

The Montague Reporter

November Dates Chosen For School Region Vote

By MIKE JACKSON

FRANKLIN COUNTY – The regional agreement to form a new six-town school district will go to Montague voters on Tuesday, November 18, officials announced tentatively this week, though there is a chance the proposal could be defeated before that day, as most of the other five towns – Bernardston, Gill,

Northfield, Leyden, and Warwick – are scheduling special town meetings for Saturday, November 15. If any town rejects the agreement, the district will not be formed. “It’s important that people show up for the election regardless of what the other towns vote,” Montague town administrator Walter Ramsey told the town finance committee see **SCHOOL** page A6

Trust Trumpets Turn Toward Broader Public Involvement



About 40 people joined a walk Saturday up Taylor Hill on the largest of three adjacent parcels acquired by the Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust.

By WILL QAULE

MONTAGUE CENTER – Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust welcomed Montague community members to its annual membership meeting on Sunday, held under a banquet tent on the Four Corners Conservation Area, one of the land trust’s newest acquisitions. The meeting’s location was chosen to highlight the organization’s move toward involving a broader community in its conservation work. The organization purchased the Four Corners property – three parcels comprising 47 acres at the in-

tersection of Old Sunderland and East Taylor Hill roads in Montague Center – in December 2024 from the Watroba family, with the assistance of an anonymous donor and in coordination with the Franklin County Community Land Trust and a network of local residents. On Sunday Mount Grace presented this network, the Friends of Four Corners, with this year’s Conservator of the Region Award. Farm conservation program manager Tyson Neukirch emphasized the “care, creativity, and steadfast dedication of this neighborhood see **CORNERS** page A7

GILL SELECTBOARD

Town Maneuvers to Keep Primary Assessor on Staff

By KATE SAVAGE

At Monday’s meeting, the Gill selectboard addressed a spate of assessor resignations. Tim Storrow resigned from the board of assessors and Diane Sumrall resigned as assistant to the board of assessors. However, the remaining two members of the board of assessors announced that they had not yet accepted Sumrall’s resignation, in the hope that a last-minute pay raise could convince her to stay. “It’s conceivable we don’t have a vacancy if we get all of this worked out,”

said member Pamela Lester. Following recommendations by the personnel committee, the selectboard established the position of “principal assessor,” with a Grade 6 wage of \$30.46 to \$37.07 an hour. If Sumrall chooses to stay in her position, there would be a separate negotiation about what her wage on that scale would be. This creates two assessor staff positions, but the board clarified that only one should be held at any time. Selectboard member Greg Snedeker explained this would create see **GILL** page A4

No Hotels, Five-Floor Buildings in Farren Zone

By JEFF SINGLETON

MONTAGUE CITY – On Tuesday night the Montague planning board endorsed a set of zoning changes for the area surrounding the former Farren Hospital property on Montague City Road. The document, presented by town planner Maureen Pollock and consultants with the Innes Land Strategies Group, was broadly identical to the one approved by the board on August 26 and by the selectboard on September 8, but with a number of updates. The proposal will now return to the selectboard, and will ultimately be approved or rejected at a special town meeting on October 22. The changes, according to the planning department’s mission statement for the project, are intended to facilitate the development of a new “village center” on the former see **ZONE** page A5

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Drainage, Disposal, Monitoring Costs Spiral

By JEFF SINGLETON

On the early evening of October 3, visitors to Turners Falls will be able to see children and adults holding *papier-mâché* bugs “alongside the Skeleton Crew trolls and revelers from the Montague Shakespeare Festival,” according to a press release from the “Great Ghouls Night Market.” The event, part of RiverCulture’s “First Fridays” program, will assemble at 6 p.m. at Peskeompskut Park, march down the Avenue A sidewalk to the bike path, and proceed to the parking lot on Second Street behind the former Chick’s Garage. At that location, visitors will be entertained by a “kazoo adoption ceremony,” a bug performance of *How the Moth Fell In Love With the Light*, and a “ghostly revelry” combining elements of Shakespeare plays performed by actors from the Montague Shakespeare Festival. There will also be a “ghouls’ market” from 5 to 8 p.m. On Monday, the Montague selectboard approved the necessary permits for the event, as well as for vendors and a live band in the parking lot next to the Shea Theater on Thursday, October 2. Matthew Wolaver, who presented the request, see **MONTAGUE** page A5

After Quarter Century, Butterfly Conservatory Begins a Metamorphosis



Vytautas Sukys looks on as owner Kathy Miller holds a tortoise at Magic Wings Butterfly Conservancy, which he and his sister are in the process of purchasing.

By BEN GAGNON

DEERFIELD – As Magic Wings celebrates its 25th anniversary as a butterfly conservatory in Deerfield, owners and siblings Kathy and George Miller III are in the process of selling the unique tourist attraction with a tentative date to close in November. They’re turning the business over to another brother-and-sister team, Victoria Tubbs and Vytautas Sukys of Greenfield. It wasn’t easy to find a buyer for a butterfly conservatory, but it just so happens that Tubbs got married at Magic Wings 15 years ago and was excited to learn it was up for

sale. Her brother Vytautas – a former aerospace engineer at NE-XT Technologies in Greenfield – is focused on expanding interactive activities and bringing the facility to the next level technologically. “They’re coming in with tons of passion, energy, and excitement,” said Kathy. “It’s going to be a really good thing for people to come in with new energy, new blood, but the same mission.” With 4,000 tropical butterflies filling the 8,000 square-foot conservatory, the typical response from a person walking through the door is, “Wow!” Mimicking a tropical environment, the large rooms have high, see **BUTTERFLY** page A6

High School Sports Week: Fumbles, Digs, and Defeats

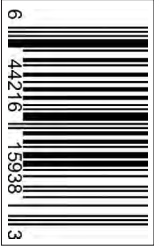
By MATT ROBINSON

TURNERS FALLS –The Turners Falls and Franklin Tech teams took advantage of the continuing drought to squeeze in several outdoor events this week. In soccer, the Turners Falls boys remain unbeaten at 6–0–1, and have

scored 27 goals while holding their opponents to just three. Franklin Tech’s golf squad saw their undefeated streak end as they were forced to play without some key players. And in football, Frontier scored on their first play from scrimmage and proceeded to score three more see **SPORTS** page A4



Multiple Eagle defensive players – Landon Smead, Brenton Russell, Wyatt Whitman, and Brady Gancarz – wrap up Frontier Regional running back Garrett Dredge last Friday as Franklin Tech hosted Frontier Regional.



| Brains Drained for Annual Maintenance | |
|---|----|
| Kazoo Adoption Ceremony..... | A1 |
| Deadly Impact of Disconnection..... | A2 |
| Small Nod to Families..... | A3 |
| Emitting Ultrasonic Soundwaves..... | A4 |
| Discrimination Against Cannabis..... | A5 |
| Giant Hissing Cockroaches..... | A6 |
| Children and Litigious Adults..... | A7 |
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| Lurkers Playing the Edges..... | B1 |
| Waste Cleared From the Brain..... | B2 |
| Last Seen With No Shirt..... | B3 |
| Mountain the Craziest..... | B4 |
| Stumble Out and Find Their Feet..... | B5 |
| Secret Agent, Dark Angel, Lark Ascending..... | B6 |
| Baby Shower, Speed Dating, Petting Zoo..... | B7 |
| Mention of a Prophecy..... | B8 |

The Montague Reporter

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Assessment

From here in the middle of history it isn't entirely clear whether we're seeing a new turn toward political violence or merely a continuation of mass-shooting culture, coinciding with a polarization of the society that happens to be in its crosshairs.

In Nashua on Sunday a 23-year-old man shot up his former workplace, a country club, killing a random diner and wounding two others. He reportedly shouted several slogans including "Free Palestine," landing the attack in national news even though New Hampshire attor-

ney general John Formella said the man was "likely... trying to make a number of different statements to create chaos in the moment."

Then came Wednesday's tragedy in Dallas, where a 29-year-old man shot several immigrant detainees, killing one, before turning his gun on himself. Within minutes the vice president of our country announced that it was part of an "obsessive attack on law enforcement."

It must feel good to live in a world that simple. A full day later, no one has bothered to name the victims.

NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION



Anthony Manzi stands inside his shop, Anthony's Accents, on the big curve at 20 French King Highway in Erving. Manzi opened three years ago selling quality used furniture and household goods. Find the shop at anthonysaccents.com or stop by Wednesdays through Sundays from 12 to 5 p.m.

OP ED Navigating the Mist

By NICOLE ST. HILAIRE

FRANKLIN COUNTY – Resilient readers, I come to you today with a much different message than I would have just a couple of weeks ago. I intended to discuss National Recovery Month and how we can be a more recovery-friendly community – which I still intend to do – but I must address the elephant that has entered our collective room.

It feels wrong to avoid the intensity and heaviness that has settled like dense fog all around us. I can't promise that the fog will clear by the end of this article, but I hope to offer you a perspective that can help ground us as we navigate the mist together.

The past several days have been brutal – heartbreaking, shocking, and dark. It feels as though the world has shifted, exposing the cracks of division that have seemingly widened as we carried on with our busy lives. Yet, some of us are so close to the divide that we couldn't help but notice the shift much sooner.

At the Opioid Task Force, we witness the deadly impact of disconnection and division every day, and it has been going on far longer than the last few weeks or years. This time, though, the undeniable reality was forced into our collective consciousness, rather than allowing us to pass it quietly on the street in the form of a stranger struggling to exist as a whole, valued human being.

Disconnection is one of the greatest risk factors for addiction. In fact, it is said that the opposite of addiction is connection. That sense of connection enables a person to make their way towards, and to sustain, a state of recovery. It is so crucial that the phrase "keep coming back" is a mantra adopted by many in recovery circles and shared with those working their way through the hardest parts of their journey. Attending meetings and sharing space with each other builds recovery capital.

Peer recovery centers, such as the North Quabbin Recovery Center and the RECOVER Project, exist to provide spaces for individuals in need of community, connection, and hope. They have built tables that allow people to gather in all of their humanity and remind each other that they are in this together. All pathways, walks of life, and points of view are welcome to sit and talk, even when it's hard.

This is how we reduce risk, harm, and isolation for those in recovery. If only we could embrace this framework of belonging and dignity across all of our spaces, the fog would finally lift.

I have found that gathering people around the table is something we only prioritize when it's a holiday, or even worse, a funeral. When was the last time you had people over to your home to enjoy a meal and foster authentic connection and understanding?

In this world of screens, convenience, social media, and echo chambers, we are rarely given the opportunity for conversation and to meet people where they are. We are too busy, too tired, and too worried about self-preservation to think about what is going on with the people around us. We have lost that crucial meeting place for building relationships and community.

During my time as a military spouse, the dinner table was where I learned the power of belonging and creating a chosen family. It encouraged me to build a bigger table for others, and it benefited the most lonely among us. It kept us grounded and helped us talk through our struggles. It stifled the rumor mills and kept people from turning to vices to process their pain and lack of social connection. Over a hot meal, we saw kindness and understanding grow.

None of us is immune to the impact of recent events, and my family was no different. Opinions and harsh words started to flow among the people I love. This is when I called for a long-overdue family dinner. Instead of dwelling on our opinions and differences, we focused on what connects us in deep, tangible ways. That space allowed us to lean into shared values and common ground, defusing the power of division.

The tables we build are a tool for peace and civil discourse, which are more important now than ever. We need to prioritize these gatherings often to build resilience and peace with each other.

As we sit and try to make sense of the fog and the challenges we face as a nation today, may we be reminded that we have more similarities than differences. There is no limit on the size of the table if we decide to use our tools to build a bigger one. Isolation and disconnection are remedied by inclusion and communication.

The opposite of addiction is *connection*. Keep coming back – and, most importantly, know there is always more room for you at our table.

Nicole St. Hilaire is the CONNECT Outreach Manager at the Opioid Task Force of Franklin County and the North Quabbin Region. This piece was originally published by the Opioid Task Force as part of its newsletter on September 19, 2025, and was republished with permission.

Letter to the Editors

Montague: Precinct 4 Voters' Meet-Up?

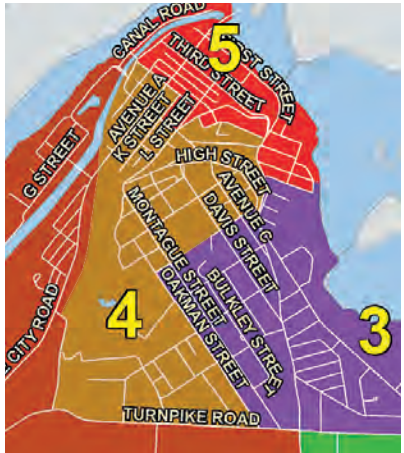
Last winter before a Special Town Meeting, Ella Ingraham organized a meet-up for Precinct 4, with help from Roberta Potter. I attended and enjoyed meeting neighbors and going through the warrant for the upcoming Special Town Meeting together.

With Ella's blessing and encouragement from several other Town Meeting members from Precinct 4, I'd like to do something similar on Sunday, October 12 this year.

I have not settled on a time or location yet – it would help to have a sense of how many people might attend. I'd also be happy to connect with folks who are up for organizing similar gatherings in the other precincts! Please write me at jaudley01376@gmail.com, or leave a message at (413) 863-3060, if you are interested.

Town Meeting members will get information about what's on the warrant for the October 22 meeting in the mail about two weeks in advance, and that same information will be posted on the town website.

If you want to follow along with deliberations related to requests on the warrant, pay attention to the Selectboard meetings on September 29 and October 6, and the Finance Committee's meeting on October 1. For background on zoning-



Montague's Precinct 4 represents a section of the Hill and part of downtown Turners Falls. It is the only one of the town's six precincts that does not touch the Connecticut River.

related issues, look to the Planning Board, and for topics related to "capital" (town-owned vehicles, buildings, streets, etc.), the Capital Improvement Committee.

I've also heard about a petitioned article, a proposal for Montague to declare itself an Apartheid-Free Community, and some of the petitioners are holding an info session about that this Saturday, September 27 at 3 p.m. under the tent in front of the Carnegie Library.

Jen Audley
Turners Falls

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TURNERS FALLS AND VICINITY.

Compiled by MIKE JACKSON

Rain! We’ve needed it.

News broke late here, too late for a news article (the plight of a weekly!), about the **Ralph C. Mahar regional high school** in Orange. Reporter Josh Heinemann called in after Wednesday night’s Wendell selectboard meeting in an agitated state, passing along a report by Kate Woodward, that town’s rep to the Mahar school committee.

The background is a tough budget year out in Orange, which supplies four-fifths of the high school’s learners and feels the smaller towns, Wendell, New Salem, and Petersham, are not paying their fair shares. Josh said Woodward said the Orange selectboard has formed an *ad hoc* committee to address the issue, which has now proposed, as one option, Orange evacuating the regional school agreement. “That choice does not answer where 400 students will go,” Josh points out.

This is all corroborated by a recent piece in the *Athol Daily News*. We’ve been up to our eyelids in the local re-super-regionalization pitch and had not properly been paying attention, but this is sure to be a story we cover in the coming weeks and months. Stay tuned.



The **power canal is drawn down** this week for its annual maintenance. It’s always worth staring at. Imagine a household member emptied of blood one week each year, lying solemn-eyed on the couch. Monday at dusk tiny figures in galoshes could be seen wandering the muck with nets, either rescuing or hunting the last terrified canal fish. This year the old Keith pedestrian bridge is also coming down, and FirstLight sent us an email Thursday morning letting everyone know that the closures of adjacent sections of Canal Street and the bike path, originally planned through this Saturday, will be extended to October 3.

Everything takes more time.



Proofreader Jamie Simpson brought in this photo of **Virginia creeper adorning the canal fence** in the Patch. Super seasonal. These colors are *in* right now.

Inveterate good neighbor Jen Audley, who also appears on the facing page, reached out in her Franklin Regional Council of Governments capacity to promote local efforts around **Good Neighbor Day**, which stretches out over this Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

The holiday is promoted statewide by the Massachusetts Coalition to Build Community and End Loneliness – www.endlonelinessma.com – and this year its tendrils extend into ten local towns. Affiliated events include a resource fair Friday afternoon at the Greenfield senior center, a community baby shower Saturday morning at the Greenfield Library, and a festival and 5K run Sunday at Avery Field in Leyden.

The crown jewel is a free screening of *Won’t You Be My Neighbor?*, the 2018 documentary on beloved public TV genius Fred Rogers, at 3:30 p.m. Sunday at the shire town movie theater. RSVPs to www.gccfor.me/neighbor are requested. The film is followed by a “panel discussion on the power of being neighborly.”

Stacey Langknecht of the Brick House Community Resource Center writes:

“The Brick House is hosting the Springfield No One Leaves organization for an **Eviction Sealing Clinic** on Monday, September 29 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Attendees who speak either English or Spanish will be able to meet with a lawyer to have their past eviction(s), sealed to make it easier to find housing moving forward.”

Registration at www.tinyurl.com/Sealing25 is required! The Brick House is at 24 Third Street.

When the old Catholic hospital in Montague City was razed recently the statue of Jesus Christ was moved to the Catholic church on Seventh Street, Our Lady of Peace (OLP),

and the church has now installed a Pathway of Bricks in front of Him with a stone bench on it intended for contemplation, OLP spokesperson Charlene Currie shares.

In related news, OLP is hosting a blessing and public gathering at 3 p.m. Sunday, October 5 featuring a Bishop, a town official, a local historian, “and remarks from the Sisters of Providence, a descendant of Bernard Farren, current and former nurses, volunteers, staff members, and community workers.”

This event, which Currie adds will draw “countless ‘Farren Babies,’” will start with a program inside the church and then move outdoors for the statue-blessing.

The Farren, first as a hospital and then as a long-term care facility, has had a deep impact on this community – and not just its Catholic constituency – and its demolition, however well-reasoned, is significant and meaningful. Gathering to commemorate losses is a crucial part of community re-integration, and I’m glad to see the congregation offer this public invitation.

Those of us who want to be *good neighbors* – especially those who were born at other hospitals far away, who have been made welcome here, who hope to see new homes one day built on that big flat sad empty lot, who would welcome even newer arrivals – are encouraged to go and listen to what the Farren Babies have to say.

The **Turners Falls Pizza House** announced this week that it will no longer accept “the old yellow coupons with the plain black printing,” due to a rash of coupon counterfeiting.

Many of our best readers have donated to us their spare coupons, as pizza leads to journalism and journalism leads to other good things, and we are sad to have to trash 16 old low-security coupons from the warchest, the equivalent of a pizza and a third. We will re-integrate.

In related news: Two people reading proofs of today’s Montague selectboard coverage in our office were surprised to hear the **Montague transfer station** does not accept cash for disposal fees, and are still sitting with the implications of the policy.

The **Independent International Commission of Inquiry** tasked by the United Nations Human Rights Council to investigate the matter announced its determination last week that the Israeli state is carrying out a genocide in the Gaza Strip. All eyes on the Global Sumud Flotilla.

Send your little bits of news to editor@montaguereporter.org.

OP ED Reflections on ‘Family Day’

By JENNA WELD

TURNERS FALLS – Founded in 2001 by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Use (now the Partnership to End Addiction), Family Day has been celebrated by families and organizations across the country. The holiday has been celebrated locally on the fourth Monday of September since 2006.

Family Day is based on the idea that a family that eats together creates stronger bonds. A stronger family unit leads to many positive changes; research supports that family time helps youth delay the first use of drugs and alcohol.

The Communities That Care Coalition has made it a major goal for the past 20-plus years to aid families of all backgrounds. Our PEER Ambassador parent-to-parent outreach program has taken action every year. For us, Family Day has been our chance to give back

to the families of Franklin County and North Quabbin.

The PEER Ambassador program is built of parent leaders that give our time to bridge the gaps in our community. We help families find existing resources and create new resources where there are gaps.

PEER Ambassadors represent thriving community organizations, including Community Action Family Center and the RECOVER Project in Greenfield, the Brick House Community Resource Center in Turners Falls, and Valuing Our Children in Athol and Orange. The Ambassadors have led many families to the resources there and many other sites.

For the past five years the PEER Ambassadors have held events celebrating Family Day. The first year consisted of family photos with a professional photographer. The second year, we made two Family Day commercials outlining the importance of family togetherness – one

in English and one in Spanish – and followed the commercials’ creation with a homemade lasagna dinner that we prepared to make family meals easier.

Last year was the most successful year for me as an Ambassador, and as co-chair of the Parent Family Engagement Workgroup. We served and delivered 25 fully prepared rotisserie chicken meals to families in Greenfield and Turners, tripling the number of families we fed from the previous year. We had donations from Just Roots for salad, and a side of rice as well.

I got to personally reach out to and engage with these families, and it felt so personal. As someone who uses my lived experience to help other families, this was so humbling for me. I came from a family that would have received this meal. As the only child of a single mother, we had struggles. There were many times we spent together over a meal

that was funded by family, because we just couldn’t make ends meet.

For me, Family Day is that moment of recognition for myself in the community, a small nod to the families that I represent. This community has a pulse and a heartbeat, and I have never felt more home.

This year the PEER Ambassadors lost funding, and the program’s beloved coordinator – but the group is determined to carry on.

Now more than ever we strive to build the bridges between our community and the available resources, bringing families together and working to postpone the age of first use. We hope that you can join us soon at an event where we can feed your family and where you, too, can have precious family time.

Jenna Weld is a PEER Ambassador at the Brick House Community Resource Center in Turners Falls.

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GILL from page A1

a “pathway” to allow a staff member to begin at the entry-level position and work upward.

While Sumrall worked as “assistant to the assessors,” the town paid for her courses to achieve certification. Snedeker suggested that in future cases, the town could consider a side letter agreement, wherein the employee would agree to either stay in the role for a certain amount of time or repay certification costs to the town.

Board of assessors member William Tomb noted that the cost of training is only around \$2,000. “How long are you going to indenture somebody for \$2,000?” he asked.

The selectboard decided to hold off on searching for Sumrall’s replacement while there is still hope that she will stay.

Attendees welcomed Storrow to likewise reconsider his resignation and remain on the board of assessors. Tomb said Storrow is leaving after four and a half years to focus on other pursuits, “perhaps his handmade furniture.”

Lester and selectboard member John Ward expressed appreciation to Lynn Stowe Tomb, the chair of the personnel committee, for helping to galvanize the group and move forward on the issue.

Sewer Sonar

Sewer commissioners Peter Conway and Jeff Suprenant joined the selectboard for sewer business.

The commission sent a certified letter to Cielito Lindo, a food truck in Riverside, about the need to comply with the town’s new grease disposal regulations. The business has until October 4 to show some action, after which it will receive a formal warning.

“They can come and ask for help,” offered Snedeker.

The commission voted to purchase a Doppler flow meter for the sewer system, provided a test of the new equipment goes well. The meter would measure how much sewage is sent from Riverside to Montague for treatment. Currently, Gill pays Montague according to a calculation based on how long its

sewer pumps run.

The proposed gadget is cheaper than in-flow meters, and is installed on the outside of the pipes. It works by emitting ultrasonic soundwaves into the pipe and measuring the change in the sound’s frequency – known as the Doppler effect – to calculate how fast the fluid inside is moving. “There’s no maintenance to it,” said highway superintendent John Miner. “There’s no upkeep to it.”

The town has \$25,000 remaining in ARPA money for a new flow meter, but it is projected to only cost around \$10,000. Town administrator Ray Purington said he would explore how the remaining funds could be used. Much of the sewer equipment still needs to be updated, according to Miner.

The commission voted to make sewer bills due within 30 days of issuing the bill. Purington said this would make the process less confusing. Before now, payment has been due 60 days after the bill was issued. That meant late bills overlapped with the next quarter’s bills,

causing some sewer users to overpay, which created more work for the collector.

The commission didn’t vote to change sewer rates, but Purington noted that they may need to rise in future quarters or future years to meet expenses.

Other Business

The selectboard board renewed an agreement for services with the Upper Pioneer Valley Veterans’ Services District for fiscal years 2027 and 2028.

It approved an application for a one-day liquor license to Helene Grosvenor for an acoustic music festival at a private residence on Saturday, October 4.

A community dance will be held at the town hall this Saturday from 6 to 9 p.m., and the Gill Harvest Festival is Sunday at noon on the town common. Selectboard chair Charles Garbiel announced there would be hayrides at the festival. “Come one come all, it’s always a good time,” he said.



SPORTS from page A1

times on fourth downs to topple the Franklin Tech Eagles.

Boys’ Soccer
FCTS 4 – Greenfield 3
TFHS 4 – Athol 0
TFHS 3 – FCTS 1

Last Thursday the Eagles soccer team crossed the bridge, and won a close one against Greenfield. Nathan Gheorghita scored twice for Tech and gave an assist, John Gheorghita and Sorin Marin also kicked in goals, while Cody Yetter gave an assist. In net, Jakob George made eight saves.

On Saturday the Turners Blue Thunder played a rare weekend game out in Athol, blanking the Red Bears 4-nil. In this one the defense came alive, limiting Red to just two shots on goal, both of which were saved by Jackson Cogswell.

Offensively, Yolvin Ovalle-Mejia scored two goals, Rojelio Galvez Mendez and John Ramirez-Martin one each, and Noah Kolodziej gave an assist.

On Monday, the traveling Thunder outkicked Franklin Tech 3-1. Ovalle-Mejia scored twice again, both times assisted by Kolodziej, while Rojelio Galvez scored once assisted with Ramirez-Martin. For the Eagles, Nathan Gheorghita scored an unassisted goal.

Girls’ Soccer
FCTS 4 – Westfield Tech 1

The Eagles’ girls’ soccer squad went on the road Tuesday, defeating Westfield Tech 4-1.

Lindsey Taylor scored two goals, Carly Walsh finished with a goal and an assist, Tristan Bliss had a goal, and Cayleigh Aldrich and Payson Lynde each gave assists. Goalie Mady Lynde made four saves.

Golf
Frontier 151 – FCTS 164
Westfield Tech 170 – TFHS 198
FCTS 159 – TFHS 186
Westfield Tech 173 – FCTS 176
FCTS 166 – McCann 167
Smith Voc 173 – TFHS 189
TFHS 183 – Pioneer 189

Last Thursday, the Eagles were knocked off of the undefeated ranks at Cherry Hill golf course down in Amherst. Jack Day and Braeden

Talbot tied for third place with 38s.

The Turners Falls Thunder, meanwhile, traveled to Shaker Farms golf course in Westfield, where they were bested by the Westfield Tech Tigers. Ethan Eichorn shot a 46.

On Friday the two teams went club-to-club at Thomas Memorial. I arrived at Thomas’s while the players were practicing their swings and the coaches were conferring. It was pretty interesting. The coaches were studying the official rulebook, discussing some of the gray areas and lesser-known rules. They spoke about Tech’s loss at Cherry Hill and kibitzed about individual golfers, and what they were working on to improve their games.

The match went about as expected, as Franklin got back on the winning track. Talbot, Mason Vassar, and Jack Day took the top three spots, followed by Cam Cogswell and Ethan Eichorn of Turners. Ayron Hemingway, Jr. also competed for the Eagles, while Andrew Eichorn and Liam Kerivan completed the Thunder foursome.

On Monday, the Tech linksmen dropped their second match of the season at Shaker Farms. Day led the field with a 37, Talbot tied for third with a 44, and Kingsbury and Mustante finished seventh and eighth respectively.

Tech bounced back on Tuesday, edging out the McCann Green Hornets at home. Day had the second-best stroke tally with 39, followed by Grady Deery (40), Talbot (41), and Hemingway (46).

The Thunder, meanwhile, were at Wyckoff Country Club in Holyoke, losing 173-189 to the Smith Voc Vikings. Ethan Eichorn shot a 40 to earn match medalist honors.

On Wednesday the drought broke, but the Turners Falls-Pioneer golf fight went on as scheduled. It was cold and wet at Thomas’s but the Thunder held on to win their second match of the season. Cam Cogswell was the match medalist with a 39.

Tech and Turners meet again at Thomas Memorial this Thursday.

Volleyball
FCTS 3 – Athol 1

Last Friday, the Franklin Tech Spiking Eagles defeated the Athol



Franklin Tech’s Sarah Beckwith dives to make a dig against the visiting Athol Bears last Friday as teammates Lilyann Baldwin (10) and Emma Petersen (13) look on. The Eagles bested the Bears 3-1 for the win.

Red Bears 3-1. I watched most of the first match before heading to the football game. Tech went on to win the first two contests by double digits before dropping the third by 9 points. The fourth match was the most closely fought battle, with the Eagles pulling it out 25-23.

Sarah Beckwith finished with seven aces, four kill shots, 14 digs, and two assists. Jenna Petrowicz had three aces, three kills and five digs; Skylei LaPan made six aces and six digs; and Madison Pettin-gill had two aces, seven kills, three digs, and a block.

Football
Frontier 36 – FCTS 12

Later on Friday, the Franklin Tech Football Eagles saw their brief win streak come to an end at the hands and feet of the visiting Frontier Red Hawks.

When I got to the game, the Hawks were already up 8-0. “They scored on their first play,” one of the regulars informed me as I made my way to the sidelines.

Seconds later it was 8-6 as Maxon Brunette had a monster kick return and Tech, too, scored on their first play from scrimmage. The Eagles were unable to tie it up,

though, as the 2-PAT failed.

The teams banged helmets for the rest of the quarter, but neither was able to score until Frontier went for it on a fourth-and-8. Not only did they convert the first down, but they scored a touchdown to give Red a 16-6 lead with seconds left in the first period.

The Eagles orchestrated a long drive, and scored with 9:13 to go in the first half to make it 16-12. Alas, another two-point attempt failed, and the team kicked away the ball still trailing by four. Sixty-three seconds later the Frontiersmen scored again, making it 22-12, though this time the Eagles denied them the extra point.

The rest of the half was a slugfest, with neither team reaching paydirt, until just before the buzzer when Frontier went for it again on a fourth-and-8. Not only was the pass completed, but the receiver raced into the end zone to make it 28-12. The Eagles again denied the PAT, but headed into halftime down by 16.

When the teams returned to play, both seemed fatigued. The second half saw multiple infractions called, including personal fouls, and both teams fumbled the ball away and could not find the end zone. Finally,

Red scored on another fourth-down attempt to ice a 36-12 victory.

Eagles QB Mason Bassett completed five passes for 65 yards. Wide receiver Hunter Donahue made four catches for 55, and tight end Cole Bassett made the other reception for 10. On the ground, Brunette led Tech with 56 yards, scored a touchdown, and ran back a kickoff 84 yards. Wyatt Whitman rushed for 30 yards while Nathan Sabolevski ran for 24, scoring Franklin’s other touchdown, and Donahue, Brady Gancarz, and Nolyn Stafford carried the ball.

Defensively, Whitman led with 15 total tackles, Carsten Couture recovered two fumbles, Camden Cousineu caused a fumble and Sabolevski jumped on one, and Gancarz knocked away a pass. Joseph DiSciullo kicked off three times for 98 yards, and punted twice for 72.

On a happier note, the Turners Falls/Franklin Tech cheer squad is back. They plan to rile up the crowd at every Franklin Tech home game, including on Turkey Day against the Smith Voc Vikings.

The Eagles host a rare Thursday night game this week against the Pathfinder Pioneers.



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MONTAGUE from page A1

said the celebration will precede a performance at the Shea by Reprise, a Phish tribute band. Wolaver was assisted by RiverCulture director Suzanne LoManto and Shea managing director Linda Tardif.

In related news, the board approved a request by John Stobierski, an ownership partner of the cannabis firm Flower Power Growers, to amend its “community host agreement” with the town for its grow facility in the airport industrial park.

The agreement, which was originally approved by the state Cannabis Control Commission (CCC) in 2020, had recently been returned for revision because the commission found it contained an “indemnity clause” that did not apply to other businesses in the town. “The CCC has made a blanket determination that those are discriminatory against cannabis businesses,” Stobierski told the board.

Town administrator Walter Ramsey also informed the board of a potential “land swap” involving the municipal airport and the Franklin County Technical School (FCTS). He said he had been approached by FCTS superintendent Rick Martin, who told him the school is considering starting an animal science program, and would like to discuss swapping 10.6 acres of property it owns across Industrial Boulevard for 11.8 acres of wooded airport land adjacent to its campus.

Ramsey said that only half the parcel on the street could be developed, “but in my opinion, it is developable,” whereas the wooded land has no street frontage.

The board did not take a vote on the proposal, which would require the approval of the airport commission. Ramsey said the school would need a “statement of support” from the town by mid-October to apply for a grant for the program.

Transfer & Disposal

Public works superintendent Sam Urkiel proposed fee increases for a number of items residents take to the town transfer station for recycling or disposal. The most notable increases would be for soiled, unusable mattresses, from \$35 to \$50; TVs, computers, and monitors, from \$15 to \$25; and a new charge to dump brush, at \$12 per cubic yard.

Ramsey justified the latter charge, which would apply to brush but not to leaves, “because there is a cost for chipping that all down.” He also said town staff had discussed

accepting cash at the station rather than money orders or checks, as now is the case, but rejected the idea as it is not required and “there is no easy way to do that.”

“I didn’t see [the fees] getting jacked up a whole lot,” selectboard chair Matt Lord said as the board approved the increases.

The board approved a contract with the engineering firm Tighe & Bond to test the surface water, groundwater, and gas at the former landfills on Sandy Lane. Ramsey said the cost of the testing, which is mandated by the state, has increased because the town is required to test not only the capped landfill but the former burn dump.

Urkiel also reviewed projects completed this summer, including the paving of the Third Street and Fourth Street municipal parking lots and South Street in Montague Center.

Traffic & Drainage

Assistant town administrator Chris Nolan-Zeller reviewed a previously discussed proposal to apply for a Local Early Action Planning (LEAP) grant from the state Department of Transportation. The new program helps “rural and underserved communities” design transportation projects to be eligible for construction grants.

The grant is intended to help the town identify solutions, not only to washouts on the Hill, but also to stormwater entering the old sewer system, periodically causing “combined sewer overflows.”

According to the meeting agenda, the board had expected to vote on a grant to design a shared-use path down Industrial Boulevard, improving the connection between Turners Falls High School and Franklin County Technical School, but Nolan-Zeller said he and Ramsey had been rethinking the application and were considering focusing on traffic-calming measures where students walk along Turners Falls and Millers Falls roads.

After a wide-ranging discussion of the need for traffic calming, future grant opportunities, and the pros and cons of the Industrial Park path, the board authorized an application that would “incorporate as many of these

elements as possible.”

The board approved a \$458,750 grant agreement with the state Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to fund a “master plan” to address stormwater runoff and erosion on the Hill neighborhood in Turners Falls. The design grant is intended to help the town identify solutions, not only to washouts on the Hill, but also to stormwater entering the old sewer system, periodically causing “combined sewer overflows” into the Connecticut River.

The town plans to contract with the Springfield firm Fuss & O’Neill, which helped with the application, Nolan-Zeller said.

Toxic Bridge

Nolan-Zeller updated the board on a potential \$10,407.50 change order for the disposal of vermiculite removed from the Strathmore pedestrian footbridge over the power canal, which is about to be demolished by FirstLight Power.

The order, which more than doubles the amount previously approved by the board for the change, is required because the state Department of Environmental Protection has rejected a plan to wrap the material in cloth and store it in the Strathmore mill complex, and instead requires its “full containment.”

Nolan Zeller said he had asked FirstLight to pay for the added cost because the town has very little budget remaining for the project. Though he had not heard back, he said, he directed the firm responsible for the abatement to move forward with the work so the bridge can be demolished on schedule.

The selectboard approved the overall change order, leaving the funding source to be determined at a future meeting if necessary.

Other Business

At the request of parks and recreation director Jon Dobosz, the board approved a \$2,750 contract with Tailblock Concrete LLC for maintenance of the Unity Skate Park. Dobosz said the repairs, which involve grouting and sealing, had previously been put on hold because there was not enough money in his operating budget, but now there was, and the work should be completed by October 18.

The board voted to make Fern Smith, the co-coach of the department’s Bluefish swim team, a “special municipal employee” because she also serves as the executive

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Request for Proposals (RFP) – Town of Montague

**ENGINEERING AND DESIGN SERVICES:
Sewer Collections System Rehabilitation Phase 2**

The Town of Montague, MA, acting through its Selectboard, will receive Responses from qualified engineering firms (“Consultant”) to provide professional engineering services for the investigation, design, bidding, construction administration, and resident project representative services to Phase 2 of improvements to the municipal sewer and stormwater collections system including specifications and bid documents.

Phase 2 includes the rehabilitation of 15 pipes (4,867 linear ft.) in the village of Turners Falls, as well as 22 pipes (4,592 linear ft.) in the village of Millers Falls, in addition to the rehabilitation of 74 manholes in Millers Falls. Phase 2 is a continuation of Phase 1, which was completed in Spring 2025 and included the rehabilitation of 53 manholes.

RFP documents are available at the Selectboard office, Montague Town Hall, 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA 01376, or by sending an email to chrisn@montague-ma.gov.

Notice of this RFP is published in the *Central Register* (weekly publication of the Office of the Secretary of State), COMMBUYS, the *Montague Reporter* (a newspaper of general circulation), and posted on the Town website (www.montague-ma.gov/BIDS).

Written questions must be submitted by email before October 14, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. Address them to Chris Nolan-Zeller via email at chrisn@montague-ma.gov. Responses to questions and any RFP addenda are expected to be emailed to applicants on record as having received the RFP by October 16, 2025.

Bid responses are to be submitted to the Montague Selectboard’s office no later than October 23, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. Submittals arriving subsequent to the deadline will NOT be considered.

The Town reserves the right to cancel this bid, to reject any and all responses, to waive informalities, and to make an award as it believes is in the best interest of the Town.

assistant in the selectboard office. The status allows employees to work additional jobs for the town, easing restrictions under the state’s conflict of interest law.

The board approved an \$82,882.80 annual contract with public health director Ryan Paxton at a new level on the employment scale. Ramsey explained that Paxton’s contract had not been updated to be consistent with a recent wage and classification study, and that he had worked with board of health chair Melanie Zamojski on

the document. Ramsey announced that he had locked the town into a three-year contract for the purchase of natural gas at a rate lower than the current one, which expires next spring.

The board retired into an executive session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the New England Police Benevolent Association, which represents the town’s patrol officers.

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

ZONE from page A1

hospital property, a “dense mixed-use hub that unites the surrounding community and unlocks new housing and economic opportunities in Montague.”

Innes Group planner Paula Ramos Martinez explained that this could not be accomplished under the area’s existing “Central Business” zoning. The firm has therefore proposed adding an entirely new category to the town’s zoning bylaws, “Mixed Use Village Center,” which places a heavy emphasis on new housing, and also creating a “Design Overlay District” to encourage pedestrian access, uses such as restaurants and shops, and open space.

The additions and subtractions to the zoning bylaws needed to accomplish these goals took up nearly 12 dense pages, which planning board chair Ron Sicard read aloud in its entirety. Most of these, involving building heights, density, setbacks, open space requirements, and the role of the planning board, were identical to what the board had

endorsed on August 26.

But there were many alterations, most of them small but significant. For example, in response to public feedback at the previous meetings, “hotels” would no longer be allowed as a permitted use, though smaller “boutique hotels” with 20 or fewer guest rooms would remain a possibility.

The definitions of various housing units were also simplified, and the bylaw would now allow only duplexes, three-family dwellings, rowhouses, townhouses, and “multi-unit dwellings,” defined as those with “four or more dwelling units.” The definitions of private and public open spaces had been updated, and parking spaces were made easier to site without a special permit.

The planning board discussed various aspects of the proposal at length, including the required “setback” of buildings from the broad sidewalks envisioned on Montague City Road, which would be zero feet. Jen Hale, housing development rehabilitation coordinator at Rural Development Incorpo-

rated (RDI), commented that she thought the sidewalks shown in illustrations provided by the consultants were “too wide,” and would limit open space.

The sidewalks, as well as the tree belt along the road, would continue to be owned by the town and would not be part of the developable parcels.

Pollock noted that the town could adjust the property lines before selling the lots, and Innes Group president Emily Innes suggested that the setbacks could be negotiated with developers as part of the “land disposition process.”

Montague Center resident Sam Lovejoy warned that adding complexity to the approval process would cause the request for proposals to become “a bear.”

Zoning board of appeals member David Jensen, formerly the town building inspector, said he thought Montague City Road is “too narrow,” and that the town will have to make significant investments in infrastructure to market the property.

RDI housing development director Alyssa Larose agreed, saying that the town should not count on developers to pay for infrastructure. Pollock said the rezoning would put the town in a good position to apply for infrastructure grants.

Though the bylaw changes would limit building heights to four stories and 50 feet, the consultants suggested that this could be changed to allow five-story buildings in some places. Several commenters opposed this, though Lovejoy said it might be preferable to send the higher option to town meeting for debate. The meeting could always reject it, he said.

Jensen said he appreciated Lovejoy’s “strategic thinking,” but warned that tall buildings would block light.

In the end the planning board voted unanimously to endorse the bylaw changes as presented, with buildings limited to four stories, and to ask the selectboard to place them on the October 22 town meeting warrant.

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GAGNON PHOTOS

Left to right: Hissing cockroaches from Madagascar are safely contained in a terrarium; butterflies feed near yellow blooms; “flight attendant” Aldina Sliwa shows off a Malaysian jungle nymph.

BUTTERFLY from page A1

semi-translucent ceilings and are filled with exotic trees and flowers, along with giant insects, lizards, and tortoises in terrariums.

It all started in 1999 when 56-year-old George Miller, Jr. – Kathy and George III’s father – arrived at Sunday dinner to tell the family he had decided to close down his company, GemCo Construction, and invest in a butterfly conservatory that GemCo was building in Deerfield.

“We all thought he was insane,” recalled Kathy. “We thought he was having a midlife crisis, and maybe getting a red sports car would fix it. But he said, ‘Climbing up ladders with shingles on your shoulders gets harder as you get older, so let’s try this for five years,’ and here it is 25 years later.”

At the time, Kathy had a masters degree in psychology and had been working with children and teens for 14 years, while her brother George was a sports reporter working for local radio stations and the *Greenfield Recorder*. But within a few years, Magic Wings became a family business as Kathy took over as general manager and special events coordinator in 2003, and George III took the reins as chief

financial officer in 2004.

Since then about two million visitors have walked through the doors – between 90,000 and 100,000 a year.

“It turned out to be a very good idea to open another attraction in Deerfield along with Yankee Candle,” said Kathy. “We get so many different responses from people – most of them have never been in a butterfly conservatory. Some people start laughing because it’s so amazing and different, and some start crying because of the beauty and the attachments they have to people they have lost.”

People have long perceived butterflies as harboring the souls of loved ones that have passed. Over the years, customers have bought 200 memorial plaques that are placed throughout the conservatory.

“‘Angels are near when butterflies appear’ is a saying that goes back a long time,” said Kathy. “At a funeral service, when a butterfly lands on the casket, it can be a really powerful sign for some people.”

On the other hand, Magic Wings attracts couples looking for a place to get married – about 15 weddings are held each year at the conservatory. Kathy believes it all comes down to the perception of butter-

flies as the embodiment of change, growth, and rebirth.

“There’s a larger connection between life and the stages of metamorphosis the butterfly goes through,” she said. “The caterpillar chews off the top of its egg, and after two weeks it forms the chrysalis, where the magic happens – where the molecules are rearranged from a solid to a liquid and back to a solid to become a butterfly.”

Butterflies are not the only attraction. One terrarium is filled with giant hissing cockroaches from Madagascar. Other insects include giant Australian walking sticks, jungle nymphs, prickly devils, rhino beetles, tiny Malaysian leaf frogs, Vietnamese mossy frogs, poison dart frogs, and various lizards and tortoises.

Small birds known as Chinese button quails wander through the facility, and a 35-year-old parrot named Akbar entertains visitors. The range of tropical vegetation includes fruit trees producing mango and papaya along with a cacao tree and vanilla orchids.

Monarch’s Restaurant closed in 2017, but the new owners plan to reopen a café with coffee from Fogbuster in Greenfield and bring new life to the food court, which

will feature custom-made butterfly-shaped benches. They’re also working with a glass-blowing company in Greenfield to create an art installation in the gallery while brainstorming new interactive activities for children.

Many of the 25 staffers will remain, including the veteran curator Fred Gagnon.

“We’re excited about how to make it better and more beautiful and how to make it shine again,” said Vytautas. “Victoria comes up with

the ideas, and I help make it happen. She’s the why and I’m the how.”

Aldina Sliwa has been commuting from Chicopee to work as a “flight attendant” at Magic Wings for more than six years.

“I love being able to work in this environment, it’s a beautiful place to work,” said Sliwa, as she showed a giant insect known as a Malaysian jungle nymph to visitors. “A lot of people who come in are in awe. I get a lot of ‘Wows!’”



Butterflies gather around statuary and a sugar-soaked red sponge.

SCHOOL from page A1

on Wednesday evening. “If one [town] votes ‘No’.... it’s important that we still carry through with the votes, to show the state where the community stands.”

The “super-regionalization” proposal has been under study since 2019, when the select-boards of all six towns, concerned about declining enrollment, agreed to send representatives to a feasibility committee. The Gill-Montague school committee endorsed the process at that time, though the school committee in the Pioneer Valley district, which represented the other four towns, abstained.

In January 2024, after years of work with state-funded consultants, the Six Town Regionalization Planning Board (STRPB) voted 13 to 3 to endorse the idea, with all three opposing votes coming from members who also sat on the Pioneer committee.

The proposed regional agreement has now been finalized. The towns would retain their existing elementary schools, but merge their middle-school populations in Northfield and their high schoolers at Turners Falls.

This week the Gill-Montague committee revisited the topic. “I’m interested in committee members’ opinions on this,” said Montague member Steve Ellis. “I just can’t think of a more important thing for us to weigh in on.”

Ellis asked student representative Olivia Wolbach if Turners Falls High School stu-

dents were discussing the idea.

“I’ve heard a lot of students talking about it,” Wolbach replied. “I don’t think there’s been any opportunities for talking about how it impacts our school. But from a social standpoint, because that’s what we see, I’ve always wanted a bigger school – and I think it would benefit the students socially as well.”

“It isn’t the money that drives it as much as the student population,” said Gill member Bill Tomb, who serves on the STRPB. “Because of population, you have limitations on scheduling, and that relates to the number of students who might be taking any individual course.”

The Gill-Montague meeting opened with public comments from four staff members and a parent decrying the recent resignation of Gill Elementary math interventionist Lauren Steer.

“We lost a human being that our district failed to recognize the true worth of,” said Gill math and science teacher Kelly Gobiell.

“Not filling this position would not only be a loss, but an issue of equity among the district elementary schools,” said first-grade teacher Jenay Hall, who also broke the news to the committee that principal Walter Huston has announced his retirement in December.

Business manager Joanne Blier later clarified that the administration had only recently been notified of Steer’s resignation, and there had been no proposal to not fill the position.

The committee asked to ask an STRPB

member to come to its October 28 meeting to discuss the proposed new region.

At the STRPB’s own Zoom meeting on Wednesday, the Pioneer committee came in for criticism. “We have members of this board on the Pioneer school committee,” said Gill member Greg Snedeker. “They’re asking questions in there.... They’re not truly interested, in my opinion, of informing the public of our work.”

The STRPB is currently holding public information sessions in all six towns. One was held last week in Gill – the video is available via *MontagueTV.org* – and another is scheduled for Thursday, October 9 at 6 p.m. at the Gill-Montague Senior Center in Turners Falls.

Chair Alan Genovese announced that Renee Keir and Kristie Sulda, both of Bernardston’s representatives, had resigned. “They contributed a lot of great ideas to this work,” he said.

The meeting became tense as Leyden representative Karen O’Neil, one of the 2024 “nay” votes, said she was “still on the fence” about whether to support the six-town district.

“When a full board votes to do something,” Genovese said, “then everyone acquiesces around what the majority vote was, and they do what they can to implement or move forward with whatever the initiative was, even if they didn’t support it in the vote.”

“If you want me to resign, I will,” she said. “I am not suggesting that you resign,” he replied. “Your comments, if you so choose, at

a town meeting, I think should carry weight, because you are a member of the planning committee and we decided to move forward.”

Though most of the towns are planning to hold the special town meetings on November 15, Genovese and Snedeker agreed to speak at the meetings on behalf of the STRPB, so discussion turned to having the towns stagger the start times. Snedeker suggested Gill’s could even be held on the 17th.

Genovese said he expected the state to give transitional aid if the agreement passes, as it “is in the state’s best interest” to show that towns in regional districts can form a larger region. “This is the next evolution,” he said, “to create a super-regional district.”

Northfield representative Deb Potee pointed out that the combined high school enrollment, 311, fell far short of the national average of 525, and that a stronger talking point was that it was a matter of “social justice and equity” to provide broader opportunities to all students in the six towns. O’Neil was seen nodding.

Genovese said he plans to officially send the regional agreement to Montague on October 2.

Reached at press time, Ramsey emphasized that Montague is only “*planning*” to hold the election on October 18. “Internally we have cleared the date but it has not been officially set,” he wrote. “That can’t happen until the town formally receives notification from the STRPB.”



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CORNERS from page A1

group to the Montague communi-ty.” “There was some real amazing collaboration, creativity, flexibility with the partnership with Franklin County Community Land Trust, the broader Montague communi-ty, and Mount Grace, so I’m really grateful for that,” he said.

Four Corners friends Ang Roell, Walker Korby, and Martin Omasta accepted the award, in the form of a *plein air* pastel by Montague artist Tracy Vernon. “We each get a corner!” exclaimed Omasta and Roell, laughing as they took hold of the painting.

“We really want to highlight that this was a community effort,” said Roell, co-owner of the local apiary They Keep Bees. “It was a collabora-tion of neighbors who just came to-gether and figured out how to make it happen.... What do we want to see happen here? How do we have both climate-resilient farming happening here, and community needs met? That conversation is ongoing.”

Before the meeting, Neukirch led several dozen Mount Grace mem-bers and local residents on a short walk along trails the organization created this year on the largest of the three parcels. Passing through a va-riety of habitats, the group stopped where meadow turns into forest not far from the summit of Taylor Hill, in a spot with a commanding view of Mount Toby.

Just a month ago, this area had been more overgrown and signifi-cantly less accessible. Two vol-unteer stewardship days led by Neukirch brought neighbors onto the land to clear brambles and old fencing material while sharing sto-ries and ideas.

“All of our conservation areas are amazing, but they tend to be ‘up and away’ – in the forest, not too many people living right nearby. But this is really in the heart of this community,” said Neukirch. “We’ve got lots of close neighbors we’re so grateful for, because they’re really thinking about how this space can serve the needs and desires of the community in as many meaningful ways as possible while still protect-ing the conservation values.”

“Land needs to be lived and worked and stewarded together. We need more people engaged with our landscapes,” he added. “This is



Left to right: Martin Omasta, Walker Korby, and Ang Roell accept Mount Grace’s Conservator of the Region award on behalf of the “Friends of Four Corners.”

also a growth area for Mount Grace as we start to do this kind of com-munity conservation.”

Responding to a variety of ques-tions from the engaged audience, Neukirch described the work Mount Grace has done over the past nine months to classify the soil, habitats, and species of the parcels’ wetland, meadow, and forest ecosystems; prepare the 15 acres identified as prime farmland for potential agri-cultural use; and secure sustainable funding for current and long-term stewardship projects on the land.

Noting that enthusiasm tends to be strongest during the rally to acquire and protect property, Neu-kirch told the attendees that “how the land is stewarded and tended and cared for is as important as its protection, because these ecosys-tems need some tending and care.”

Ongoing funding for the con-served land is also necessary to uphold Mount Grace’s longstand-ing policy of paying property tax-es to the town – in this case, under the state’s Chapter 61 Current Use program.

“We want to make sure there’s nothing that we’re doing that draws away from the resources of the small communities that we live and work in,” said Neukirch. “It’s im-portant to be working hand-in-hand with our communities, and not feel like we’re at cross purposes.”

In a keynote address during the annual meeting, state senator Jo Comerford applauded Mount Grace for this practice, and encour-

aged its members to become advo-cates and activists as the state con-siders changing the PILOT formula by which it reimburses municipali-ties for state-owned land.

During the walk up Taylor Hill, following a discussion about the future of the land, one attendee voiced a question that may have been on everyone’s mind:

“So we’re free to come up and wander around?”

“Yes!” Neukirch replied. “Please!”

“The whole purpose of these areas is to enjoy them,” he continued. “To take advantage of the open space, for passive recreation, for reflection, for shared conversations with neigh-bors. That’s what it’s here for. These paths were put in place to create op-portunities for folks to walk in here.”

While members of the public are welcome on the property at any time, Neukirch said that Mount Grace plans a “grand reveal” event at the Four Corners in the “near fu-ture,” once the property boundaries are fully marked and the wetlands are more clearly protected.

One mathematically-inclined walker observed that the fourth corner at the intersection – which was subdivided in the 1980s, and now contains five houses – was not part of the Mount Grace acquisition. “Should we start referring to this as the Three Corners?” she asked.

“We’ve already printed the signs,” Neukirch re-plied with a laugh, “so this is definitely Four Corners.”



QUALE PHOTOS

The view from near the top of Taylor Hill, with Mount Toby in the near distance.

LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here’s the way it was on Sep-tember 24, 2015: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Annex Annexed

If any Montague inhabitants are curious to check out their latest acquisition, a modest but handsome brick storage building dating to the town’s industrial heyday, they need only cross the Bailey bridge from Canal Street into the Patch, turn left into the big empty parking lot, and walk through the wide-open gate that once discouraged children and

litigious adults from wandering into the collapsing, asbestos-filled former Griswold Cotton Mill.

Beyond that structure, remem-bered by some still living as the Railroad Salvage discount store, is its smaller “annex” at 15 Pow-er Street, housing nearly 10,000 square feet on two levels. This squat storehouse was taken on September 10 under tax title by the Town of Montague.

“It’s a solid structure,” said town building inspector David Jensen. “There’s a lot of possibil-ities for that building – anything from storage to a dance hall.”

20 YEARS AGO

Here’s the way it was on Sep-tember 22, 2005: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Noise Regs Turned Down

Montague residents waiting for new noise regulations to take effect were handed a setback at Monday night’s selectboard meet-ing when it was announced that the regulations would not be put into effect after all. According to town administrator Frank Abbon-danzio, town counsel has deter-mined the selectboard does not have statutory authority to enforce the proposed noise regulations be-cause they are too broad.

The regulations were approved at a meeting of the selectboard two weeks ago and were sched-uled to take effect on Tuesday, September 20, in response to

complaints about excessive noise at certain local bars.

Day of Celebration

The smell of burning sage and cedar sweetened and purified the air, the deep bass thrum of Hawk Henries’ bassoon flute seemed to emanate from the earth itself, and sun played tag with clouds above the river as Native Ameri-cans set up camp by Barton Cove for the first annual People’s Har-vest on Sunday.

Organizer Joe Graveline of the Friends of Wissatinnewag said, “This is the first day in 328 years Native peoples have gathered here in peace,” since the massacre led by Captain William Turner on May 19, 1676 scattered the tribes who had lived and fished there for ten thousand years or more.

150 YEARS AGO

Here’s the way it was on Sep-tember 22, 1875: News from the Turners Falls Reporter’s archive.

Turners Falls and Vicinity

This weather is enough to give a fellow’s nose the blues.

Dibble & Potter’s coal carts have begun the winter’s campaign in earnest.

Work has begun on a two-story two-tenement brick block on K street, for Samuel R. Pierce.

N.D. Allen’s big dog got into the river the other day, and being un-able to swim ashore was drowned.

The cemetery association at their last meeting voted to borrow a sum not exceeding \$2,000 on their note, and pay Mr. Goss cash down for his land.

Geo. L. Barton, Esq., has been re-appointed trial justice, to the gratification of the entire commu-nity, but more especially to the con-stables who were compelled to take criminals to Greenfield for trial.

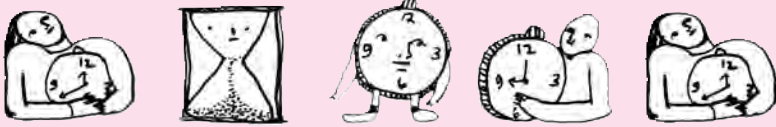
Mr. Schuler, after ascertaining the prices which he would have to pay help, has abandoned the idea of manufacturing overalls, etc., for

the present. He has just returned from Boston with a very heavy stock of clothing for the fall trade.


A piece of rock from a blast in the cellar for Samuel R. Pierce’s new house on K street was driven through the windows of the resi-dence of A.M. Baker, adjoining, Monday, breaking a large mirror, and doing other damages, besides greatly frightening Mrs. Baker, who barely escaped serious injury.

The glass in the door of Brad-dock & Webster’s hardware was broken by a carelessly thrown base-ball, presenting an invitation to a burglar to enter the store at night. Frank Webster, who resides in the rear of the store, heard the noise, and taking a young man’s pocket companion, six volumes bound in one, proceeded to see what could be done for the happiness of the burglar, who concluded not to take any second-hand cartridges.

The man who picked up a sealed letter, dropped by us on the way to the post-office, the other day, tore the envelope off, and pocketed the contents, is the kind of a fellow for whom houses of correction are built.



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NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Officials Warn of Strife, Sonic ‘Torture’ As Pickleball Craze Reaches Leverett; Town Still Seeking Next Fire Chief

By GEORGE BRACE

The Leverett selectboard heard Tuesday from a group proposing to build two pickleball courts on the town’s athletic field. The board also interviewed a second candidate for fire chief, after the town’s offer was turned down by the first.

Pickleball is “easy to play, and good for all ages, including older people,” said resident Peter Sylvan, representing a group looking into building two pickleball courts on the town’s athletic field between the Leverett Elementary School (LES) and the Leverett Library.

Saturday morning games at LES currently get “20-ish” players every week, Sylvan said, and he expects that number will rise with greater access. LES principal Siby Adina and library director Hannah Paessel were both on board, Sylvan said, and highway department superintendent Matt Boucher told him parking was not an issue.

Discussions with abutting residents and sound testing are not yet complete, but Sylvan said so far there have been no objections. “We are still in the process of looking at things, but we are getting there,” he said.

The group intends to apply to the Community Preservation Commission (CPC) for a grant to cover the estimated \$75,000 cost of construction, as well as pursue other grant opportunities.

“I think it’s a great idea,” said selectboard member Tom Hankinson, commenting that it would add diversified recreation to the town, and that there should be a place for it. He said if it is determined the field in question is the right place, he would support it.

Selectboard chair Patricia Duffy said that her “big concern” was “noise, and our noise bylaws.”

The sound of pickleball has been compared to “water torture,” she said, and “all over the country there are ordinances against pickleball courts in residential neighborhoods.”

Duffy warned that if this issue was not seriously addressed before

a court is built, it could result in “warfare.”

Sylvan replied that noise was a primary issue the group was looking at, and that speaking for himself, the court would need “100% sign-off from the abutters.” He said the group is also researching noise mitigation ideas.

Resident Richard Nathhorst objected to the proposal on the basis of aesthetics, saying pickleball and tennis courts are “pretty ugly” and only used by small groups, adding the opinion that “it is a fad and is going to be gone” at some point.

Nathhorst also questioned the maintenance plan, which he said could not be covered by CPC funds.

Sylvan replied that the group has been looking at a construction contract that includes a 10-year maintenance plan, though after that, money may need to be sought through grants or at town meeting.

Selectboard member Jed Proujansky expressed concern over encroaching on the town’s “only large open space,” noting that a proposed greenhouse on the athletic field had faced opposition for the same reason. He said his worry was not the court itself, but the prospect of others coming forward also wanting to use the space.

Duffy also raised the question of parking, noting that a sidewalk is planned for the area under the state’s Complete Streets program and that she is unsure how it would affect the group’s parking plan.

Proujansky told Sylvan he was “not opposed” to the idea, and that the board’s questions should not be seen as “naysaying,” but as points to consider in determining “what made sense for the town as a whole.”

No vote was taken on the matter.

Fire Chief Interview

Mike Visniewski, the candidate for the chief position, is currently a lieutenant in Leverett’s department, where he has served for eight years, and deputy chief of Amherst’s on-call force, where he has served for 11. He has had basic EMT certification for 24 years, and said he uses

those skills sporadically in Amherst but increasingly in Leverett, where medical calls now stand at four to five per week and rising.

Visniewski said he is “invested in the town,” and knows Leverett and the surrounding towns and departments well. He has trained to the Firefighter 1 and 2 standards, as all on-call firefighters do, he said, but does not yet have the certificates.

However, he said, the possibility of a major housing development being built at the Kittredge estate, which would likely create a need for full-time certified firefighters in Leverett, led him to begin pursuing the certifications in March. He expects to receive the certifications within six months, he said, and would pursue the Fire Chief certification if hired.

Visniewski said he would work with interim chief Amy Rice on the transition before her retirement in March, and that his familiarity with the town, his experience in the department, and his training as a civil engineer would ease that process.

Asked if he would make any changes in his first two years, Visniewski said he would continue holding community education events, training with other town departments, and looking for ways to improve communication with the community, and would work to modernize and standardize the department’s equipment.

In addition, he said he would like to move toward more effective day-time coverage, possibly by adding a full-time firefighter. He noted that the chief is the only full-time employee currently, and that responsibilities often call them away from the station. It is already hard to rely on volunteers to cover the increasing call volume, he said, and the town is growing.

The selectboard did not take a vote on the position after the interview.

Other Business

Proujansky provided an update on the town’s employee health insurance plan ahead of a 20% rate

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TUE-SAT 4-9

increase from the Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust (HCGIT) beginning on October 1. He said he had met with town administrator Marjorie McGinnis and treasurer Ryan Mailloux, and the three found that other prospective insurers are facing similar financial difficulties, and their rates are “not too dissimilar” from those of HCGIT.

Proujansky said he did not see a “compelling reason” for the town to change providers right now, and that it was “almost too late” to do so before the increase, but that “we sure do need to look for the future.”

Jynx Diers and Robert Mobley were hired as attendants at the transfer station. The selectboard also signed a memorandum of understanding allowing the station to host a second clothing donation box, at the request of coordinator Annette Herda.

The board announced that a CodeRED alert had been sent regarding the need for people storing private property at the public boat ramp on Leverett Pond to remove it.

The board signed a letter of support for a state bill supporting pancreatic cancer research.

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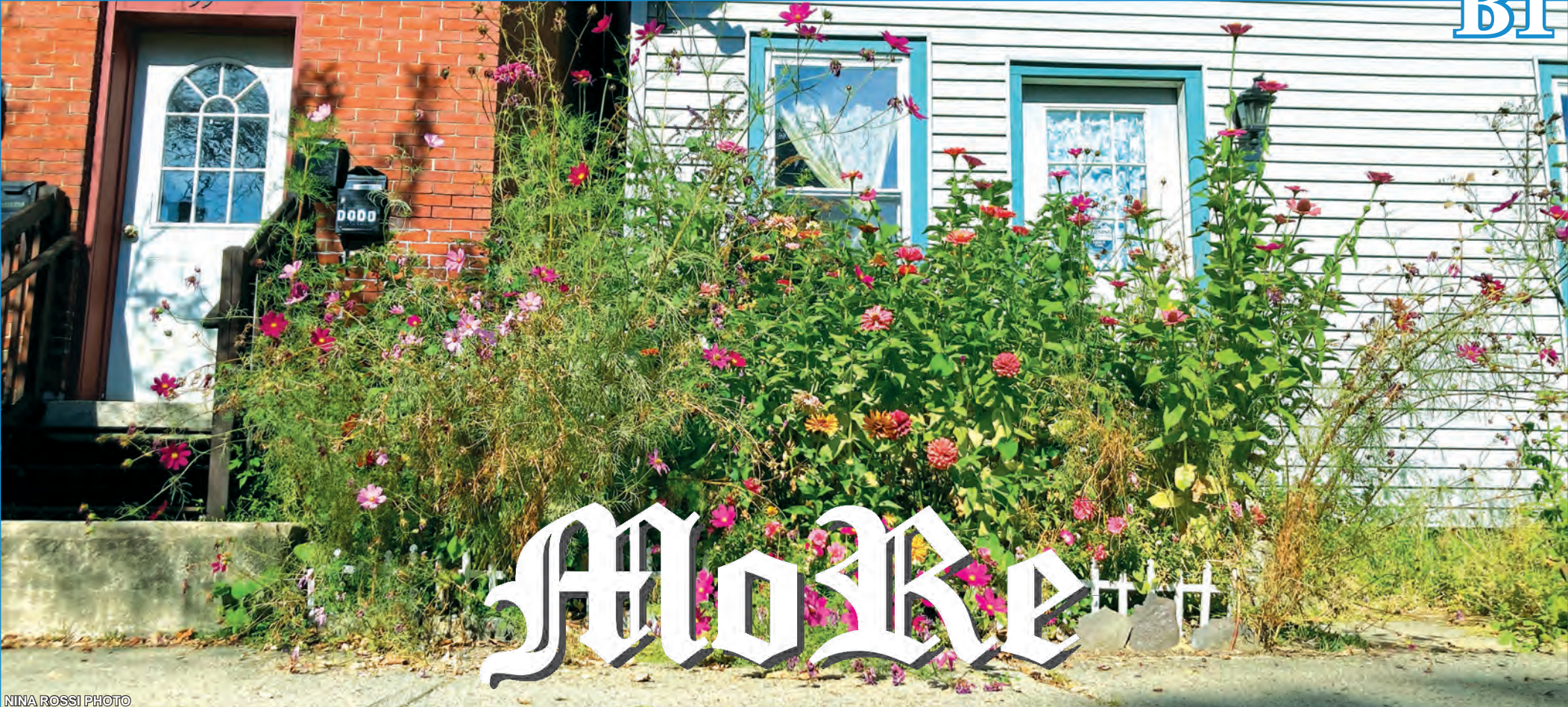
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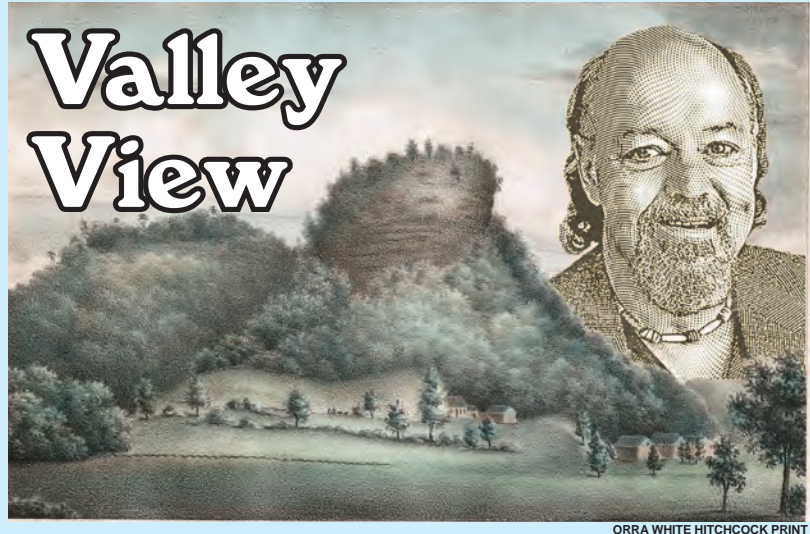


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NINA ROSSI PHOTO

features@montaguereporter.org OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER SEPTEMBER 25, 2025



ORRA WHITE HITCHCOCK PRINT

Close Encounters

By GARY SANDERSON

GREENFIELD – The wildlife sightings on my daily early-morning walks have been curiously sparse and uneventful this summer.

Not a single turkey or bear, or even a distant gobble. No great-horned owl nestlings cocking their heads to peer down at me. No phantom moose or bobcats. Just the same four deer: most often a doe and her twin fawns, a few times an unremarkable five- or six-point buck, likely the doe's twin born two or three years ago.

I've seen the doe and fawns many times – most often feeding far away, a few times playing catch-me-if-you-can in the open meadow along the northern edge of a cornfield, less than 200 yards south of the road I walk. A few times, they have crossed the road together in front of me, the buck leading the way. Once, he noticed me turning the corner as he crossed the road. On the other side he stood tall and still, ears perked, white tail fidgety, signaling his companions to *proceed with caution, danger looms*. Once I'd passed, they too crossed, continuing on their merry way.

When in close quarters, I speak to them softly. Something like, "Mornin' Momma," or "It's OK, kids. I won't harm you."

They stand statuesque, observing me at full alert, ears curling in my direction, sometimes tilting their heads curiously in daybreak's soft grey light. Instinct tells them their best defense is to freeze until I pass. Then they resume their journey to a bedding area, likely not far away – closer than one would imagine to houses. Neighborhood deer are comfortable slithering between homes at quiet hours and bedding on the edges.

I had often seen the buck passing my front yard in broad daylight. Minus antlers in late May and June, his posture and longish legs told me he was probably a subordinate, loner buck riding out the fawning season. When he fi-

nally sprouted antlers around July, it confirmed my suspicion that it was a buck.

At that time of year, the pregnant does with whom other deer have traveled during the green-ing season wander off for birth-ing-season seclusion. Then in August, once their fawns get their game legs and can take care of themselves, winter-spring companions reunite. You'll often see pairs of does, their fawns' spots fading, accompanied to feeding and bedding areas by random bucks in their range.

As November approaches, the dynamic will again shift, as dominant bucks will separate for the breeding season, or rut, marking territory with urine-saturated scrapes on the ground that reduce timid subordinates to lurkers playing the edges. It's an annual cycle that anyone who watches deer understands – especially hunters, which, by choice, I am no longer.

As for bears, I'm certain I heard one killed soon after first light on opening day of the Sep-tember hunting season, which al-ways falls on the day after Labor Day. I was about halfway through my walk when two rapid-fire rifle shots broke the morning silence. Then, some 10 minutes later, two more quick shots. The cadence and the upland, wooded site from which they came suggested a kill. Just an educated guess.

Though I have yet to see a neighborhood bear this year, one never knows when one will appear. It's all about being in the right place at the right time.

Just last week I learned from a third party that a woman I often pass walking her dogs on our early-morning rambles has bumped into bears twice recently. One was a sow and her cub, which the woman found unnerving, the other a large loner. As it turned out, she had nothing to worry about in either case. Just kept walking and the bears let her pass.

No great surprise to me. Bears see **VALLEY VIEW** page B3

New Café Comes to Route 63

By LEE WICKS

MONTAGUE CENTER – Sometime in mid to late October, there will be a new café serving break-fast and lunch in Montague. Located on Route 63 at the site of the old Montague Inn, which later became Red Fire North's farmstand and bakery, Common Variety will offer breakfast and lunch options including baked goods and pastries, made-to-order breakfast sandwich-es on house-made bread, seasonal soups and salads, and lunch sandwiches prepared fresh every day.

In addition to the café menu, the new owners plan

to stock some of their own prepared foods, along with a limited selection of grocery staples.

"You will be able to stop by for breakfast and check dinner off your to-do list at the same time!" Molly Botnick, one of the owners, told me.

Common Variety will be a daytime café, but Bot-nick and her business partner, Tawni Benick, are hop-ing to host monthly or quarterly dinners for the com-munity in the future. They will not open with a liquor license – though, Botnick said, "there are some avail-able in Montague, so stay tuned on that!"

see **CAFÉ** page B4



WICKS PHOTO

Co-owners Tawni Benick and Molly Botnick aim to open the café in mid-October, though a definitive date has not yet been set.

CONCERT PREVIEW

Beach at the Rendezvous

By MICHAEL REED

TURNERS FALLS – This town has been on a hot streak lately, attracting indie touring bands that one might be surprised to find in a little haven. Lulu Van Trapp came all the way from France, while Lavender Flu and C.A.D & The Peacetime Con-sumers only had to travel from Portland, Oregon and Detroit. Australian Michael Beach will add to the momentum of this pastoral, brick village attracting international talent when he plays here next Wednesday, October 1.

In Michael Beach's catalog, you'll find rockers, jammers, bal-lads, and freakouts. If you like your rock'n'roll wild, the hook-filled anthems on the edge of feedback will anchor themselves in your memory. If you're more for ballads, his piano tunes will float you away.

If you're for neither, but wonder how to get through these challenging times, then listen closely and Beach will share with you the nuanced moments of human connection that have given him comfort within the chaos. Always tuneful, though, most-ly minor key, and sartorially proper – frequently delivered in a black blazer over skinny black jeans.

Born in California but living in Australia since the '00s, Beach

see **BEACH** page B5



Australian rocker Michael Beach comes to town.

Pets of the Week



CARMODY COLLAGE

‘MOONLIGHT’ & ‘PUMPKIN’

Moonlight and Pumpkin are domestic short-hairs looking for a forever home together. These bonded three-year-old brothers have never been apart. Their owner would like to rehome these cuddlebugs as a pair. Favorite pastimes include snuggling together, watching the world go by through the window, chasing laser pointers, and watching YouTube videos of mice. Moonlight and Pumpkin are good with children, love cat toys,

gentle attention, and would thrive in a calm, patient home where they can feel safe and loved. Both are neutered, housetrained, and current with shots. To apply to adopt Moonlight and Pumpkin, now located in West Springfield, find “Available Community Animals” under the “Adopt” menu at www.dakinhumane.org. A potential adopter must submit an application, interview and meet the pets, and sign an adoption contract.

ADVICE

Getting Quality Sleep in Jail

By ALEJANDRO PENA

GREENFIELD – Last night, as I was slowly starting to fall asleep, the officer flashed his flashlight into my cell, illuminating the room during one of his regular wellness checks. This, as we know, is standard procedure when you’re in jail. As you can imagine, or have experienced, the quality of sleep while being incarcerated isn’t so great; flashlights to your room every 30 minutes are just one of the many disruptors of rest. Unfortunately, the effects of this are perilous and often not spoken about. Bad sleep affects inmates’ mood and emotions, and can add to any stress we may already be under from being in an environment like this. With conditions such as other inmates being loud and flashlights in the face, it’s a wonder how or if anyone is ever actually rested here. In the last couple of months of my time, or “bid,” as most would call it, I have experienced all three of those tough sleeping conditions and much more. When was the last time you had a night of quality sleep? Or have you ever thought you had a good night’s sleep and still felt tired? Well, I’m here to inform you on the importance of quality sleep, beginning with an exploration of what happens when someone gets too much sleep. As many people who are incarcerated know, many people try to “sleep off” their bid; these people stay in their rooms for the majority of the day and night and do exactly that: sleep. However, “too much sleep can actually be bad for the body and mind.” This is why our bodies still feel worn out and tired from oversleeping. There’s a great risk that comes with oversleeping, besides being tired. According to an article by BJC HealthCare, “[p]eople who get too

much sleep are more likely to be overweight or obese. Oversleep can result in alterations in hunger hormones, potentially causing individuals to feel more famished and consume more food. Weight gain can, in turn, increase the risk of diabetes.” Along with these side effects, too much sleep can also deprive the body and cause serious risk of depression, because it “disrupts the production of serotonin, a neurotransmitter that is involved in mood regulation.” Given this, the fight against ourselves to not sleep all day might be an important one after all. In the same way that oversleeping can be detrimental to the body, so can undersleeping. For example, “[n]ot getting enough quality sleep regularly raises the risk of many diseases and disorders. These range from heart disease and stroke to obesity and dementia.” According to the NIH’s *News In Health* magazine, studies have shown that people tend to gain weight with lack of sleep, and in the same study it was discovered that people’s ability to control blood sugar levels becomes harder. This research highlights a need for people to have balanced sleep – not too much, not too little. But if that doesn’t convince you to pay more attention to your sleep routine, then maybe all the benefits of getting quality sleep will. Quality sleep can impact your overall mood and everyday life. The first benefit of quality sleep is faster muscle recovery and tissue repair because sleep is a time for essential rest and healing. “During a good night’s sleep, your body builds muscle, repairs tissue damage, and regenerates cells that are partly driven by hormones, including human growth hormone (HGH), which is produced in its highest amounts during sleep,” Jay Vera Summer writes at sleepfounda-

tion.org. In other words, sleep is necessary for healing and growth. Another benefit of quality sleep is improved memory, focus, and learning. According to Summer, “[s]leep plays a role in memory, focus, and other aspects of thinking and cognition. During sleep, waste is cleared from the brain, paving the way for improved brain function.” Don’t we all want that? Now we will get into my favorite benefit of them all, which is a better mood and mental health. Without enough quality sleep, you’re more likely to feel irritable, frustrated, anxious, or sad. Studies have found that people who get inadequate sleep are at a higher risk of experiencing mental distress that detracts from their emotional and mental health. Luckily, there are a few tips and tricks for increasing your quality of sleep that you can start today. **Tip #1:** Avoid drinking caffeine after 2 p.m., and don’t eat right before bedtime. **Tip #2:** Practice slow breathing and counting. Maybe even try a grounding exercise. **Tip #3:** Have regular wake-up and sleep times. **Tip #4:** Keep your space tidy, and make it as comfortable as possible. What are your tips?

This article was written for The Light, a newsletter by Franklin County Jail and House of Correction (FCSO) residents. Some of the writers join The Light already devoted to writing, while others discover love for writing through their participation. The students engage in process-oriented work to create stories and art, including personal essays, op-eds, recipes, poems, research articles, and other explorations of interest to them and their peers, coalescing into a new issue every eight to 10 weeks.

THEATER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Turned Away; Swamped By Culture Clash

TURNERS FALLS – On Sunday, October 5 at 2 p.m., the Reproductive Justice Task Force of FCCPR will present a staged reading of *The Turnaway Play* at the Shea Theater. All proceeds benefit the Massachusetts Medication Abortion Access Project (The MAP). *The Turnaway Play* translates a 10-year scientific study into a theater performance with five actors, answering the question: “What happens when a person is denied an abortion?” Turnaway’s revelatory findings debunk common myths and dangerous false claims, and help to dispel abortion stigma. The performance will be followed by a Q & A with the playwright, director, and actors, including a provider from the The MAP, which uses a telemedicine platform to provide medication abortion care to abortion seekers throughout the US. “If you read only one book about democracy this year, *The Turnaway Study* should be it,” says Gloria Steinem, journalist, activist, and co-founder of *Ms. Magazine*. “Without the power to make decisions about our own bodies, there is no democracy.” “Now more than ever, it’s important that people of all ages come together to learn about and talk about abortion rights,” says Inanna Balkin, co-director of Amherst Feminist Generation and a junior at Amherst Regional High School. “We hope that young people take this opportunity to support The MAP.” Tickets are \$10, at fccpr.us/donate-to-map and at the door. Additional donations are welcome.

WENDELL – The Captain’s lost his wife – he’s marooned in assisted living. “You’re not going to try to change the equipment, are you?” he asks his caregiver Clove. “The equipment is my body, Captain.” “But you are who you are, for a reason!” “What reason?” asks Clove. “How the hell should I know? I can’t even find my shoes!” Meanwhile Stephen, the son of the Captain’s dead war buddy, is trip-wired for trauma: “You old men. You ship out and leave your goddamn carcasses for the rest of us to clean up!” But his girlfriend Kat is the one shipping out – to Provincetown. “I may not be in love with any *man*!” she says. “If I do come back, it’ll be with conditions.” “Things are so cockeyed down here in this crooked Disneyland anymore!” But even with all the laughs, in this cautionary tale, everyone is *Swamped*! Written and directed by Court Dorsey, *Swamped* is a world premiere featuring Steve Eldredge, Joe Laur, Izzy Miller, and Heather Willey at the newly equipped theatrical venue at the Wendell Meetinghouse. Sound design by Brian Bender; set by Tim Holcomb; lights by Pedro. “*Swamped* is a culture clash of red and blue state values,” says Dorsey. “It is a healing saga, a cautionary tale. All told, it’s a story of personal contact, which may be the only real road to reconciliation we have left.” *Swamped* runs Thursdays to Saturdays at 7:30 p.m., October 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, and 25, and Sundays at 2 p.m., October 19 and 26. Tickets are \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door Fridays through Sundays, and \$5 less on Thursdays. The Meetinghouse participates in the MA Card to Culture program, with tickets at \$10 for eligible audience members.

Senior Center Activities

SEPTEMBER 29 TO OCTOBER 3

| | | | |
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| 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 9/29 10:15 a.m. Aerobics 11 a.m. Chair Exercise 4 p.m. Tech Class Tuesday 9/30 9 a.m. Chair Yoga 12:30 p.m. Tech Tuesday 3 p.m. Tai Chi Wednesday 10/1 9 a.m. Veterans’ Agent 10:15 a.m. Aerobics 10:45 a.m. Outdoor Yoga (weather permitting) 11 a.m. Chair Exercise 12 p.m. Bring Your Lunch Bingo 4 p.m. Mat Yoga Thursday 10/2 10:30 a.m. Brown Bag Lunch 1 p.m. Pitch 3:30 p.m. Montague Villages Board Meeting Friday 10/3 10:15 a.m. Aerobics 2 p.m. Chair Dance | 12 p.m. Pitch Cards 1 p.m. Yoga Tuesday 9/30 9 a.m. Stretch & Balance 10 a.m. Line Dancing 11 a.m. Social Stringer Wednesday 10/1 9 a.m. Interval Training 10 a.m. Chair Aerobics 11:30 a.m. Bingo 1 p.m. Veterans’ Agent Thursday 10/2 9 a.m. Barre Fusion 10 a.m. Pilates Flow 12 p.m. Brown Bag Lunch Friday 10/3 9 a.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. The next clinic is October 21. Luncheons are the fourth Friday at town hall. For more information, contact (413) 548-1022 or coa@leverett.ma.us . Check the town newsletter or the LeverettConnects listserv for info. | WENDELL Foot care clinic is the first Wednesday of each month. The next clinic is October 1. Call Katie Nolan at (978) 544-2306 for information or appointments. For Senior Health Rides, contact Nancy Spittle at (978) 544-6760. |
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VALLEY VIEW from page B1

I’ve encountered have never been aggressive or territorial – quite the contrary, in fact.

Whether my sightings have occurred in the neighborhood or deep in the forest, I have always been cautious, but can’t say I’ve ever felt threatened. Well, except for my very first bear-sighting as a teen in the late Sixties, when such sightings in the valley flatlands were nonexistent, akin to UFO sightings.

My shocking first encounter occurred along the outer perimeter of the old, minimum-security, Monroe State Prison Camp. I was there as summer help, a lineman and rod-man for a South Deerfield land-surveying company. If memory serves me, the late Larry Attesi of Greenfield was the party chief that day in the Mohawk Trail wilds. It was probably mid-June or July.

I remember us parking along a steepish, slightly washed-out dirt road and soon exchanging pleasantries with two old-timers fishing for fingerling brook trout on a small mountain stream, classic willow creels strapped over their shoulders.

We were there to “detail” a parcel on which a traverse had been recently completed. Our job was to identify natural and manmade features, and to record their elevation with a 16-foot rod viewed through a transit level. As I was detailing a mucky spring-hole marsh and the brook exiting it, I kept hearing loud, peculiar scratching and what sounded like a

baa-ing sheep or fussing baby.

When I got within maybe 30 yards of the broad, twin hemlock from which the sounds emanated, I discovered what I was dealing with. It was two nervous bear cubs out of harm’s way. When I sensed something to my left, I spotted their burly black mother out of the corner of my eye – standing large and motionless about 60 yards away.

Uh-oh. Not a good place to be: smack-dab between a momma bear and her infant cubs.

Though never trained how to react to such a potentially dangerous situation, instinct took over and I dodged a bullet by remaining calm.

I balanced the rod over my right shoulder, turned away from the sow, and angled my way out of the bears’ line of sight, watching the sow with peripheral vision and being careful not to face her. I played it like I didn’t know she was there.

After I covered a slow, calm and deliberate 50 or so yards, I saw her walking toward her treed cubs. Approaching the base, she made a sound I can’t remember and the cubs returned to the spongy ground. Soon all three of them angled away from me in no particular hurry. The sow led the way over a stone wall, and they disappeared into the mixed forest.

Whew!

My bear crisis was in the rear-view. Not the type of hair-raising occurrence one soon forgets.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Family Dumbbell; Many Suspensions; Jehovah’s Witnesses; Three Brush Fires; Bare-Chested Fracas in Lake Pleasant

Monday, 9/15

6:01 a.m. Caller from East Taylor Hill Road requesting officer to property; states that over the last year her property has been getting vandalized, and today she woke up to find a dumbbell placed behind her tire so that she would run it over. Would like dumbbell checked for fingerprints. Officer advised caller of options. Caller called back stating that a family member put the dumbbell there.

12:19 p.m. Caller states there is a commercial vehicle parked blocking the “five corners” intersection at L Street, causing traffic to go into the opposite lane to make the corner. Officer observed vehicle; not a hazard. Will monitor for long-term parking.

2:22 p.m. Party into station stating he was letting his son use his vehicle, and his son’s girlfriend took the vehicle, but they broke up, and now the girlfriend won’t give the vehicle back. Officer advised party of options.

4:26 p.m. Officers checking

on a camper by the Farren lot; noted trash but not associated with the camper; trying to locate the owner. Officer spoke to owner at his residence. Officer went through the bylaws, and nothing applies; shouldn’t be a problem until it’s posted otherwise.

4:49 p.m. Caller states he and his daughter were at Unity Park and he watched a truck slow down; seemed like occupant was taking a video of the park and the area. Wanted it on record.

5:15 p.m. Caller states cars have been zooming up and down Greenfield Road for an hour; wondering if the road could be monitored. Report taken.

Tuesday, 9/16

8:51 p.m. Caller wants fire department to check on a fire in the Fourth Street alley. Referred to another agency.

Wednesday, 9/17

3:34 p.m. Report of a fire in a wooded area near the Route 47/63 intersection; three-foot flames reported. FD requested. Officers advised.

6:05 p.m. 911 caller from

Rubin’s Auto Repair states there is a male party threatening him; nothing physical yet, but could be heading in that direction. Caller believes male is trespassing from the property. Male party moved along; caller and owner advised of legal options.

8:46 p.m. Caller states her car was just hit while parked on the side of Seventh Street. Report taken.

9:46 p.m. Caller states that a car is blocking the main parking lot at the Rendezvous, and has been there for an hour. Referred to an officer.

10:23 p.m. Caller from Prospect Street states that a loose dog is barking on her porch and she is unable to get out of her house. Referred to an officer.

11:57 p.m. Caller reports fire alarms are sounding at a multi-family residence on Montague City Road. Shelburne Control advised.

Thursday, 9/18

8:25 a.m. 911 caller concerned about a male party in a white truck who was filming kids at the bus stop at Avenue A and Eleventh Street this morning. He is still parked across the street at the car wash. Party advised of complaint.

8:40 a.m. Passerby reporting a car broken down on Unity Street, causing a hazard. Vehicle located. Not broken down; male party searching for his dog that got loose. Dog located by owner.

4:32 p.m. Multiple 911 calls reporting two-car accident at Bridge Street and East Main Street. No injuries. Fluids leaking from vehicles. Officers advised. Control contacted. Tow requested.

11:33 p.m. Report of threatening/harassment by a family member on Twelfth Street. Advised of options.

Friday, 9/19

12:17 p.m. Walk-in from Carlisle Avenue reporting that three women pulled into his driveway and began arguing with him about politics. He does not know them, and they stated they were Jehovah’s Witnesses. Advised of options.

12:20 p.m. Caller states that her daughter’s ex-boyfriend stole a new iPhone from her daughter and won’t give it back. Caller stated she would come in later with the receipt for the phone.

10:57 p.m. Caller from East Main Street states that an individual who resides above her room is making loud stomping noises. Caller advises this has been going on for months. Officer advises units spoke to male party and advised him of the complaint.

Saturday, 9/20

8:52 a.m. Caller from Dell Street reporting some type

of alarm going off at his neighbor’s house; believes it is for carbon monoxide, but is not sure. Control advised; officer checked in with TFFD, who will call if they need MPD.

2:14 p.m. Caller reporting a very large tree branch on power lines on Masonic Avenue. Caller worried because the branch is over part of the bike path. Officer advises it is a Comcast line; no wires down; branch only leaning on wire. Comcast notified.

2:25 p.m. Caller reports that a male party backed into her car while she was in traffic on Avenue A. Caller states the man has since left the area. She has his information but would like an officer to respond. Officers investigated.

3:15 p.m. Three 911 calls reporting a disturbance at Broadway and Lake Pleasant Road; reports that an individual is screaming at a female party and chest-bumped several females. There is reportedly a crowd of approximately ten people trying to get the individual back under control. No known weapons. Subject last seen with no shirt, but carrying a shirt. Officer advises situation mediated. All parties advised of options. Courtesy transport to downtown Turners Falls provided.

10:38 p.m. 911 call; CO detector activation on Chestnut Hill Loop. Everyone has evacuated; no one is feeling ill. Conferenced with Shelburne Control.

Sunday, 9/21

12:49 a.m. Report of some sort of loud noise, perhaps a party, in the George Avenue area. Quiet upon officer’s arrival.

11:35 a.m. 911 call from Discovery Center reporting a possible brush fire on I-91 in Greenfield, near mile marker 47. Transferred to Greenfield.

1:22 p.m. 911 caller reporting out-of-control brush fire on Federal Street, spreading rapidly. Transferred to Control. TFFD on scene.

4:01 p.m. Caller would like an officer to check the Unity Park area for a group of teens in PJs that are yelling. Officer checked area and spoke to parties; all is fine.

5:55 p.m. Party into station to speak to an officer about a complaint regarding her neighbor. Advised of options.

8:15 p.m. Caller from Avenue C reporting a possible stalking incident; would like an officer to check the area and report back to her if it is safe for her and her baby tonight. Officer checked area and spoke with caller; advised her to call back if the individual returned, and the PD will check it out.

MONTAGUE REPORTER...

SUBMITTED PHOTO

ANN CALDERWOOD PHOTO

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Top right: Joan Pillsbury and Maggie Sadoway caught up on news they’d missed – from 1873, that’s one of our historical special editions – on the Schoodic Peninsula in Maine’s Acadia National Park.

Above: Turners Falls reader Jay DiPucchio brought along our August 21 edition to a senior nutrition conference in San Antonio, Texas, and read it under this statue of the city’s namesake, Saint Anthony of Padua.

Right: Black Sheep Deli manager Eric Morel wears a Montague Reporter fundraiser apron as he bakes. Check out the deli online, then head south to Main Street in Amherst to try their fabulous breads and other offerings.

Going somewhere this fall? Bring us with you! Send photos to editor@montaguereporter.org.

...ON THE ROAD

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CAFÉ from page B1

Botnick and Benick are co-owners and chefs. Botnick’s husband David D’Altorio is also involved in the project, supporting operations and front of house. Though the three are not from western Massachusetts, Botnick has ties through her parents, who have lived in Hatfield for ten years. Now Botnick, her husband, and Benick all live in Hatfield.

Botnick said one of the restaurant’s primary goals is to support the incredible agriculture and food system in our area. “That means highlighting the best seasonal ingredients and produce available locally,” she said. “Many producers we’re planning to work with are certified organic and already well known in the community.”

She added that while it’s not a vegan or vegetarian café, there will be options for lots of people with dietary restrictions. There will also be a full espresso bar, drip coffee, tea, and bottled beverages.

If you think that sounds a little bit like an urban café, maybe one in Brooklyn, you’d be right. Botnick went to the International Culinary Institute in New York, and has worked in kitchens in New York and Mexico for the last eight years. Benick, who learned on the job, has been working in kitchens in Portland, Oregon, Nashville, and New York for almost 18 years! The two met while working at a café and catering company in Brooklyn named Poppy’s.

“We bonded over our love of seasonal cooking, and developed our creative partnership,” Botnick said. “As soon as I met Tawni I knew she was a very special person, a thoughtful leader, and a talented chef. I started planting the seeds about doing something together some day.”

Around 2022 Botnick started thinking seriously about opening her own space, but taking that on in New York seemed daunting, so she started thinking about moving to western Massachusetts where she

could be closer to family. “The stars aligned,” she said, “when I learned that Tawni was also ready for a new adventure.”

And, after a long search, here they are. “We looked at probably most of the available commercial restaurant spaces for rent or for sale in the Valley,” Botnick told me. “We have always felt the magic of Montague, and we loved the idea of reviving our space for the town to enjoy once again.”

The owners were particularly excited about the outdoor space in front of the building, and plan to have tables and chairs set up there in warm weather. Health regulations prevent dogs, except for service animals, from coming into the café, but there will be some seating outside in the garden area where friendly pups will be welcome.

The owners are aiming for a mid-late October opening, but have not set a definitive opening date. The best way to stay in the loop and hear about the grand opening will be to follow them on Instagram at the handle @commonvarietyma; a website will be up and running shortly at commonvarietyma.com. “We will update an opening date as soon as we can!” Botnick said.

Those who are not inclined to use social media will find news of their grand opening in this paper. Local gossip will quickly spread the word as well.

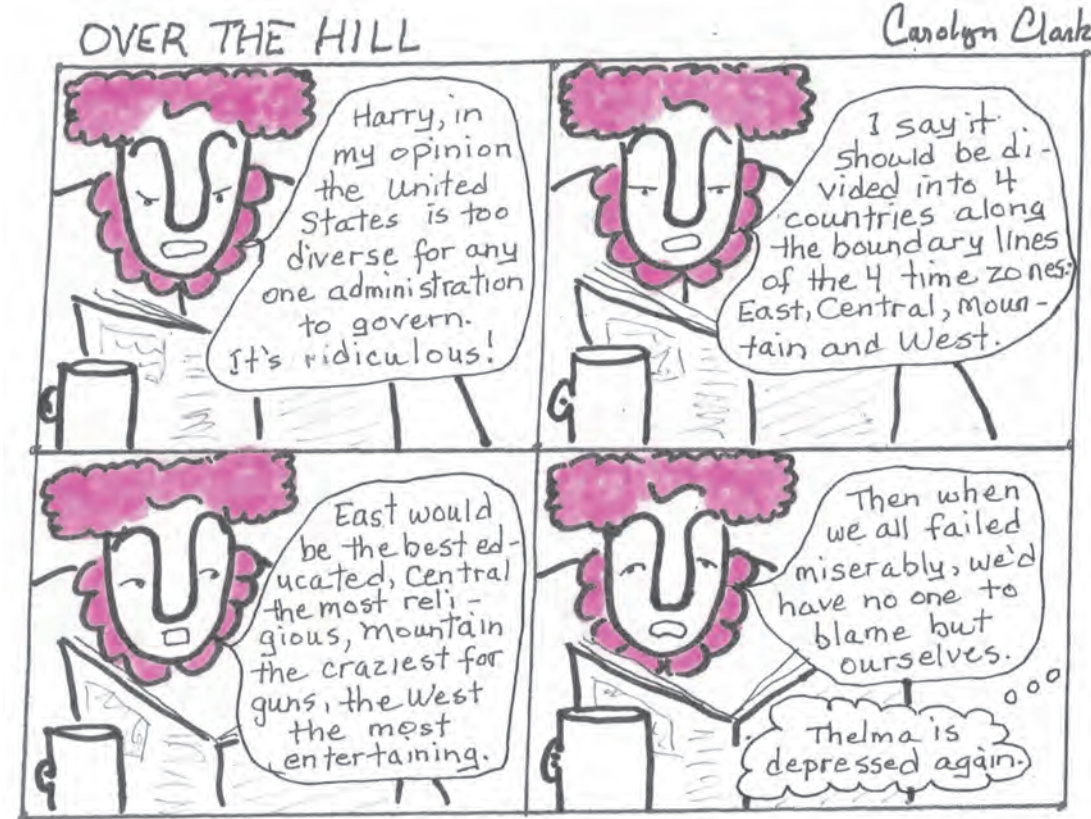
I always end an interview by asking what people want readers to know about them. In this case, Molly Botnick said: “We are so very excited to meet you all, and we’re working hard to get our doors open to welcome you all in for a pastry and a coffee. We’re thrilled about building a life and a business here, and we hope people will be just as excited about Common Variety as we are.”

“Also,” she added, “we are starting to hire, so if you are interested in coffee, baking, or savory cooking please feel free to reach out to hello@commonvarietyma.com.”



WICKS PHOTO

Botnick (left) and Benick, who met at a café and catering company in New York City, spent a long time scouting locations in western Massachusetts for their new venture.



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Montague Community Television News

Like Clockwork

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – Wendell honors Divya and Danny, “Voices in the Village” holds an open mic, and the Six-Town board presents on “super-regionalization,” all while the meetings chime in like clockwork: Montague finance committee, Gill-Montague school committee, Montague selectboard. It’s these community events and discussions that keep MCTV active, and we are happy to play our role in documenting these goings-on and storing them in a simple place for you to find – or stumble upon by chance.

You never know what you will find playing on Channel 9! But it’s

easy to find what you are looking for on our Vimeo page, which you can find by clicking the “Videos” tab at MontagueTV.org. There you will also find folders directing you to all of our archived Montague and Gill selectboard meetings, past and present.

If you would like to make a video, or if you know of an event that should be filmed, let us know. You can come by the station at 34 Second Street in Turners Falls to talk with Dean or Deirdre, Mondays through Fridays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. You can email us at infomontagueTV@gmail.com or even call us up at (413) 863-9200.

And if you see us out there filming, say hi!

BEACH from page B1

played in a handful of underground bands – Electric Jellyfish, Brain Drugs, Shovels – before settling into a streak of seven albums under his own name, accompanied by friends.

Beach now visits the US in support of his new album, *Big Black Plume*, featuring co-production and additional instrumentation by members of Tropical Fuck Storm and Dirty Three and released domestically through the Memphis-based Goner Records.

His lyrics suggest a man who has witnessed the ending of our time and reports back that what hope remains lives nestled within our everyday interactions. His lyrical phrasing brings to mind Leonard Cohen or Lou Reed: sung, not spoken, but with conversational cadence.

Michael Beach plays the Rendezvous in Turners Falls on Wednesday, October 1, with locals Creative Writing – who also celebrate a new album, out October 3 on Spain’s Meritorio Records – and Spectre Folk.

MR: *How does a small town like Turners Falls, MA end up on your tour itinerary, in the company of big-draw places like LA, Oakland, NYC, Seattle, Nashville, and Gonerfest?*

MB: We’ve got a long history with Western Mass, so I always try to stop by when I can. Years ago, John Moloney from Sunburned [Hand of the Man] was working with Thurston Moore and Byron Coley at Ecstatic Yod, and they put out my first tape (as Electric Jellyfish).

That was the first connection and since then we’ve played with a ton of killer bands from the area – MV/EE, P.G. Six, Pigeons, Magik Markers, Sunburned, etc., etc. It’s always a heady time!

MR: *If a town wants to receive more visits from artists like you, what can the community do to encourage it?*

MB: I guess any way folks can spread the word and support artists directly is always encouraging.

Check out a show, buy a record, tell some friends.

MR: *The new album has a varied cast of players, recorded in multiple continents and studios. How do you teach the songs to the players, and are you rehearsing them much before recording, or are you recording the songs spontaneously, with the whole band playing live?*

MB: It’s a bit of all of the above. I’m pretty fortunate to have gotten to record with the folks that I did. They are all wonderful players with unique identities, so we rehearsed things, but not overly so. Once everyone had a sense of what the song needed, we hit record and got a few live takes.

Generally the first take is always the best!

MR: *What prompted your move from your home state of California to Melbourne, Australia, and what have you learned from such a big move?*

MB: Melbourne is a pretty great place to be a musician in my experience. We’ve got very strong independent radio (RRR, PBS), lots of music venues of all sizes (Tote, Old Bar, Bell City are faves), and a pretty consistent outpouring of local bands (like Tropical Fuck Storm, Exek, Green Child, on and on and on) because of those things. So that was a big part of it.

I guess I’ve learned a lot from moving across the world – it’s pretty helpful to see your culture through the eyes of another.

MR: *What brought you back to California to record at El Studio – with Phil Manley of Trans Am – for parts of this new record?*

MB: Two things brought me back – firstly, Utrillo Kushner (Colossal Yes, Comets On Fire) is a dear friend, a tremendous drummer, and a true Oakland head. He’s played on most of my records. No one in the world plays drums like he does, and I’m pretty fortunate to



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get to play with him.

Secondly, Phil is a great engineer and good bud as well. I’ve recorded with him several times, and we have an easy working relationship. I really love how he makes records, and they always sound fantastic. The dude knows tone like no one else.

MR: *How do you write? Chord progression first? Riff first? Beats first? Do you play to a drum machine or MIDI beats as you’re formalizing the song?*

MB: No song is written the same. I kinda wish I had a formula, but I never settled on one, so the ideas just kinda stumble out and find their feet as they go. It keeps things interesting for me I guess.

MR: *How do you demo or capture your ideas? In addition to guitar and/or keys, what other instruments will you typically include on demos?*

MB: I’ve got a bunch of instruments in the studio. Lots of synths, drums machines, and effects in addition to piano and guitar. I really loved the last Mope Grooves record (RIP Stevie Pohlman), and was blown away by Stevie’s use of samples and beat making, so that will be an inspi-

ration for the next round of demos.

MR: *Let’s get in the weeds for a moment. In “Poison Dart,” the single and video from the new album, the first verse starts with standard measures of 4/4 beats, but then there’s a single 3-beat measure, with almost a turnaround feel, and it’s a great hook. Under the lyrics, “You of the blue jeans.” The drummer accents it with a crash... so, it doesn’t seem accidental. How did a hook like that, a complexity, make its way into the song?*

MB: Ha, thanks. I don’t think I planned that too consciously, but these weird, semi-proggy time signatures tend to pop up in my songs. Final arrangements are usually led by lyrical phrasing, and I never worry if things need beats added or subtracted. That sort of thing happens a lot in music I like, from Dylan to feedtime.

MR: *I’ve read that you teach music. Thinking about guitar students in particular, can you think of an area of study that unlocked a lot of potential in your own playing or writing?*

MB: Hmm, I don’t think there has ever been a moment where

something was “unlocked.” I tend to get obsessed with an artist or style and chase that as long as I can, and it inevitably rubs off on my creative output.

I really loved an idea I heard from Peter Brötzmann one time (paraphrasing): Use what technique you have to create, and when you feel like there’s something else you want to do, learn the technique that leads you to that. Technique for any other reason is useless.

MR: *Melbourne, Australia is home to so many great bands: The Stroppies, Program, Possible Humans, Vintage Crop, Glas Nost, Terry, Phil & the Tiles, Equal Parts... Tell them about Turners Falls if they’re headed over this way, eh?*

MB: Hell yeah! Those are all great bands – I’ll spread the word! If you like Melb bands, also check out Kissland, Delivery, Lost Animal, Leah Senior, Anti Fade Records, Hobbies Galore, Poison City Records, the list goes on....

MR: *I wish you great turnouts, in Turners Falls and beyond. Have a great tour.*

MB: Thanks heaps!

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EVENTS

submissions:
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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Nice & Easy Walk*. 10 a.m. Free.

Music Connection, Turners Falls: Listening party for Neko Case's *Neon Grey Midnight Green*. 5 p.m. Free.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: Political comedy show, *Laugh Don't Cry*. Shows at 6 and 8 p.m. \$.

New Salem Public Library, New Salem: *Living with Black Bears in Massachusetts*, presented by wildlife technician Shasta Slade. 6:30 p.m. Free.

Bellows Falls Opera House, Bellows Falls: Documentaries, *Vietnam: The Secret Agent* (1984) and *Country Joe's Vietnam Experience* (1987). Discussion afterward with filmmakers Charles Light and Daniel Keller. 6:30 p.m. \$.

Leverett Elementary School, Leverett: Presentation, *Talk with the Indian Doctress: Indigenous Medicine in the Valley*, by UPenn professor emerita of anthropology Marge Bruchac, whose research focuses on colonial history and the recovery of Indigenous history. 7 p.m. Free.

Holyoke Media, Holyoke: *KaneLoggiaHYPOTHESIS*, Eric Dahlman, Jabe Ledoux, Anthony Bearse. 7:30 p.m. By donation.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Comedy Open Mic*, hosted by Lana Epstein. 8 p.m. No cover.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Kidleidoscope Story Hour: River Otters*. Ages 3 to 6. Story, activities, and crafts. 10:30 a.m. Free.

Greenfield Senior Center, Greenfield: *Community Resource Fair*, featuring the debut of a newly-formed volunteer services group for adults 55 and above, the Greenfield Neighborhood. 1 to 3 p.m. Free.

Jacobs Road Municipal Center, Heath: Screening, *Views from a Woodlot*, short documentary profiling retired Quabbin forester Bruce Spencer. Panel discussion afterward on forestry. 4:30 p.m. Free.

Multiple venues, Northampton: *Northampton Jazz Festival*, feat. *The Amherst Jazz Orchestra*, *Jimmy Gavagan Trio*, more. Full listing at northamptonjazzfest.org. 4:30 p.m. Free.

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: *Friday Night at the Library*. Extended hours (until 7 p.m.), picnic potluck. 5 p.m. Free.

Downtown Greenfield: *Prose Parade*, feat. *Sierra Dickey*, *Vanessa Brewster*, *Sarah Wisby*, *Mo Schweiger*, *Rebecca Rideout*, *Matthew Latkiewicz*, more. Meet at Looky Here; bring trumpets, drums, pots and pans, bubbles, etc. Ends back at Looky Here for refreshments, etc. 5 p.m. Free.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: Reception, Anna Bayles *Arthur's Selected Paintings*. 5 to 8 p.m. Free.

Mead Art Museum, Amherst College: *75th Anniversary Party*, and reception for new exhibits. 5 to 8 p.m. Free.

Dickinson Library, Northfield: *Teen Night*. Low-key hangout after hours; food, crafts, games. 6 to 8 p.m. Free.

North Amherst Library, Amherst: *Dishpit*, *whenthe time comes*, *Glockteau Twins*, *Caedus*, *Cliffrose*. 6 p.m. \$.

Palladium, Worcester: *Dark Angel*, *Sacred Reich*, *Hirax*, *Void*. 6 p.m. \$\$.

Unnameable Books, Turners Falls: Reading: *Miranda Mellis*, *Andrea Lawlor*. 6:30 p.m. No cover.

Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: *Iva Bittová*. 7 p.m. \$.

Last Ditch, Greenfield: *Low Volume Electronics* with *Snowglobe Almanac*, *ZBS.FM*, *Sunset Mission*, *Hissquiet*. 7 p.m. \$.

Marigold, Brattleboro: *Wishbone Zoë*, *Saliba*, *Goldsetter*. 7 p.m. \$.

Clark Art Institute, Williamstown: *James K*, *Maria Somerville*. 7 p.m. \$.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Deep C Divers*, *Couchboy*. 8 p.m. No cover.

Shutesbury Athletic Club, Shutesbury: *Zepptunes*. 8 p.m. No cover.

Grey Matter Books, Hadley: *Lark Ascending* feat. *Noise Nomads*, *Valediction*, *Ozeregroth*. 8 p.m. By donation.

The Drake, Amherst: *Yaima*, *Camp Saint Helene*. 8 p.m. \$.



Andrea Lawlor, best known for their 2017 novel *Paul Takes the Form of a Mortal Girl*, reads at Unnameable Books this Friday with Miranda Mellis.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Zoë Keating*. 8 p.m. \$.

Deep Thoughts, Northampton: *Andy Boay*, *Bong Wish*, *Mike Etten*. 8 p.m. \$.

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

Hutghi's, Westfield: *Animal*, *Surrender*; *Ryan Sawyer/Wendy Eisenberg duo*; *Matt Krefting*. 8 p.m. \$.

Asbestos Farm, Hadley: *Tareneh*, *Comet*, *Taxidermists*, special guest TBA. 9 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Wide Open Jam*. 9:30 p.m. No cover.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

Leverett Congregational Church, Leverett: *Harvest Festival*. Tag sale, raffle, bake sale, art, more. Benefit for the Community Network for Children. 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free.

Canalside Rail Trail, Turners Falls: *Source to Sea Cleanup*. 10 a.m. Free.

EXHIBITS

Waterway Arts, Turners Falls: *Portals, Doorways, & Leaks*, works by Mathew Hollander and Trevor Powers, through September.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: The Springfield Photographic Society presents *The Towns of Franklin County*, through September 30.

Montague Center Library, Montague Center: Paintings by Millers Falls artist *Ashley Liu*, through September.

Northfield Mount Hermon, Gill: *Bicycles, Beaches, and Bovines*, multimedia work by Gill artist Doug Dale, at the Rhodes Art Center through October 10.

Leverett Library, Leverett: *Art & Crafts Inspired by the 1774 North Leverett Sawmill*, with work by dozens of artists, through October.

Leverett Crafts & Arts, Leverett: Susan Valentine, *Paintings*, and Sue Kassirer, *Works in Clay*. Through September.

Artspace, Greenfield: *Japanese Pop Art and Moment in Light*, landscape paintings and pop art by Kimiko Donohoe, through October 3.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *Silent Auction Art Exhibit*, works donated by local artists and assemblages by Andy Rothschild for sale to benefit LAVA, on view through December 20. Anna Bayles *Arthur*, *Selected Paintings*, through October with a reception this Friday, September 26 from 5 to 8 p.m.

Looky Here, Greenfield: *Belt Course*, paintings and prints by Amy Borezo and John Armstrong, through September 28.

Fiddleheads Gallery, Northfield: *Fall Into Fiber*, group show. Through November 2.

Sunderland Library, Sunderland: *Woodland Soundscape*, interactive art exhibit by Ms. Green Jeanne with canvas prints of wildlife and accompanying sound clips via QR codes, through September.

Clarkdale Fruit Farms, Deerfield: *Doorways*, self-guided audio-visual tour with sculptural doorways and sound pools by multiple artists, through November.

Mead Art Museum, Amherst College: New exhibits include *A Contentious Legacy: Paintings from Soviet Ukraine*; *Spaces That Hold: Swapnaa Tamhane*; *Re/Presenting: An Activity Gallery*; and the installation of Fred Wilson's chandelier

Dramatis Personae. Opening reception for all exhibits, and the museum's 75th Anniversary Party, this Friday, September 26, from 5 to 8 p.m.

Gallery A3, Amherst: *Counterspells & Concatenations*, works by Marianne Connolly and Rebecca Muller, through this Saturday, September 27.

Shelburne Arts Coop, Shelburne Falls: *Harvest Colors*, group show by members, through September.

Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne Falls: *Old and New*, paintings by father-and-son duo Robert and Matthew Steinem, through November 2.

Carberry Fine Arts Gallery at STCC, Springfield: *We're Riding the Same Wave*, interactive environments and playful sculptural forms by Sunny Allis, through October 3.

CALL FOR ART

LAVA Center, Greenfield: Community art exhibit on the theme of *Heart & Soul*. Submit up to three pieces to bit.ly/comartshow by October 11. No freestanding works allowed; pieces must be able to hang on the wall.

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CALENDAR

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4

Buckland-Shelburne Elementary School: *Shelburne Falls Oktoberfest*, with games, vendors, live music, a bounce house, and more. Benefit for Nature’s Classroom field trip. 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Free.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5

Conway Center, Conway: *Festival of the Hills*. Parade, skillet toss, logsplitting, history talk, book sale, fried dough, etc. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Free.

Lady Killigrew, Montague Center: *All Feels, Ollie Schechter, Matt Fero*. 4 p.m. Free.

Kitchen Garden Farm, Sunderland: *Kimya Dawson, Sylvie’s Okay, Olive Klug*. 7 p.m. \$.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10

Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: *Square Dance with Devilish Mary’s Stringband*, Sally Newton calling. Jammers welcome. 6:30 p.m. By donation.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11

Bombyx Center, Florence: *Norma Dream* album release party, with the *Mia Friedman Band, Dream Choir, Young at Heart Chorus*, pizza by *Augustine’s Pizza Club*. 7 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18

Mount Toby Friends Meetinghouse, Leverett: *Anne Louise White and Friends*. Concert and community sing, benefit for LUCE Immigrant Justice Network. 7 p.m. \$.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26

Greenfield Records, Greenfield: *Ben Richter, Eric Wong, Katie Porter*. 7 p.m. By donation.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8

Ralph’s Rock Diner, Worcester: *The F.U.’s, Psycho, Execution Style, D.O.D*. 8 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15

Multiple venues, Brattleboro: *Circuits in the Woods*, feat. *Jeffrey Alexander + The Heavy Lidders, Wet Tuna, Charles Dodge, Caldon Glover-Wessel, Badweatherfriend*, many more. Schedule TBA. \$.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19

Palladium, Worcester: *GWAR, Helmet, The Dwarves, Blood Vulture*. 7 p.m. \$\$.

Greenfield Public Library, Greenfield: *Community Baby Shower*. 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Free.

Shantigar, Rowe: *Mushroom Talk and Walk* with Berkshire Mycological Society president John Wheeler. 10:30 a.m. By donation.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *National Public Lands Day Celebration*. Food, music, teach-ins, kids’ activities, tabling by organizations, and a collaborative art project. 12 to 4:30 p.m. Free.

Greenfield Savings Bank, Turners Falls: *The Farley String Band*. Light refreshments. 1 p.m. Free.

Forster Farm, Orange: *North Quabbin Garlic & Arts Festival*. Music, food, vendors, farm products, kids’ activities and games, demonstrations, more. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. \$.

Winchester, New Hampshire: *Winchester Pickle Festival*. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free.

Multiple Venues, Northampton: *Northampton Jazz Festival*, feat. *Miki Yamanaka, Expandable Brass Band*, more. Full listing at northamptonjazzfest.org. 11 a.m. Free.

Palladium, Worcester: *Bad Religion, Pennywise, Propagandhi, Face To Face, Adolescents, Dwarves*, more. 12 p.m. \$\$.

Unity Park, Turners Falls: *Montague Community Fair*. Light refreshments, music, activities, and information about local organizations. 2 to 5 p.m. Free.

New Salem Public Library, New Salem: *Superfoods 101*, presented by Kim Larkin. Learn about the health benefits of cacao, acai, goji berries, and more. Register at (978) 544-6334. 2 p.m. Free.

Carnegie Library Tent, Turners Falls: Information session, *Apartheid-Free Communities*. Talk with town meeting members and other residents who support this resolution, which will be voted on at the October 22 special town meeting. 3 to 5 p.m. Free.

Sunderland Town Park, Sunderland: *Melt: A Queer Yenta Event*. 21+. Fundraiser for LUCE Immigrant Justice Network. Speed dating, 4 p.m.; dance party with DJs Seva, *PRL, Cachetonia*, 7 p.m. By donation.

Gill Town Hall, Gill: *Community Dance*. All ages and experience levels welcome. Beginner lessons, family dance, squares, and contras. 6 p.m. Free.

Four Phantoms Brewing, Greenfield: *Burning Roses Burlesque*. 21+. 6 p.m. \$.

Brewery at Four Star Farms, Northfield: *Big Trouble*. 6 p.m. No cover.

Brick House, Turners Falls: *Tiger Moth, Glockteau Twins, Myella*. 7 p.m. \$.

Unnameable Books, Turners Falls: *leatherleaf, Corey Thuro*. 7 p.m. By donation.

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

Nova Arts, Keene: *Camp Saint Helene, Kristin Daeyln, Adeline Hotel*. 7 p.m. \$.

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

Greenfield Garden Cinemas, Greenfield: Screening, *Won’t You Be My Neighbor?* (2018), followed by a panel with representatives of Greenfield Community College, the Greenfield Business Association, and the Greenfield Police Department. See gccfor.me/neighbor to register. 3:30 p.m. Free.

Unnameable Books, Turners Falls: *Dreamt Dreamer, Dave Scanlon, Mo Schweiger*. 4 p.m. No cover.

Hope Center for the Arts, Springfield: *Rafiq Bhatia, Ian Chang, Riley Mulherkar*. 8 p.m. \$.

Space Ballroom, Hamden CT: *Melvins, Redd Kross*. 8 p.m. \$.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1

Dickinson Library, Northfield: *Music and Movement*, for toddlers and their caregivers; *Book Group*: Elizabeth Strout, *Tell Me Everything*. Both at 10 a.m. Free.

Erving Public Library, Erving: *Afterschool Activities*. Games, makerspace, snacks. 1:30 to 3 p.m. Free.

Dickinson Library, Northfield: *Poetry Group*. 3 p.m. Free.

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: *Guided Mushroom Walk*. Register at (978) 544-3559. All ages. 4 p.m. Free.

Dickinson Library, Northfield: *Dungeons & Dragons*. Single-night campaign for ages 16 and up, all XP welcome. Register at northfieldrec.com. 5 p.m. Free.

Whately Town Hall, Whately: *Tannahill Weavers*. 7:30 p.m. \$\$.

Northampton Center for the Arts, Northampton: *Lucian Ban/Mat Maneri duo*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Michael Beach, Spectre Folk, Creative Writing*. 8:30 p.m. \$

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2

Dickinson Library, Northfield: *Environmental Reading Group*. Robert Macfarlane, *Is a River Alive?* 3 p.m. Free.

Wendell Meetinghouse, Wendell: *Honoring Elders: Janee and Don Stone*. Bring stories to share. 6:30 p.m. Free.

Sulis Studio, Florence: *Free Body Estimate, beetsblog, River Full of Fruit*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Reprise*, Phish tribute. 8 p.m. \$.

Marigold, Brattleboro: *Sally Baby’s Silver Dollars*. 8 p.m. Free.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3

Nova Lot, Turners Falls: *Great Ghouls Night Market*, with vendors, crafts, music, performances. 5 to 9 p.m. Free.

Peskeompskut Park, Turners Falls: *Bug Museum Parade*, proceeding to the Nova Lot. 6 p.m. Free.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Cinemastorm*, movie double feature: *RoboCop* (1987), *The Crow* (1994). Trivia, refreshments. 7:30 p.m. Free.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *B-52.Os, Zepptunes*. 8 p.m. \$.

Parlor Room, Northampton: *The Mammals*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Academy of Music, Northampton: *New York Voices*, grand finale of the Northampton Jazz Festival. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *King Kyote*. 8 p.m. \$.

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

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Back In ‘86, Grazer, Slab Division*. 8:30 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Noah Britton, Girl Beatles, Jeff Unfortunately*. 9:30 p.m. No cover.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

Apex Orchards, Shelburne: *Apples & Artisans*. Vendors, rides, apple picking; music by *Ragged Blue*. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Free.

Forster Farm, Orange: *North Quabbin Garlic & Arts Festival*. Music, food, vendors, kids’ activities, games, more. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. \$.

Gill Town Common, Gill: *Harvest Festival*. Food, hayrides, petting zoo, vendors, coin toss, raffle, more. 12 to 3 p.m. Free.

Erving Public Library, Erving: *Book Club: Dungeon Crawler Carl* by Matt Dinniman. Copies available at the library. 2 p.m. Free.

Marigold, Brattleboro: *Rosie Porter Duo*. 7 p.m. Free.

Hutghi’s, Westfield: *Gripper, Shampoo, Mibble, Sleep Destroyer*. 7 p.m. \$.

Cold Spring Hollow, Belchertown: *Jayden Barber, A Louis, Scald Hymm, Memory Object, Kryssi B., Secret Boyfriend*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Big E Arena, West Springfield: *ZZ Top*. 7:30 p.m. \$\$.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Slant of Light, Les Deraillieurs, Saliba*. 8 p.m. \$.

Big E Court of Honor Stage, West Springfield: *Queensryche*. 8 p.m. \$.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

Brick House Community Resource Center, Turners Falls: *Eviction Sealing Clinic*, with Springfield No One Leaves. Meet with a lawyer to have past evictions sealed, to make it easier to find housing moving forward. In English and Spanish. Register at www.tinyurl.com/Sealing25. 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Free.

Garden Cinemas, Greenfield: Silent film, *Way Down East* (1920), with accompaniment by keyboardist *Jeff Rapsis*. 6:30 p.m. \$.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Chris Moyes, Floyds Row*. 7:30 p.m. \$

Reggae legends Black Uhuru, led by original member Duckie Simpson, play the Stone Church in Brattleboro this Saturday with support from openers Joel Veena, Simon White & Rhythm Inc., and Selector D.

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TV REVIEW

AppleTV’s *Chief of War*

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – I have seen Jason Momoa in a couple of films as Aquaman, and found that he works well in that role. His latest acting role is a TV series on Apple TV+’s streaming network called *Chief of War*. It’s the true story of the unification of Hawai’i at the end of the 18th century.

Momoa, in fact, co-wrote the first two episodes, and it was his idea to make the show. He stars as a warrior chief named Ka’iana. The Hawaiians in it actually speak their native language.



At the start of the two-episode premiere that aired in August, Ka’iana and his family had taken refuge from fighting with other tribes on another island. We hear mention of a prophecy among the people of a king who will unite

them. I believe that this prophecy is supposed to have merit connected to the storytelling involved.

We are also treated to the view that the king is a greedy man whom Ka’iana doesn’t want to serve at all, but through some interaction with a seer of some kind, he is convinced to do it again. I am guessing that, like the last time, it doesn’t go well. He flees, and is running for his life.

Ka’iana encounters another person who shall be in an arranged marriage shortly with the King named Keoua, whom he didn’t want to serve. That woman is named Ku-puohi, and I believe they will encounter each other again.

Another chance encounter, with fur traders who really need some food comes in handy for Ka’iana. He helps them out and gets help from them with his life-and-death situation. At the end of the second episode, Ka’iana is on the fur traders’ ship, going away from Maui. He is safe from fellow tribesmen who want to end his life, but he is going far away from his home, and that isn’t what he wants – or, some might say, his style.

I believe some of these interactions show him to be an honorable man. He doesn’t want to do certain things, and yet, what is someone supposed to do in the middle of some of what is going on? It’s really quite a mystery where it is going to end with this guy, let alone what kind of part he might play next. I am very interested in how they end his story in connection with the real-life events that happened in Hawai’i.

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- Search for coins in the sawdust
- Coloring Contest
- Birds of Prey Presentation
- Live Music with the Falltown String Band
- Visit with friends and neighbors
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**Sunday, September 28
from 12 to 3 p.m.**
(Rain date October 5)
The Common, Town Center, Gill

FESTIVAL SCHEDULE ANNOUNCEMENT
Film Fest Schedule Announced

GREENFIELD – The LAVA Center is gearing up for its fifth annual LAVA Film Festival, which will take place Thursday to Sunday, October 9 to 12 at the LAVA Center, at 324 Main Street in Greenfield. The festival spotlights emerging local filmmakers who create films that engage with the community and are made with joy. All were made by current residents of Massachusetts, more than half from western Mass.

Thursday, 7 p.m.: *Rising River’s Edge*, at All Souls Church, 399 Main Street. From LAVA’s humanities team, a new film documenting extreme weather events in Franklin County through farmers’ struggles, and how they shape consumer experience. With a Q&A with the team.

Friday, 5 p.m.: *Reception*. Meet filmmakers whose work will be screening over the weekend.

Friday, 7 p.m.: *Comedy Movies*. Both lighter and darker comedies.

Saturday, 1 p.m.: *Documentaries and Personal Documentaries*.

Saturday, 4 p.m. *Music Movies*, including music videos and documentaries.

Saturday, 7 p.m.: *Thriller, Horror, and Action Movies*. Signature dark, fun Saturday night program.

Sunday, 1 p.m.: “From Script to Screen: the Stages of Filmmaking,” a panel moderated by Wally Marzano-Lesnevic.

Sunday, 3 p.m.: *Experimental Movies*. Some overlapping with documentary, drama, comedy, poetry, animation, and variety TV.

Sunday, 6 p.m.: *Powerful Dramas*.

More information, including a listing of the films in each category, is at www.thelavacenter.org/lava-film-festival/. Some themes may not be intended for younger audiences. Many events include Q&As with the filmmakers. Most are on a \$5 to \$20 sliding scale, though some are free; weekend passes are available for \$25 to \$60. Tickets can be purchased at www.tixtree.com/o/lava.

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Amanda Gorman, *The Hill We Climb*

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