paths. Nor does it resemble helplessness, although most people do need increasing levels of help as the years pass.

Montague Villages, our local non-profit all-volunteer organization that helps people age in their own homes, has members in their 60s who are also volunteers, and house-bound members who rely on a number of services – including Meals on Wheels, which is currently threatened by federal budget cuts. Montague Villages will, in some cases, be able to fill the gap between needs and dwindling services, but the cuts being proposed are daunting.

At the Gill-Montague senior center Roberta Potter, the director of the Council on Aging, says people are worried about changes to the Social Security Administration, where staff cuts have made it hard to talk to an individual and citizens are encouraged to go online for answers.

Potter said she can help people get online, but the site asks for a number to text in order to send an access code, and the whole process falls apart if the person doesn’t have a cell phone. If that person is living on their Social Security benefits, this threat to services or access is frightening.

LifePath, a Greenfield-based non-profit organization dedicated to the well-being of older adults, individuals with disabilities, and caregivers, publishes a newsletter called *The Good Life*. In a recent issue, executive director Gary Yuhas writes: “Any cuts to Medicaid will be catastrophic. Individuals who receive support via Medicaid often do not even realize it. In Massachusetts,

Medicaid is called MassHealth. If you have coverage through MassHealth, a Senior Care Options plan, or a One Care plan, you are on Medicaid. And you should be aware and vigilant about any changes to Medicaid and how they can impact you.”

To read this newsletter and back copies, go to www.lifeathma.org/stories-news/print-archive.

Changes to Medicaid are not the only threat. Elders relying on Medicare can also be affected by cutbacks. For those who do not know, Medicare primarily covers individuals aged 65 and older, and some younger individuals with disabilities, while Medicaid provides coverage for low-income individuals and families.

A friend in Amherst who is on Medicare was relying on having a hospital bed delivered to her home for her husband, who is dying from ALS. When the time came, she learned that this service is no longer available.

If you are an older American and you aren’t wealthy, many of the changes proposed by this administration will harm you. “We have been taking a critical look at what services we provide, while looking for ways to be more efficient and more effective,” Mr. Yuhas writes. “Even so, we already know that some of the programs we have today will not exist in the future... [W]e have accountability to those we serve, our communities, our partners, our LifePath team, and other stakeholders. I know that disappointment will touch all of us at some point.”

Those are sobering words. Maybe it’s time for elders to assume their vital role in society and find inspiration from people like Frances Crowe or Randy Kehler, a local war tax resister who dedicated his life to peace and social justice.

I love to read and write, and hang out with my dog Ziggy and my family. I enjoy walking around the village admiring my friends’ beautiful gardens. But it might be time to lace up a pair of comfortable shoes and join a march, or hold a sign at a busy intersection.

If you are interested, you can find out about local actions by going to the website for Franklin County Continuing the Political Revolution, www.fcctrp.org. This organization was founded by longtime activist Ferd Wulkan, who lives in Montague Center, and the site is a good place to learn about opportunities for involvement.

If that is too much, there’s still advocacy that can be done from home.

In the same letter, Yuhas writes: “Mass Aging Access is our partner organization that supports LifePath and the other Aging Service Access Points across Massachusetts. Please consider visiting their site at www.agingaccess.org. Clicking the orange ‘Take Action’ button at the top will take you to a page where you can see all of our legislative priorities. I encourage you to advocate for what you feel is important for you, those you care about, and the community you live in.”

I realize there are a lot of links in this column. If you have problems with using the internet or computer, the Gill-Montague senior center in Turners Falls hosts Tech Tuesday, a computer literacy session, on Tuesdays from 12:30 to 2 p.m. Students from the tech school come and patiently help with phones, computers, and tablets. Senior centers and libraries in nearby towns offer something similar.

The wise elders in our community have much to offer. We have worked and saved; we do not feel “entitled” to anything, but we paid our taxes, and expect the programs and services supported by those tax dollars. We are not helpless, and should not become hopeless. I plan to do what I can to sustain a just society, and hope others will do the same in any way that feels right.

Senior Center Activities

APRIL 28 TO MAY 2

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.

A six-week class, “Mindfulness Meditation for Stress Reduction,” will be offered on Thursdays from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. starting May 22. Seniors 55+ from all towns are welcome. Call or email instructor Jean Erlbaum anytime for info or registration: (413) 230-1518, jean.erlbaum@verizon.net.

Monday 4/28
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
3:00 p.m. Senior Tech Class

Tuesday 4/29
9 a.m. Chair Yoga
12:30 p.m. Tech Tuesday
3 p.m. Tai Chi

Wednesday 4/30
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
12 p.m. Bring Your Lunch Bingo
4 p.m. Mat Yoga

Thursday 5/1
10:30 a.m. Brown Bag
1 p.m. Pitch

Friday 5/2
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
2 p.m. Chair Dance

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 listserv for more info.

WENDELL

Foot care clinic is the first Wednesday of each month. The next clinic is May 7. Call Katie Nolan at (978) 544-2306 for information or appointments. For Senior Health Rides, contact Nancy Spittle at (978) 544-6760.

ERVING

Open Mondays through Fridays from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 1 Care Drive. Daily snacks and coffee. Fitness room and pool table open.

Monday 4/28
9 a.m. Good for U
10 a.m. Seated Fitness
12 p.m. Pitch Cards
1 p.m. Yoga

Tuesday 4/29
9 a.m. Stretch & Balance
10 a.m. Line Dancing
11 a.m. Social Stringer

Wednesday 4/30
9 a.m. Interval Training
10 a.m. Chair Aerobics
11:30 a.m. Bingo

Thursday 5/1
9 a.m. Barre Fusion
10 a.m. Pilates Flow

Friday 5/2
8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Quilting, Open Sew

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Email it to us at podcast@montaguereporter.org and listen for our “Ask the Editor” segment to hear the answer!

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WEST ALONG from page B1

on the front porch wreath, and the rabbits leap and play, crazy as, well, mad March hares. The woodpeckers’ drum corps hammer out a strident beat on every hollow tree trunk, echoing through the woods.

Last evening’s chorus rang through the yard and the gathering dusk. Whistle-voiced white-throated sparrows sang in perfectly clear, sweet tones. The junco clan, here since November, called out in a twittering series of notes. I’d like to think they are thanking this house for the table we set for them all winter. Now they’ll be on their way up to the tall pines in Wendell and beyond for the summer.

Our constant gardeners too, the song sparrows, kept up their singing that began in late February. They will stay here to set up home in the brushy thickets along the rushing river.

April 20. Now on this Easter morn, new singers have arrived on the warm current of yesterday’s evening shower that fell and has now stopped.

Swamp sparrow and chipping sparrow have winged in, renewing my faith that I can still be optimistic for the enduring biodiversity among species. These representatives are a local affirmation that even the diminutive sparrow family, well over a dozen species of this sparrow nation, still thrives across the Northeast.

Unlike decades ago, church bells no longer ring out here in the village on Easter morn.

This family’s parish of Saint John no longer has a choir, nor bells to ring. The church has been closed and boarded up for a generation now. This was the church where family members were baptized, married, honored in their funerals before their journey up to Highland Cemetery.

So with no bells to ring in Easter, what am I to do? Then I remember The Dixie Hummingbirds.

I dive into my music collection and finally locate their disc. This repertoire is not the reserved and staid hymns of my youth, but rather the spirited gospel sounds of Southern Baptists, maybe singing down in a perfect Georgia.

Those Dixie Hummingbirds will know how to lift the soul, proclaim Easter and bring the joyful news of spring’s resurrection after a difficult winter.

I catch up the dog, jump into the car, pop the disc in the player, crank up the volume, and the two of us head for the river!

Billy Collins writes:

I have always loved this harmony like four, sometimes five trains running side by side over a contoured landscape...

But I am not here to describe the sound of the falsetto whine, sepulchral bass, alto and tenor fitted snugly in between; only to witness my own minor ascension that morning as they sang, so parallel, about the usual themes, the garden of suffering, the beads of blood on the forehead, the stone before the hillside tomb, and the ancient rolling waters we would all have to cross some day...

They are a far cry from the quiet kneeling I was raised with, a far, hand-clapping cry from the candles that glowed in the alcoves and the fixed eyes of saints staring down from their corners.

Oh, my cap was on straight that Sunday morning and I was fine keeping the car on the road No one would have guessed I was being lifted into the air by nightingales hoisted by their beaks like a long banner that curls across an empty blue sky, caught up in the annunciation of these high, most encouraging tidings.

From Billy Collins, “Sunday Morning with the Sensational Nightingales”



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Lots of Break-Ins; Crash Into School Bus; Stolen Rosemary; We Measured Those 3 A.M. Leaf Blowers At Over 90 dB

Monday, 4/14

7:47 a.m. 911 caller reports that she just rear-ended another vehicle on Millers Falls Road. Both vehicles drivable. Medical attention declined by both parties. Report taken.

7:48 a.m. Caller from Walnut Street would like it on record that someone “went through” his vehicle overnight. Caller does not believe anything is missing.

11:15 a.m. Caller from Turners Falls Road would like it on record that the trailer hitch was stolen from his truck overnight.

11:49 a.m. Caller from Federal Street would like it on record that last night around 9:30 p.m., some type of truck pulled up her driveway and may have backed into her bird feeders. The vehicle turned around and went back down the driveway.

5:23 p.m. 911 caller states she heard from a neighbor that a dog at a Greenfield Road address is left out all the time and runs in and out of traffic. Believes that the owners do drugs and are not able to care for the dog. Copy of call left for animal control officer (ACO).

10:47 p.m. 911 caller from I Street states the apartment above her is making loud noise. Officer advises he spoke to the caller about her concerns and advised an individual on the third floor of a noise complaint. Officer advises there was minimal noise from the involved location while he was on scene.

Tuesday, 4/15

6:50 a.m. Caller from Turners Falls Road reports seeing a male party dressed in dark clothing stumbling around in traffic while walking over the bridge into Greenfield. Caller states male appeared to be bleeding from one of his legs. Greenfield PD advised of call’s nature.

11:09 a.m. Officer conducting drills at the elementary school.

12:55 p.m. Walk-in requesting to speak with an officer about drug activity in the neighborhood.

1:52 p.m. Caller from Greenfield Road states that a package containing a security system was taken from her porch while she was out of town. Would like incident on record.

1:54 p.m. Caller states that he left his wallet and phone on top of his vehicle before going for a bike ride in the Plains. When he came back, his phone was there, but his wallet was gone. Services rendered.

2:45 p.m. Caller states that a tractor-trailer unit is driving on Millers Falls Road with its back doors open and loose pallets are about to fall out. Erving PD notified as well. Unable to locate.

2:54 p.m. Multiple 911 callers reporting an accident between a school bus and a motor vehicle at Montague City Road and Depot Street. Passenger may be having a medical issue as well. Officer reporting juvenile having a seizure. TFFD/AMR responding. Rau’s requested to tow SUV. Officer requesting DPW be contacted to fix a sign. Officer advises bus is driveable and is being driven to the bus company in Gill. Van is being towed. Some parents have picked up their kids; another bus has been sent to bring the other kids back to school. Officer followed bus to Gill. All set.

4:20 p.m. Caller from Worcester Avenue reporting wire down across the road. Officer advises it seems to have come off someone’s house. Called Comcast; they are putting in a call to fix the wire. Officer advises he wrapped police tape around it and the neighbors are aware of it. Clear.

9:31 p.m. Caller states he hit a mailbox by Leaf Joy in Gill. Gave him number of Shelburne Control.

11:15 p.m. 911 caller from I Street states she can hear loud noise and stomping from someone in the building. Officer advises he stood in hallway for several minutes and observed no noise. Officer states he spoke to the caller through a Ring camera, and advises the individual is not home at this time.

Wednesday, 4/16

1:13 a.m. 911 caller from I Street states someone above her on the third floor is currently making noise and stomping on the floor. Officer advises no loud noise observed again. Caller is hearing normal movements from someone who resides above her. Caller was advised to contact her landlord if she is unhappy with living conditions.

11 a.m. Walk-in from I Street reporting ongoing harassment from a neighbor. Advised of options.

1:32 p.m. 911 caller states that a male party in a truck with temporary Vermont plates pulled up next to her and her husband at the intersection on the Gill side of the bridge and started yelling at them. Words were exchanged between both parties, and at some point the male party got out of his truck and threatened them with a boxcutter. The caller’s husband threw a soda into the guy’s truck, and they turned and went across the bridge into Turners. The truck followed them, but turned off while they kept going. No further incidents. Shelburne Control called in with truck operator’s info. Officer checking area for truck; unable to locate.

1:38 p.m. Caller from Whitney Way believes an employee stole some jewelry from her elderly mother about a month ago. The caller called the employer, but they would not give out any information. Caller dropped off a statement form, which was forwarded to an officer.

8:25 p.m. 911 caller said he was walking from Greenfield toward Erving, not sure where he is, wearing a black hoodie, possibly dehydrated and confused. Fire department on scene. Party removed to hospital.

Thursday, 4/17

2:54 a.m. Caller from Third Street states she was woken up by the DPW, who is currently outside using leaf blowers. Wants someone to speak to them about the noise, and would also like to know who said it was OK to do work at this time. Officer advises DPW notified of complaint, and will be working until 5 a.m. Caller called back frustrated by the noise level; requests to speak with an officer later in the morning to inquire what can be done in the future. Advised caller call would be logged.

3:26 a.m. Unknown caller reporting loud noise from leaf blowers downtown. Additional caller reporting loud noise outside her residence at this time.

8:47 a.m. Caller and children smell something odd in an Avenue A salon. Transferred to TFFD.

9:28 a.m. 911 caller from Montague Center Water District states that a shed was broken into and \$1,000 worth of meters were taken. Referred to an officer.

Friday, 4/18

7:29 a.m. Caller from Chestnut Street calling about her neighbor or the town doing work and a high-pitched beeping that woke her up 30 minutes ago; would like an officer to check the beeping. States this also happened six weeks ago, and she has a medical condition and needs her sleep. Referred to an officer.

7:52 a.m. 911 call reporting two-car accident near Nouria; fluids leaking; no injuries. Control contacted for TFFD assistance. Officer states vehicle out of roadway. Tow requested.

11:01 a.m. Caller from Federal Street reporting vandalism and theft; she has footage of the incident, which occurred shortly after midnight on 4/17. One mailbox-style cash box was stolen, another was badly damaged, and a pallet of rosemary was also stolen. Report taken.

12:03 p.m. Report of several needles at the abandoned house across the street from the funeral home. Officer picked up items.

11:12 p.m. 911 caller states he crashed his ebike on Massasoit Street. Call given to Control. Party struck a phone pole at 15 MPH. Removed to hospital.

Saturday, 4/19

6:03 a.m. Caller from South High Street states his vehicle was broken into. Officer checking area for other damaged vehicles; located second vehicle on street with open door. Report taken.

6:40 a.m. Caller from Turnpike Road states they had a vehicle gone through. Report taken.

8:06 a.m. Caller from O Street states that a male party with a dog broke into their cars last night. They have the suspect on camera. Nothing taken. Caller will email footage. Investigated.

10:24 a.m. Caller from Our Lady of Częstochowa believes that someone tried to break into the church overnight through a vent. Just wanted on record; no real damage done. Investigated.

Sunday, 4/20

3:25 a.m. Caller from Central Street reporting intoxicated male party and friends are outside arguing with each other. Quiet upon officers’ arrival; no one outside. Advised one individual of the complaint.

11:03 p.m. Caller states her mother hit a deer, not specific on location. Advised to have mother call 911. 911 call for vehicle vs. deer. Condition of both unknown. Area searched; unable to locate deer. Report taken.

Monday, 4/21

1:28 a.m. 911 transfer from Shelburne Control for active breaking and entering at Montague Bookmill. Camera motion detector went off in lower-level restaurant off the deck for a thin individual wearing a hood. Owners on way to stage down the road until called that the building is secure. Officers on scene; insecure door in back. Building secure. Owners went home; will be back to meet officers. Shelburne Control advised departments to be on lookout for suspect vehicle. Door secured. Officers and owners clear.

12:23 p.m. Caller from Turnpike Road states there is a lot of smoke from this area; concerned it could be a brush fire. FD notified; PD responding. Second caller reporting active brush fire behind a Turnpike Road address. Heavy smoke and fire in area. PD units clear; FD remaining.

1:01 p.m. Caller from Turnpike Road would like it on record that his blue-and-silver Trek mountain bike was taken from his backyard in the last day or two.

SCENE REPORT

Greenfield’s Earth Day

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

Greenfield, Massachusetts held an Earth Day celebration on Monday. A parade took place at the start of the celebration featuring a band called the Expandable Brass Band. They were an organized marching band, and continued to be that way as they marched from Greenfield’s town common to Energy Park, where the rest of the celebration took place.

Other things featured in the parade were one or two people holding signs about protecting the environment, and one cool thing was a guy pulling a float of a plane connected to a bike. The float was presented by the band when they got to Energy Park. A juggler was also present with the band.

The band continued to entertain the crowd nicely at the park. I should mention that a few members of the band, I believe, were dressed

as plants, which worked with this being an Earth Day celebration.

A nice crowd showed up for the event, and a duo that involved a flute player played beautifully from the park’s actual stage. The food provided by the Stone Soup Café was decent.

Places I expected to see at this were there with tables, including Indigenous Voices, a Native American organization; the Greenfield Garden Club; the Greenfield Solar Store; the Connecticut River Conservancy; and the Greenfield Tree Committee. I saw a couple of people sign up for email lists at some of the tables. Franklin County Continuing the Political Revolution was another place where that could be done.

People seemed to enjoy finding out about these organizations, and hearing the music from the marching band and the duo that played on stage. It was an enjoyable experience for me.

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MUSIK from page B1

These experiences set the stage for Sister Xmas’s bullishly sensitive yet subversive spirit.

MMM: How about previous musical ventures?

SX: Before Sister Xmas, the members honed their skills in groups such as Bunwinkies, Tongue Oven, Forest Avenue, The Old Hammondton Concert Band, Purple Dawn, triiiiiish, and a handful of assorted collaborations stretching over two decades.

The diversity of these projects helped refine their approach to music-making – apprehending the sonic space between esteeming trad music sensibilities and trashing them riotously. They know this approach is very CPTSD of them, and are tickled you noticed.

MMM And what are the origins of the band?

SX: In a characteristically cosmic twist, Sister Xmas found their name before they’d even played together, apparently on the metaphorical “rings of Saturn” while eating Halloween candy. As is true with most phenomena in the Sister Xmas universe, the name chose them and not the other way around.

From that first unintentional interstellar vacation emerged a band that prizes spontaneity, radical at-

tunement, genre power-clashing, browlessness, extremist inclusion, respecting the hell outta the dead and unseen, and finger-curlingly cold cherry vanilla seltzer from Trader Joe’s.

MMM: What are some of the band’s favorite bands, artists, and records?

SX: Their musical horizons are expansive. Favorites include Paul McCartney’s *Ram*, Fairport Convention, Jean-Luc Ponty, Kevin Burke, Love, Josephine Foster, Kim Gordon, Coughs, Princess Demeny, Harry Pussy, A.C. Marias, Xcetera, Hermine, Destroy All Monsters, Linda Smith, Laurie Anderson, giving birth, every subway conductor who has ever piloted the G Train, cows, snow blowers, unbridled grieving – these and countless others have helped shape Sister Xmas’s sonic identity.

Expect a fusion of obscure folk, noise, demented lullabycore, and avant-garde femme-fluence, all recombined with precision-abandon.

MMM: What’s the “Sister Xmas Message”?

SX: Putting it simply: Sister Xmas melds “femme noise core misandry” with anti-structural influences and ephemeral sounds from the multiverse. Their music is trying to tell you to bed rot, burn wood on

a frozen river, be assertive af about your perimenopausal and/or PMDD breakthroughs, buy Spice Girl Barbies on eBay, save injured seagulls, try as many psych meds as you want, learn telepathy, go swimming in footie pajamas, eat a Crunchwrap Supreme on a snowy beach with no hands, emasculate male ER doctors, say yes to everything, say no to everything, watch reality TV until your eyes bleed, talk to your dead loved ones everyday out loud in public, ask for a drink then immediately pour it on the floor, go pogo sticking, and assemble your fambly like your life depends on it. (Make it keut as hell, pls.)

Also, and perhaps above all else, hype up, collaborate with, feature, and love abundantly on other femme and queer experimental artists AMAP.

MMM: The last show was a *Mystra* night at the Voo, right? What were some highlights?

SX: Their most recent show at the Voo was described as “a lot o’ fun!,” “an orchestra of chaos,” “too loud,” and “woah, your set sent me into outer space.” They loved – and always love – playing and feverishly gossiping with fellow performers and audience members alike.

MMM: Do you have any new recordings on the way? What’s

ahead for you guys?

SX: Yes! Sister Xmas plans to release new music soon. Keep your ears peeled, you keut lil’ freax.

Sister Xmas also hopes to embark on a NYC/New England mini-tour in the spring or summer. Between finishing up recordings and mapping out travel dates, the future is positively *juicy* with possibility, so keep an eye out for announcements of new performances.

MMM: And any fun stories from your worlds?

SX: When pressed for favorite backstage tales, Sister Xmas speaks cryptically about “6 month old/half-eaten ice cream birthday cake,” “trust falls,” “hung chihuahuas,” “free bleeding in the Connecticut River,” “psychospiritual friendships,” and “resurrecting the Poop Renaissance.”

One thing they are willing to be more clear about: Ulysses, band member Desi’s visionary 24-year-old son with Down Syndrome, is a vital fixture in the band. Sometimes physically present, sometimes telepathically, his contributions electrify the group’s process and grant them access to dimensions of the bodiless, adding yet another layer of mystique to Sister Xmas’s infinitely evolving – or devolving, depending on how you look at it – identity.



Montague Community Television News

Covered!

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – Did you miss the Montague City Village Center Community Rezoning Workshop on Thursday, April 17? No problem! Montague Community TV has you covered. You can find recordings of many public meetings on our Vimeo page, which is linked from our website, *MontagueTV.org*.

There are hundreds more hours of meetings in our archive, but we don’t just cover meetings – we cover any Montague community events, so if you know of something you think should be filmed, let us know! Even better, if you want to make something yourself, our equipment is free to learn and free to use.

Our station at 4 Second Street in Turners Falls is equipped with a studio, cameras, lights, microphones, and friendly staff members available to help. Stop Mondays through Fridays between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., or contact us at (413) 863-9200 or *infomontaguetelevision@gmail.com*. Follow us on Facebook or find us on Instagram @montaguecommunitytv.

Don’t forget to like and subscribe! (Just kidding...)



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Aquí se habla español

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



Voces de Inmigrantes: Una Celebración de las Artes regresa al Centro de Artes Teatrales Shea en Turners Falls el domingo 4 de mayo a las 7 de la tarde. El evento destaca por la diversidad de tradiciones artísticas que representan a los inmigrantes en el oeste de Massachusetts.

Las presentaciones de este año incluyen danzas de la República Democrática del Congo, Afganistán, y Venezuela, canciones de Haití y El Salvador, así como poesía. El Centro para Nuevos Estadounidenses se complace enormemente en dar la bienvenida de nuevo al Grupo Tradiciones Folkorico, el talentoso grupo de baile compuesto por profesionales de las escuelas públicas regionales de Amherst, que apoya a los hijos de sus estudiantes.

El ensayo técnico de marzo fue una gran revelación, ya que los estudiantes que se han presentado, a menudo con cierta timidez, suben al escenario y comparten su talento. La organización agradece la bienvenida y el apoyo que recibe del personal del Teatro Shea, incluyendo a Connor Roberge, el increíble técnico que ha apoyado este espectáculo durante muchos años.

Monte (Christopher) Belmonte, presidente del Centro de Artes Teatrales Shea, concibe el Shea como un espacio de representación comunitaria. El Centro para Nuevos Estadounidenses ha contribuido a cumplir esta misión cada año durante los últimos nueve años, llenando el teatro con una amplia representación de miembros de la comunidad que aprecian la música y la danza de todo el mundo.

Las entradas tienen un precio de \$10 y se pueden comprar por adelantado a través del sitio web del Centro para Nuevos Estadounidenses, www.cnam.org. Las donaciones adicionales permiten obtener entradas para estudiantes, artistas y sus familias.

Aranceles 101...

Por VICTORIA MAILLO DE AGUILERA

GREENFIELD – El 2 de abril de 2025, en el día llamado por la administración como “Día de la liberación,” Trump impuso unos aranceles de un mínimo del 10% a todas las importaciones a los Estados Unidos. Esta decisión se hizo efectiva el 5 de abril y provocó un caos enorme en las bolsas internacionales que aún sigue coleando.

La institución de estas tarifas no debería haber sorprendido a nadie porque durante su campaña electoral ya había prometido que usaría estos aranceles, según sus palabras, para conseguir ciertos objetivos como mejores condiciones comerciales para los Estados Unidos, prevenir la tercera Guerra Mundial, mejorar la situación en las fronteras y a conseguir ayuda monetaria para el cuidado infantil.

En su primer mandato en 2018 ya impuso tarifas a las importaciones de aluminio y acero que repercutieron en los bolsillos de los consumidores. En aquella ocasión, la Organización Mundial del Comercio se pronunció sobre estas medidas y dijo que violaban las leyes del comercio internacional por lo que tanto Trump como Biden tuvieron que dar marcha atrás parcialmente a los aranceles, y estos términos se mantuvieron hasta la llegada del actual presidente.

Ya en Mayo de 2019, Trump usó los aranceles para presionar a México y conseguir que tropas mexicanas patrullasen las fronteras entre México y Estados Unidos. Y también durante su mandato y en plena pandemia los aranceles contra China aumentaron de un 1,7% en 2017 a un 13,8% en 2020.

¿Y cómo funcionan los aranceles? Como he dicho antes la historia de los aranceles no es nueva, muchos políticos los han utilizado como moneda de cambio con otros países o para atraer votantes durante sus campañas electorales con proclamas nacionalistas. La idea es poder proteger el mercado interno de productos que son más baratos en el exterior y garantizar así la demanda de producción del propio país lo que conllevaría un aumento de los puestos de trabajo.

Dicho así parece sencillo y razonable. El problema viene cuando los otros países ven esto como una guerra comercial y deciden subir también de forma recíproca sus aranceles y el resultado es un precio final, mucho más caro, que es el que paga el consumidor de a pie.

Los economistas creen que estas medidas económicas drásticas traen consigo un riesgo grande de la subida de la inflación.

Pongamos un ejemplo: Supongamos que Estados Unidos produce cajas de cartón, pero hay otro país que las fabrica mucho más baratas. Estados Unidos decide poner unos aranceles a cada caja de cartón que llega de ese otro país por lo que las empresas que usan esas cajas de cartón deben pagarlas más caras si quieren comprarlas esas en lugar de las que se producen en los Estados Unidos.

Entonces, empiezan a comprar solamente las que se producen en los Estados Unidos.

Pero aquí es cuando y debido a la ley de la oferta y la demanda, las cajas de cartón son un objeto de deseo y los precios han subido porque escasean. Y la cosa no acaba aquí: los usuarios de las cajas de cartón vuelven a buscar las del otro país, pero resulta que este a su vez ha decidido poner aranceles como reciprocidad a los de Estados Unidos y las cajas han subido de precio. Al final las cajas de cartón se han convertido en objetos de lujo para los ciudadanos.



El ejemplo anterior sería el de una política arancelaria llevada al extremo. Los economistas creen que los aranceles pueden ser una buena medida si se llevan a cabo con cautela y de forma moderada. Siempre han existido y forman parte de la economía global. Biden gravó los coches eléctricos provenientes de Europa para conseguir que las inversiones estatales en investigación de nuevas energías tuvieran resultados favorables.

Los expertos en economía opinan que los aranceles pueden dañar la economía global al afectar la balanza de pagos entre Estados Unidos y los países que tienen deudas contraídas con el anterior ya que estos países lo tendrán mucho más complicado para pagar sus deudas.

El problema se agrava ya que en estos momentos la guerra de los aranceles se está fraguando entre países tradicionalmente aliados como Canadá.

En el llamado Día de la Liberación, la cuenta oficial de Instagram de la Casa Blanca mostró al Presidente Trump con un cartel donde estaban escritos los nombres de los países y las tasas arancelarias con las que iban a gravar las importaciones de dichos países. A Europa le asignaba un 20%, a China un 34%, al Reino Unido un 10%, a India un 32% y así en una lista de unos 200 países. En el discurso que acompañaba el anuncio, Trump alegó que estas medidas se imponían porque nuestro país había sido expoliado y robado anteriormente por estos países.

Añadió que los otros países nos habían engañado durante más de 50 años y la nueva industria estadounidense iba a renacer. En sus discurso, se mostró especialmente duro con la

Unión Europea, hasta el momento un potente aliado comercial de los Estados Unidos, a la que calificó de estafadora.

Por su parte, Ursula von der Leyen, presidenta actual de la Unión Europea, se mostró muy contrariada ante las medidas impuestas por Trump y aunque abierta a negociaciones dijo que prepararían represalias. Macrón, presidente de la República de Francia, propuso a las empresas europeas dejar de invertir en los Estados Unidos como medida de presión.

Respecto a los países de Latinoamérica, la mayoría de ellos se salvaron de unos aranceles drásticos, excepto Nicaragua, y Venezuela. Estados Unidos exporta más que importa de los países de América Latina por lo que estos mantendrán un arancel del 10%.

Hay un dato importante y es que muchos de los países con los que Estados Unidos tiene un Tratado de Libre Comercio se encuentran en América y aún así han sido gravados con un arancel del 10%, aunque siguen teniendo que cumplir las condiciones del TLC como leyes de propiedad intelectual, laborales y de medio ambiente por lo que tener un tratado con los Estados Unidos no significa ninguna ventaja.

Sin lugar a dudas el impacto más grande de los aranceles de Trump está en Asia. China, India e Indonesia han sufrido los aranceles más altos, en torno a un 26%.

En cuanto a nuestros dos países vecinos, México y Canadá, sus importaciones fueron gravadas con un arancel del 25% si estos países no tomaban medidas contra el narcotráfico y la inmigración ilegal. En principio, tanto Sheinbaum como Trudeau se mostraron flexibles ante las negociaciones, pero Trump dijo que los aranceles entrarían en vigor el 4 de febrero, eso sí, con una reducción en los productos energéticos a los que solamente se les aplicó una tasa del 10%.


El 3 de febrero los presidentes de los tres países se reunieron y negociaron un retraso de un mes en la aplicación de los aranceles. Dentro de este acuerdo México se comprometía a desplegar 10.000 soldados en su frontera con Estados Unidos, mientras que Canadá se comprometió a nombrar un comisario delegado para el fentanilo y a continuar con su plan de reforzar la seguridad en la frontera.

Pese a ello, el 27 de febrero el Presidente Trump cambió de opinión y decidió implementar los aranceles el 4 de marzo. Ante ello, Canadá decidió tomar represalias y poner unos aranceles del 25% en productos estadounidenses.

Por su parte, México decidió llevar a cabo alianzas comerciales con países de la zona como Brasil y combatir de esta forma los aranceles de Estados Unidos.

Es importante señalar que Rusia escapó a toda esta guerra de aranceles sin recibir ningún porcentaje adicional al que ya existía anteriormente derivado de la guerra contra Ucrania.

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EVENTS

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THURSDAY, APRIL 24

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *Jazz Jam*, with featured performers *Two For Jazz*. 6 p.m. Free.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Play reading, *The Scariest Thing to See in the Woods*, presented by Silverthorne Theater Company. Reservations at www.tinyurl.com/theaterthursdays. 7 p.m. By donation.

Pink Edwards, Greenfield: *Adeline Hotel*, Will Stratton, Wallace Field, Chris Goudreau. 7 p.m. \$.

Tree House Brewing, Deerfield: *Jeffrey Foucault, Wild Horses*. 7 p.m. \$\$.

Workshop13, Ware: *MER, Footings, All Feels*. 7 p.m. \$.

Bowker Auditorium, UMass Amherst: *Meshell Ndegeocello*, performing *No More Water: The Gospel of James Baldwin*. 8 p.m. \$.

The Drake, Amherst: *Dinosaur Jr, Rhubarb Duo*. 8 p.m. \$.

Firehouse, Worcester: *Monolithic Dome, Space Camp, Doom Beach*. 8 p.m. \$.

Last Ditch, Greenfield: *Wicked: An Abridged Drag Musical*. 9 p.m. \$.

FRIDAY, APRIL 25

Fairway Avenue Cemetery, Montague City: *Arbor Day tree planting*. 9 a.m. Free.

Highland Cemetery, Millers Falls: *Arbor Day tree planting*. 10 a.m. Free.

Eleventh Street, Turners Falls: *Arbor Day tree planting*. 11 a.m. Free.

Fifth and L streets, Turners

Falls: *Arbor Day tree planting*, in memory of Gabe Rice. 3 p.m. Free.

Greenfield Garden Cinemas, Greenfield: Film, *Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith* (2005), with trivia, coloring, and cosplay contests. 3 and 6:30 p.m. \$.

Franklin Patterson Hall, Hampshire College: Public lecture, *Noura Erakat, "The Boomerang Comes Back: How the US-backed war on Palestine is expanding authoritarianism at home."* 4 p.m. Free.

Madhouse Multi-Arts, Greenfield: *Open studios*. 5 to 8 p.m. Free.

Artspace, Greenfield: Closing reception for *New England Dreamscapes*. 5 to 8 p.m. Free.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Loudon Wainwright III, Olivia Nied*. 7 p.m. \$.

Institute for Musical Arts, Goshen: *Deidre McCalla, Joe Jencks*. 7 p.m. \$.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Torie Jock & Damage Control*. 8 p.m. No cover.

Hampshire College, Amherst: *Landowner, New Orthodox, Neets*. 8 p.m. \$.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Two-Step Night*, with *Les Taiauts, The Honky-Tonk Angels*. 8 p.m. \$.

MASS MoCA, North Adams: *Ani DiFranco, Wryn*. 8 p.m. \$.

Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center, Great Barrington: *Old Crow Medicine Show*. 8 p.m. \$.

Space Ballroom, Hamden, CT: *Swervedriver*. 8 p.m. \$.

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

SATURDAY, APRIL 26

Leverett: *Earth Day Community-Wide Cleanup*. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Montague Center Common, Montague: *Arbor Day tree planting*. 10 a.m. Free.

Seeds of Solidarity, Orange: Workshop, *Grow Great Gardens*. Presentation and discussion, followed by self-guided tour of no-till, climate-resilient gardens, fields, greenhouses, and energy efficient buildings. 10:30 a.m. Free.

Franklin County YMCA, Greenfield: *Healthy Kids Day*. Family activities, performances, resources, games. Register for a kid's bike giveaway at tinyurl.com/YMCAGiveaway. 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *Polish Mini-Festival*. "Celebrate Polish culture and heritage with music, folk dance, traditional crafts and displays." 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free.

Federal Street Books, Greenfield: *Indie Bookstore Day*, with prizes, children's used book sale, and more. 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Cowell Gym, Shelburne Falls: *Hilltown Draw-Around*, with a "giant community sketchbook" for drawing on the gym's floor and walls, as well as workshops, games, and live music. Fundraiser for the Art Garden. See tinyurl.com/drawaround. 12 p.m. until midnight. By donation.

Millers Falls Rod and Gun Club, Montague: *7th Annual Sticky Pig Roast*, with live music. 2 p.m. \$.

Deidre McCalla, a renowned singer-songwriter and partisan of the women's movement, plays this Friday night with Joe Jencks at the Institute for Musical Arts in Goshen.

Roundabout Books, Greenfield: *Indie Bookstore Day* event with author *Astrid Scheckels*. 2 p.m. Free.

New Salem Public Library, New Salem: *Superfoods 101*. Educational workshop with Kim Larkin celebrating nutrition powerhouses such as cacao, açai, and goji berries. Register at the library or (978) 544-6334. 2 p.m. Free.

Juicebox Winebar, Shelburne Falls: *Keat Sweat, Applzöe, Malik Abdul-Rahman*. Dance party and cookout, fundraiser for Palestinian Food Sovereignty. 4 p.m. No cover.

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

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *The ZeppTunes, Led Zeppelin* tribute. 7 p.m. No cover.

Wendell Meetinghouse, Wendell: *Songs and Stories of Appalachia*, with *Carrie and Michael Kline*. 7 p.m. By donation.

Marigold, Brattleboro: *Nat Baldwin, Wishbone Zoe, Matt Fero, Taggie & Friends*. 7 p.m. Free.

EXHIBITS

Waterway Arts, Turners Falls:

Art=Work, group show, May 1 through June 6; opening reception Friday, May 2 from 5 to 8 p.m.

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.

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

Sawmill River Arts, Montague Center: Vanessa Kerby, guest artist showing ceramics through May.

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

Leverett Crafts & Arts, Leverett: *Playmakers: Making Sense of the World Through Art*, work by Whitney Robbins, Bobby Brown, and Joan Green, through April 27.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *New England*

Dreamscapes, paintings on slate by Sarah Adams, through April; *New Roots in Riverbanks*, exhibit about Eastern European immigrants to the valley, through May. Opening receptions Friday, May 2 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. for *Portraits in RED: Missing and Murdered Indigenous People*, paintings by Nayanna LaFond, and Saturday, May 3 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. for paintings by Steve Howe.

Artspace Gallery, Greenfield: *Teen Art Show*, work by youngsters across Franklin County, through this Friday, April 25, with a closing reception from 5 to 8 p.m. Beginning May 9: *Lydia M. Kinney*, solo exhibition; *The Overlap*, GCC student group exhibition.

TEOLOS Gallery, Greenfield: *Peter Ruhf: Magical Surrealism*, sixty years of paintings, drawings, and prints, through this Saturday, April 26.

Fiddleheads Gallery, Northfield: *STEAM Art and Science*, group show of art that incorporates elements of science, through May 18.

Gallery A3, Amherst: *Closed and Wide Open Spaces*, paintings by

Nancy Meagher, through this Saturday, April 26. Opening reception Thursday, May 1 at 5 p.m. for *Confluence*, paintings by Paula Hite.

Science & 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. Both through May 30.

Shelburne Arts Coop, Shelburne Falls: *Hurry Up Spring*, member show heralding the season, through this Monday, April 28.

Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne: *Student Art Exhibit*, work by fifth- and sixth-graders at the Mohawk school district, through this Sunday, April 27. On view in May and June, *Dreams From My World*, oil paintings by Trina Sears Sternstein, with an opening reception Saturday, May 10 from 2 to 4 p.m.

Forbes Library, Northampton: *Zine Libraries of Western Mass and Beyond*, collection of zines from regional libraries, through April.

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CALENDAR

Parlor Room, Northampton: *David Wilcox*. 7 p.m. \$.

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

The Drake, Amherst: *Moon Hooch, Future Joy*. 8 p.m. \$.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Nefesh Mountain*, Ali McGuirk. 8 p.m. \$.

Dream Away Lodge, Becket: *Dan Blakeslee*, *Footings*. 8 p.m. No cover.

Last Ditch, Greenfield: *The Last Drag Show on Earth*. 10 p.m. \$.

SUNDAY, APRIL 27

Montague Elks Lodge, Turners Falls: *Pancake Breakfast*, to benefit the Friends of the Franklin County Regional Dog Shelter. 8 to 11 a.m. \$

The Hill, Turners Falls: *Newt Guilbault Community Baseball Opening Day*. Parade, activities, youth league games. 11 a.m.

Seeds of Solidarity, Orange: *Workshop, No-Till Gardens and Farms*. Sliding scale; scholarships available. 1 p.m. \$.

Bombyx Center, Florence: Author talk, *Jennifer Rycenga*, on her book *Schooling the Nation: The Success of the Canterbury Academy for Black Women*. 2 p.m. Free.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Concert and Writers' Showcase*, with featured performer *Erica Wheeler* and participants from the NEA Big Read workshop series. 3 p.m. Free.

Leverett Elementary School, Leverett: *Community Potluck*. Short presentations by Leverett organizations and discussion on building community. "Bring finger foods and snacks to share if you can." 4 p.m. Free.

Quarters, Hadley: *Western Mass Electronics*, with featured artist *Belltonesuicide*. Bring your own synth, drum machine, sampler, etc. 7 p.m. No cover.

The Tank, Agawam: *Mibble, Grazer, 40 Lashes, Virgo's Moon*. 7 p.m. \$.

MONDAY, APRIL 28

Bishop's Lounge, Northampton: *The Cradle*, *Miriam Elhajli*, *Blind Spot*, *Two Wrong Turns*. 9 p.m. \$.

TUESDAY, APRIL 29

Dickinson Library, Northfield: *Mara Silver* of the Northfield Bird Club presents *Swallows*. 5:30 p.m. Free.

Greenfield Public Library, Greenfield: *Poet's Seat Poetry Contest*. Readings by winners and finalists. 6 p.m. Free.

Nova Arts, Keene: *Takaat*, *Rick Maguire*. 7 p.m. \$.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30

Greenfield Community College, Greenfield: *Health Occupations Job Fair*. 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Free.

Hadley Public Library, Hadley: *Integrating AI Tools into Science*, presentation about integrating AI tools in science, research, and the classroom. Pizza and drinks provided. Zoom available; register at tinyurl.com/aisciencecafe. 6 p.m. Free.

JERI MORAN PHOTO

Do you need to pass through a tunnel of garland hoops after the season we've had? This year's May Day celebration at Montague Center takes place Sunday, May 4. Bring a picnic. (Pictured above: A scene from the 2022 Montague May Day.)

THURSDAY, MAY 1

Peskeompskut Park, Turners Falls: *Rallying Joyful Ruckus*, march to Discovery Center, speakers. 5 p.m. Free.

FRIDAY, MAY 2

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

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Bird Migration Madness*. Presentation about migration, nesting, habitat, and bird song, with crafts and a matching game. For all ages. Materials provided. 4 p.m. Free.

Waterway Arts, Turners Falls: Opening reception for *Art=Work*, May group show. 5 p.m. Free.

Easthampton Film Fest, Easthampton: Film screening, *Tallywhacker*. 5 p.m. \$.

YMCA, Greenfield: *Movement-Based Empowerment Workshop*, with Estelle from Box Your Way Fit! Register at tinyurl.com/boxingtofit. 6 p.m. Free.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: Opening reception for *Portraits in RED: Missing and Murdered Indigenous People*, by Nayana LaFond, on display through July. 6 p.m. Free.

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

Element Brewing Company, Millers Falls: *David Brule & His Irish Band*. 6:30 p.m. No cover.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *New England Repertory Orchestra*. 7 p.m. \$.

Hutghi's, Westfield: *GDI, Gagu, Hedge, Scorpion Porch*. 7 p.m. \$.

Nova Arts, Keene: *Dead Gowns, Rick Rude, Footings*. 7 p.m. \$.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Myrtle Street Klezmer*. 8 p.m. No cover.

Rat Trap, Holyoke: *Phrøeggs, NRG, Creative Writing, Mental Irrigation*. 8 p.m. \$.

Wild Asparagus, beginners' workshop, *George Marshall* calling. 7:30 p.m. \$.

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

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Dr. J*. 9:30 p.m. No cover.

SUNDAY, MAY 4

Yankee Candle Headquarters, South Deerfield: *20th Annual Antique Truck Show*. Vendors, food, raffle. Rain or shine, all welcome. 8 a.m. Free.

Montague Center Common, Montague: *May Day Celebration*. Begins with procession from post office, followed by carol singing, maypole dancing, and Morris dancing. Participants encouraged to bring picnics. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Free.

Stationery Factory, Dalton: *Central Berkshire Record Show*. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. \$.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Indigo Dyeing and Shibori*. Hands-on workshop with Gail Callahan. For adults, and children ages 6 and up accompanied by an adult. 1 p.m. Free.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *First Sunday Word*, open mic and featured readers. 1 p.m. By donation.

Polish American Club, South Deerfield: *Pioneer Valley Balfolk Dance*, a French-Breton music and dance party celebrating La Fête des Muguets, or Lily of the Valley Day. No partner necessary. Instruction and *hors d'oeuvres* provided. Potluck and jam session, 2:45 p.m.; dance, 4 p.m. \$

Greenfield High School, Greenfield: *Franklin County Community Chorus Spring Concert*. 3 p.m. \$.

Brewery at Four Star Farms, Northfield: *Rosie Porter*. 3 p.m. No cover.

Palladium, Worcester: *Dying Fetus, Cradle of Filth, Fleshgod Apocalypse, Ne Obliviscalis, Undeath, Vomit Forth, Corpse Pile*. 4 p.m. \$.

Progression Brewing, Northampton: Reading, *Richard III*, presented by Valley Players. 6 p.m. By donation.

The Tank, Agawam: *Geronimostilton, Silent Spring, Letters of Marque, Feeble Hands, KG and the Heartbreakers*. 6 p.m. \$.

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

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *AJJ, Jake McKelvie*. 7 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Emily Margaret Band*. 8 p.m. No cover.

FRIDAY, MAY 9

Holyoke Media, Holyoke: *Perennial, Miracle Blood, Videodrome, Velveteen*. 7 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, MAY 10

Unity Park, Turners Falls: *Música Franklin's 7th Annual Fun Fest*, with musical performers, interactive drum circle with Abdou Sarr, dance party, arts and crafts, and vendors. For all ages. 12:30 p.m. Free.

Great Falls Harvest, Turners Falls: *Peter Stampfel, Wednesday Knudsen, Cosmic Ray, J. Burkett, Junk Orbit*. 7 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, MAY 17

Wendell Town Common, Wendell: *Plant Swap and Community Tag Sale*, with food vendors. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

SATURDAY, MAY 31

Dream Away Lodge, Becket: *Purple Dawn, Liz Durette*. 8 p.m. No cover.

SATURDAY, JUNE 7

1794 Meetinghouse, New Salem: *Christine Ohlman, Rebel Montez*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, JUNE 14

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

SATURDAY, JUNE 28

Tourists, North Adams: *Little Mazarn*. 7 p.m. \$.

TUESDAY, JULY 1

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Ocean Vuong*. 7 p.m. \$.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Fievel Is Glaque, Flanafi*. 8 p.m. \$.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 16

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

SATURDAY, JULY 19

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Ladysmith Black Mambazo*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

MONDAY, AUGUST 4

Tree House Brewing, Deerfield: *Dark Star Orchestra*. 6 p.m. \$.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 5

Tree House Brewing, Deerfield: *Dark Star Orchestra*. 6 p.m. \$.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 8

MASS MoCA, North Adams: *Julio Torres*. 8 p.m. \$.

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CHIEF from page B1

I asked about the “dumbass” things people have done that had to be responded to, but he didn’t take the bait, beyond mentioning folks who “put wood ashes out in the garden when the ashes are still hot and active.”

He explained that 57% to 62% of the calls are medical issues. “There are fewer fires now, but more tough medical calls, cardiac issues and drug overdoses,” he told me. These days, he said, the responders to difficult events “are taking better care of ourselves, not doing the ‘We’re tough firefighters’ thing.”

“The best thing is the camaraderie,” Dave said. “It’s a family, a group of us who have been together for 35-plus years in a small town.” And he feels the most rewarding part of the work is “having to learn, going to classes, learning the whole system and the teaching. You learn as you teach.”

Common Sense

As Dave spoke about his experiences, it was clear that training is a big part of what the MCFD does. Every Thursday is training night, and there is lots of training in all aspects of their duties.

Dave talked about training newbies to stay calm when they get to a fire, and not rush into the situation. “Take your air bottles,” he said, “and at each turn of the cap, say ‘calm down, calm down.’” It sounds like there is a fair amount of cooperative training with other towns, sharing training equipment – including a “maze” truck that helps train firefighters how to find their way round in an active building fire. Dave mentioned that the Ware deputy fire chief does training “all over.”

There is a lot of mutual aid between towns: just this week, I read on the department’s Facebook page that MCFD went to Leverett to help with a brush fire. And when a department is busy with an event, other towns will cover for them at the station if there is need.

I asked Dave if he had any advice for residents, and the tips he gave seemed like common sense, for the most part: have properly installed smoke and carbon monoxide detectors; replace their batteries at the Daylight Savings time changes; if you have a wood stove, have it installed and inspected by an expert; have an exit plan, and a meetup plan, with your family or roommates in case of an alarm or fire; and get a permit for any outdoor burning.

I can say definitively that the carbon monoxide (CO) detector in my house has saved the day twice! Once due to a faulty heating system, and the other to an inexpert woodstove pipe installer (me).

We also discussed brush fires, especially relevant at times like last fall’s drought. They can be difficult to fight. Montague has some experienced folks, including Rick Solon,



In a training exercise, department members practice setting up a water supply for a fire.

the head fire warden with the state Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), who serves as Montague’s town forest warden and the inspector at MCFD.

Brush fires are often caused by people, but can also be caused by other things, including sparks from train wheels. Dave told me a story of one train passing through Athol, Orange, and then Erving, starting nine fires along the way.

The department has also cooperated with the state Division of Fisheries and Wildlife on controlled burns on the Montague Plains, and just recently helped Our Family Legacy Farm on Turners Falls Road conduct a controlled burn on their asparagus farm.

Moving Forward

Dave’s last day as chief will be Monday, June 30. On July 1, Luke Hartnett will take over. Luke is a captain in the Turners Falls fire department as well as a member of the MCFD.

I asked Dave about the challenges the new chief and the department will face. He told me he hopes the MCFD “keeps up the momentum going forward,” and continues to attract young talent. “There is a bunch of great young people, and the department is in a pretty good place,” he said, and another vital thing is “having a good training officer.”

He told me he hopes the MCFD “keeps up the momentum going forward,” and continues to attract young talent.

He seems to have faith in the team going into the future.

The new fire station is “the biggest change – a better space.” The old station was a carriage house, not ideal for a fire station in any way.

“We’re a small fire district, with a flat budget,” he said. “We have good equipment, and we need cre-

ative ideas about how to acquire a new truck.” With the increasing numbers of medical calls, he added, certain levels of training and equipment will be needed.

We talked about the possibility of working with Franklin County Technical School to get students involved and interested in the field. I read recently about the “Student Force” at UMass Amherst, a student wing of the Amherst Fire Department that students can join; some decide to become firefighters after graduation. Dave said he thinks it is a great program.

I know that some small local volunteer/call departments are struggling to get new members, so programs recruiting interested young people seem vital.

I wondered how community members might help or get involved with the work of the MCFD. Dave explained that the Thursday training nights are open to the public – you can go to the department’s Facebook page to check them out – and added that there are some small non-firefighting jobs that need doing that would be helpful to the team. (I’ve brought baked goods a couple of times!)

As Dave’s term as chief winds down, he is making plans for his own future. I first met Dave through his wife Diane, who was an EMT and sat on the Prudential Committee governing the fire district for over 15 years. Sadly, Diane passed away a few years ago.

Dave is close with his daughter out west and his two stepsons and keeps active, skiing, biking, and hiking. He plans to move to Scituate, south of Boston, happily to be with someone he met and connected with. He plans on continuing his activities, learning, and volunteering wherever he is.

A retirement party will be held for Dave on Saturday, June 7 from noon to 5 p.m. at the Schuetzen Verein, 55 Barton Cove in Gill. If you would like to attend, RSVP by May 17 to ssawing41@gmail.com or jkclaus62@yahoo.com, or call the station at (413) 367-2757.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Erratic Skunk; Dead Bird, Raccoon; Grass Fire; Preacher at the Pump

Saturday, 3/1

12:09 p.m. Unwanted person, West Gill Road.

Monday, 3/3

8:15 a.m. Fire alarm, Boyle Road. Officer on scene for drop-off reports alarm sounding for unknown reason. Required toning FD. 12:27 p.m. Abandoned 911 call, Walnut Street. Confirmed info on callback; no emergency. 1:39 p.m. Sun Run will be soliciting town-wide until 4 p.m.

3:21 p.m. Call requesting status of plates. 3:24 p.m. Report of dog running in the middle of Boyle Road.

Tuesday, 3/4

8:20 a.m. Car vs. deer accident, French King Highway. Deer is injured on the roadway. 10:48 a.m. Assisted probation officer with visit, Main Road.

Friday, 3/7

1:42 p.m. River Road caller reports a large tree in road. No wires down, and the road is passable. Highway department advised. 3:10 p.m. Tree over the lines, Gill Road. No arcing or sparking.

Saturday, 3/8

8:04 a.m. Mini-Golden-Retriever-type dog missing, Center Road. Homeowner reported the dog returned.

3:42 p.m. Caller advises a white Lexus SUV with an unknown plate is being followed by a white Subaru with no plate. Passed him in the breakdown lane. 5:27 p.m. License plate stolen, Main Road.

Monday, 3/10

8:45 a.m. Kept peace, Lamplighter Way. 5:28 p.m. Paperwork service, Main Road.

Tuesday, 3/11

6:10 a.m. Lamplighter Way caller advises he struck a raccoon with damage to his Chevy Malibu. He is looking to fill out a report.

3:33 p.m. Assisted Bernardston PD with motor accident, Route 10 and Bald Mountain Road. No injuries.

3:38 p.m. Assisted Northfield PD with vehicle fire, Route 10.

Wednesday, 3/12

10:14 a.m. Fire alarm, Dickerson Road.

Thursday, 3/13

9:28 a.m. Main Road caller reports a dead bird of unknown species has been in his backyard for two days. Is concerned it may have bird flu, as no predators have eaten it. 9:49 a.m. Wildlife photographer at Barton Cove found what appear to be two needles. 11:10 a.m. French King Bridge, welfare check. 3:13 p.m. French King Highway caller reporting a red Tacoma driving erratically; almost struck a telephone pole. 3:44 p.m. Checked on disabled vehicle, French King Highway.

Friday, 3/14

9:03 a.m. Disabled vehicle with transmission issues, French King Highway and Barton Cove Road. Moved to a safe location. 10:33 a.m. Animal complaint, River Road.

Sunday, 3/16

9:37 a.m. French King Highway caller reports fire in the woods, gray smoke in the distance. 4 p.m. Anonymous call to the station reporting male subject preaching the word of the Lord at Gill Mill, pump 2.

Monday, 3/17

2:10 a.m. Abandoned 911 call, Mount Hermon Road. No answer on callback. NMH security called, advised likely due to weather.

Tuesday, 3/18

5:15 p.m. Burglar alarm, West Gill Road.

Wednesday, 3/19

7:37 a.m. Disturbance, French King Highway. 8:45 a.m. Disabled vehicle, Main Road. Front driver’s side tire came off while traveling straight. 2:11 p.m. Tree down on primary wire, River and Lyons Hill roads.

Thursday, 3/20

12:57 p.m. Assisted Northfield PD with welfare check. 1:48 p.m. Escort/transport, French King Highway.

2:44 p.m. French King Highway caller reporting vehicle driving in the middle of the road. 6:39 p.m. Main Road caller advises a skinny tan dog is running around the area.

8:38 p.m. Cash envelope found in the PD parking lot.

lope found in the PD parking lot.

Friday, 3/21

9:48 a.m. Served warrant, Setback Lane. 10:30 a.m. Lockout, Main Road.

Saturday, 3/22

2:01 p.m. Grass fire, Munn’s Ferry Road. One quarter acre, stretching to the river. 4:05 p.m. Gas leak on Oak Street.

Sunday, 3/23

9:04 a.m. Two-car accident, French King Highway and River-view Drive. No injury. 1:01 p.m. South Cross Road caller states she found a malnourished cat and needs guidance. 4:32 p.m. Main Road caller requires an officer as his mailbox was vandalized. 4:49 p.m. Illegal burn, Main Road. Emailed. 6:52 p.m. Assisted Erving PD with accident, State Road. Rollover with no injuries. Subject out of the vehicle.

Monday, 3/24

7:38 a.m. French King Highway caller advises she was rear-ended. She is in the travel lane and unable to pull over. No personal injuries or leaking fluids. 12:11 p.m. Main Road fire alarm.

2:03 p.m. Assisted a citizen, Main Road.

Tuesday, 3/25

3:40 p.m. Two-car accident, French King Highway at Riverview Drive. No injuries. 6:17 p.m. Center Road resident reporting a skunk acting erratically in backyard.

Thursday, 3/27

9:57 a.m. Disabled vehicle, Main and Mountain roads. Parked unattended with cone. 3:05 p.m. Two-car accident, Main Road. No injuries, smoke, or fluids leaking.

Friday, 3/28

5:31 p.m. Caller advises protesters are blocking his view while he turns onto the Bridge.

Saturday, 3/29

4:55 p.m. Mountain Road caller requests an officer for a subject looking into windows.

Monday, 3/31

4 p.m. Mount Hermon Road 911 call. Declined need for response. Call due to weather.

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Amanda Gorman, *The Hill We Climb*

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