

The Montague Reporter

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editor@montaguereporter.org

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

montaguereporter.org

THEATER

Homegrown Shakespearians Strut, Fret Upon Shea Stage



JULIA HANDSCHUH PHOTO

Lady Macbeth and Macbeth, above, plot as gentler nobles rave below.

By MAISIE SIBBISON-ALVES

TURNERS FALLS – Hear ye, theatergoers: the Montague Shakespeare Festival is serving up *Macbeth*, for its second and final weekend, this Friday through Sunday. Anyone going to Turners Falls last weekend may have experienced difficulty parking downtown during show times, as the Shea Theater’s house was packed all weekend long. A few traditional enthusiasts in the audience were seen gussied up in medieval garb, though on stage not a woolly frock was in sight; the play was stylized in the contemporary era.

At only 90 minutes in run time, *Macbeth* was slightly cut down from the full length of what is considered to be William Shakespeare’s shortest play. The cast of 30 included theater director Linda Tardif as Lady Macbeth, Parker Cross, who traveled from upstate New York, as Macbeth, Kory Turner as Banquo, E.W. Sheets as King Duncan, and Sam Perry as Macduff.

The cast spent only 13 days in rehearsal time, and gave an energetic and dedicated performance. Their multigenerational collaboration filled the Shea’s whole stage, which included a “thrust” see **STAGE** page A4

ERVING SELECTBOARD FY’26 Budget Balanced, Amid Grumbling at Departments

By KATIE NOLAN

Monday night’s joint Erving selectboard and finance committee meeting started by considering an apparent deficit of \$106,343 in the draft \$15 million FY’26 budget. After several hours of discussion and number-crunching, the board and fin com ended the joint meeting with a balanced budget.

“Last time we had a deficit,” selectboard chair Jacob Smith said as he began the discussion. “Regardless of whether we do today or not, we asked everyone to come back with areas and adjustments to get us into balance.”

Selectboard member Scott Bastarache said he felt the deficit could be partially addressed by setting the secondary education budget at last year’s actual costs, rather than the estimated future number of Erving students attending Turners Falls High School (TFHS). He pointed out that the number of graduating sixth-graders at Erving Elementary was not increasing, and that some do not end up attending TFHS.

see **ERVING** page A4

Town Officials Voice Cautious Skepticism of Service Dog

By JEFF SINGLETON

TURNERS FALLS – The one agenda item that predictably generated negative vibes at Monday’s meeting of the Montague selectboard (see article, Page A1) involved an elderly resident, barred under state law in 2023 from owning a dog, who had reportedly been spotted walking a dog by neighbors.

Town administrator Walter Ramsey recapped for the board the history of the woman’s dog violations, which had included allowing her unregistered pets to breed large numbers of puppies and to threaten pedestrians after escaping through inadequate fencing.

The board, after holding a required hearing, had issued an order in October 2023 requiring the woman to secure the property. They issued a second order that November after determining their first had been violated, which under state law automatically prohibited the resident from dog ownership for five years.

This resident, Ramsey said, was recently photographed by neighbors walking a “puppy German shepherd.”

However, he told the board, she had also “produced a note” signed see **DOG** page A8

Federal Fund Freezes Leave Local Farmers in Limbo

By BEN GAGNON

FRANKLIN COUNTY – While local farmers look to the sky and hope for enough rain to support healthy crops, they’re also looking to Washington, DC and wondering if the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) will freeze or unfreeze funding for a wide variety of programs.

Last month, Diemand Farm in Wendell discovered that a \$139,000 grant awarded under the Biden administration last year to pay for a solar array through the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) was

frozen by the Trump administration.

Last week they learned that these funds may be unfrozen – but only if their project aligns with Trump’s executive orders, one of which makes coal, gas, and oil priorities for energy development.

On March 25, the USDA announced that farms will have 30 days to edit their projects to “remove... far-left climate features.”

“The news out of Washington is changing quickly, and it’s not super clear what’s going to happen,” said Claire Morenon, communications see **FARMERS** page A5



NINA ROSSI PHOTO

Upinngil Farm co-owner Sorrel Hatch (left) and her sons Everett and Wilder cultivate compost in a heap behind a barn at the Gill farm. Upinngil recently received a state Department of Agricultural Resources grant to improve its composting facilities, but opted not to pursue federal aid amid widespread funding freezes and cancellations.

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Climate-Readiness, Housing Projects Extended Into 2026

By JEFF SINGLETON

At the Montague selectboard’s Monday night meeting, the board discussed the idea of rezoning the former Farren Hospital property in Montague City, approved a range of local cultural events, and put the finishing touches on the warrant for an experimental weeknight-evening annual town meeting.

The only discordant note was a decision to impose potentially difficult demands on an elderly resident who had been barred from owning

a dog due to violations of “nuisance dog” orders, but had recently been seen walking an unregistered canine, which she reported was a “service animal.” (See article, Page A1.)

Various requests for the use of public property over the next six months took up a large portion of the meeting. The board approved proposals by RiverCulture director Suzanne LoManto to hold the traditional May Day event on Montague Center common, which will involve a maypole and Morris dancing, on see **MONTAGUE** page A7

Scraps Diligently Gathered



SADOWAY PHOTO

Big Foot Food Forest co-owner offers free compost hauling for households in Montague.

By MAGGIE SADOWAY

MONTAGUE – Every Monday afternoon, Babette Wils loads her Toyota Matrix with empty five-gallon buckets and sets out on a circuit around downtown Turners, the Patch, and Montague Center. She’s collecting compostable kitchen scraps – wilted lettuce, banana peels, dairy and meat gone bad – left for Big Foot Forest Farm by participants in the farm’s Food Scrap Exchange.

A 35-acre educational permaculture farm at 16 Hatchery Road in Montague Center, her business has signed up some 40 Montague households in the free program, and is looking to enroll another 30. “When we reach that goal,” Wils explained, “we can feed our hens almost 100%

from nutritious table scraps.”

“It’s easy to participate,” she continued. “I start you off with an empty bucket, you drop your waste in, I pick it up the next week and leave you another bucket.”

For \$7 per dozen she will also drop off the beautiful, astonishingly delicious rainbow eggs laid by Big Foot’s 100 hens, who feed happily on such mouthwatering waste, saving it from the landfill where it would otherwise decompose and let off harmful methane gas. (Do those heritage-breed hens know they may have laid the very eggs whose empty shells they are pecking away at?)

For more information or to enroll in the Food Scrap Exchange, call or text (781) 428-1670 or visit bigfootfoodforest.com.



DAVID HOITT PHOTO

Franklin County Tech School pitcher Hannah Gilbert, also a force at the plate, makes solid contact as the Eagles hosted the Narragansett Warriors for a pre-season contest last Friday. For more high school sports coverage, see Page A6.

Sometimes the Best Way Out Is Through

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The Montague Reporter

"The Voice of the Villages"

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August 2002

All Against All

Canadian newsprint is, miraculously, exempt from Trump's new round of tariffs, so his is not a fare-well note. However, we are not confident things will be going well.

"[I]t appears that this new approach to international trade is based on the theory that if I buy something from you, that means you have to buy something of equal value from me or it is not fair," a gaming journalist named Ian Boudreau observed on Bluesky. This seems to be an accurate read of the theory underpinning our new, drastic, global tariffs.

RFK Jr., Secretary of Health and Human Services, explains in his book *The Real Anthony Fauci: Bill Gates, Big Pharma, and the Global War on Democracy and Public Health* that he doesn't think sickness is caused by germs. He believes in *miasmas*, general vapors of badness, and incidentally he believes vaccines are *miasmas*.

Something similar may be going on among the Economic Advisors. "While models of international trade generally assume that trade will balance itself over time, the United States has run persis-

tent current account deficits for five decades, indicating that the core premise of most trade models is incorrect," the US Trade Representative posted Wednesday. "As a result, US consumer demand has been siphoned out of the US economy into the global economy..."

Many of us have never assumed "trade will balance itself," nor that such a "balance" is a wise goal. The planet's 200-odd nations are heterogeneous in every respect including size, resources, productivity, and location; why would it be desirable for every nation to purchase a reciprocally equivalent value of goods from every other nation?

The US buys \$440B of goods from China and sells \$145B of goods to China. Trump's policy is to take the difference (\$295B), divide it by the imports (295/440 = 67%), halve that because he's "lenient" (34%), but then tack on a 10% global baseline (44%). Huh?

This is a very dramatic tax on US consumers in an effort to force a dramatic import reduction. By impoverishing us, it will become easier to eventually rebuild a large manufacturing sector. *Miasma shit.*

People Pushing Back

Pushback may be invisible to the mainstream media, but it is real, here and across the country.

This coming Friday at 4:30 p.m. will mark the ninth Gill-Montague Bridge action on the Route 2 side of the bridge in Gill. This Bridge Action began on Wednesday, February 5, when local residents who could not get to Washington or Boston for the first "50501" protests across the country (50 protests, 50 states, one movement) assembled at the Route 2 end of the bridge to protest Trump's first heinous actions.

Since then, people have continued to assemble there each Friday at 4:30, to exercise our First Amendment right "peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." These grievances have been many, dangerous, and severe since January 20, and require our continued pushback.

This coming Saturday, April 5 at noon, those who again cannot get to a state capitol for the national Hands Off action can assemble at the bridge. It will be the 10th action during Trump's 10 weeks in office.

Each week, more and more people come from towns up and down the valley, as well as down from the hills of both West and East counties.

The response we hear from the dense traffic converging on that spot from four directions has been generally positive. As one first-time participant recently expressed, this action is encouraging and uplifting not only for those assembled, but also for the people who drive by enthusiastically honking support, waving, and giving their thumbs up. It helps people see that the resistance is real, and enduring, and growing.

So, if you can't get to Boston or Washington this Saturday the 5th for the national Hands Off actions, please participate in one of the following local actions:

- 11 a.m. at Memorial Park in Orange. (This is also a regular Saturday action.)

- Noon on the Route 2 side of the Gill-Montague Bridge. (The group will also assemble there this Friday the 4th at 4:30 p.m. for our regular weekly action.)

For other locations near you, visit Northampton Indivisible (www.in-slwm.org), Franklin County Continuing the Political Revolution (www.fccpr.us), or Mobilize (www.mobilize.us).

Edite Cunha
Turners Falls



Hayley Descovich works with Indi Cady and Sophia Moses, students in the Pre-Ballet class at Catherine Grace Studios, located in the former Masonic Lodge in Montague City. The school started up a year ago, and offers a range of classes to accommodate would-be dancers of all ages and skill levels.

Letters to the Editors

Sacking Tax Staff ...

How many of you are able to escape paying income tax? My bet is that there aren't many. Montague and the surrounding towns are largely middle class so for most of us, from the most liberal to the most far-right, our income information is reported to the IRS in great detail. Much of the income we get has taxes already deducted.

I am not fond of the IRS, but I can accept paying taxes based on income. What I cannot accept is very, very wealthy individuals and large corporations who avoid paying or do not pay.

I understand the need for skilled IRS personnel to audit large business and very wealthy individual tax returns. Large businesses and very wealthy people can afford tax

accountants and tax lawyers and file complex returns.

According to a *New York Times* article dated March 13, 2025, many of the 7,000 employees laid off from the IRS to date are from the "large and international business" division, who were auditing just these businesses. On March 27, *Fortune* magazine reported that the US faces a \$500 billion drop in tax revenue due to the cuts in the IRS workforce.

This issue cuts across party lines. Why should anyone, or any business, earning money escape paying a fair tax rate? I am protesting, and I hope to see some of my MAGA neighbors joining me.

Ella Ingraham
Turners Falls

... Undermining Libraries

A little over two weeks ago the Trump administration issued an executive order entitled "Continuing The Reduction of the Federal Bureaucracy," calling for the elimination of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (ILMS). On Monday, IMLS was effectively shuttered, their staff put on leave, their email accounts disabled.

The small but vital institution funded projects like the Hands On Children's Museum's toolkit for helping patrons with incarcerated loved ones. IMLS served rural libraries, educational programs, and museums across the country – especially those serving marginalized communities.

Also targeted by the order are the United States Agency for Global Media, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, and the Minority Business Development

Agency. These agencies exist to support people who have historically been at best underserved and at worst systematically exploited.

A culturally educated and informed public is essential to any functioning democracy. Protesters are being arrested, words are being banned, and the rich continue to take from the poor while dismantling the institutions that were once highly valued. Silencing libraries is not policy reform. It is repression.

Though I have hope. A bit in the newspaper that shows other people are working on this in their own ways. A child standing in a group, holding up a sign that reads "NO KING." Individual actions can spark bigger changes, and make a bigger difference, than we might realize.

Luke DeRoy
Turners Falls

File-Sharing Often Piracy

Domini Lenz references pirate sites as a way to share files during a fascist regime (*Op/Ed: Time, Once Again, for File-Sharing*, March 27). OK. Well, pirate sites also share copyrighted material – which prompts Lenz to suggest those who download hide behind VPNs.

My novels – and those of most authors from Stephen King to, well, me – can be found on Library Genesis, most recently noted for the fact that Meta used copyrighted content from LibGen to train its artificial intelligence.

For sure, as we devolve back to 1984 (which is also in LibGen), we'll need a way to spread information undetected, and there are many good people frantically downloading and saving government websites the current administration is deleting as fast as it can. Last fall, a judge ordered LibGen to pay publishers \$30 million. But no one knows who owns or runs LibGen, which also tells me it is not safe.

While I would like to think users of pirate sites are doing so to defend democracy, my guess is it's mostly a bunch of people who want to get stuff for free. The Authors Guild reports that the median book income for all authors (full- and part-time) was \$2,000 in 2022. No, there are no missing zeros there.

So please know that while you are downloading books and films from torrent sites or LibGen, you are taking royalties out of the wallet of authors like me. Stephen King doesn't need to care, but I and most others do.

Elaine Burnes
New Salem

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Compiled by NINA ROSSI

Postal worker **Tom Sena** retires from the Turners Falls Post Office today! Tom has worked for the postal service since 1984, and has been at the Turners location since 1995.

By coincidence, Tom was the subject of my Page A2 illustration a year ago this week, on April 4, 2024:



We'll all miss him, and hope he enjoys his retirement.

The Montague Common Hall is hosting another “**Movies that Make you Cooler!**” event this Friday, April 4, this time featuring Wim Wenders’s 1987 *Wings of Desire*. The event starts at 6 p.m. with a “Berlin Pub” experience of Nick Cave music, film shorts, and snacks – bring your own beverages – and the feature starts at 7 p.m.

There’s a suggested donation of \$10 to \$20, with all proceeds going towards building an accessible ramp to the hall.

In Deerfield, over a third of the households on the town’s mile-long main street included at least one enslaved person by the mid-18th century.

Historic Deerfield is holding a one-day conference, “**Engaging with the Legacies of Northern Slavery**,” this Saturday, April 5 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Deerfield Community Center. The event was organized in collaboration with the Witness Stones Project to mark the completion of the second phase of the project to install 35 “witness stone” memorials that honor the enslaved people who lived in the community. Speakers at the confer-

ence will share their research about slavery’s legacy in the North.

Tickets can be purchased at www.tinyurl.com/hisdeertalk. Prices range from \$35, for a Zoom login, to \$50 for in-person attendance, to \$86 for attendance and lunch.

You can make **haiku postcards** at a free workshop with Denise Fontaine-Pincince this Saturday, April 5, at 1 p.m. at the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls. Poems and all materials will be provided to create *haiga* postcards.

The workshop is geared for ages eight and up, and no registration is required. Samples of these postcards can be viewed by searching on YouTube for “Haiku Gifts: Art with Poetry by Denise Fontaine-Pincince.”

The Nolumbeka Project has announced that **volunteers are needed for trail and garden projects** at the Wissatinnewag lands in Greenfield through October, with several spring work parties planned. The first is scheduled for this Sunday, April 6 from 2 to 4 p.m. Email Brent at brentp100@protonmail.com to RSVP.

The Traprock Center for Peace & Justice reached out to let us know that Phyllis Bennis, “a well-known policy analyst dedicated to educating the public as well as advising activists on the **history and current situation in Israel/Palestine** and the role of the US,” will be speaking at All Souls Church, 399 Main Street in Greenfield, next Monday, April 7 at 6:30 p.m.

“A fellow of the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, DC, Bennis has written numerous books on the Middle East, the UN, and US foreign policy,” they write. “An international adviser to Jewish Voice for Peace, she was twice short-listed to become the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.”

Bennis’s current New England tour is intended to engage with the public at this critical time for Gaza, the West Bank, and the region, as well as to present her new book from Interlink Publishing in Northampton, *Understanding Palestine and Israel*. Copies will be available for sale and author signing.

Doors open at 6 p.m., and admission is free.

The **Honoring Elders series** at the Wendell Meetinghouse continues next Tuesday, April 8 at 6:30 p.m., with a tribute to Karen and Michael Idoine.

Karen and Michael came to live in Wendell in 1971, and have been active members of the community ever since. Michael has served as Wendell’s town meeting moderator, selectboard member, and finance committee member, and was one of the founders of the *Wendell Post* and Wendell Concerned Citizens group.

For more information on Honoring Elders events, or support in organizing similar events in other communities, contact Gail Mason at rushingwaters01@gmail.com.

Smith College theater professor Kiki Smith has recently written a book about **the everyday clothing of ordinary American women**. A traveling exhibit based on the book is planned for this year, with the New York Historical Society as its first venue.

The Shelburne Falls Area Women’s Club welcomes Smith to the Shelburne-Buckland Community Center next Wednesday, April 9 at 7 p.m. for a presentation on *Real Clothes, Real Lives: 200 Years of What Women Wore*. She will bring examples of clothing – modest and inexpensive pieces, as well as one-of-a-kind garments – and explain how they reveal information about different eras.

All are welcome to this free event. For more information, contact christincouture@icloud.com.

Woodpeckers don’t sing like other birds, but are still able to draw attention to themselves with their noisy tree-chiseling activities. Learn about these “super-craftsmen of the bird world” during a Zoom presentation by Dana and Bob Fox, hosted by the Athol Bird & Nature Club, next Wednesday, April 9, at 7 p.m.

The Foxes will explain how these birds evolved, and how these non-migrating species manage to live in difficult locations. Register at www.tinyurl.com/wpeck.

Once a month on a Monday evening, Stone Soup Café in Greenfield holds a **Community Soup Night**. The organization runs it as a pay-what-you-can meal, with the side benefit of fostering connections between diners at the community table. Enjoy conversation and delicious food at the next event on Monday, April 14 from 5 to 7 p.m.

For more information, visit www.thestonesoupcafe.org and sign up for newsletter updates.

During 11 years of living in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, violinist and composer Kaethe Hostetter immersed herself in the musical culture and founded a band, QWAN-QWA, which released three albums. Now located in New York City, she seeks to explore, expand, and preserve traditional Ethiopian sounds.

On Friday, April 18 at 7 p.m. Hostetter will share her “**Impressions of Ethiopia**,” a solo multimedia project using electronics and loops, storytelling, and video projection, at the Montague Common Hall. Local band O Ksenos will play an opening set of Greek folk music.

There is a suggested donation of \$20, but nobody will be turned away for lack of funds. Find out more at www.weathervanearts.org.

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

DISPATCHES FROM THE CARNEGIE BASEMENT

Moving Existing Library Ruled Out

By CAITLIN KELLEY

TURNERS FALLS – Welcome to *Dispatches from the Carnegie Basement*, where I will provide updates on Montague’s library building project.

In January, Montague was awarded immediate funding by the Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program (MPLCP). Since 1987, the MPLCP has helped build 62 new library buildings and 169 addition, renovation, and conversion projects. Montague’s acceptance into the program means that if we build a new or improved main library, roughly 50% of our construction costs will be paid for by the state.

Between now and the end of the year the Library Building Steering Committee, consisting of town staff, library trustees, and Montague residents, will work to hire a project management firm and an architectural firm, survey the community about their building preferences, hold several public input sessions during the design process, and submit a final design for approval by the state.

It’s very important to us that the voices of the Montague community be heard throughout this process and represented in the final design.

Additionally, one of the most important things the Steering Committee will do is recommend whether to add onto the Carnegie Library or to build a new main library.

In our construction program application, the Trustees of the Montague Public Libraries and I proposed three different scenarios for the building project: 1. *Construct an addition onto the Carnegie Library*, 2.

Construct a new library building at 38 Avenue A, and 3. Pick up the Carnegie Library, move it to 38 Avenue A, and construct an addition onto it there.

For better or worse, I recently learned that the Mass Historical Commission will not allow us to move the existing building.

The Carnegie Library has a preservation restriction on it, which means that any repairs or additions to the building – especially the outside of the building – must be in keeping with its historical character. For example, we can’t add a modern front door to the building or paint the window trim orange. Mass Historical has determined that the restriction also means that the building can’t be moved offsite.

After we hire a project manager, the Steering Committee hopes to gain a better understanding of the pros and cons of, and the costs associated with, each of the two remaining scenarios. We’ll be interviewing potential management firms this week, and aim to have one on board by mid-month.

Want more information? Check out www.montague-ma.gov/government and scroll down to “Library Building Steering Committee” for maps of the proposed sites, the library building program, and other project-related documents. You can also feel free to email me at librarydirector@montague-ma.gov.

Stay tuned for additional updates, as well as a community survey.

Caitlin Kelley is the director of the Montague Public Libraries.

Another Letter to the Editors



In Praise of USAID, and David Brule’s Column

Most people think that the US spends way too much on foreign aid. Recent polling by AP and KFF has found that two-thirds of Americans think US assistance to other countries should be reduced so we can take care of problems at home – and that the average American believes it amounts to 31% of our budget.

The actual number? We have been spending less than 1% of our entire budget on foreign aid.

David Brule’s account of his time in a rural Moroccan village as a Peace Corps volunteer (*West Along the River: USAID Comes to My Village*, March 27) vividly shows what a few hundred dollars in USAID can do to help build a common house for students eager to learn English, way up in the mountains of Morocco.

I didn’t join the Peace Corps to promote US economic and political interests, but like Brule, I also secured USAID funds for several small villages where I lived, deep in the rural rainforest of Costa Rica. The couple of hundred dollars allowed us to build wood-conserving stoves for

school kitchens.

Kids didn’t have to hike back into the mountains for lunch, the cooks didn’t have to breathe in smoke while cooking on open fires, and entire villages saw the USAID plaques on those schools.

By training locals to feed the hungry and treat disease, build potable water pumps, health care clinics, and schools, and much more, USAID is a crucial arm of US foreign policy. Aid workers and diplomats know that investing in this “soft diplomacy” is worth it because it advances our economic and political interests, as well as protecting us from outbreaks of disease.

Most of us also know it’s worth it because it’s the right thing to do.

USAID and the professionals around the globe know the real impact of the less than 1% of the US budget. The rest of Americans need to know, and speak up. Don’t allow these programs to be eliminated under the Musk/Trump administration.

Julie Kumble
Montague Center

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**KINDERGARTEN
OPEN HOUSE**

For all children who will be 5 years old
BEFORE September 1, 2025


Kindergarten Open House: Hillcrest Elementary
30 Griswold Street, Turners Falls
Wednesday, April 9, 2025
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Please bring:
- Birth Certificate or Affidavit
- Record of Immunization
- 2 forms of Proof of Residence

In addition to registering at a Kindergarten
Open House, families may return
registration paperwork to the
Office of Student Services
35 Crocker Ave., Turners Falls
until April 30, 2025

For more information, please call:
Hillcrest Elementary 863-9526
Gill Elementary 863-3255

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STAGE from page A1

built out just for the festival.

The Montague Shakespeare Festival is now in its second year. The festival's educational approach starts with workshops led by accomplished Shakespeare people in the United Kingdom, mostly remotely, and culminates in a full production of one of his plays. This gives the foundation for something beyond the vibe one might associate with regular community theater.

Describing the festival, founder and director Kenny Butler waxed poetic about the element of *kismet* in bringing Shakespeare to Turners Falls, a Village of Montague: "Montague is a great name for it because Montague is in *Romeo and Juliet*, and the festival is in Montague, Massachusetts," he told the *Reporter*. "Everyone I talk to at the Royal Shakespeare Company and the Globe Theater thinks we took the name from the play. When I tell them, they love it."

It is Butler's informal ties to these prestigious London-based Shakespearean motherships that make what is happening here special.

Macbeth was directed by Nia Lynn, a voice coach from Wales with experience working with the Royal Shakespeare Company, one of the preeminent Shakespeare theater companies. "A great Shakespearean performance doesn't start on the stage," she says. "It starts in the body. If an actor is connected to their physicality, they will be connected to their voice, and through that, to the audience."

With any Shakespeare play, diligent delivery is key for modern minds to stand a chance of knowing what's going on. This cast of *Macbeth* was determined to be understood. Even still, for viewers, going into the experience cold may be a challenge.

In preparation for seeing this



Macbeth and his lady, Lady Macbeth, recently coronated as king and queen of Scotland, enter at stage left.

production, Steve Alves of Greenfield – a family member of this reporter – read the entire play and watched four film productions of *Macbeth*. "The language is so beautiful, but dense," he said. "I wanted to understand what was being said, so I could appreciate *how* it was being said. Shakespeare has such subtlety of thought."

For those lacking the time to go quite that distance, a short plot synopsis can be found online.

The contemporary style of this production didn't feel like a stunt or gimmick, but an exploration of themes that felt real and interesting. For example, the set for the show was a skeletal, two-tiered piping structure, reminiscent of a fire escape. As characters were murdered they would move ritualistically through the base of the structure, confronting death as if passing into another realm. It was an elegant and

creative idea that engaged the play's supernatural topics.

One could see how witnessing different interpretations of *Macbeth*, or of any classic, can put enthusiasts in touch with the effect of repetition and variation in our lives. Even audience members not steeped in Shakespeare are likely to feel engaged by the sets and staging of this production.

Moreover, the present-day style underlines *Macbeth's* relevance to present circumstances. *Macbeth* is a play in which people are not evil, but deluded to the core by the corrupting nature of unchecked ambition.

"I don't know why, but when they held up his head in the bag, I was like, *that's Trump's head*," said one audience member, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

We are left to draw our own connections to the world we live in, as well as to ponder: Can we ever

wash our hands of our sins?

Whatever the play reveals to us, it's clear that the town is abuzz with Montague Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. "Cast members were coming into the café and performing sonnets during their rehearsals," said Sky Loth, general manager of the Upper Bend Café. "It's been all over town, so I felt like I should check it out."

"And I was happy I went," Loth added. "I go to community theater because I like being impressed by my community, and that's what happened."

The Montague Shakespeare Festival presents Macbeth at the Shea Theater, 71 Avenue A in Turners Falls, this Friday and Saturday, April 4 and 5, at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, April 6 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$25 and can be purchased in the lobby or at



ERVING from page A1

Fin com member Benjamin Fellows suggested putting "some kind of fee on garbage collection" and reviewing other fees charged by the town, though he agreed this "won't bring in a whole lot of money."

Jacob Smith responded that fees "are not something we're going to materialize to balance the budget right now."

"We need to look at what we can do to generate revenue," said fin com chair Debra Smith. She said department heads had provided lists last year of fees the town might charge, but the fin com "dropped the ball" and didn't follow up.

Bastarache recommended reviewing potential fees in the summer, before the next budget season. Fellows also suggested reducing the pre-payment for a new pumper/tanker truck from \$450,000 to \$420,000, and asked about whether the funding allocated for developing a new cemetery was flexible.

Jacob Smith said that after talking about the truck purchase with fire chief Philip Wonkka, he understood that it was "more what the town wants to commit to, and less about an exact number." As far as the new cemetery, he said the plan was to pre-fund the project at \$200,000 and then borrow to complete it, but, "We could borrow and not pre-fund with cash at all."

"We requested level funding," Debra Smith commented. "Any department that did not level-fund, have them level-fund."

"It's not like apples and oranges," fin com member Daniel Hammock said of the different departments' requests to level-fund or increase their budgets. "It's more like fruit salad!"

"It is fruit salad," Jacob Smith agreed. Because various departments followed or ignored the guidance to different extents, he said, "we aren't making a fair comparison."

"We complain about it every year," Bastarache observed, "but then we find a way to balance the budget and move on."

The officials agreed to provide boards and departments with "requirements," rather than "guidance," next year for their FY'27 requests.

Eventually, the meeting balanced the draft budget by making the following adjustments: adding \$160,000 to the estimate of tax revenue from "new growth"; reducing the cost of secondary education to the actual FY'24 cost; increasing expected interest income by \$40,000, based on a rate negotiated by the treasurer; assuming a 2% raise to non-union wages; adding \$60,000 to the "benefits" line to account for insurance costs for new hires; adding \$57,000 for an additional firefighter; and establishing a line item for replenishing capital stabilization, and putting \$100,000 into it.

The selectboard and fin com reviewed the draft warrant for the May 14 annual town meeting.

Its 26 articles include the FY'26 budget; a by-law regarding systems for rapid fire department access to residences; changes to the Franklin Regional Council of Governments charter; moving about \$1.1 million from free cash and \$85,000 in unspent funds from closed projects to capital stabilization; and establishing water and wastewater capital stabilization accounts.

After making amendments, the fin com voted to recommend all of the financial articles. The selectboard plans to vote on the final warrant next Monday, April 7.

Other Business

Eight people applied to be members of the seven-member senior services director screening committee.

The board appointed Becky Paciorek, Leo Parent Jr., Abigail Baines, Debra Smith, Beth

Gannon, Sally Delaney, and Rebecca Miller to the committee as full members, and retiring senior center director Paula Better as an *ex officio* member. She will be able to participate in the committee's work, but not vote.

Town administrator Bryan Smith reported that town counsel had not yet commented on a draft of road-opening regulations. The selectboard discussed how the regulations defined an "emergency," the permit fees, and the length of frontage that would be required to be rebuilt after a road opening.

The board agreed to consider the regulations further at their next meeting, and to create a revolving fund to collect road-opening fees at a special town meeting later this year.

The lawyers have also not commented on draft water and sewer regulations.

For all of the draft regulations, Bryan Smith suggested setting "expectations" that future underground utilities should be installed near current ones. He said he would research other towns' regulations, and consult Dig Safe.

In October, the owner of 195, 197, and 199 North Street asked for his lots to be connected to a sewer main the former owner of 219 North Street paid to have installed.

Bryan Smith reported that the requesting owner had a 2001 letter from the former town coordinator stating that the main was publicly owned, but there was no documentation in selectboard minutes that the town had ever adopted the extension.

The sewer department inspected the main and found it was installed according to its standards, and town counsel advised that if the owner of 219 North was not claiming to own the extension, the town could assume ownership.

The board voted to formally adopt the extension.



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Co-owner Faith Diemand and friends at Diemand Farm, where a \$139,000 grant to install solar panels on a rooftop was initially frozen, then apparently re-approved.

FARMERS from page A1

manager for Communities Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA), an advocacy nonprofit based in South Deerfield. “We’ve been told that farmers have 30 days to reapply for grants that were awarded last year, but with caveats – they have to show they’re aligned with Trump’s executive orders. And there’s concern about solar projects.”

Diemand Farm raises free-range turkeys and chickens, grass-fed beef and lamb, and sells eggs and caters homemade meals. Co-owner Anne Diemand Bucci told the *Montague Reporter* on Tuesday that the farm invested \$40,000 in a new roof last year and took out a \$242,000 loan in December to install the solar array on it. The farm has already received a \$50,000 grant from the state Department of Agriculture (MDAR), but the \$139,000 USDA grant would only be paid once the array is installed and operating.

Diemand Bucci said she had just received word from her solar contractor that the USDA will approve the farm’s recently-revised grant application – but she’s not breathing a sigh of relief just yet.

“I will believe it when it’s in the bank and the loan is paid down,” said Diemand Bucci, noting that interest on the loan comes to \$1,300 a month. “It’s very confusing at this point, and I do not trust the [Trump] administration one iota.”

The solar panels Diemand Farm hopes to install would provide about half the electricity used at the farm, which currently costs between \$3,000 and \$4,000 per month.

Far-Left Features

Funds for installing a major solar array on land owned by Montague’s Red Fire Farm were also frozen, according to co-owner Ryan Voiland, who has not received any encouraging news about the grant.

“I was told not to proceed with the solar project,” said Voiland, who has joined six other farms across the country in a lawsuit against the USDA filed by Earthjustice, a nonprofit organization based in San Francisco. Red Fire Farm includes land on Meadow Road in Montague and a property in Granby, just south of Amherst, where Voiland planned to install a \$125,000 solar array until he discovered the funds were frozen.

A separate \$25,000 USDA grant was also frozen for two months, he said, but was recently awarded.

“I had already submitted receipts for buying and spreading compost and biochar for soil management through the USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service, and was informed of a freeze on that just days after the Trump inauguration,” Voiland said. After weeks of trying to

contact the USDA, Voiland said, that \$25,000 was eventually released.

The uncertainty of federal funding has kept CISA busy working with area farmers to get a handle on what’s coming next.

“It’s very complicated,” Morenon said. “We’re doing the best we can to track what funding streams have been frozen or unfrozen, to try to help farmers figure out what’s going on. Right now we just can’t say whether contracts that have already been signed will be honored.”

On March 27, US senator Cory Booker (D-New Jersey) introduced the Honor Farmer Contracts Act, which would require the USDA to release frozen grant funds, while mandating that the agency “shall not cancel” any signed contracts with farmers unless they’ve failed to comply with the original terms. Senator Ed Markey (D-Massachusetts) is a co-signer of the bill.

At Upinngil Farm in Gill, co-owner Clifford Hatch was recently awarded a grant from MDAR for composting and was planning an application to the USDA to expand the project, but has decided against it.

“It could have been a bigger project with a USDA grant, but when we heard those funds were hung up, we decided not to bother,” Hatch said.

Grant applications require considerable time to complete, and according to CISA, Hatch is not the only one wary of spending the time and energy to go through what has suddenly become a chaotic and intimidating process.

“There are lots of other farmers affected, but not everyone wants to talk about it publicly,” said Morenon, who has been working for the past year with farmers on enrollment and planning for the new Climate-Smart Commodities Program, which was intended to roll out over several years with the promise of up to \$45,000 in the first year.

While funds were not scheduled to be paid out yet, Morenon said she fears the USDA will cancel the program on the grounds that it contains “far-left climate features.” The program encourages mulch-



Massachusetts agricultural commissioner Ashley Randle (right) sent a letter last month to the Secretary of Agriculture warning that USDA grant suspensions and cuts were harming farmers.

ing, permanent soil beds, and hedgerows to make farms more resilient to extreme weather events, Morenon said, adding that 400 farms in Massachusetts have been part of the enrollment process.

Farm-to-Table Fears

Farmers are also worried about possible cuts to the federal SNAP program, which helps about a million Massachusetts residents buy groceries, and can be used at many local farmers markets.

“So many of the projects that have been supported by the federal government in the past go beyond the partisan divide,” said Morenon. “So many people in this region care about open space, clean water, clean air, food insecurity, and having viable farm businesses.”

On March 6, MDAR commissioner Ashley E. Randle – who herself grew up on Indian Acres Farm in South Deerfield – wrote a letter to USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins expressing a variety of concerns.

“In many cases farmers have made investments in services and capital projects based upon approved grants, only to find that they may not be reimbursed as promised,” Randle wrote. “For some, not being able to count on those resources could be the difference between remaining sustainable and losing their farm. Even if funds are ultimately released at the conclusion of your review, the intervening suspension is harming farmers, and I encourage you to resume payments...”

In an interview this week with the *Reporter*, Randle said it was “pretty upsetting” to learn recently that three different USDA programs to combat hunger while supporting local farmers were being cut, for a total loss to Massachusetts of almost \$22 million.

Randle said these cuts include \$12 million in USDA funds set aside for schools in Massachusetts under the Local Food Purchasing Agreement, another \$6.4 million from the Local Food Purchase Assistance Program, and \$3.4 million from the Emergency Food Assistance Program. The federal funds are normally passed through MDAR to be granted on a monthly basis to schools, food banks, and food pantries.

“We were told these programs were terminated immediately because they no longer effectuated the administration’s priorities,” said Randle.

She added that a 39% cut in USDA funding of MDAR’s Food Safety Program is also “concerning,” and will result in reductions of staff inspectors who ensure fruits and vegetables are safe for consumption.

Meanwhile, Randle said she expects the federal cuts will cause greater demand this year from farms, fisheries, schools, and food banks for MDAR’s \$25 million Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program, which funds greenhouses, refrigerated vans, school kitchens, food bank warehouses, and other infrastructure that links local farms and fisheries with nonprofit groups that provide food to residents.

“We’re fortunate to be in Massachusetts, because we’re rallying together to figure out how to respond,” Randle said. “We’re continuing to stick to our core values and our core mission and doubling down on our commitments. The state legislature is mindful of that, and we’re presenting a united front to focus on these issues.”

PUBLIC NOTICE OF APPLICATION
for a
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In the Connecticut River Basin

Great Falls Aquaculture, LLC (GFA) has applied to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) for a Water Management Act Permit Amendment in the Connecticut River Basin. GFA is seeking authorization for three (3) wells drilled on their properties located at 1 Australia Way, Turners Falls, Montague, MA 01376 and 0 Industrial Boulevard, Turners Falls, Montague, MA 01376. The capacity of the new wells are 0.070, 0.044, and 0.041 million gallons per day. The three new wells will not increase overall water withdrawals by GFA. They will only provide additional sources for permitted withdrawals. A copy of the application is available for review at the Turners Falls Water Department, 226 Millers Falls Road, Turners Falls, Montague, MA 01376. Please contact Jeffrey Hildreth, Superintendent, at 413-863-3175 to arrange an appointment.

Written comments on the application may be submitted within 30 days of April 3, 2025. Written comments are to be submitted to Superintendent Jeffrey Hildreth and MassDEP, 100 Cambridge Street in Boston, MA 02114, Attention: Emily Wilcox.

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PERSONAL INJURY, WILLS & ESTATES, WORKER'S COMP

FACES & PLACES

Photos and reporting
by JOSH HEINEMANN



Lieutenant Matt O'Donnell, recently selected to serve as chief of the joint Wendell-New Salem fire department after chief Joe Cuneo retires this June, attended the Wendell selectboard meeting Wednesday night, along with Cuneo, fire captain Asa de Roode, and Cam Dunbar, a New Salem captain who Cuneo appointed as deputy chief for the two towns.



Nina Keller of No Assault & Batteries (NAB) also attended Wednesday's meeting to present the town with a \$7,000 donation from the citizens' group. The funds were raised to help defray the town's legal fees as it appeals the state's rejection of a solar siting bylaw drafted last year by NAB and passed overwhelmingly at town meeting. In December, the selectboard voted to allocate \$5,000 from the public coffer toward the appeal. Check next week's Montague Reporter for a full report on the meeting!

ANNOUNCEMENT

New Trauma Healing Group

GREENFIELD – The Brick House Community Resource Center of Turners Falls and the Salasin Project in Greenfield have come together to offer a new eight-week program, "Beyond Trauma: A Healing Journey."

This confidential support and discussion group explores the impact of interpersonal violence and trauma on individuals. The group will explore ideas for creating safety and developing healthy relationships while sharing healing activities for the mind, body, and spirit.

The program is open to anyone 18 or older who identifies as female. It will take place on Thursdays from 5:30 to 7 p.m., from April 10 through May 29. It is a hybrid program, in-person at the Salasin Project at 55 Riddell Street in Greenfield and also via Zoom.

For more information or to register, please contact either Stacey Langknecht at slangknecht@brick-housecommunity.org or (413) 800-2496 or Lynn at lynn-resiliency@wmtcinfo.org or (413) 575-0042. Registration is required.

High School Sports Week: School Squads Slide Into Fresh Season

By MATT ROBINSON

TURNERS FALLS – Franklin County Tech and Turners Falls high schools started their 2025 spring seasons this week.

On Monday the Turners softball Thunder shut out Northampton, with Madison Liimatainen striking out multiple batters. Tuesday saw Tech's baseball team defeating Turners in a lengthy game, while Greenfield overwhelmed Tech in softball.

And across Millers Falls Road, the girls' hybrid tennis team secured their first win.

Softball

TFHS 11 – Northampton 0
Greenfield 12 – FCTS 3

The spring sports season officially cracked off at 5 p.m. on Monday, March 31 as the state champions, the Turners Falls Softball Thunder, took the field against the Blue Devils of Northampton. First pitch was supposed to be at 5:30, but you know New England weather – an overnight storm was expected, so the game was moved up.

The rain held up, and it remained warm and muggy throughout the contest. It took Powertown an inning to score their first run, but from the second to the sixth they scored in every inning.

On defense, it was the Liimatainen show. She struck out 19 batters, leaving only two outs for the rest of the team. As she racked up the Ks some spectators began calculating her climb to 1,000, while others voiced concerns that the fielders might become complacent and play back on their heels.

But it was the first game of the season, so the Champs have a long road ahead, and a lot to look forward to.

At the plate, Liimatainen had three hits and knocked in a run. McKenzie Stafford also had three hits, Addison Talbot and Ameliya Galbraith had two each, and Maddie Deitz had one, while Autumn Thorton and Mia Marigliano scored RBI sacs.

In the circle, Liimatainen allowed one hit, walked two, and whiffed 19.

Franklin Tech got their season started a day later, against the Green Wave of Greenfield. It was one of three contests slated for four o'clock on April Fool's Day. David Hoitt and I split the assignments – he went to the Turners/Tech baseball game, while I went to softball. Unfortunately, neither of us was able to make it

to the tennis match going on at Turners.

The skies had cleared, but the temperature had plummeted by 20 degrees, and while the players tried to keep warm in the field spectators were bundled up in winter coats and gloves.

Both Greenfield and Tech got runners on base in the first two innings, but neither could cross the plate. In the third, a failed pickle attempt kept Green on the bases and led to two runs.

A walk and a hit batter in the fourth put two more on, and after a strikeout, an E2 loaded the bases. That's when the floodgates opened. Throw in a wild pitch, and the Greenfielders suddenly had an eight-run buffer.

Coach Joe Gamache shuffled his players around in the fifth, and Brayleigh Burgh took to the circle. By then the Wavers were up 10-0 and the game was already two hours old.

"This has got to be the longest game in softball history," someone quipped as Burgh warmed up. But the girls played on. Down by 10 runs, some of Tech's players were beginning to get down on themselves, but Gamache reassured them: "It's early – it's the first game of the year. Now get out there and play!"

Tech finally scored in the bottom of the inning, with Hannah Gilbert driving in two runs. In the seventh, with Franklin trailing 12-2, Samantha Duncan knocked in Tech's third and final run of the game.

Gilbert and Duncan had Tech's only two hits, though Duncan also stole a base, as did Amelia Rider and Sandra Johnson. Gilbert pitched four innings, allowing seven runs, four hits, and four walks and striking out 11. Burgh pitched five innings, giving up five more runs on five hits and two walks, and struck out one batter.

Turners and Tech are slated to play each other this Thursday, though with another storm in the forecast, who knows?

Baseball

FCTS 8 – TFHS 7

I went to the baseball diamond before Tuesday's softball game and touched bases with both teams. Turners came in as the defending conference champions, while Franklin was one of the few teams that beat them last year.

The game lived up to the hype, a wild extra-inning affair, as it took an eighth inning for the Eagles to defeat the Thunder. It was Tech's second straight season-opener win



DAVID HOITT PHOTOS

against Turners.

The Thunder took an early 2-0 lead, but the Tech Boys came out shooting, scoring four runs in the bottom of the first and adding three more in the second.

Turners chipped away at the gap, scoring once in the third inning and twice in both the fourth and sixth to knot it up at 7 all.

After a scoreless seventh, Turners was again unable to score in the eighth and the Eagles made them pay, icing the win with a single runner across the plate.

Six different Eagles had hits – two from Brody Hicks, and one each from Tyler Yetter, Zaydrien Alamed, Hunter Donahue, Nick Prasol, and Tucker Hicks.

And Turners finished with four hits, from Jackson Cogswell, Trevor Lyons, Julian Kaiser, and Ethan Eich.

Girls' Tennis

TFHS 3 – Mohawk 2

While Tech and Turners competed in baseball and softball at the tech school, the schools' co-operative girls' tennis team was across the road winning their first match of the season.

Turners won all three singles matches against Mohawk – Olivia Wolbach 6-1, 6-0; Avery Heathwaite 6-1, 6-0; and Gianna Marigliano 6-3, 6-1 – but dropped both doubles contests (Izzy Decker and Khiarieliex Huertas Hernandez; Keira Feeley and Shayly Martin).



Top: Franklin Tech's Brody Hicks scores at the plate, avoiding a tag by Turners Falls catcher Trevor Lyons, as the Eagles bosted the Thunder last Tuesday in the first game of the spring season. The Eagles topped the Thunder 8-7 in the extra-inning contest.

Above: Turners Falls's Madi Liimatainen is off to a strong start to the new season, here pitching to a Keene High batter as the Thunder hosted the Keene, New Hampshire Blackbirds for an early-season scrimmage last Friday.

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MONTAGUE from page A1

the first Sunday in May, and to close Second Street in Turners Falls for a vintage car show on September 21.

LoManto said there are expected to be approximately 200 cars at the latter event, which is in its third year.

She also announced the winners of the contest to install wheat paste murals in downtown Turners Falls, Millers Falls, and Montague City – Sophie Foulkes of Amherst, Ponnappa Prakkamakul of Cambridge, and Aaron Meshon of Great Barrington. Each artist will create two murals which will be printed commercially “on a large scale” and installed using wheat paste, intended to last from three to five months.

Community input sessions will be held for the public to view drafts of the murals and meet the artists.

The board did not vote on the art, but did vote to approve a request from the public libraries to use Peskeompskut Park on July 19 for a “dog event” and Unity Park on September 27 for a “community fair,” which will include information tables from local organizations, music, “light refreshments,” and perhaps “live animals.”

The traditional parade at opening day of the New Guilbault baseball league on Sunday, April 27 was approved, as was a Memorial Day service on the Montague Center common on May 25 and the annual “Mug Race” road race in that village on August 16.

Contaminated Habitat

Town administrator Walter Ramsey requested that the board extend the town’s purchase and sale agreement with Pioneer Valley Habitat For Humanity for the lot across First Street from the town hall, where the organization plans to construct five units of affordable housing, through June 2026. The project has been stalled by the discovery of contaminated fill on the site.

Ramsey said further investigation of the area, funded by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments and federal Environmental Protection Agency, has shown “only a small area of soils” will need to be removed from under the lot, at a cost of between \$150,000 and \$300,000.

He said the town was “actively talking” to the state Department of Environmental Protection and MassDevelopment to help finance the cleanup. “I am confident we will get the funding through one of those two sources, and maybe a combination,” he said.

The board voted to extend the purchase and sale. Habitat will also need to re-apply to its funding source for the purchase.

Slower Seeds

Town planner Maureen Pollock asked the board to extend the town’s deadline for completing a state Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness 2.0 grant for a year, through June 2026. The grant, which aims to help vulnerable communities prepare for climate change, includes \$50,000 for a local “seed project.”

Pollock said the state had originally envisioned the local decision-making process would take a year, “but they, as well as municipalities, are realizing that we need one more year.”

In February, the committee stewarding the grant reported that it had narrowed possible “seed projects” to three options: expanding the number of community gardens in town; developing a working community

kitchen in the former Second Street Bakery space on Fourth Street; and propagating plastic window inserts for eligible homeowners and renters.

Asked why the process was taking longer than expected, Pollock said that a central goal of the grant was “creating new relationships, and building on community engagement.... and to do that authentically and thoroughly takes time.” The board agreed to extend the contract.

Faster Raises

In a somewhat surprising change of course, the board voted to approve contracts with two town employee unions – the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE) and the National Association of Government Employees (NAGE) – which have been adjusted to be consistent with a recent pay and classification study. The new wage schedules can now be included in the FY’26 budget and voted at the annual town meeting in May.

Several weeks ago it had appeared that these contracts would not be renegotiated in time for the May meeting, and their impact on the budget would have to wait until a special town meeting in the fall.

The board also voted to recommend depositing a total of \$200,000 in free cash into the town’s capital stabilization fund, its stabilization fund for the Gill-Montague regional school assessment, and its “other post-employment benefits” (OPEB) trust fund, which cushions predicted increases in retiree health benefits. These transfers will be included on the town meeting warrant.

Zone of Interest

One of the lengthier agenda items was a slide presentation by Mary Innes of the consulting firm Innes Associates, Ltd. The firm is helping the planning department evaluate the potential rezoning of a section of Montague City that includes the former Farren Hospital property and the Rod Shop Road area.

The project is sponsored by a grant from the Massachusetts Housing Partnership and, Innes said, confronts a “busy schedule” because its oversight committee hopes to send a rezoning proposal to a fall special town meeting. A “community workshop,” which Innes called “Zoning 101,” will be held Thursday, April 17.

Innes summarized the range of options proposed for the Farren property, variations on what is called a “village center”-style development involving housing as well as community and commercial space, but with differences in density, height restriction, and other factors.

At a selectboard meeting a year ago, town planning staff had expressed criticism of the current “Central Business” zoning of the Farren property and proposed consideration of a Chapter 40R overlay district, which would “increase the amount of land zoned for dense housing.” However, at Monday’s meeting Innes did not mention any specific rezoning proposal, or how it would impact such a development.

“We don’t have any answers for you tonight, because this is really a pitch for people to come to the public meeting on April 17,” Innes said, later noting that “a lot of people don’t necessarily get involved in zoning discussions, and then they come in when there’s an actual [development] proposal out there.”

The selectboard did not discuss or vote on the rezoning process,

but chair Rich Kuklewicz recommended that residents attend the April 17 meeting.

Many Cones

The board approved a request from assistant town administrator Chris Nolan-Zeller to access \$74,077 from a previously-approved state grant to reimburse funds the town spent on an “asset vulnerability inventory” of its Clean Water Facility and sewer system. The inventory focuses on “the vulnerability of these assets to flooding,” as measured by whether their elevations fall within 100- and 500-year floodplains, according to the engineering firm Wright-Pierce.

The board did not discuss the results of the research, which were not included in the meeting materials.

Nolan-Zeller also requested that the board authorize an application for a grant from the state’s Green Communities program to weatherize and insulate the Unity Park field house, the headquarters of the parks and recreation department.

“The catalyst for starting this conversation was the failure of the wood stove, that happened back in February when it was still quite cold,” Nolan-Zeller said. “It kind of encouraged us to take a holistic view of the building, and ways to improve it.”

The field house is the only town building still heated by a wood stove, and Nolan-Zeller indicated that the grant would not pay for a replacement, which is being purchased as a “temporary solution.”

Nolan-Zeller updated the board on the project to install solar panels on the town hall annex, which he said will be completed this spring; the ongoing streetscape improvements on both sides of Avenue A; and the repavement of the parking lot behind town hall. “A lot of these are dovetailing nicely,” he said. “There’s been a lot of orange cones around the office lately.”

Other Business

Acting as the personnel board, the selectboard promoted assessing technician Oliver Beane to the position of interim director of assessing until a new director is hired, and appointed Karen Tonelli, the former director, as a consultant to the department at a rate of \$45.06 per hour for up to 10 hours per week.

The board discussed a potential violation of a nuisance dog order and voted to direct Ramsey to send a letter seeking to bring the owner into compliance (*see article, Page A1*).

On a somewhat lighter dog note, the board approved a request from children’s librarian Angela Rovatti-Leonard to hold a “dog event” at Pekeompskut Park on Saturday, July 19. She said the event would include an agility course, “meet-and-greet” therapy dogs, and light refreshments.

“We’re going to try to spread it throughout the park,” she said, “to make sure that there’s not a bunch of dogs in one section.”

Selectboard member Matt Lord, seeming skeptical, asked if organizers had looked at “other models for how this event can work, and to limit potential negative dog interactions.”

Rovatti-Leonard said she had talked with the town’s insurance company and was told the town would not be liable for such interactions.

The event, which is called “The Dog Days of Summer,” was unanimously approved by the board.

The selectboard’s next meeting will be held Monday, April 7.

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

Here’s the way it was on April 2, 2015: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

No Double Dipping

The Wendell selectboard met on March 25, a night of sleet, freezing rain, and roads covered with small soft and slippery pellets.

Town coordinator Nancy Aldrich relayed town counsel David Doneski’s determination that a household served by electric utility poles, but which does not choose to take a fiber-optic internet connection when Wired West is able to provide that, may not file for an abatement of its property tax on the basis of not having

an internet connection.

GPS-Induced Jackknives

Police Chief Chip Dodge gave the Montague selectboard an update on his efforts to address the dangerous corner where Route 63 and Millers Falls Road meet in Millers Falls. Trucks attempting to make the turn south on Route 63 or west onto Millers Falls Road frequently jackknife, and even cause major accidents or delays. A sign just before Lake Pleasant Road urging trucks to take this detour south is often ignored.

Dodge suggest the problem may be caused in part by a tendency to rely on GPS.

20 YEARS AGO

Here’s the way it was on March 31, 2005: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Mariamante Conundrum

The future of the former Mariamante property on Main Road in Gill is uncertain, but the town should decide what type of development it wants before a determination is made of the need for archaeological studies.

According to Professor Mitchell Mulholland, director of the Archaeological Services Department at UMass-Amherst, it is uncertain whether or not any studies are even required. It appears the land can be

Towns Snag \$29,735 Grant

Montague police chief Ray Zukowski announced his department, in cooperation with the Greenfield police department, had been awarded a highly competitive state grant worth \$29,735 for community outreach programs on topics including substance abuse prevention, juvenile fire-setting prevention, and “Raising Our Children.” The funds will be divided between the two towns to run programs for two years.

150 YEARS AGO

Here’s the way it was on March 31, 1875: News from the Turners Falls Reporter’s archive.

Turners Falls and Vicinity

Cap. Smith’s broom factory is running full time.

The ice in the river at present is fifteen inches thick, and solid and blue at that.

The Keith Paper Company are manufacturing five tons of paper a day.

A dental office is shortly to be opened in Schuler block, by Dr. M.F. Walton.

The first freight through the Tunnel was a car load of rags for the Keith Paper Co.

John Perry is looking after the man who stole his shiners from a neighboring brook.

Henry Stoughton’s horse ran away with him twice within the past week, without damage.

There is talk of leasing Lake Pleasant as a fish cultivating pond, and the matter will be before the next town meeting for action.

The largest shipment of brick ever made in one day from any Franklin county yard was that of 50,000 sent from Adams & Son’s yard, Friday.

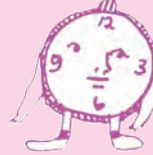
A man fell from an attic window of a two-story house on K street, to the ground, a few days ago, without sustaining any injury. He was drunk.

A man upset his load of hay and reloaded three times, on the avenue, yesterday, and then in disgust drew part of the load home and returned for the remainder.

Twenty-two of the twenty-six towns in the county have officially, through their selectmen, protested against the action of the Legislature in the matter of the proposed new bridge here, and other towns are expected to follow their example.

This being the year in which the census is taken of the entire State, R.N. Oakman, Esq., chairman of selectmen, will in a few weeks take the census of this town. The figures which will be obtained by him will be of much moment to all interested in Turners Falls, showing as they will the exact number of inhabitants in this Fire District, of which few people have a correct idea.

The notice that a place for tramps had been fitted up in the village had no sooner gained publicity than swarms of these impecunious pests began to flock here to enjoy their rights.



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DOG from page A1

by a nurse practitioner stating that this dog was needed as a "service animal." Though this new dog had not been registered, Ramsey said, speaking as the town's Americans With Disabilities Act coordinator he "need[s] to advise the board to proceed with caution" in any enforcement measure, as the Act requires modifications of standard policies "to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability."

Ramsey proposed sending a letter requiring a "very tight timeline" of 48 hours for the resident to prove the dog is required and trained as a service animal; two days to one week to ensure it is properly licensed, vaccinated, and photographed by the animal control officer; and after that to comply with all other requirements of the 2023 orders, including "securing the property."

"I have a friend who lives in

that area, so I go by that house occasionally, and the fence is still in very, very poor repair," selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz commented. "That was one of the challenges."

Kuklewicz also recommended the letter should request more information about any training the dog has received.

Selectboard member Matt Lord said he understood the privacy restrictions the town must respect as far as a resident's potential disability is concerned, but suggested Ramsey contact the nurse practitioner who wrote the note to simply "ensure that they are an existing person, and ask them if they wrote it."

Ramsey said the letterhead appeared to be from a doctor's office, but agreed that "it's a good question to ask."

The board then voted to authorize Ramsey to send the letter as described.



PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Protect Our Community: Ensure Measles Immunity

By RYAN PAXTON

MONTAGUE – Measles is a highly contagious disease that can lead to serious health complications. Vaccination remains the most effective way to prevent infection and safeguard public health.

The recommended vaccination schedule for children consists of two doses of the Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) vaccine – the first at 12 to 15 months, and second at 4 to 6 years.

For adults, those without evidence of immunity should receive at least one dose of the MMR vaccine.

Specific groups at higher risk of contracting measles include:

International travelers: Individuals aged 6 months and older traveling internationally should be vaccinated prior to departure. Infants 6 to 11 months should receive one dose; those 12 months and older should receive two doses, separated by at least 28 days.

Healthcare personnel: All healthcare workers without proof of immunity should receive two doses of the MMR vaccine, separated by at least 28 days.

College students: Students at-

tending post-high school educational institutions without evidence of immunity should receive two doses of the MMR vaccine, each dose separated by at least 28 days.

Close contacts of immunocompromised individuals: Family members and close contacts of immunocompromised persons should ensure they are fully vaccinated to protect vulnerable individuals.

Those who received an inactivated measles vaccine: During 1963 to 1967 a small portion of adults may have received an inactivated measles vaccine. If you may have received an inactivated vaccine, a further attenuated dose, or an unknown type of vaccine, it is recommended that you speak with your healthcare provider regarding re-vaccination.

Ensuring you and your family are up to date with measles vaccinations not only protects individual health but also strengthens community immunity. For more information, consult your healthcare provider or visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website: www.cdc.gov/measles/.

Ryan Paxton is the public health director for the town of Montague.

MONTAGUE REPORTER



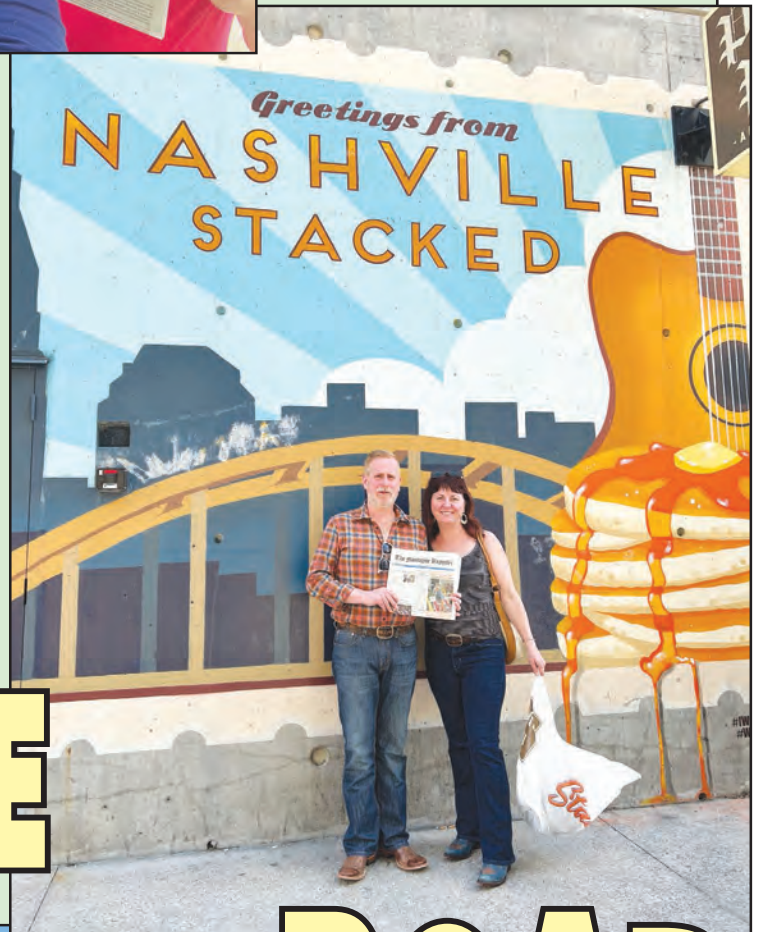
Left: Andy Moffett and Andy Vega of Lake Pleasant send greetings from Waikiki Beach in Honolulu, Hawaii, with our March 20 edition.

"We subscribe to the Reporter and enjoy seeing the section of where the newspaper travels to!" they report. "We wanted to join in on the fun! Mahalo!"

ON

"My husband, Josh Bell, and I recently vacationed in Nashville, Tennessee," Turners Falls subscriber Amie Keddy reports.

"Among the many historic sites we visited was The Pancake Pantry, and this mural just outside the restaurant." It looks like our March 6 edition made it down to Tennessee with them.



THE

SUBMITTED PHOTOS



ROAD

"Happy spring!" writes another Turners subscriber, Amy Kirchner, pictured here with our March 13 edition.

"My husband Jon Owen and I recently went to the Sonoran desert in Arizona. Had to snap this shot and send it to you!"

Going somewhere? Take us with you! Send your photos to editor@montaguereporter.org.

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MIKE JACKSON PHOTO

features@montaguereporter.org OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER APRIL 3, 2025

Above: About 45 people turned out last Friday for the eighth weekly stand-out on Route 2 at the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge. Slogans on the handmade signs included “Save Social Security,” “Stop the Coup,” “Billionaires Should Pay Higher Taxes,” “No King,” “Detusk Musk,” and “April 5th Protest: Hands Off.” A steady contingent of cars and large tractor-trailers honked approvingly, while a smaller number of other drivers, nearly always in pickup trucks, offered signals of disagreement.

FROM A TEEN'S POINT OF VIEW...
FILMING FOR COMMUNITY ACCESS TV



JONES PHOTO

The view from behind the FCAT camera Monday evening.

By FINTAN ANDREW JONES

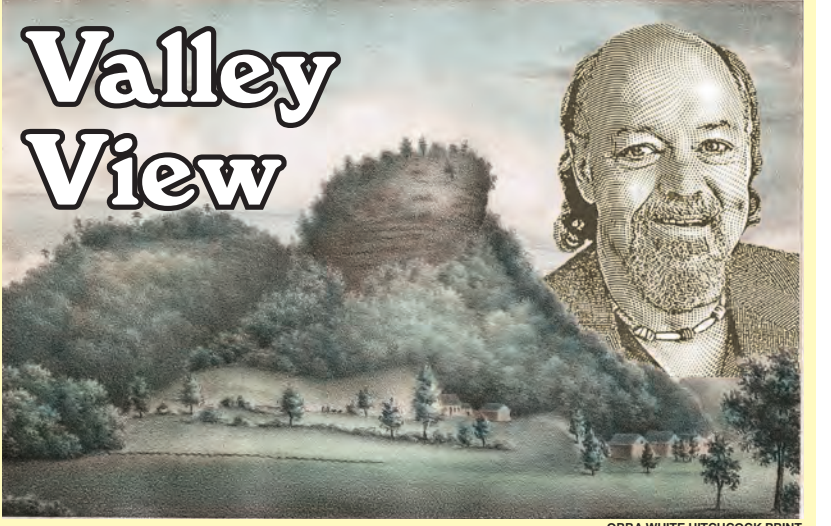
MONTAGUE – Frontier Community Access Television is a nonprofit organization that films events at and around the towns of Conway, Deerfield, Sunderland, and Whately. They film Frontier Regional High School’s sports games, concerts, public events, and town meetings within said towns. In this column, I want to share my experiences helping out.

Their outreach coordinator and senior producer is one of my teachers, and he helped me start filming and helping out at these events. I started out by filming a Telethon at my school and was immediately hooked. Since then, I have filmed lots of sports games, and look forward to doing more in the spring season. All of these events are livestreamed on FCAT’s YouTube channel.

At the beginning, I filmed the Telethon, and in those three hours, I learned so much about how cameras work and how to work with a team to put on a production of this size. FCAT had four cameras running, and at least four other people running the livestream and managing audio.

This was a big first event for me, and I must admit, I was a bit nervous. I started on one of the cameras closest to the stage, and was given a headset. For livestreaming

see **FILMING** page B4



Valley View

ORRA WHITE HITCHCOCK PRINT

Those Fenway Mem’ries

By GARY SANDERSON

GREENFIELD – Four o’ clock. Opening Day. Settled into my power recliner, my wife lounging eight feet to my right in its twin leather companion, computer tablet propped up on her lap. The Red Sox and their new flame-throwing phenom, lefty Garrett Crochet, are facing the Texas Rangers in Arlington, Texas.

Half taking in the pre-game festivities over the top of her device, my wife entertains a thought and asks, “Have you ever been to Opening Day at Fenway Park?”

“Nope, can’t say I have,” I responded, immediately drifting off into a raging stream of memories from America’s baseball cathedral that endured till the final pitch.

Funny how an innocent question like that can trigger a vivid journey down memory lane. So, I figure, why not share some of the recollections I judge appropriate, if even barely so, for a family newspaper? And while we’re at it, if space constraints don’t obstruct our path, maybe even random memories from other New England sports venues – such as the moldy old Boston Garden, Harvard Stadium, and the low-budget Schaefer Stadium in Foxboro, where I spent many a sun-baked Sunday afternoon on the east side, shifting in discomfort on Section 218’s aluminum bleacher seats.

Yes, those were the days at Foxboro, and I was there – often struggling outside the south entrance before the game to get the face-value \$18 apiece for two extra tickets. When barterers tested my patience with offers of half-price or less, I sometimes just gave the tickets to a couple of kids who looked like they’d appreciate the generous offer, and ended up joining us for the game.

The problem with a narrative like this is that the best stories can never be told in print, even if the statute of limitations has passed. Far too scurrilous. After all, one has an adult reputation to protect. Trust me, many unprintable reputation-busters arose from

the permissive Seventies – when stadiums were stuffed with cussing, cigar-chompin’ men akin to racetrack “railbirds,” and, if you can imagine, coolers stuffed with food and beverage were allowed through the Foxboro turnstiles.

Those were wild times, indeed. Maybe we can circle back if space permits.

I have vivid memories of my first trip to Fenway – purely kids’ stuff. I was 10, in the company of my father, younger brother Bobby, and South Deerfield pals Fran-nie Redmond and David Zima. Reserved-grandstand seats were \$2.25 a pop back then, souvenir programs a prohibitive 15 cents. My father knew the ticket manager and, with our seats on the first-base side, arranged a pregame meeting with budding star left-fielder Carl Yastrzemski near the Red Sox dugout. The Minnesota Twins and slugger Harmon Killebrew manned the visiting dugout.

I brought Yaz’s Topps baseball card to the game to try and get it autographed. Unsuccessful, I stapled it to the program cover when we returned home and tucked it away in a scrap book. Decades later, when my brother was the golf pro at the International in Bolton and got to know Yaz as a member, he got it signed for me with a “HOF ’89” tag signifying his Hall of Fame induction year.

By then I had been to Fenway several times with my dad and brother, but can’t say any of those visits were particularly memorable. However, that cannot be said of the times I attended games in my teens and 20s with friends and without adult supervision. Many of those adventures were memorable but not for print.

I can tell about the two-night doubleheader I attended in 1972 with older St. Joe’s of Thorndike Tri-County League baseball teammates, on the way home from an independent Saturday road game against the Amesbury semi-pro baseball club. Back then, with attendance sparse by today’s standards, you could still get good

see **VALLEY VIEW** page B3

MONTV / MUSIK / MOUNTAIN

Interview by J. BURKETT and TROY CURRY

TURNERS FALLS – Willie Lane is a local guitarist and singer who releases albums on his own label, CORD-ART. He’s been doing his music since the early ‘00s, and has a brand new LP out called *Bobcat Turnaround*.

His playing style is pretty unique, but has been described as “a wonderland of textures and sound shapes... some almost straight ahead... others as wobbly and jagged as a drunk peacock.” He has been compared to Jack Rose, who he played with back in the day. His records are usually just solo guitar, but this one is different, and has vocals, bass and drums. Get a copy ASAP, as they are limited and usually sell out fast.

Willie doesn’t play live too often, but once in a while will play places like Abandon Dream, Ooze Fest, the Drake, or Mystery Train Records, where he used to work. And he is playing next Friday, April 11 at the Deja Brew Pub in Wendell, with Matt Valentine and Spectre Folk. Check him out!

MMM: Hi Willie! What are some of your early music memories? Did you play in the school band? Any early favorite LPs?

WL: I remember being about five years old and obsessed with the song “Time Won’t Let Me” by The Outsiders (US). Oldies radio back then had a lot of Nuggets-comp songs like this. My parents struggled to procure a tape containing that song at Record Town, and could only find some budget comp of modern (’80s) interpretations. It’s good to learn about disappointment early in life.

I played in a metal-leaning “hardcore” band in high school that fortunately left no evidence. In Maine back then you had to work with what’s in front

of you. I did enjoy my metal years, though, and still like a detuned guitar now and then.

My earliest memory of full-length album immersion is a cassette of the Rolling Stones’ *High Tide and Green Grass* hits comp my folks gave me. I would get home from school, make a stack of Ritz crackers with peanut butter, and then head up to my room to draw my Matchbox and Hot Wheels cars to the sound of Sir Michael of Kent and co.

see **MUSIK** page B8



BURKETT PHOTO

#78: Willie Lane

Pet of the Week



©ARMODY COLLAGE

'CICI'

Meet Cici. *Tweet tweet!* Are you looking for a happy, singing companion? I might be just the pet for you! Cockatiels like me are very social and love interacting with humans, as well as with other feathered companions. With patience we can be trained to do tricks, sing songs, and perch on your shoulder! We are quite vocal and will brighten your home with our singing and chirping. We require quite a bit of sleep each day, about 14 hours.

Cockatiels are a social species, meaning the company of their own kind is critical to their health and well-being. A new friend will need a separate cage until friendship has been established.

Most housing sold at pet stores is too small for small pets. Cockatiels spend most of their lives inside their cage. One cockatiel requires a cage that is 24 inches wide, 20 inches deep, and 30 inches high.

The adoption fee for one cockatiel is \$100. Don't forget, cockatiels are a long-term commitment, since they can live up to 25 years.

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



By CASEY WAIT

TURNERS FALLS – We made it to Spring, dear readers!

Historically, Spring has been the season with the lowest rates of COVID transmission. Indeed, this year the trend continues, with the winter wave appearing to have peaked in January.

However, even with limited data due to the dismantling of pandemic monitoring systems begun under Biden and worsening under Trump, the People's CDC reports that as of March 25 there are 17 states in the "high or very high" categories of COVID transmission, "while nearly 50% of all states and territories are at least at moderate levels."

These estimates are almost certainly undercounts. We continue to lose hundreds of people every week to the virus, and the number of those living with Long COVID is only getting larger. Meanwhile, this month the Trump administration cut vital funding that had been allocated towards researching better preventatives and treatments for both acute and Long COVID.

Despite head of Health and Human Services RFK Jr.'s self-declared commitment to eliminating chronic illness in the United States, the very policies he and his fellow Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) movement leaders support, such as eliminating vaccination mandates for children, passage of state-level mask bans, and taking away access to or even criminalizing gender-affirming care, will instead endanger millions of Americans and further degrade our already dismal healthcare system.

From talking to friends and family members, I've gotten the sense that many liberals and leftists were taken aback by the very existence of the MAHA movement. Unless you are extremely online in leftist and disability-justice-oriented spaces, you might not have come across this strange confluence of alt-right Christian nationalists and crunchy-granola reactionary hippies.

Fortunately for you – and very unfortunately for me – I am quite familiar with these dangerous weirdos and can point the curious reader to some great media on the movement. What follows is a list of my favorite books and podcasts on all things MAHA.

1. *Conspiracy: How New Age Conspiracy Theories Became*

a Health Threat, by Derek Beres, Matthew Remski, and Julian Walker. These guys are probably the leading experts on MAHA. Beres, Remski, and Walker host the *Conspiracy Podcast*, which they began in 2020 after noticing people in their industry – all three hosts were yoga teachers at the time – falling prey to wild COVID-related conspiracy theories.

Five years later, the three have reported on the rise of RFK Jr., the anti-vaxx movement, QAnon's hold on wellness influencers, the danger of spiritual high-control groups and their tendency to support reactionary political movements, and so much more. Their book is an incredible feat of original reporting, and gives important historical context that shows that conspiratorial and spiritual movements have always been intertwined.

Their book is an incredible feat of original reporting, and gives important historical context that shows that conspiratorial and spiritual movements have always been intertwined.

2. *Doppelganger: A Trip into the Mirror World*, by Naomi Klein. Many of you are likely familiar with Naomi Klein. Even if you haven't read any of her books you've probably come across the term "disaster capitalism," which she coined in her most-referenced book *The Shock Doctrine* to describe the particular way neoliberal economic policies both capitalize on and create disasters as part of their never-ending quest for infinite growth.

In *Doppelganger*, Klein gets much more personal. She began the project in response to her experience throughout her several-decades-long career in the public eye being confused for the reactionary feminist turned right-wing commentator Naomi Wolf. She uses this experience as a way in to examine today's highly polarized political climate. She also spends a significant portion of the book discussing the anti-vaccine movement, something very close to her heart as the mother of an autistic child.

3. *The QAA Podcast*. Julian Fields, Jake Rockatansky, and

Travis View began the show, formerly QAnon Anonymous, in 2018, way before most of the world had ever heard of a little conspiracy theory called QAnon. They know more than perhaps anyone else about the subculture that has essentially taken over the Republican Party, and come to define American politics.

While the show has plenty of irreverence and silliness, thank god, they have some of the best reporting on both MAGA and MAHA movements as they emerged in real-time. Their episodes on RFK Jr. are particularly relevant.

4. *The Decoding the Gurus* podcast. Christopher Kavanaugh and Matthew Browne, a psychologist and anthropologist respectively, are known for their three-hour-long deep dives on heavy-hitting figures in the MAHA movement such as Peter Thiel, Jordan Peterson, Bryan Johnson, Andrew Huberman, and even Joe Rogan. They do their best to be fair, but aren't pulling any punches, either. They are quite funny too, which is always a bonus when dealing with less than delightful subjects.

5. *TrueAnon* podcast. By far the most irreverent source on this list but by no means untrustworthy in their reporting, TrueAnon got started by following the Jeffrey Epstein case, long before their subject ended up dead in a prison cell.

Hosts Brace Belden and Liz Franczak and their producer Yung Chomsky have put out some of the best reporting I've come across when it comes to Elon Musk, RFK Jr., Donald Trump, Epstein, and even shadowy right-wing cults like the Falun Gong and the Unification Church, a.k.a. the Moonies.

If you're not a foul-mouthed millennial or younger, you might find their delivery a little jarring, but if you can get past that and really listen to the substance of their episodes, you'll learn a lot about the people who currently run our world.

I hope these resources give you a better understanding of our current moment and how we got here. Without that, we will be ill equipped to fight back.

Want to annoy a fascist? Get vaxxed, wear a mask in public spaces, and test regularly. Take care of yourself and your neighbors. Hang in there.

With love and rage,

Your Sick Friend

Senior Center Activities APRIL 7 THROUGH 11

GILL and MONTAGUE

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

Monday 4/7

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

Tuesday 4/8

9 a.m. Chair Yoga
12:30 p.m. Tech Tuesdays
3 p.m. Tai Chi

Wednesday 4/9

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

Thursday 4/10

10:00 Psanky Class
Egg Decorating
1 p.m. Pitch

Friday 4/11

Closed

Tuesday 4/8

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

Wednesday 4/9

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

Thursday 4/10

9 a.m. Barre Fusion
10 a.m. Pilates Flow
12 p.m. Senior Tech

Friday 4/11

8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Quilting,
Open Sew

LEVERETT

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

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

WENDELL

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VALLEY VIEW from page B1

seats at the ticket windows leading into the ballpark.

On this day, with a few beers under our belts before we passed through the gate near the Green Monster, our second baseman, a garrulous, fun-loving, black Vietnam veteran from Amherst, got into an argument with a police officer that quickly escalated. Uniformed officials had a way of sparking spirited reactions from some Vietnam vets, and my teammate was one of them. To make a long story short, he never made it into the ballpark, and was instead cuffed, stuffed, and loaded into a paddy wagon to – if memory serves me – Boston’s Fourth Precinct jail, where he spent the night as a drunk-and-disorderly.

When we called the station in an effort to bail him out, we didn’t take the bait to come and get him. Sounded like entrapment to us. Not something you soon forget.

The very next year, on a free catered bus trip for St. Joe’s players to another Saturday

game, I arranged to meet my college buddy and teammate at the game, got carried away, and missed the bus home. Undeterred, we hit the Commonwealth Avenue bars after the game and spent the night in Boston. Early the next morning I hitchhiked home to South Deerfield, threw on my uniform, and drove to Thorndike in time for batting practice before our weekly Sunday doubleheader, the park equipped with a full bar and concession stand behind the backstop.

Prior to my arrival, the hilltop park was buzzing about my whereabouts. The loyal, colorful, alcoholic grounds crew was concerned: Would I or would I not show up for the game? Was I alright? As I pulled into a parking place along the right-field line, the fellas gave a smiling standing ovation.

I don’t recall how I performed on the field that day. Probably not well. Out late and up early, I was not in high-performance mode, but ready to give it a go nonetheless. Story of my young baseball life.

I also had some memorable Fenway visits with my sons. Among them was the famous October 16, 1999, ALCS Game 3 “pitchers’ duel” between Roger Clemens and Pedro Martinez, won by Pedro and the Sox, 13-1. Clemens lasted two innings and was serenaded with chants from opposite sides of the field of “Where is Roger?” / “In the shower,” long after he had settled in the clubhouse.

Also, four years earlier, the post-1994-’95 Major League Baseball strike fan-appreciation doubleheader against the Seattle Mariners, offering \$1 general-admission tickets to all on a first-come, first-served basis. I took my family and a group of Frontier Youth League players to the games and, at their request, arrived early to secure primo box seats behind the Mariners dugout. The kids wanted to get a good look at Ken Griffey Jr., and possibly even his autograph.

Unexpected was the nearby presence of a loud Griffey-hater mercilessly haranguing the young Mariners superstar with vicious

banter, including the nickname “Whiffey” as he returned to the dugout between innings, knelt in the on-deck circle, or returned to the dugout after strikeouts.

The man was there for one reason: to get under Griffey Jr.’s skin. It worked. Though big leaguers are expected to ignore such catcalls and insults, Griffey violated the etiquette by engaging in continuous exchanges with the obnoxious fan, who was finally ejected by security guards during the early stages of Game 2. I was surprised, having seen much worse fan abuse aimed at visiting players over the years.

Whew! Enough already. No time for the “Foxboro chronicles.” Just as well – such narrative would require a deep dive into full Hunter S. Thompson-style gonzo mode. I’m not certain a small community weekly is the place for that.

Questions and comments are welcome at gary@oldtavernfarm.com.



New sidewalks cover both sides of the road along busy Route 9 in Hadley.

SOUTH DEERFIELD – Sidewalks, often overlooked in the tapestry of urban infrastructure, are quietly undergoing a renaissance both in western Massachusetts and worldwide. These unassuming pathways are not just concrete slabs but the arteries of pedestrian life, connecting communities, fostering social interaction, and promoting sustainable mobility.

Recent developments in western Mass, including new sidewalks along Route 9 in Hadley and a half-mile addition in Sunderland, are a cause for celebration if you, like me, are sick of cars taking up all the room.

One of the most exciting additions to sidewalks in my part of the Valley is a planned mixed-use pathway that will run from Whately’s park-and-ride lot just off Route 91 at Routes 116 and 5 & 10, all the way down 116 through Sunderland over the bridge, and connect to another path on Meadow Street in North Amherst. An eight-mile proposed new path, though so far just the study has been funded by MassDOT.



The proposed mixed-use path will run along Route 116 from Whately to North Amherst.

Sidewalks are no longer an afterthought in urban planning. Recent laws and guidelines are redefining their dimensions to ensure accessibility and usability for all. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has long set the standard, requiring sidewalks to be at least 36 inches wide, with passing spaces every 200 feet if the width is

less than 60 inches. However, new updates from the US Access Board have introduced more comprehensive guidelines. These include specifications for curb ramps, detectable warning surfaces, and even shared-use paths designed for pedestrians and cyclists.

In Massachusetts, whenever a new highway is built or one is improved, the plan must consider cars, bicycles, and pedestrians. The state’s Complete Streets program has been the basis for grants for dozens of towns, using funds with a catch. In 2024, Northfield received a grant for \$127,000 for sidewalk improvements in the town.

According to MassDOT, the Complete Streets program “addresses critical gaps in transportation networks by giving Massachusetts municipalities tools and funding to advance Complete Streets in their community. Complete Streets provide safe and accessible options for all travel modes – walking, biking, transit and vehicles – for people of all ages and abilities.”

I drove down Route 9 between Hadley and Northampton and, to my surprise, found there are now two nearly completed eight-foot-wide shared-use paths down each side of this state highway. Full of stores, restaurants, and shopping malls, the road needed pedestrian and bicycle access. *Done.*

In 2025, when the town gets a grant to improve sidewalks and streets they have to build these bikeways and think about pedestrians, not just cars. These regulations aim to create inclusive spaces accommodating everyone, from wheelchair users to parents pushing strollers. The emphasis is on equity and accessibility, ensuring that sidewalks are not just functional but also welcoming.

Montague has received several rounds of Complete Streets funding. In 2020, the town developed its bike lane along Avenue A and Montague City Road and made pedestrian safety improvements at the top of Unity Street, as well as in Montague Center and Millers Falls. In 2021,

nearly a mile of new sidewalk was built along Montague Street and Turnpike Road, to help kids walk more safely to school.

And this year, the town is focusing on Montague Center with a third round of grants aimed at improving bicycle safety and bus connectivity, as well as better connecting sidewalks and crosswalks around the town common.

A Nation On the Move

Across the United States, cities and towns are investing in sidewalk infrastructure like never before. This surge is driven by a growing recognition of the role sidewalks play in public health, safety, and environmental sustainability. Urban centers like Los Angeles and New York boast extensive networks, but smaller towns are also stepping up.

For instance, Massachusetts has seen a notable increase in sidewalk mileage. The state has prioritized pedestrian-friendly initiatives, adding miles of sidewalks to improve connectivity and safety. This trend is mirrored nationwide, with federal and state governments allocating funds for sidewalk construction and maintenance.

Projects are either adding sidewalks or removing large highways and boulevards around the country. In San Francisco last year, voters decided to turn a two-mile-long section of the Great Highway along the waterfront into a pedestrian park, a linear open space for everyone but cars to enjoy. The park will open this month, and cars will be permanently banned.

Around the World

Many cities around the world are embracing pedestrianization projects to create more walkable, vibrant, and sustainable urban spaces. Here are a few standout examples:

Paris is undergoing a remarkable transformation of the Champs-Élysées, aiming to turn this iconic avenue into a giant pedestrian-friendly green space. This has been a car-dominated part of

Paris for generations.

The project, spearheaded by Mayor Anne Hidalgo, involves a \$304 million plan to reduce car lanes, introduce greenery, and create inviting public areas. The redesign will cut the number of car lanes in half, replacing them with bike paths, rain gardens, and shaded pedestrian zones connecting the Arc de Triomphe to the Place de la Concorde.

Copenhagen, Denmark is renowned for its pedestrian-friendly zones, particularly Strøget, one of the world’s longest pedestrian shopping streets. This 1.1-kilometer stretch in the city center prioritizes walkability and social vibrancy, blending historical charm with modern commerce.

In Miami, Florida, one of the nicest places to shop, walk, and eat is Lincoln Road, an eight-block section for pedestrians only near the ocean.

In Burlington, Vermont, tourists are attracted to the Church Street Marketplace, where more than 100 stores, cafés, and restaurants share a car-free environment with attractive brick sidewalks.

In Barcelona, Spain, La Rambla is undergoing a dramatic transformation that emphasizes pedestrians. It has added thousands of large trees, new pavement, and moved bus stops to improve flow. It’s hard for some to believe that this iconic 1.3-kilometer street used to be choked with car traffic. The iconic street now offers more tree-lined promenades, street vendors, and a

lively atmosphere that attracts both locals and tourists.

In Melbourne, Australia, the city has expanded its network of pedestrian laneways, turning underused alleys into vibrant spaces filled with cafes, street art, and boutique shops. These laneways have become a hallmark of Melbourne’s urban culture.

Closer to home, Massachusetts is making strides in sidewalk development. Last year, a .08-mile sidewalk was completed in Sunderland from the center to Claybrook Road. This addition connects key areas and provides a safe pedestrian route, reflecting the town’s commitment to creating a more walkable community. Several years ago, South Deerfield saw all of the sidewalks on Sugarloaf Street repaved after decades of disrepair.

And in Northampton, the effort called “Picture Main Street” for 2025 envisions adding bike lanes to both sides of Main Street, adding more pedestrian areas, and changing the car lanes from four to two. It’s a very controversial plan, opposed by hundreds of business owners but strongly endorsed by the mayor and many city councilors.

Max Hartshorne, from South Deerfield, is the editor of the GoNOMAD.com travel website and the host of the GoNOMAD Travel Podcast, with weekly short form episodes, every week: feeds.captivate.fm/gonomad-travel-podcast.

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FILMING from page B1

there is always one person who switches between the cameras with a device, so the viewers get more interesting views and things stay moving. That person is constantly talking to the people running the cameras, telling them when they are live or even what to point the cameras at.

I quickly figured that out, and once there was a break, I switched off with someone else. We all rotated back and forth all night until the Telethon was over, and that was basically the whole event.

These events are pretty big, but if you have a big production team, everything is more manageable and less intimidating.

Anyway, the next event that I filmed was the Pioneer Valley Tip-Off Classic for my school's basketball teams. It took place at UMass, but this time I felt more comfortable, knowing more of the people helping out. FCAT has their own cameras and equipment, which meant that I would be using the same camera and would know more about it this time. This was the case, and after everything was set up, we went live.

Filming basketball is definitely one of the easiest things to do, because you just have to make sure all of the players and the hoop are in frame, and aside from that, you just follow the ball side to side on the court.

There are a couple exceptions,

like timeouts, penalties, and other portions of the game. During timeouts you typically zoom in on the team and cycle between both of the teams until the timeout is over. With penalties you want to capture what is happening, but turn the camera away if somebody is hurt, as that can be hard to watch and possibly embarrassing for that person. Also, at the beginning of the game, during the national anthem, you typically zoom in on the teams or even the American flag.

These two events were my first big ones, and ever since then, I have only been filming home games that take place at my school. These can vary significantly in size, as a rivalry game will have more attendees and thus would require a bigger production.

An example of this was a game Frontier played against Greenfield. This game had been hyped up at school for multiple days, and the student section was completely filled that night. About eight FCAT volunteers showed up, including myself, and we went to work. We would be running four cameras and doing live replays of this game.

Replays are common for more professional sports game streams, but this was very complicated for a group of eight volunteers to manage. Anyway, I showed up early to help set up, and it just so happened that the Junior Varsity teams of

CONCERT REVIEW

'Sweet Spirit: Songs of Joy, Peace, and Freedom'

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – I like to review concerts, and was looking for one to review as the weather began to warm up. I found one on Saturday afternoon at the Second Congregational Church in Greenfield called "Sweet Spirit: Songs of Joy, Peace, and Freedom." It was presented by the LAVA Center, and featured performances by Música Franklin and Twice as Smart.

Both Música Franklin and Twice as Smart are groups of children performers. Besides singing, the groups also played a couple of violins during the performance, and a piano accompanied them as well. Both sounded very nice with the singing.

Most of the kids were grade school age. Their singing sounded like something you would hear in

a church, and I believe they sang songs you would hear in church. Two of the songs were "Sweet Sweet Spirit," by Doris Akers, and "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child," which I once heard in a movie.

One performer sang a solo while a guitar was playing. For a little while, the guitar continued playing during the singing. Their singing was good and almost sounded professional or at least well-trained. One of the adults directing the singing, Gloria Matlock, sounded very good herself when she sang. The crowd there applauded quite well at what they heard.

An alright crowd of people showed up, and it turned out to be a relatively short and sweet concert. Despite this people appeared to enjoy it. The kids' performance showed they worked hard at all of this. I was happy with having gone to review this concert.

Greenfield and Frontier were playing when I walked in. My teacher showed me the replay machine, and I got to practice on the JV game.

I was not able to run the replay machine for the Varsity game, because I am usually running a camera, but the game started and everything was off to a great start.

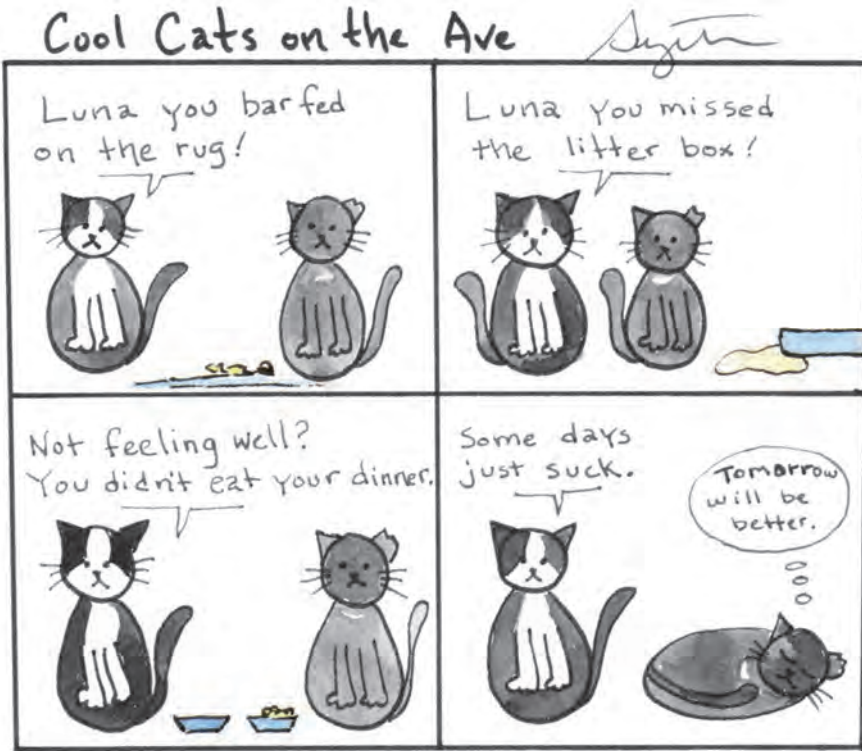
As I mentioned, we were running four cameras. One high camera was the default and filmed the entire court, another mostly zoomed in and caught the drama, and, the final two cameras were under the hoops, for action and capturing cool shots.

To go from raw camera footage to a polished livestream output there are multiple steps. All of the cameras send their video into a video switcher, which is a machine someone can control to decide which camera they want to show. After that, the person running the replay machines decides whether to show the live game or a replay in the downtime.

Finally, you have it all go through computer software which can add effects to the screen, and even the score. Of course, the commentators are reacting to the game live, and their audio is used.

I could talk about filming sports games and other events for hours, but this is just a brief summary of it. I am still filming with FCAT, and we are getting prepared for the spring season, with softball, baseball, and maybe even track and field. I love filming, and it has definitely become a new interest of mine, one I was not aware of before a couple of months ago.

In my next column I will write about my family's trip to Ireland, and some of the cool things that we did when we were over there.



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BACKGROUND

Research Spending Targeted

BY SPENCER SHORKEY

MILLERS FALLS – For two months now, a wave of executive orders has resulted in cutting and restructuring federal research spending at a pace that is difficult to follow and comprehend.

Chemist Derek Lowe has been documenting the challenges federally-funded researchers are facing in a series, “The Continuing NIH/NSF Crisis,” on *In the Pipeline*, his blog at *Science* (www.science.org/blogs/pipeline).

I prompted ChatGPT to read Lowe’s series and generate this informative summary. I fact-checked its response, and cut some of it for the sake of brevity:

The United States has long been a global leader in scientific research and innovation, with institutions like the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Science Foundation (NSF) playing pivotal roles in advancing knowledge and technology. The US has enjoyed decades of dominance in science and technology, contributing to its global influence and economic prosperity.

Notably, between 2000 and 2023, 40% of US Nobel Prize winners in sciences were immigrants, highlighting the nation’s ability to attract top talent worldwide.

The scientific community has faced increasing uncertainty due to shifts in federal funding priorities. Reports indicate that the US federal government has canceled over 300 research projects funded by the NIH, including 65 related to HIV care advancements. These cancellations jeopardize efforts to prevent new HIV infections and expand care access, potentially leading to an increase in HIV cases and hindering scientific progress.

The situation has been further exacerbated by plans to significantly restructure the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Robert F. Kennedy Jr. announced intentions to cut 10,000 jobs from HHS’s workforce of 82,000, close half of its regional offices, and create a new agency called the Administration for a Healthy America (AHA).

This restructuring aims to streamline bureaucracy but raises concerns about its impact on key health agencies, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Food & Drug Administration, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, and the NIH.

The internal environment within agencies like the NIH has become increasingly chaotic. Probationary employees, including those recently promoted or relocated, have been terminated under the guise of performance issues, despite a lack of performance reviews. While some agencies have rehired employees under court orders, the NIH has yet to fully address these workforce reductions. Administrators have been directed to submit plans for further reductions, signaling ongoing

efforts to strip funding and personnel from science-focused federal agencies.

The funding cuts have had a pronounced effect on early-career scientists and research programs. The suspension of programs like the NIH post-baccalaureate initiative has disrupted career trajectories for aspiring researchers.

Since January, executive orders have led to extensive federal funding cuts, hiring freezes, and job losses, constraining opportunities for students and graduates to gain essential research experience. Faculty and students have reported considerable reductions in graduate program admissions, exacerbating competition and limiting pathways into scientific careers.

Certain research areas have come under direct attack, compounding the crisis. For instance, NIH-funded researchers have been instructed to remove all mentions of mRNA vaccine work from their grant applications. There is fear that existing grants in this area may be canceled, reflecting a broader trend of politicization affecting scientific research priorities.

Additionally, the NIH has canceled all work on vaccine hesitancy, indicating a shift away from supporting studies aimed at improving vaccine uptake.

Compounding the crisis is the drastic reduction of the NIH’s indirect cost allocations – from 60% to 15% – which universities rely on for essential research infrastructure and administrative costs. This reduction poses severe financial challenges for research institutions, potentially leading to layoffs, diminished research capabilities, and halted projects.

The academic community has expressed deep concern that these cuts reflect a broader public distrust of higher education, potentially alienating many from its perceived benefits.

The current funding crisis poses a significant threat to the US’s position as a global leader in science and technology. The freezing of funds, cancellation of projects, and dismissal of scientists create an atmosphere of uncertainty that could lead to a “brain drain,” with both domestic and international talent seeking opportunities elsewhere.

This potential exodus jeopardizes the nation’s ability to compete in critical areas such as artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and other emerging fields.

In response to these challenges, the scientific community is mobilizing to advocate for the protection of research funding and the integrity of scientific inquiry. Researchers and institutions are organizing demonstrations and engaging in dialogue with policymakers to underscore the importance of continued investment in science for societal and economic well-being.

The situation calls for a concerted effort to uphold the values of scientific progress and to ensure that the US remains at the forefront of innovation.

SCIENCE STORIES

The State of Science in 2025: UMass Graduate Student Perspectives

By MATT FERTAKOS

AMHERST – Recent actions by the Trump Administration have impacted science at all levels throughout the United States. Funding freezes¹ and cuts,² elimination of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs,³ and mass layoffs⁴ are only a few examples of how science has come under fire.

As a plant ecologist and biogeographer, I study the role of the ornamental plant trade on plant invasions as well as create models to identify sites for the restoration of vulnerable native plant species under future climate conditions. My time as a PhD student at UMass has been mainly funded through the National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship Program.

Not only is the future of my funding that allows for work that directly benefits the health of our landscapes and ecosystems now uncertain, the government career path I have been working towards now seems impossible.

– Matt Fertakos, *Organismic and Evolutionary Biology PhD Student*

As an ecologist that studies bees and their parasites, my funding comes from the National Science Foundation, and hopefully the USDA. (I have a grant in submission from October.)

The likelihood of getting this grant now seems even less tenable, and my ideas and hopes for my future career and the research we can do to benefit native pollinators seems murky at best.

– Elyse McCormick, *Organismic and Evolutionary Biology PhD Student*

I work on climate adaptation for healthy plant communities, and my funding is connected to the United States Geological Survey (USGS). I also work specifically on diversity, equity, accessibility, inclusion, and justice in climate adaptation science, so some of my work has been halted and censored by federal actions, and support for my research is unstable. As a transgender person, I am simultaneously affected by the loss of civil liberties for myself and my family.

We all pay for climate change one way or another, so it’s important to me to continue to do the hard work of trying to protect ecosystems, food systems, and human communities as much as possible.

– Thomas Nuhfer, *Organismic and Evolutionary Biology PhD Student*

My research focuses on removing pollutants from our environment to protect the Earth and human health. Overall budget cuts have led to a smaller, and more competitive, funding pool, meaning the likelihood of continuing my research is on thin ice. With that, it is unlikely I will find employment opportunities through other alternatives, as academic programs are already rescinding accepted students and organizations like the USDA have faced large cuts to their funding and jobs.

– Julie Sentman, *Plant & Soil Science PhD Student*

My research questions explore protein interactions that have been identified as targets for cancer therapies, particularly multiple myeloma. My initial research has been funded by a NIH traineeship.

The fundamental biology that results in successful treatments and cures for disease often stems from funding like mine; cutting it will slow the treatment of disease and hamper American competitiveness in the biomedical industries.

– Andrew Doig, *Molecular and Cellular Biology PhD Student*

These are only some of the many ways in which these federal actions are affecting graduate students at UMass Amherst.

Science needs *you* more than ever. Please contact your representatives and make them aware that you care about science funding and do not approve of the actions of the Trump administration. Donate to organizations that support science education and advocacy. Keep yourself up to date on how the government is affecting science by reading the news, blogs, and having discussions with your peers.

Whether you are a scientist yourself, or just interested in science, you can stand up for the in-

novation, employment, safety, and quality of life that science brings.

If you want to learn more, here are some groups which are organizing actions to protect science: The National Center for Science Education; 500 Women Scientists; Science for the People; United for Medical Research; and the Union for Concerned Scientists.

This article appeared first on the “That’s Life [Science]” blog (www.sci-stories.org), a project of the UMass Amherst graduate student organization Science Stories.

¹ Stein, R. (February 22, 2025). “NIH funding freeze stalls applications on \$1.5 billion in medical research funds.” *NPR*.
² Mervis, J. (February 19, 2025). “There’s a big courtroom showdown over NIH’s ‘indirect costs’ this week. What are they?” *Science*.
³ “Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing.” *Executive Order No. 14151*.
⁴ Garisto, D., Kozlov, M., and Tollefson, J. “Trump team orders huge government lay-offs: how science could fare.” *Nature*.
⁵ Langin, K. (February 21, 2025) “U.S. early-career researchers struggling amid chaos.” *Science*.

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THURSDAY, APRIL 3

Belltower Records, North Adams: *Erica Dawn Lyle & Marshall Trammell, belltonesuicide, Hurry Scurry, Cryovacs*. 7 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Vinyl Night with Breakdown Records*. 9 p.m. No cover.

FRIDAY, APRIL 4

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

Waterway Arts, Turners Falls: *Sadie's Bikes' Gumball Machine Takeover* feat. *Sue Blauner, Lyndee deal*. 5 p.m. No cover, bring quarters.

Brick House Community Resource Center, Turners Falls: *Queer Community Night*. Food, games, community visioning. 5 p.m. Free.

Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: Film, *Wings of Desire* (1987). BYOB and snacks "speakeasy" with music at 6 p.m., feature at 7 p.m. By donation.

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.

Floodwater Brewing,

Shelburne Falls: *Deep Seize*. 7 p.m. No cover.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Red Baraat*. 7 p.m. \$

JJ's Tavern, Florence: *Ex-Temper, Lucky Shots, Don't Tell Iris*. 7 p.m. \$.

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

Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Wildcat O'Halloran Band*. 8 p.m. No cover.

Hutghi's, Westfield: *Fugue State, Pearl Sugar, Clean Freak, The Lowliest One*. 8 p.m. \$.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Fatboi Sharif, K-The-1???, Wave Generators*. 10 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, APRIL 5

Greenfield Public Library, Greenfield: *Winter Farmers Market*. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. \$.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *League of Women Voters Legislative Coffee*, open to the public, with guest speakers *Natalie Blais* and *Jo Comerford*. Refreshments served. 3 p.m. Free.

All Souls Church, Greenfield: *The Legacy of Pete Seeger*, with dozens of performers. "Led by old

friends of Pete." 3 p.m. Free.

CitySpace, Easthampton: *Bluegrass jam session*. 4 p.m. Free.

Four Phantoms Brewing, Greenfield: *Jazz Rules Quintet*. 6 p.m. No cover.

Unnameable Books, Turners Falls: Poetry with *Julie Choffel, Curtis Emery, Matthew Klane, Zoe Tuck*. 7 p.m. \$.

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

Wendell Meetinghouse, Wendell: *Sound Journey with Nirmal Chandraratna*. 7 p.m. \$.

Bartlett Hall, UMass Amherst: *Bread & Puppet*. 7 p.m. Free.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Lez Zeppelin*. 7 p.m. \$.\$.

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

Guiding Star Grange, Greenfield: Contra dance with *River Road*, beginners' workshop, *Alyssa Adkins* calling. 7:30 p.m. \$.

St. James Church, Greenfield: *GCC Community Chorus spring concert*. Includes choral pieces by Schütz, Bach, Handel, Haydn, Brahms, Barber, Pinkham, and Arnesen. 7:30 p.m. Free.

Whately Town Hall, Whately: *Max Wareham & The National Bluegrass Team; Berklee Women and Non-Binary People Ensemble*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

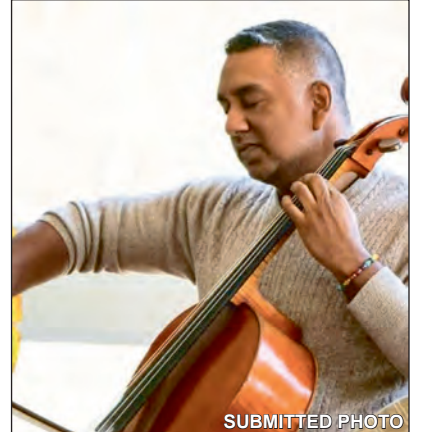
Bombyx, Florence: *Know the Ledge: Hiphop History Live* feat. *Sa-Roc, Akrobatik, Dutch Rebelle*, more. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Tillis Hall, UMass Amherst: *Etienne Charles: Creole Soul*. 8 p.m. \$.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Shakedown CITI, Grateful Dead* tribute. 8 p.m. \$.

Sulis Studio, Florence: *Joe Mygan, Faucet, Ether Codex*. 8 p.m. \$.

CitySpace, Easthampton: *Ida Mae Specker*. 8 p.m. \$.



New York City-based Kirtan artist Nirmal Chandraratna will lead a sound meditation "journey" with cello, voice, percussion, and harmonium at the Wendell Meetinghouse this Saturday.

EXHIBITS

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

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Where We Are, Together*, paintings by Cameron Schmitz, through May 26.

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

Sawmill River Arts, Montague Center: Vanessa Kerby, guest artist showing ceramics during the month of April. Reception next Saturday, April 12 from 1 to 4 p.m.

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

Leverett Crafts & Arts, Leverett: *Playmakers: Making Sense of the World Through Art*, artwork by Whitney Robbins, Bobby Brown, and Joan Green. Through April, with an opening reception this Saturday, April 5 from 2 to 5 p.m., including a dance performance at 3 p.m.

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

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

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

Fiddleheads Gallery, Northfield: *STEAM Art and Science*, group show that incorporates elements of science, April 4 through May 18. Reception this Sunday, April 6 from 2 to 4 p.m.

Gallery A3, Amherst: *Closed and Wide Open Spaces*, paintings by Nancy Meagher. Through April 26, with a reception this Thursday, April 3 at 5 p.m.

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. Through May 30.

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

Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne: *Student Art Exhibit*, work by fifth- and sixth-graders at the Mohawk school district, through April 27.

Hosmer Gallery, Forbes Library, Northampton: *Zine Libraries of Western Mass and Beyond*, collection of zines from regional libraries. Through April, with a reception next Saturday, April 12, from 2 to 4 p.m.

Borgia Gallery, Elms College, Chicopee: *For a Pair of Wings*, works by Hannah Hurricane. through April 18.

April 30. Email kmartineau@cwmars.org with questions.

The Greenfield Redevelopment Authority is looking for digital submissions for art to be displayed in the two 40-by-60-inch windows of the former **First National Bank building** on Bank Row. Details at greenfield-ma.gov/gra. Deadline to submit is April 17.

CALL FOR PERFORMERS

The Brick House is seeking teen performing artists from Franklin County for the second annual **Franklin County Teen Performing Arts Showcase** on May 23 at the Shea Theater.

Musicians, actors, dancers or any other type of artist who would like to perform are welcome to apply. Performers will receive a small stipend. Apply at www.tinyurl.com/Teen-Showcase-Sign-up by April 27. Contact olliepawell@gmail.com with questions.

CALL FOR EVENTS

RiverCulture, the creative economy program of the town of Montague, is seeking **cultural events for their 2025 summer calendar**, including performances, art exhibitions, history talks, music festivals, craft fairs, theater, farmers markets, outdoor movies, and workshops. All events must take place in Montague between May 24 and September 22. Send details to riverculture@montague-ma.gov before April 28. Include the name, date and time, cost, and location, plus a one- or two-line description. Call Suzanne with any questions at (413) 863-3200 ext. 115.

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CALENDAR



Hutghi's, Westfield: *Chris Goudreau, True Jackie, Noble & the Clones*. 8 p.m. \$.

Midnight's, Brattleboro: *Just Lee, Glum Reaper, Mollgoth*. 9 p.m. No cover.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Brad Vickers & His Vestapolitans*. 9:30 p.m. No cover.

SUNDAY, APRIL 6

Millers Falls: *Millers Falls Village Clean Up Day*. Meet in front of the library for coffee and muffins before getting your assignment and trash bag. Bring gloves. 9 a.m. Free.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Mr. Liam, Rocking Puppies*. 10 a.m. \$.

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

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

Erving Public Library, Erving: *I Dissent*, one-woman show featuring actor *Sheryl Faye* as *Ruth Bader Ginsburg*. Registration required. 2 p.m. Free.

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

Leverett Library, Leverett: *Beth Logan Raffeld Trio*. Benefit for an accessible, interactive community park on the library grounds. Tickets available at www.tinyurl.com/LevRaffeld or at the library. 4 p.m. \$.

Hutghi's, Westfield: *Killer Fiction, Wishful Thinking, Schenectavoidz, eleveninchstormtrooper, Brain Vacuum*. 5 p.m. \$.

Greenfield Garden Cinemas, Greenfield: Film, *Bad Shabbos* (2024), part of the Pioneer Valley Jewish Film Festival. Tickets at www.tinyurl.com/badshabbos2 6:30 p.m. \$.

Iron Horse Northampton: *Martin Barre*. 7 p.m. \$\$.

MONDAY, APRIL 7

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: *Yesterday's Mail*, multimedia presentation by the Wendell Historical Society. 6:30 p.m. Free.

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

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Väsen-Duo*. 7 p.m. \$.

TUESDAY, APRIL 8

Mount Toby Friends Meetinghouse, Leverett: *Heart-Conscious Communication* with

Karen Fogliatti, Ph.D. Free introduction for a paid eight-week series. 6 p.m.

Wendell Meetinghouse, Wendell: *Honoring Elders: Karen & Michael Idoine*. Bring stories. 6:30 p.m. Free.

Nova Arts, Keene: *mssv, Landowner*. 7 p.m. \$

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Nels Cline's Consentrik Quartet*. 7 p.m. \$.



Shenanigans With Friends bring an eclectic mix of folksy, country, bluesy, and rocky to the Great Falls Discovery Center next Friday, April 11, a benefit for programs.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9

Next Stage Arts, Putney VT: Documentary screening, *The Velvet Underground* (2021), dir. Todd Haynes. 7 p.m. \$.

Hutghi's, Westfield: *Tara Clerkin Trio, Stefan Christenen, Bent Light*. 7 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Falltown String Band*. 8 p.m. No cover.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Shayfer James, Sparkbird*. 8 p.m. \$.

THURSDAY, APRIL 10

Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environmental Center, Northfield: *Monthly Hike*. Pre-register at www.bookeo.com/northfield. 1 to 3 p.m. Free.

First United Methodist Church, Greenfield: *Música Franklin Talent Show* with student performances, grades 1 through 12. Dinner after the show. 5 to 6 p.m. Free.

Dickinson Library, Northfield: *Circles of Safety Workshop*. For parents and caregivers, especially those raising teens, to learn about preventing child sexual abuse. 5:30 p.m. Free.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: Documentary film screening, *Deep Rising* (2023). 6:30 p.m. Free.

New Salem Public Library, New Salem: *Learn to Play the Ukulele* with *Julie Stepanek*. Instruments provided, "but bring your own

if you have one." For ages 12 and older. 6:30 p.m. Free.

The Drake, Amherst: *Lydia Lunch*, spoken word, with musicians *Tim Dahl and Matt Nelson*. 8 p.m. \$.

FRIDAY, APRIL 11

Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: *Montague Square Dance*, with *Pretty Cranks*, caller *William Wellington*. Jammers welcome.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Willie Lane, Matt Valentine, Spectre Folk*. 8 p.m. No cover.

The Drake, Amherst: *Tank & The Bangas, Elliott Skinner, DJ Zeus*. 8 p.m. \$.

33 Hawley, Northampton: *Vic Rawlings & Arkm Foam, Jake Meginsky & Lemuel Marc, Milk of Mustard Seed*. 8 p.m. \$.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Band of Brothers*, Allman Brothers tribute. 8 p.m. \$.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Lost Film, Nanny, Slant of Light*. 8 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Behold! True Believers, Fool & the World*. 9:30 p.m. No cover.

SATURDAY, APRIL 12

Our Lady of Czestochowa Church, Turners Falls: *Easter Bazaar*, with a variety of Polish food including babkas, kielbasas, pierogis, and the national dish of Poland, bigos or hunter's stew. Luncheon, raffle, bake sale, arts and crafts. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. \$

Main Street, Athol: *Big Cheese 5K Race*, 9:30 a.m., \$; *River Rat Promenade*, 9:35 a.m., free.

Greenfield Savings Bank, Turners Falls: *Shoemaking with Sharon Raymond*. Using scrap leather to create toddler shoes. 1 p.m. Free.

Leverett Public Library, Leverett: *Juggler Meadow String Band*. 1 p.m. Free.

Millers River, Athol: *River Rat Race*. 1 p.m. Free.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Vernal Pool Variety Hour: Secrets to Frog and Salamander Survival*. Drop-in program. For ages 7 and up. 2 to 4 p.m. Free.

Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: *Open mic*, with featured performers *Annika Amstutz, George Wilson, and Becky Hollingsworth*. 6:30 p.m. By donation.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Seva, Snowbeasts, Clock Serum, Orange Demon, Starvation Wages*. 7 p.m. \$.

Guiding Star Grange, Greenfield: Contra dance with *Red Case Band, Lisa Greenleaf* calling. 7:45 p.m. \$.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Joan Osborne*, singing Bob Dylan songs and originals. 8 p.m. \$

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Consider the Source, Unqualified Band, Chiburi*. 8 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Teen Driver, Hardcar, Grammerhorn Wren*. 9:30 p.m. No cover.

looking forward...

SUNDAY, APRIL 13

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *One Master, Midden, Compress*. 7 p.m. \$.

MONDAY, APRIL 14

Greenfield Garden Cinemas, Greenfield: Film, *The Encampments* (2025), documentary on Palestinian solidarity movement at Columbia University. 7 p.m. \$

THURSDAY, APRIL 17

Drawing Board Brewery, Florence: *Hollow Deck, Pressure Care, Blues Poison Dart Frog*. 7 p.m. \$.

FRIDAY, APRIL 18

25 Main, Northampton: *Barbie ai, Maddog, Roost, World, Tech.Ota + Topher, System_failure*. 10 p.m. \$.

FRIDAY, APRIL 25

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

FRIDAY, MAY 2

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

SUNDAY, MAY 4

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

SATURDAY, MAY 10

Energy Park, Greenfield: *Cranky-Fest*, epic illustrated storytelling. 2 p.m. Free.

FRIDAY, MAY 16

The Drake, Amherst: *Gold Dust, The Croaks, Silvie's Okay, Mibble*. 8 p.m. \$.

SUNDAY, MAY 18

Lunder Center, Williamstown: *75 Dollar Bill, Alexander Turnquist*. 5 p.m. Free.

TUESDAY, MAY 27

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Ralph White, Colby Nathan, Spectre Folk, Frozen Corn*. 8 p.m. No cover.

FRIDAY, JUNE 6

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Johnny Folsom 4, Johnny Cash* tribute. 7:30 p.m. \$.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 23

Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center, Great Barrington: *Roseanne Cash*. 8 p.m. \$\$.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 16

Dream Away Lodge, Becket: *Home Body*. 8 p.m. No cover.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 30

Tanglewood, Lenox: *Lynyrd Skynyrd*. 7 p.m. \$\$.

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MUSIK from page B1

MMM: What are some of your favorite venues?

WL: I loved the Khyber in Philly – a perfect room for a small rock show. Terrible bathroom, though, which makes for CB’s comparisons, not that I ever went to the latter.

Here in MA I have very fond memories of nights at the Hampshire Tavern, as well as those at a secret location in Belchertown called the Carhole. The Book Mill remains a lovely spot, too. And of course the New Grass Center for Underground Culture was another early ’00s hotspot.

MMM: Any stories or feelings about western Mass, and the scene out here? How is it different from Philly?

WL: Hard to compare scenes when you’re as housebound as I am, and with a flagging memory to boot. But I’d say the W. Mass scene I’m witness to tends to take more influence from free improvisation, and the Philly acts generally have songs/compositions.

Always exceptions, natch. Somewhat related: Dredd Foole is a die-hard Phillies fan.

MMM: Do you want to talk about your new LP? It seems like a departure from the others.

WL: Well, I’m singing “songs,” so yeah, that is a departure! I got to a point where I was coming up with guitar riffs that just didn’t sound right on their own, and so I was forced to use my voice, in a way. Good thing I live out in the country where I can practice without bothering anyone except my wife, the poor thing.

This record is also not strictly solo, as I was fortunate enough to have Rob Thomas and Ryan Jewel lend their formidable talents.

MMM: Any all-time fave re-

cords? Or recent LPs or bands you are digging right now?

WL: Too many all-time faves. But a recent thing I’ve dug has been the Gray/Smith *Heels In The Aisle* LP - it has very cool meandering, unexpected guitar lines, and a great sound overall.

I was listening to Liz Durrette’s keyboard LPs and enjoying them. And then there’s this one-sided outsider-folk monsterpiece by Lau Nau and Joshua...

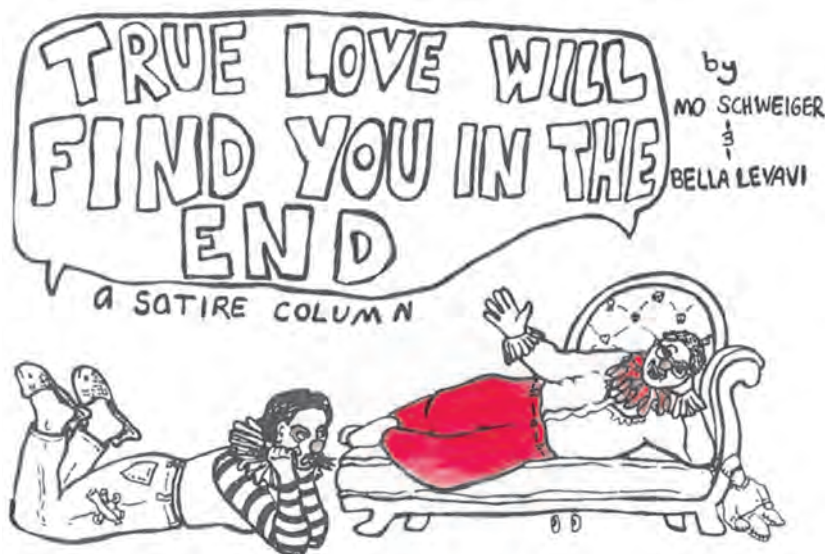
MMM: Any memories from your years at Mystery Train?

WL: My shifts tended to be more exciting for what was in the New Arrivals than any sort of hijinx.

I do remember being alone on a quiet, rainy Sunday, deciding it was the perfect time to reckon with Deep Purple as I’d hitherto never really investigated. In the middle of “Hush,” a large man with headphones on and wearing a Deep Purple t-shirt trundled down the stairs and burst through the door. After taking a few steps he froze and pulled a ’phone off one ear as a smile spread across his face.

“Deeppurple!” he said in a sort of stage-whisper, and a stream of DP/Blackmore/Rainbow/Tommy Bolin factoids came spraying out of his mouth like a firehose. He then marched over to the ‘Purp CD section, extracted some obscure and misbegotten live recording stickered at \$5 – normal CD price back then: \$8 – and brought it to the counter to begin the big dig inside his pockets of change.

He got to about \$3.76 before I said “close enough,” and bagged the treasure up. He then winked at me and said “I’m going to enjoy this!” before exiting the premises, whereupon he sat on the ledge next to ABC in the pouring rain and listened to that DP bootleg in a state of sheer bliss.



Cease and Desist

Dear Mx. Mudballs,

You are receiving this letter because we at the Daniel Johnston Estate have learned about your continual use of Mr. Johnston’s song title “True Love Will Find You In the End” as the title of your column, *True Love Will Find You In the End*. This is a complete and utter misuse of his likeness and original idea: cease and desist immediately or we will pursue further legal action.

You might be thinking, “Poor me, nobody understands me, poor me.” Well, let me tell you, Mx. Mudballs: this is the story of an artist! Daniel Johnston was a once-in-a-lifetime talent, and you are making a mockery out of his life’s work.

I read your column, all thirteen editions, as well as your compilation zine (available for purchase over Instagram DM @menschorama for a sliding scale of one to one billion dollars). I’ll have you know that I paid the low end of the sliding scale, and am taking advantage of your “hard work.”

Mx. Mudballs, you give terrible dating advice! Moreover, it has nothing to do with anything that Mr. Johnston would say. You say that seeing your crush threw you into an “absolutely rabid and trancelike

state of baby fever that spun you into a heterosexual frenzy.” What Daniel would have said is, “She has pretty hair. I want to touch her hair.” Mr. Johnston’s work is all about simplicity; all you write is convoluted bullshit!

Not only this, but there is not a single mention of drugs throughout your entire completed works, something that goes against the Johnston way. I doubt you even used drugs except for one time in college!

In exchange for using the Johnston name, you have been cursed to only be able to draw like him every time you pick up a pen. Your posters will never look good, though, and will lack the charming, irreverent timelessness of Daniel Johnston’s work.

Furthermore, it is unimpressive to make a series of films under the name “Shmaniel Shmonston” (clearly in reference to the late and great Daniel Johnston) that feature you in clown makeup. This is clearly punching down at a man with mental health troubles rather than showing the reverence that you think clown makeup implies. Nobody else understands that when you put on clown makeup and borrow someone’s name, it is the highest form of compliment that

you know how to offer with your limited skills. If you plan to use Mr. Johnston’s likeness in clown again, please make this clear.

We have also tapped your phone and have been listening to your conversations. You have to stop telling your roommate, “That’s so Daniel,” when they make bad art. Give them real feedback! Try changing things up with something like “Picasso-esque!” or “Peter Schumann would love.”

This is your first warning. If you publish one more column under this libelous name, Turners Falls will revert from Bestietown, USA, to Deviltown, USA.

If you publish two more columns besmirching Mr. Johnston’s lineage, you will never get a girlfriend, much like Mr. Johnston.

If you publish three more horrendously off-base articles under the header “True Love Will Find You In the End,” you will be taken straight to the funeral home. On the way there, Joe will be kicked while he’s down!

If you publish four more, your “Shmaniel Shmonston” films will never be received well by the public, and will be rejected from the Ashfield Film Festival. Knowing how much you care about that celebration of the creativity of Ashfield residents – of whom you are not – things will not get that far. If they do, let’s just say that your punishment will involve people you’ve never met stealing your identity and giving out even worse dating advice than you do (if that’s even possible!).

Remember, everything you cling to will rot, and everything you do will be forgotten by everyone you ever tried to impress.

You have been warned.

True Love Will Find You in the End (TLWFYITE),

The Estate of Mr. Daniel Dale Johnston

P.S.: Loved your set at Birge.

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