

# The Montague Reporter

Year 24 – No. 17

APRIL 2, 2026

\$2

editor@montaguereporter.org

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

montaguereporter.org

## Open Selectboard Seat Attracts Two Fresh Faces



Nate Card

By MIKE JACKSON

**MONTAGUE** – Two candidates will be on the May 19 ballot for an open Montague selectboard seat, and both are newcomers to the town’s government: Nathanael Card Schiffbauer, a downtown Turners Falls resident who goes by Nate Card in professional and public life, and Chestnut Hill resident John Snyder.

Town clerk Wendy Bogusz told the Reporter on Wednesday that Card and Snyder are the only two candidates who turned in nomination papers and were certified as candidates for selectboard.

Though the Democratic town committee has been authorized in the past to nominate candidates for office directly onto the ballot by caucus, chair Francia Wisniewski confirmed that the committee was deactivated and is currently in the process of reestablishing itself, and will not be able to place nominees this spring.

A third candidate previously reported to

see **FACES** page A5



John Snyder

## MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

### Senator Calls for ‘Sea Change’ At State Ed Department

By JEFF SINGLETON

The Montague selectboard meeting on Monday night was dominated by a discussion with state senator Jo Comerford of the impact of state aid on the town’s budget.

The board also recommended articles for the May annual town meeting warrant, reviewed a draft of the warrant itself, approved a policy for outdoor dining, and discussed a waiver for a law firm concerning a new “drone agreement” between Montague and Greenfield.

The discussion with Comerford began with selectboard chair Matt Lord noting that the board had developed a list of the town’s “legislative priorities,” but that he was interested in hearing where she saw “the most movement happening at this time” on Beacon Hill.

Comerford began by addressing a variety of forms of state aid whose formulas she said she felt have been inequitable to rural communities. She called the calculation of payments *in lieu* of taxes (PILOT) for

see **MONTAGUE** page A7

## High School Sports Week: Softball Time is Here Again

By MATT ROBINSON

**TURNERS FALLS** – The spring sports season got off to a rousing, but cold, start this week.

Last Friday, March 27, the Turners Falls Softball Thunder played their home opener against the Red Hawks of Frontier, and for the first

time in recent memory, Powertown was mercied. On Tuesday, however, they bounced back and came from behind to even their record to 1 – 1.

The Franklin Tech softballers, meanwhile, traveled to Wilbraham on Tuesday for their season opener against Minnechaug, and let an

see **SPORTS** page A8



DAVID HOITT PHOTO

Turners Falls High School’s multi-talented pitcher Autumn Thornton blasts a two-run homer Tuesday against the Greenfield Green Wave, putting the Thunder ahead 6-4 in the fourth inning. The Thunder stunned with an 11-6 win over their state championship rivals, only one game after a 14-2 loss to Frontier Regional.

## ERVING SELECTBOARD

### Sheriff Offers Officers After Staff Exodus

By KATIE NOLAN

On Monday night at the Erving selectboard meeting, Franklin County sheriff Lori Streeter proposed supplying the town’s police department with patrol officers. Since January, four patrol officers and the cadet officer have resigned from the Erving department, leaving chief Robert

Holst and sergeant Adam Paicos as the department’s only employees.

Neither Holst nor the selectboard members discussed the departure of all the town’s patrol officers at the meeting. Since January, the board has held eight executive sessions “to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining” regarding Erving Police Benevolent Association

Local 121. Monday’s meeting ended with another executive session regarding the union.

In a comment on the Local 121 Facebook page, retired Erving officer Laura Gordon wrote: “Strong law enforcement agencies depend on clear policies, professional standards, and accountability. Clear

see **ERVING** page A4

## SHOW OF NUMBERS



MIKE JACKSON PHOTO

Thousands of people – three and a half thousand, according to organizers – paraded down Greenfield’s Federal Street on Saturday and rallied boisterously in front of city hall in conjunction with a nationwide “No Kings” protest campaign. “Vote for Democracy, Not Brutality, Bombs, and Ballrooms!” read one of hundreds of homemade placards.

## New Salem Tax Override Aims to Save Swift River School Jobs

By SARAH ROBERTSON

**NEW SALEM** – Voters in New Salem will be asked whether to support a tax override next month in order to reduce layoffs at Swift River School and bolster other departments’ budgets amid rising costs.

The New Salem/Wendell school committee voted last week to recommend a Swift River School budget for the upcoming fiscal year that would require laying off as many as five staff members. In response, some school committee members, parents, and educators say they plan to advocate in favor of the Proposition 2½ override in order to reduce the number of staff cuts to three.

“It’s the insurance that is killing us,” school committee chair Nancy Slator said at the March 26 meeting. “We would be delighted to get

see **OVERRIDE** page A6

## WENDELL SELECTBOARD

### Meetinghouse Expansion Draws Protest, Compromise

By JOSH HEINEMANN

Thirteen Wendell residents, including selectboard members and this reporter, went to the Wendell selectboard’s March 25 meeting for what turned into a long and contentious discussion about a proposal to build an extension to the Wendell Meetinghouse with an ADA-accessible

washroom with running water and flush toilets, a warming kitchen, secure storage, and a changing room.

The agenda was short, but the meeting went late.

Citizens Mary McBride and Alison Wight were in the room as the meeting opened, offering cell phone images of proposals for the

see **WENDELL** page A6



REPORTER FILE PHOTO

The meetinghouse, owned by a non-profit, was extensively renovated in 2021 and 2022, but does not have running water or an accessible washroom.

### Still Doing the Whole Newspaper Thing

A Rousing, But Cold, Start.....A1	Savory, Rich, and Somewhat Sweet.....B1
The Nasty Wasty History of Extraction.....A2	So Much Comfort and Experience.....B2
If Their Power is Uninterrupted.....A3	Casting Such Trusty Patterns.....B3
Somewhat of a Public Safety Emergency.....A4	Feed Us, Give Us Soft Beds.....B4
The Pace of Bureaucracy.....A5	Considerados En Gran Medida Ineludibles.....B5
Elegant Interior Facilities.....A6	Snowbeasts, Hot Dirt, Pancake Breakfast.....B6
A Little Strike Among the Section Hands.....A7	Converge, Chipmunks, Earth Day Cleanup.....B7
A Foe Closer to Home.....A8	Scan the Lake’s Nooks and Crannies.....B8



# The Montague Reporter

"The Voice of the Villages"

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Founded by  
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August 2002

## No Brakes

As of press time Thursday, crude oil prices were up over 12% on daily trading, indicating that last night's speech in Washington, "President Trump Delivers Powerful Primetime Address on Operation Epic Fury," may have fallen short of convincing the world the US is finding a path out of its maze.

News also came in that Kamal Kharazi, a former Iranian foreign minister who has been involved in peace talks with the US, was targeted by an Israeli airstrike at his Tehran home. Kharazi, the latest in a series of negotiators targeted by

America's close ally, was seriously injured; his wife was killed.

"The choice between confrontation and engagement is both real and consequential," Iran's president, Masoud Pezeshkian, wrote this week to American civilians. "[I]ts outcome will shape the future for generations to come."

Pezeshkian may be trolling, but he's not wrong. It will take diplomacy to make peace, and the US's diplomats were fired for warning Trump not to tear up deals and alienate our allies. It's a magical time for those who crave war.



Carnegie Library assistant Scotty Schmith poses with a cutout of Dolly Parton, an eye-catching way to draw visitors' attention to the singer's Imagine Library program, which sends millions of free books out each month to children in five countries. If you have a child five years old or younger, you can sign them up at [imaginationlibrary.com](http://imaginationlibrary.com). Scotty has been at the Carnegie for 12 years, and shares that his favorite recent book is *An Immense World* by Ed Yong.

## Letters to the Editors



### The More Things Change ...

Last month, while browsing through the shelves at our local gem of an establishment, the Montague book Mill, I came across a book called *Postcards from Ed: Dispatches and Salvos from an American Iconoclast*. This is a collection of letters and postcards that Edward Abbey had written to friends and family, and to the editors of magazines and newspapers, which were collected and organized after his death.

If folks aren't familiar with Edward Abbey, he attended the university of New Mexico at Albuquerque and spent the first half of the 1970s in the southwest area of the United States, specifically Moab, Utah, and northern Arizona around Tucson, manning fire towers, working for the National Park Service, floating the Grand and Glenn Canyon (before it was flooded), driving cattle, and exploring intimately on foot more of the grand Southwest than most.

He was a self-described anarchist, author, and activist, anti-government, anti-population growth, anti-industry, anti-pavement, anti-automobile, anti-mining, anti-Army Corps of Engineers, etc., etc. He could be a crotchety SOB.

Abbey loved these wilderness areas and was a die-hard defender of them. And he saw the writing on the wall. He pushed back against the "progress" of expansion and access to these places. He raged against paved roads, parking lots, litter, Coke machines, billboards, powerlines, and long snaking lines of cars.

He knew intimately the native plants, the flowers and succulents, and understood the stones, gems, minerals, and the nasty wasty history of extraction of gold, silver, copper, and uranium. He was familiar with the human history: Apache, Navajo, pictographs and petroglyphs, and ranchers, as well as the rattlers, scorpions, tarantulas, vultures, and fire ants. He chose to go against the grain, mostly, and there's a part of me that connects with this spirit.

Anyway, the day I picked up this book was the same day I heard that Donald Trump, Pete Hegseth, and Marco Rubio had decided to send 5,000 marines to Iran. It's clear to me that the leaders of this country right now are

dishonest, unserious, and unqualified hacks and grifters.

In the first few pages of this book, I came across a letter written by Ed on December 29, 1972 to the editor of the *Arizona Daily Star* in Tucson and it read:

*Editor,*

After winning the election with the fraudulent promise that 'peace is at hand,' the Nixon/Kissinger team have now revealed the true depth of their intellectual dishonesty and moral corruption. Through the tangled cobweb of official lies comes the thunder of the bombs falling on the people of Vietnam. After eight years of defoliating forests, poisoning rice fields, burning villages, napalming civilians, and torturing prisoners, our Government is now engaged in an apparent effort to obliterate the cities and destroy the population of the northern half of the little peasant nation of Vietnam.

Nothing in American history, not even the wars against the Indians, can equal the shame and brutality and cowardice of this war. It makes an obscenity of our Christmas holidays and sinks our own Government and all who passively consent to its atrocities down to the moral level of Stalinist Russia, and Hitler's Germany.

Our so-called leaders speak of an 'honorable' withdrawal from Vietnam, but there can be no honorable conclusion to such a dishonorable war.

The only decent thing we can do now is to somehow compel those moral degenerates in the White House and Pentagon to stop their cowardly attack on Vietnam and then begin at once, as best we can, to help the survivors in that devastated land rebuild their farms, homes, villages, and cities, and reconstruct their shattered culture. If, that is, if they would even be willing to accept aid from our bloody hands.

*Edward Abbey*

In the spirit of Ed, enough of the bullshit. We've been stepping in it too long.

**Jason Kaiser**  
Turners Falls

## ... The More Things We've Always Known

In December of 1950 I was 16 years old, and the country was about six months into the Korean War. Every year just before Christmas, it was the tradition at the small school I attended on the shores of Long Island Sound to stage a medieval play in a city cathedral even though the school was non-sectarian.

The entire student body took part, from the smallest children in kindergarten who were cherubs and acolytes, to the seniors who took the coveted parts of Mary and Joseph, wise men, and angels. It opened with a moving speech by the prophet Isaiah, as gleaned from the King James version of the Bible.

A few years ago I came across, in an old scrapbook, an article I had written for the school newspaper, *The Dolphin*, in December of that year. It juxtaposes newspaper headlines and radio reports of the war with pronouncements by the prophet as spoken in our play (Isaiah 9:2-7, Isaiah 11:9).

**They Shall Not Hurt Nor Destroy**

Korea, June, 1950, War in Asia... war by jet and by G.I. ... stirs pride of U.S but exacts a payment... 45,000 Reds attack on 200-mile front... communists breach Kum River in major Taejon drive... first Marine division on its way... Navy sky raiders strike out... mobilization in U.S. has started... draft revived... reserves will be called as needed, married men are not exempt... veterans will return to army, young doctors and dentists will be under pressure... Situation in Korea takes headlong dive... U.N. forces are slowly being pushed off peninsula...

"The people that walked in dark-

ness have seen a great light: They that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder."

Korea, August, 1950. U.N. troops invade Seoul. Planes pave way for landing... bombers hit Red roads and railways, leave gutted plants and bridges... pattern of war changed as U.N. forces strike the Red rear... city of Inchon taken in twelve hours... Marines besiege hills in Seoul... G.I.s race north to trap Red force... Kimpo taken and Han River crossed... victory in the lap of the U.N. army...

"Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, but to establish it with judgment, and with justice from henceforth even forever."

Korea, November, 1950. U.N. troops delayed by snow, insufficient clothing... Manchurian Reds slowly withdrawing... supply routes cut by heavy drifts... airlift may be needed... six hundred North Koreans sentenced to death for collaboration with communists... forty-five percent of the First Cavalry Division of U.S Army wiped out as Reds slash back...

"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

I hadn't realized what a cynic I was at such a tender age. Seventy-five years later it still, I think, resonates.

**Lyn Clark**  
Turners Falls

**Published weekly on Thursdays.**  
Every other week in July and August.  
No paper the fourth week of November,  
or the final week of December.

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# TURNERS FALLS AND VICINITY.

Compiled by MIKE JACKSON

"Calling children of all ages!" Linda Ackerman writes. "Peter Cottontail will be hopping into the Turners Falls Branch of Greenfield Savings Bank at 282 Avenue A from 3 to 4:30 p.m. on Friday, April 3. A small gift will be given to all youngsters. This will be a great photo op, so adults, please bring your cameras or cell phones."

Mr. Cottontail's services are in high demand this time of year. The following afternoon, rain or shine, he will host his annual EGGstravaganza at Unity Park. "Peter Cottontail and his friends will be placing 5,000 candy and toy-filled eggs throughout the park." Montague parks and rec director Jon Dobosz explained in his *Out of the Park* column on February 26, which you may have missed.

"It usually doesn't take very long for the kids to gobble up all the eggs, so be sure to get to the park a few minutes before 1 p.m. when the horn sounds," Jon explained. "The hunt is geared towards children ages 4 to 12 due to the small candy and toys, and we would like to thank the Montague Elks and Greenfield Savings Bank for co-sponsoring the event."

One might assume this Peter Cottontail is an ancient folk hero, along the lines of Robin Hood. However, while records of an Easter bunny or hare date back at least as far as the 17th century and a seasonal egg-producing rabbit was – rather questionably – associated by folklorists with the Anglo-Saxon goddess Eostre, it turns out that Mr. Cottontail is in fact younger than escalators, lie detectors, windshield wipers, neon light, Einstein's theory of relativity, and the patent on MDMA.

The name, Wikipedia tells us, came from Massachusetts children's author Thornton Burgess, who borrowed a character called Peter Rabbit directly from his British contemporary Beatrix Potter. Mr. Rabbit adopted the name as an affectation in Burgess's 1914 book *The Adventures of Peter Cottontail*, though he dropped it a chapter later.

It might have been buried under the sands of time were it not for commercial songwriters Steve Nelson and Jack Rollins, who were seeking in 1949 to chase the success of Gene Autry's singles "Here Comes Santa Claus" and "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer." The pair penned "Here Comes Peter Cottontail" and "Frosty the Snowman," both of which charted for Autry in 1950. Their song made Cottontail, indelibly, an Easter bunny, "hop-pin' down the bunny trail" with jellybeans, eggs, an orchid, and even a bonnet for your family.



JOE R. PARZYCH PHOTO

Roving photo-correspondent Joe R. Parzych of Greenfield encountered these goats on a visit to his hometown of Gill. "The goats says hello to our readers," he writes, "including please come to Peila's Creamery farm. It's spring time..."

Peila's is up on Lyons Hill Road. You may have missed their shamrock milk this year, but they should still have chocolate, blueberry, banana, maple, and milk-flavored milks at the farm store.

We also wish Joe a very happy birthday – Wednesday was his 35th. He has been working as a freelance photojournalist for 28 years, and announces that his photography book will be published soon. We will keep you posted on that.

Two conflicting events next Wednesday evening might force you to decide once and for all whether you are more of a urine nutrient recycling person or more of a comprehensive signage and wayfinding system person:

*Exhibit A:* "The Rich Earth Institute invites community members to a kick-off event to help plan the future of urine nutrient recycling in Franklin County, Massachusetts, thanks to

funding from the Long Island Sound Futures Fund. 'Peecycling' reclaims human urine as a safe, sustainable, locally available fertilizer while preventing watershed pollution and conserving clean water.

"The event will take place on Wednesday, April 8 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the Sunderland Public Library. Attendees will learn about the initiative, share ideas, and explore opportunities to get involved in completing the food nutrient cycle in Western Massachusetts."

*Exhibit B:* "The Town of Montague is developing a comprehensive signage and wayfinding system for Turners Falls to improve navigation, strengthen civic identity, support local economic development, and create a welcoming, accessible environment for residents and visitors. Technical assistance is provided by VHB and Hired Hand Signs. This project is being funded by the FY'26 MA Downtown Initiative Technical Assistance Program. We encourage all community members to get involved!"

On Wednesday, April 8 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. in the second-floor meeting room at Montague town hall, 1 Avenue A in Turners Falls, "the project team will present project goals and expected deliverables, review existing sign conditions and proposed sign locations, and take public comments to help guide this project."

If you absolutely must attend both events, or wish to attend only one but not in your earthly body, there is a way: both will be accessible via Zoom. The Rich Earth Institute kick-off can be accessed via [www.tinyurl.com/PissHarvest](http://www.tinyurl.com/PissHarvest) and you can use [www.tinyurl.com/ConfuseTourists](http://www.tinyurl.com/ConfuseTourists) a half-hour later to join in on the downtown Turners signage and wayfinding discussion.

If you can't make the signs meeting but have opinions to offer on the matter, town officials have issued an online survey (sample questions: "Which style best represents Turners Falls?" "Which age group do you belong to?"). Use [www.tinyurl.com/WayfindingPoll](http://www.tinyurl.com/WayfindingPoll) to fill it out.

For many species, it should be noted, urine nutrient recycling and comprehensive wayfinding are accomplished by a single mechanism.

In other portal news, Massachusetts residents may now use [www.mass.gov/fedmisconduct](http://www.mass.gov/fedmisconduct) to report misconduct by federal agents. The site also accepts photo and video uploads.

Send your little bits of news to [editor@montaguereporter.org](mailto:editor@montaguereporter.org).

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*The massacre at Peskeompskut/ Turners Falls took place 350 years ago, during King Philip's (Metacomb's) War. David Brule coordinated the just-completed 12-year study of the site and its surroundings sponsored by the National Park Service Battlefield Grant Program. He will talk about the precedents, aftermath, and present implications of that war, and the fascinating and often surprising results produced by the project team – research scientists, town historical commissioners, and Native American cultural custodians.*

What really happened  
here in our backyard?

*David is a member of the Nehantic Tribe in Connecticut and Chair of its Tribal Council. He coordinates the 1676 Commemoration Steering Committee in Montague and is president of the Nolumbeka Project, dedicated to honoring the presence and culture of Native Americans in the region. A well-published book author and columnist, he is a very engaging speaker! He lives in Millers Falls/Erving side.*

OP ED

## Harnessing the Energy of No Kings, and Taking Action

By PETER GARBUS

**GREENFIELD** – Estimates are that over 8 million people showed up for No Kings 3 across this country and across the globe. There were an estimated 3,500 in Greenfield. What does that outpouring mean, and where will it go?

There are many reasons people might have shown up on Saturday. In just one year, Trump's destruction, lawlessness, and grift takes up more space than this column can cover. Here are a few: mass deportations and detention, canceling or blocking renewable energy initiatives, Medicaid cuts, firing multiple Inspectors General and attacking the judiciary, DOGE, tariffs, tax cuts for the rich while cutting social safety net programs. War in Iran!

Suffice it to say there are significant violations and offenses that led millions to join No Kings demonstrations.

Some on the right claim the No Kings crowds were paid, they were organized by radical left organizations, and they represented communist, anti-American interests. They say these were "hate America" rallies. If any of you were out there on Saturday, you know that couldn't be further from the truth. The people who came out are your neighbors, your grandparents, young families with their

kids, members of your community who care about the country. Left-leaning, no doubt, but opposition to Trump is beyond left and right.

Some think rallies, even if massive, don't impact the power structures of this country or change how the system works. My Millennial and Gen-Z children don't see the point of taking to the streets when they see a system rigged by the Epstein class, who seem to get away with everything. They see corporate interests and powerful elites running the world and getting richer and more powerful by the day.

They and their cohorts are not wrong. And they have little evidence of anyone in our hallowed institutions standing up to push back. Online commenter Carlos LeMar Dixon says No Kings means nothing if the ruling class's wealth goes untouched, if their power is uninterrupted, if their system is still running perfectly.

This is an important challenge, and should not go unaddressed. Nonetheless, we elders have a longer view, perhaps, and we see some evidence of progress over the course of history. At the very least, we still believe that individuals and institutions ought to put up a good fight.

Here's what's ahead. May 1 will be the next organized national day of resistance. The

tactic will be economic disruption, and the actions are already set: "No school, no work, no shopping." Hit the pockets of powerful interests, and we'll see what difference rallies make. To change this country, we need to harness and direct our power, which in the end is economic. There are too many of us and not enough of them to stem the tide if we are organized and determined.

In Massachusetts, there's work to do right now. The state House of Representatives has passed the PROTECT Act, establishing a number of provisions to rein in ICE activities. It might not go as far as some hoped, but we should take our wins where we can and fight for the rest down the line. The Senate now takes up the bill. They need to hear from us, through emails and letters and phone calls, that we support this legislation. Go to the MIRA website ([www.miracoalition.org](http://www.miracoalition.org)) for background and concrete next steps to promote the PROTECT Act.

Even closer to home, a number of groups have been providing, or are now organizing, mutual aid to help our immigrant neighbors impacted by ICE detentions or by fear of them. In Montague, the Brick House and Heartwing provide help to families, and a group with Indivisible Montague is organizing more. In Greenfield, the Center for New

Americans is initiating Circles of Care to match small groups of volunteers with families needing support.

In the north Quabbin and west county, there are organized efforts to provide food, transportation, help with rent, legal assistance and more. The Franklin County People's Fund provides direct monetary support. There are people right now being impacted, and all of us can help out in concrete ways.

Perhaps most important of all, we can take action by simply talking with family and friends about what we're seeing, and the kind of country we wish for. Personal connections, personal conversations, expressing our concerns and cares – these make a difference.

The signs and slogans, the singing and the spirit of No Kings day reminds us that we are not alone. Standing out and speaking up exercises our power. No real change can happen without that. Yet it is not enough. We now have to translate potential energy into organized, determined, relentless action – in voting booths, in the legislature, with our dollars, with our voices – to take back our country and right the ship.

*Peter Garbus is a retired educator, community organizer, and Indivisible Montague member. He lives in Greenfield.*

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**PAPER**  
Week of April 6  
in Montague



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**ERVING** from page A1

expectations, fairness and consistent leadership strengthen morale, support officers in performing their duties effectively, and reinforce public confidence. A continued commitment to these principles will be essential for the department to move forward and to attract and retain the dedicated officers needed to serve the community effectively."

Streeter said the Franklin County Sheriff's Office (FCSO) was offering one or two state-certified officers because Erving's lack of patrol officers constitutes "somewhat of a public safety emergency." She said the FCSO has supplied officers to localities in the past, and currently has officers in Greenfield and Montague.

The officers would wear their sheriff uniforms and drive FCSO cruisers, but would be supplied with Erving body cameras and follow the Erving department's procedures.

Selectboard member William Bembury said Erving residents should be informed about the use of FCSO officers, so no one is confused by the different uniforms and cruisers. State police will also provide support to the Erving department.

The board is expecting comments from legal counsel about the memorandum of understanding between the town and the FCSO, and will reconsider the proposal at its April 6 meeting. Streeter told the board the officers would be available in one or two weeks after the agreement is signed.

They also approved hiring two new police officers: Alexander Meisner and Nicolas Stone. Meisner is currently a FCSO deputy sheriff and has completed police academy training. Stone is a military police officer with the US Army reserves; the town expects to send him to the academy in June.

In addition, the board was receptive to hiring the FCSO to provide animal control services in FY'27 and will consider an agreement at its next meeting. Streeter told the board that FCSO provides animal control services for 21 of the 26 Franklin County towns. Holst said the town

has been contracting with Athol for animal control "on a *per diem* basis."

#### Corroded Clarifier

The selectboard, meeting jointly with the finance committee and capital planning committee (CPC), reviewed the latter committee's recommendations for funding projects. The most expensive items include \$878,000 for Ridge Road improvements, funded by state Chapter 90 and capital stabilization; \$600,000 for demolition at the former International Paper Mill, from capital stabilization; and \$420,000 for a new fire truck, from capital stabilization.

The clarifier at town-owned POTW#2 wastewater plant, installed when the plant was built in 1974, needs to be repaired or replaced. "That clarifier's a real mess," said water and wastewater superintendent Peter Sanders. "If any of the corroded beams were to give way at any point, it will destroy everything in there, and then it's even a worse situation."

In preparing the capital projects budget for FY'27, the CPC estimated the repair cost at \$400,000. However, on Monday morning, engineering consultant Tighe & Bond sent a conceptual estimate of \$979,500 for the work.

Various ideas for funding the repair surfaced. Bembury suggested borrowing or "possibly cutting another capital project." Finance committee member Daniel Hammock suggested that POTW#2 operator ERSECO could help pay for the repairs.

Selectboard chair Jacob Smith recommended moving \$750,000 in interest from the general stabilization account into capital stabilization.

#### Water & Sewer Fees

CPC member Brandon Pollard presented a formula for calculating the fee for the town water system using operating costs, debt service, non-water-use revenue, and total gallons sold as factors. Using FY'25 data, the rate would be cal-

culated at \$6.77 per 1,000 gallons of water. The town currently charges \$5.40 per 1,000 gallons.

Pollard noted that the median charge in Massachusetts is \$8 per 1,000 gallons. Town administrator Bryan Smith said the rate was last adjusted in 2012.

The selectboard and fin com asked Pollard and Sanders to return in two to three weeks with additional information.

The committees discussed the potential for charging sewer fees for residents connected to the sewer system that serves a portion of the town. Town taxes and charges to Montague pay for the system now.

Jacob Smith and Hammock both commented that, because the Northfield Mountain project pays the majority of property taxes, residential taxpayers have been getting sewer service at a bargain. Residents who are not connected to the sewer may have septic waste disposed at POTW#2 without charge.

#### Other Business

The selectboard voted to appoint Thomas Duffy, currently the highway department foreman, as facilities maintenance manager, effectively immediately. Highway superintendent Glenn McCrory plans to leave the foreman position vacant through the end of FY'26, then evaluate later whether it is financially responsible to fill the position.

Selectboard members James Loynd and Jacob Smith both expressed concern about not filling the foreman position. However, Loynd said McCrory "has plans to make it work and he has, at least in my opinion, yet to let us down – and in Glenn we trust."

The selectboard, fin com, and CPC agreed to finalize the town's FY'27 budget – and the May 13 annual town meeting warrant – at the April 6 and April 13 meetings, in order to allow time to print the warrant and send it to every Erving household.

#### EVENT ANNOUNCEMENT

## Language Festival Launches

**AMHERST** – To everyone who has been told not to use your language, who has been told your accent is ugly, or who ever wanted to learn and play with words:

Come to the first-ever Festival of Languages and Dialects, a mini-convention and carnival that celebrates our rainbow of languages, next Saturday and Sunday, April 11 and 12, at Thompson Hall at UMass Amherst.

The festival, which is free and open to the public, begins with an opening ceremony at 9 a.m. We are excited to feature live music, dance, puppetry, talks, workshops, and a

parade. Most of all, we are excited for members of different language communities to meet and learn how to support each other.

The festival is inspired in part by the 1987-2003 All-Japan Dialect Festival (*zenkoku hougen taikai*) organized in Mikawa Town, Yamagata, Japan. It is intended to bring communities together for fun, to create new links of solidarity, and to help move toward a more welcoming, open, and curious world where we take the time to understand each other.

For more information, visit [www.tinyurl.com/LangFest2026](http://www.tinyurl.com/LangFest2026).

#### Montague Community Television News

## Many Are Asking

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

**TURNERS FALLS** – It's not just the elderly who have questions and concerns about AI. Amy Wiley's recent presentation at the Northfield senior center is thorough and comprehensible. She explains terms, history, and uses in a thoughtful PowerPoint, and even facilitates a conversation that trudges through the muddy waters around AI use, and how, when, and if you can use or avoid it.

This week we also have new recordings from meetings of the Montague finance committee, selectboard, and conservation committee; a public information session on Faren redevelopment; and yet another protest, this time locals joining in the nationwide "No Kings" protest.

All of MCTV's videos are available on our website, *MontagueTV.org*, and our Vimeo page, which you may find by clicking the "Videos" tab on the site.

You can also always tune in to Channel 9 to see what's on air!

And if you've never been by the station, please stop by. It is not only a welcoming and friendly place, but also a community resource available to anyone interested in learning how to record and produce videos.

Come check it out! We're located at 34 Second Street in Turners Falls, open Mondays through Fridays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. You can email us at [infomontaguetv@gmail.com](mailto:infomontaguetv@gmail.com) or even call us up at (413) 863-9200.

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



Turners Falls resident and Reporter columnist Casey Wait took us to the Mutter Museum, a medical history museum affiliated with the College of Physicians of Philadelphia.

Going somewhere? Send your travel photos to [editor@montaguereporter.org](mailto:editor@montaguereporter.org)!

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**FACES** from page A1

have taken out nomination papers, Mike Henry of Millers Falls, said he did not garner enough signatures by the deadline to turn them in. “Maybe I’ll leaflet for a write-in campaign depending on what other candidates say their goals are,” he added.

Card and Snyder both provided statements, which are reprinted below. Card works at an ecological design firm in Greenfield, and Snyder is the chief operating officer at 253 Pharmacy, a cannabis dispensary that operates in Montague. For both candidates, the selectboard position would be their first entry into Montague town government.

The seat in play is currently held by selectboard chair Matt Lord, who has declined to run for a third term.

Another competitive race is shaping up for the library trustees. All three incumbents up for reelection – Jim Martineau, Miryam Veset, and Lydia Ievins – turned in their papers, Bogusz said, as did a chal-

lenger: Cara Hins of Millers Falls.

Though the four candidates will vie for three three-year seats, Bogusz noted that a vacant two-year seat attracted no candidates, and will be filled by write-in votes. A late attempt to reach Hins for comment was unsuccessful as of press time.

In two of the town’s six precincts – Precincts 1, Montague Center, and 5, downtown Turners Falls – Bogusz said there will also be eight candidates for seven seats on Montague’s representative town meeting. In the other four, some number of seats will be filled by write-ins.

For all other town seats, Bogusz said, there will be one or fewer candidates on the ballot.

**School Committee**

Nomination papers for the Gill-Montague school committee were due at 5 p.m. Wednesday, and as of press time Thursday, attempts by the Reporter to ascertain the final list of candidates for the Gill-

Montague school committee proved unsuccessful, as the signatures on the nomination papers first had to be certified by the town clerks. Bogusz deferred to Gill-Montague executive assistant to the superintendent Tara Thomas for a final list.

“Well, you’ll have a story for next week,” Gill town coordinator Ray Purington pointed out.

Two of the three incumbents whose terms are ending, Gill representative Bill Tomb and Cliff Spatcher of Montague, confirmed that they had submitted their papers. Montague’s other representative, Steve Ellis, is not running. At least one additional candidate, Lake Pleasant resident Sue Richardson, was confirmed as certified in March.

Gill will hold its annual election on Monday, May 18, and Montague the following day. Voters in both towns will elect school committee representatives from both towns by a combined district vote.



# In Their Own Words...

The Montague Reporter contacted the two certified candidates for Montague selectboard on Wednesday with identical questions, asking them to briefly introduce themselves to voters. Here are their written responses in full...

## John Snyder

**MR:** Who are you, and what’s your relationship to the town?

**JS:** I’m John Snyder and I live on Chestnut Hill with my wife and our children: an 11-year-old son, a 2-year-old daughter, and we’re expecting another daughter this May. My wife and I specifically chose to raise our family here because of our deep connection to Montague’s natural beauty, its woods, rivers, and wildlife.

Professionally, I’ve founded and built several businesses from the startup phase. Since 2019 I’ve served as Chief Operating Officer of 253 Pharmacy. That role has given me strong, hands-on experience in management, budgeting, and responsible financial stewardship.

I’m also a passionate musician. You’ll usually find me with a guitar in hand. I’m also an avid outdoorsman who loves hiking, fishing, and fly fishing.

**MR:** What inspired you to run for selectboard? Have you been involved in the public sector before?

**JS:** I have not held elected office before. That said, for more than 10 years in my line of work I’ve worked closely with town governments on permitting, operations, compliance, and community issues.

What inspired me to run is simple: when I learned this selectboard seat was opening, I felt it was time to step up and serve. My family and I are committed to Montague’s future, and I want to bring my real-world experience to help the town succeed.

**MR:** What do you see as the biggest challenge(s) the selectboard deals with? What will you bring to that?

**JS:** The biggest challenge the selectboard faces right now is navigating the difficult economic environment we’re in, managing tight budgets, stretching limited resources, and making decisions that support sustainable growth without losing what makes Montague special.

What I’ll bring to the table is my background in business operations, financial management, and responsible stewardship. I believe those practical skills will help the board keep Montague fiscally healthy and position the town to be the best it can be going forward.

## Nate Card

**MR:** Who are you, and what’s your relationship to the town?

**NC:** Most folks know me as Nate Card. I’m a Senior Resiliency Planner at Regenerative Design Group Cooperative, an ecological design studio in Greenfield. My work focuses primarily on state- and regional-scale landscape planning, especially concerning soil health, regenerative agriculture, and biodiversity.

On any given day, when I’m not in meetings, you can find me working on map-making, reporting, community engagement design, project management... and more meetings. I also spend about 15 hours a month volunteering with Redistro, a mutual aid project and free store in Greenfield, where I focus largely on systems design for consumer waste reduction and repair education initiatives.

I moved to the area in 2023 to earn my MSc. Ecological Design at The Conway School, and stayed because I fell in love with the ecology and community here. I also have family roots in Massachusetts, so there’s a bit of a “coming home” feeling about it, too.

Prior to 2023, I enjoyed a nearly 20-year career in theatre and event production – my BFA is in Theater Arts – which started in Kansas City, Missouri (where I was raised) and took me all over the country.

**MR:** What inspired you to run for selectboard? Have you been involved in the public sector before?

**NC:** I have! I’ve been a registered and active voter since 2003, and starting in 2015, during Bernie’s presidential primary run, I started to get more involved. The results of that election inspired me to start focusing more on local government, because I could see that big change happens from the bottom up.

I started attending council and committee meetings, and in 2022 I was appointed to a DPW committee position, on the Art & Garden Board for Huntington Woods, Michigan (where I was living at the time). Through that work, I led the board in organizing the town’s first Spring Ecology Fair, which was a great success.

I am excited for the opportunity to increase my commitment to public service here in Montague as a candidate for selectboard, and hopefully inspire others to get involved in local government, too.

**MR:** What do you see as the biggest challenge(s) the selectboard deals with? What will you bring to that?

**NC:** I see a few challenges – or what I would call opportunities. Here are three which come to mind, based on my recent conversations with Montague residents and town staff:

- meeting the public’s needs with a constrained budget that depends heavily on external inputs (i.e., the state, often subject to an Eastern Mass bias);
- ensuring that as the town grows, development minimizes displacement and equitably benefits residents at all income levels;
- balancing the changing needs of Montague’s people with the changing needs of the land that sustains us.

In addition to my professional skills in systems-level planning and design, I’ll bring existing relationships with state agencies, including familiarity with the pace of bureaucracy; a deep commitment to community development; and unwavering dedication to the responsibilities of representing my neighbors as an elected official in Montague.

## Tip of the week ...

Regularly inspect your water heater for leaks and rust. A leaking heater can easily damage flooring, resulting in costly repairs. Rust or water around the unit may signal a need for professional inspection.

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### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

## MONTAGUE ZBA #26-02

Notice is hereby given that the Montague Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing on **Wednesday, April 8th, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.** VIA ZOOM and IN PERSON at the Montague Town Hall Annex conference room, One Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA at the request of **Melissa Terault** for a Special Permit to allow the conversion of an existing single-family dwelling into a two-family dwelling by constructing a 1,200-square-foot addition, under sections 9.2 and 5.2.3(b)ii of the Zoning Bylaws, located at **127 Federal Street (Map 34, Parcel 21), in the RESIDENTIAL 1 (RS-1) District.** The filing is available for review at Town Hall.

In-person meeting details and remote meeting login information can be found at [www.montague-ma.gov/calendar](http://www.montague-ma.gov/calendar).

Joshua Lively, Chairman  
Montague Zoning Board of Appeals

### PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE

## MONTAGUE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

In accordance with the Mass. Wetlands Protection Act, M.G.L. Ch. 131, Sec. 40, the Montague Conservation Commission will hold the following public hearings & public meetings at **6:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 9, 2026** to review:

**RDA #2026-02 - Request for Determination of Applicability**, filed by **Laura Meyer** to determine whether the proposed demolition of an existing single-family house and removal of asphalt at **82 Chestnut Hill Loop (Parcel # 53-0-043)** is subject to the Wetlands Protection Act, and whether the wetland boundaries are accurate.

**RDA #2026-03 - Request for Determination of Applicability**, filed by **Teresa Neal** to determine whether the proposed construction of a new 16’ x 24’ screened porch and drainage within buffer zone only at **199 East Chestnut Hill Road (Parcel # 53-0-075)** is subject to the Wetlands Protection Act, and whether the wetland boundaries are accurate.

**RDA #2026-04 - Request for Determination of Applicability**, filed by **Gary Houle** to determine whether the proposed construction of a new 32’ x 40’ 3-car detached garage within buffer zone and Riverfront Area at **31-33 Randall Road (Parcel # 21-0-141)** is subject to the Wetlands Protection Act.

**NOI #2026-02/DEP #229-0269 - Notice of Intent**, filed by **Laura Meyer** for the proposed construction of a new single-family house, and associated site improvement, such as driveway access, utility connections, site grading, and drainage at **82 Chestnut Hill Loop (Parcel # 53-0-043)** within buffer zone only.

**NOI #2026-03/DEP #229-0270 - Notice of Intent**, filed by the **US Geological Survey**, for the proposed installation of approximately 4,500 to 5,000 feet of force main for the Conte Anadromous Fish Research Laboratory, to be connected to the municipal wastewater system at **1 Migratory Way (Parcel #08-0-3)** within buffer zone.

A hybrid meeting will be held at the Montague Town Hall Annex, 1 Avenue A in Turners Falls, MA. Remote meeting login information and the filing are available for review at [www.montague-ma.gov/calendar](http://www.montague-ma.gov/calendar).

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PERSONAL INJURY, WILLS & ESTATES, WORKER’S COMP

**VERRIDE** from page A1

Medicare for All and not have to pay for insurance anymore, but that's not happening anytime soon."

The rising cost of health insurance premiums paid to the Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust is one major reason municipal budgets across western Massachusetts are stretched especially thin this year. Health insurance costs for Swift River School are expected to increase by \$179,679 in the coming fiscal year, a 45.8% hike.

At the request of the New Salem finance committee, the school committee voted last week to submit a \$3,577,466 budget, discussed this spring as "Option 2," for town meeting approval. This would represent an increase of 2.87% over the current year, and require cutting four teaching assistants and one special education paraprofessional.

The alternative plan, "Option 1," would instead cut three staff positions, increase the school budget by 4.72% to roughly \$3,642,000, and require New Salem voters to pass a tax override.

While Slator and some other school committee members said they preferred Option 1, the committee voted unanimously to approve the lower budget to avoid a complicated bureaucratic struggle of balancing the budget on the town meeting floor if the over-

ride does not pass.

"The best-case scenario," Slator said, "is we're going to have an override, the override is going to pass, but still the practical thing for us to do is to request Option 2 tonight."

New Salem school committee chair Steven Blinder said Option 1 would require a 9% increase in New Salem's assessment over the current year, an increase he feared town meeting voters would not support. Under Option 2, the town's assessment would increase by 6.1%.

Wendell and New Salem jointly fund Swift River School using a formula based on the number of students attending the school from each town. Wendell currently covers about 60% of the cost of the combined local assessment, though its share is decreasing.

Wendell's assessment would decrease by 1.2% under Option 2 and increase by 1.3% under Option 1, neither of which would trigger an override vote in that town.

"Now there is actually a pathway to get to the lower staff reductions," Blinder said at the March 26 meeting. "I feel strongly we should stay the course that we voted on, especially now that there's this pathway, so the townspeople of New Salem will have a say. And if they can support us through the override, that means fewer people we have to cut."

The general override will be included on

New Salem's annual election ballot on Monday, May 4, one week before citizens gather to vote on a final FY'27 town budget at the May 11 town meeting.

New Salem finance committee member Claire McGinnis said the proposed override would also increase funding for other town departments, including the library and public works department, which are facing non-mandatory cost increases of 4% or more. At last week's meeting she said that putting the lower proposed school budget on the town meeting warrant would protect other departments' budgets from being "sabotaged" if the override fails to pass.

"We took a very equitable slice," McGinnis said. "And it's a collective override, which we thought was wiser."

"I know there are parents that are organizing," Slator said of the election. "Twenty percent of people in this town have [a] connection with the school... It's the other 80% that we have to get to." She added that if there are no competitive races on the ballot, turnout for the election would ordinarily be low.

If the override passes, voters would be asked again to approve the additional school spending at the town meeting. The budget will be presented at the meeting in two columns, representing the two different options.

Meanwhile, Wendell has been planning

on the possibility that an override will pass in New Salem, according to finance committee chair Meagan Sylvia.

"At this time, Wendell is carrying the override option in our draft budget," Sylvia told the *Reporter* in an email. "We will await the outcome of New Salem's override vote before finalizing our budget in advance of the Annual Town Meeting."

While the school committee's vote to recommend "Option 2" was unanimous, members Brandon Reed and Molly Rapp hesitated before voting 'yes.'

"It sounds like we want Option 1," Rapp said. "If we're expecting the insurance to keep increasing each year, or at least to be a big burden for the schools, that is a more permanent thing... The best way to do that [is] really an override, because it's not a one-time thing."

The last time New Salem voted on a general budget override was in 2007. It passed 156 to 142, giving the town an extra \$92,555 to fund general operating expenses and the schools.

Sylvia told the *Reporter* that Wendell will have time to adjust its elementary school assessment based on the results of New Salem's vote. Wendell's annual town meeting, which has yet to be officially scheduled, will likely be held in late May or early June.

**WENDELL** from page A1

Meetinghouse renovation. Both mock-ups showed a large addition tacked onto the building's east side. They argued that an addition as shown in the images would detract from the Meetinghouse's classic look.

They were soon joined by Meetinghouse abutters Brian Anderson and Gabrielle Freels, and close neighbors Pam Richardson and Alistair MacMartin. The rest of the agenda for the meeting, which began early, was finished before the time posted for the Meetinghouse discussion, and calls were made to Friends of the Wendell Meetinghouse officials Chris Queen, Deb Lynangale, and Court Dorsey to come ahead of schedule.

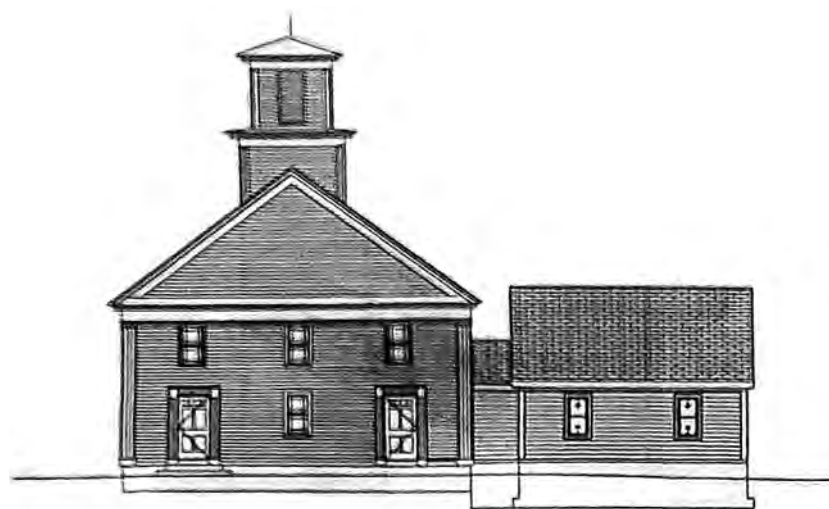
The Friends organization, which owns the Meetinghouse, had drafted a letter to Senators Elizabeth Warren and Edward Markey supporting a federal grant application for the proposed construction, with the new extension and a new roof, and they asked the selectboard to sign it. The grant application is due this Friday, April 3, and Queen said the opportunity will not come again.

The Meetinghouse lot and Anderson's house lot are both non-conforming. The Meetinghouse lot is zoned as a Historical district, created by the town to allow the Friends to own the building and the land it sits on. Anderson's lot, meanwhile, was grandfathered in before the zoning.

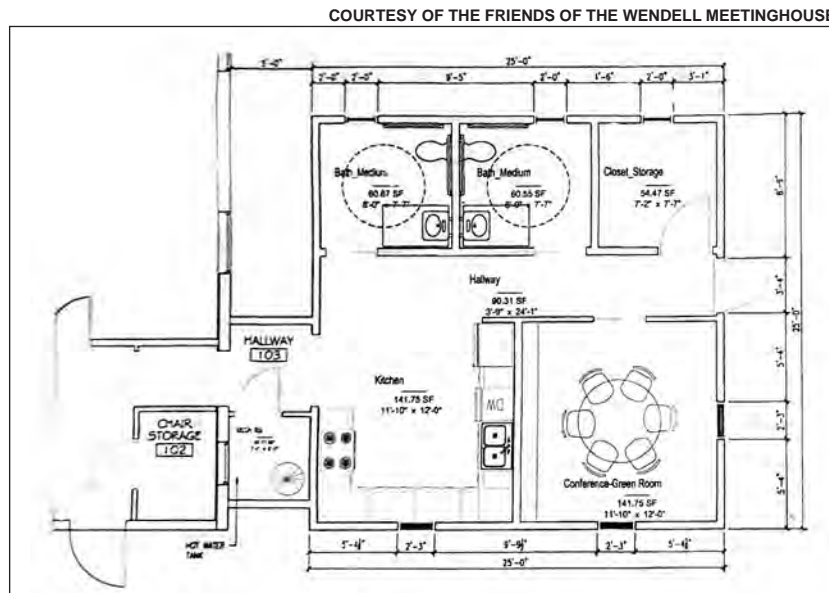
Anderson said a recent survey had shown the lot line was closer to his house than he had thought, making the distance between the proposed addition and the line within the legal setback, but as the line is at his house wall, he said, the addition would crowd his house. He said events at the Meetinghouse already interfered with the quiet enjoyment of his home.

MacMartin, a neighbor to the Meetinghouse's south across Morse Village Road, was involved in almost all of the building's rehabilitation, including the elegant interior facilities with a hand sanitizer, which are serviced from the outside like a Porta Potty, a tourist spot in itself.

MacMartin said he did not support an exterior addition, and that



SOUTH ELEVATION E-W RIDGELINE



Top: One of two concepts for the addition distributed at last week's meeting, drawn for the Friends of the Wendell Meetinghouse by Omnibus Designs.

Above: Floor plans for the interior layout of the proposed addition.

the building as it stands is beautiful, and has been good for 100 years. He passed around a poster showing New England churches with the same overall shape, none of which included a bump out.

Freels, a neighbor to the east, said the improvements, including running water, could be put inside the building. She reported that noise and activity at the building have not been conducive to her acupuncture practice.

Richardson, a Wendell historian and neighbor to the south, said Wendell has lost many historic buildings already, and also opposed any exterior addition. She added that fellow historian Jean Forward had warned her the addition could cause the Meetinghouse to lose its place on the National Register of

Historic Places.

McBride and Wight also said they liked the building as it is. McBride said neither version shown in the pictures was attractive.

Lynangale said over 1,000 people had come to Meetinghouse events in the past year, but that without better facilities it cannot support itself, and that donations were not enough. She said what the Friends were asking for was not a blank check, but an opportunity for a townwide conversation about creating a more viable venue for rentals.

Queen said signing the letter of support for the grant was not buying into a specific design, but that the application had required a cost estimate, and the proposed designs were intended to provide that number. Richardson said he was talking

from both sides of his mouth.

Dorsey said he thought the final decision should be made by the whole town.

"The whole town does not live next door," replied Freels.

Dorsey suggested that with the improvements, the Meetinghouse could host a few high-end weddings each year. He said the Friends took over the Meetinghouse in 2001 with the goal of preserving and protecting the building, and that as people look elsewhere for a venue with proper facilities, the building is not sustainable. He added that the Full Moon Coffeehouse has shown interest in moving to the Meetinghouse if it has facilities.

A suggestion made was to put the improvements inside the existing structure, making the southeast door "dead."

Selectboard member Adam Feltman said that if the grant were for a new roof, he would sign the letter immediately.

Member Paul Doud said he has no eye for building looks, but that while he would like to support a more useful Meetinghouse, he would prefer a smaller design.

Selectboard chair Laurie DiDonato called for scheduling an emergency meeting for Wednesday, April 1 at which the selectboard could review, and possibly sign, a revised version of the letter of support for the application. If the board agreed to sign it, the early meeting would allow the Friends to submit the application by April 3 deadline.

**Compromise Reached**

Over a dozen residents came to the April 1 meeting to give their opinions on the proposal.

DiDonato offered three options for the meeting's decision. The first option was sending the letter as it was offered by the Friends of the Meetinghouse asking for running water, an ADA-compliant bathroom, a new roof, a kitchen, a community meeting room, and equipment storage. Option two was a letter supporting the grant application but citing a need for not much more than a roof, running water, and a washroom. Option three was not sending a letter at all.

Kathy Becker, the former town

moderator, now town crier, and member of the Old Home Day organizing group, spoke first, asking the selectboard not to stand in the way and to consider the uses of the Meetinghouse.

Good Neighbors uses the town hall every Sunday, she pointed out, leaving no in-town option for other events. She also advocated for a changing room for performers.

Anna Gyorgy spoke of the difficulty of carrying five-gallon buckets of water to clean up after a potluck. She argued that food is an elementary part of community, and urged the board not to get "caught in the weeds." As it currently stands, she said, there are people who cannot use the Meetinghouse.

Hal Flynn, who had worked alongside MacMartin in renovating the building, said he agreed with him that with creativity, the needed improvements could fit inside the current building.

Dorsey said taking up interior space for the improvements would make the usable space for performers or other occupants too small.

After hearing an hour of comments, and expressing reservations, the board members agreed to sign and send a letter supporting running water, a bathroom, and a roof, less than what the Friends' letter asked.

**Other Business**

Selectboard members reviewed the town's Green Communities energy reduction plan at the March 25 meeting.

Feltman said he saw no glaring energy hemorrhage, but that improving town building envelopes may be worth pursuing. He said new codes call for an R60 roof insulation, up from R38, and that in his experience central geothermal heat pumps consume close to as much electric energy as they save in other heating systems.

DiDonato suggested getting in touch with the Swift River School and the New Salem energy committee.

It was announced that recently-hired facilities manager Frank McGinn had resigned. Citizen Stephen Broll volunteered to take over the position without pay.

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**MONTAGUE** from page A1

state-owned land “wildly inequitable” in how it values land, pointing out that it ignores “ecosystem services” such as growing food and purifying water. Governor Maura Healey has proposed establishing a commission to look at the formula.

“There are inequities under every rock,” Comerford said, pointing to the formula for Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA). She said that “thanks to good advocacy of municipalities,” one-third of the total Chapter 90 highway funds are now distributed according to road mileage only, which benefits rural and less-developed communities.

“My hope is that the third will go to a half,” she said. “Maybe it will go to two-thirds.”

Comerford was particularly critical of the Chapter 70 education aid formula. “There’s actually no more bankrupt formula right now,” she said. Addressing two key elements of the formula, Comerford said that “what you get hasn’t been opened in more than 10 years” and that the minimum local contribution, or “what you’re asked to spend,” has not been reviewed in 18 years.

After board member Rich Kulewicz said he felt the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is often viewed more as an “adversary” than an “ally” to school districts, Comerford said that what was needed was “a sea change at DESE.”

Local spending on education, she said, is “eating up a larger and larger share of your fiscal budget, and that’s causing real hardship.”

The conversation turned to state support for the redevelopment of the former Farren Hospital property. Lord introduced the topic in the context of the need for more housing, saying that there was a “particular problem that we’re really focused on,” and that the town was at a “critical juncture” in developing a marketing strategy for the property.

“The governor needs to build housing,” Comerford said, “and they’re eager.” She said she would be willing to work with the town to organize a tour for state officials. “The state loves to see communities like Montague doing excellent work with the dollars you have,” she said. “It’s an incentive for the state to put its dollars in.”

Lord applauded Comerford’s analysis of the funding formulas and articulating the connections between housing, education, and the unique conditions faced in rural areas. “It’s a slog,” he said. “Please keep it up.”

**Block Grants**

The selectboard held a hearing on the town’s next application for

community development block grants (CDBG), a federal aid program channeled through the state Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities.

Brian McHugh of the Franklin County Regional Housing and Re-development Authority (FCRHRA), which oversees the program for the town, described the programs Montague is applying to fund. These include four social service programs – two by LifePath and one each by the Brick House Community Resource Center and the Heartwing Center – for a total of \$83,039, and streetscape improvements including new sidewalks, planter and curbing upgrades, and building entrance ramps where needed on the southwest side of Avenue A for the half block between Third Street and the Third Street alley, at a cost of \$535,725.

McHugh explained that no loans for housing rehabilitation, a usual component of Montague’s CDBG grants, were included in the application because funds previously received for that program had not been fully spent.

The application also included \$206,255 for the FCRHRA for its oversight and administration of the funds.

After a very short hearing the board voted to approve the application, which is due April 21.

**Drone Pact**

The selectboard discussed a request from the law firm Sullivan Hayes & Quinn LLC (SHQ) for its blessing to represent Greenfield in negotiating an agreement between the two municipalities involving the shared use of drones. The firm has represented Montague in labor negotiations in the past, a substantially different role, but requested the waiver in case the “appearance” of a conflict of interest is raised.

The board seemed ready to sign the waiver but Lord, who works as an attorney, expressed concern over a sentence stating that “by providing consent, you are also agreeing that in the event litigation develops between the City of Greenfield and the Town of Montague regarding this matter that SHQ and its attorneys will be able to continue to represent the City of Greenfield even if adverse to the Town of Montague in any such litigation.”

Lord interpreted this as saying that if conflict develops over the agreement, “you’ll let us sue you too.” “I don’t know how I feel about that part of this whole thing,” he said. He suggested asking the town’s current counsel, KP Law, for input.

The board did not take a vote on the requested waiver. Town ad-

ministrator Walter Ramsey later clarified to the *Reporter* that there is not currently an agreement over drones, but that one is being “contemplated.”

**Town Meeting**

The board voted to endorse four transfers to reserve funds that will appear on the May town meeting warrant, with one dissenting vote from Lord, who opposed allocating \$100,000 into the Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) account, money set aside to cover a shortfall in retirement benefits projected down the road.

The board also voted to endorse nine special articles that were not for capital projects. These included a purchase agreement for Tasers, a change in the town’s bylaw for accessory dwelling units, a major revision of the personnel bylaw, and allowing the town to enter into a municipal aggregation agreement for the purchase of electricity for residents.

The board also reviewed an initial draft of the warrant itself, which must be posted and distributed in the coming weeks. The articles, which do not specify funding sources, were virtually identical to those the board had already endorsed, though some had been combined in the hope of saving time at the meeting.

Ramsey said the board should give input on the order, wording, and bundling of the special articles. These included an article funding miscellaneous equipment for the police department, another allowing the town to obtain rights of way for two road projects, and another funding repairs to both the Unity Park skatepark and the Montague Center playground.

The draft warrant also included a \$23.7 million debt exclusion to cover the total cost of a new downtown library, which must pass town meeting by a two-thirds vote and then be sent to a local referendum on June 24. The state has pledged \$11.3 million in reimbursement for the project.

Town meeting member Ariel Elan asked if members could pull out one or more pieces of the articles that had been bundled together and vote on them separately. Lord and Ramsey said this could be done if a written amendment were presented to the moderator.

The board did not take a vote on the warrant, which Ramsey said still needed to be reviewed by town counsel.

**Other Business**

The board approved a new town policy for outdoor dining and alcohol service, which the state has handed off to local communities. The previous week had seen the first discussion of the proposed policy, and the board had generally approved of the draft, but wanted to ensure that the rules would be consistent with existing guidelines for the use of public spaces such as sidewalks and parking lots.

The edited version approved on Monday referenced these guidelines. Executive assistant Fern Smith told the *Reporter* that the new policy does not need to be approved by the state Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission, but is available for their review.

The selectboard’s next meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 6.

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

*Here’s the way it was on March 31, 2016: News from the Montague Reporter archive.*

**Lawyers and Demolition**

At its March 28 meeting the Montague selectboard approved a five-page annual town meeting warrant that included a \$50,000 appropriation to fund legal opposition to a natural gas pipeline, as well as an appropriation to again study the cost of demolishing the Strathmore paper mill complex.

**Wendell v. Solar**

Wendell’s conservation commission reported Wednesday that

designers of a proposed two-megawatt solar generating plant off Wendell Depot Road will appeal, in superior court, the conditions the con com set for the project.

Selectboard member Dan Keller said he regretted that development, but noted that such situations are why the town retains a law firm.

**A Park at Usher**

The Erving selectboard reviewed a \$94,000 proposal from Milone & MacBroom for services associated with the design, bidding, and construction consulting for the proposed public park at the former Usher plant, on the banks of the Millers River.

**20 YEARS AGO**

*Here’s the way it was on March 30, 2006: News from the Montague Reporter archive.*

**Feasibility Studies**

The Montague special town meeting last Thursday night approved feasibility studies for a new police station and for a community center, which would combine the main branch of the town library with the Gill-Montague senior center and programs of the parks and recreation department.

The motion for a \$65,000 study for the community center passed on a voice vote. Approval for the police station, or safety complex, study, pegged at \$25,000, followed shortly thereafter.

The \$90,000 came from a warrant approved by town meeting in December 2000 to purchase land and a building behind the Carnegie

Library on Seventh Street, in the hope of expanding the century-old library at its present location. That money was never spent.

**He Knew What He Was Doing**

On March 22 the Wendell selectboard read a state Ethics Commission finding that former board of health member Andrew Hamilton had violated state conflict of interest law.

In June 2003, Hamilton told Reverend Adele Smith-Penniman that tests of her newly dug well showed high mineral content requiring a filtration system before he, as board chair, would allow work to continue on her house. He then offered to sell her such a system for around \$1,100.

Smith-Penniman returned the unused unit; ordinary use of her well flushed the contaminants out.

**140 YEARS AGO**

*Here’s the way it was on March 31, 1886: News from the Turners Falls Reporter archive.*

**Turners Falls and Vicinity**

The ice in the river quietly melted away, Sunday, for a mile or two up the river. There is considerable snow on the hills yet, and a chilliness hangs over the country that is quite oppressive.

Chas. N. Johnson has returned from his trip through the west, looking as gimpy as a game rooster.

We anticipate a sweet time this spring, as maple sugar is to be so plentiful. It is said that there will be 10,000,000 pounds made in Vermont, while the local supply promises to be large, as well.

A paper has been circulated among about twenty families to raise funds to repair the water pipe in the avenue broken by the settling of the earth in the sewer

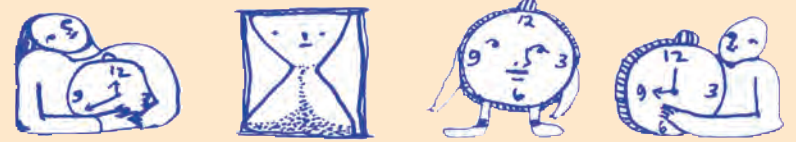
trenches. The Turners Falls Company won’t repair the damage because they were not to blame for the breakage.

A scout of the salvation army preached in the Methodist church last Sunday. We have been promised a siege of the eccentric workers in the Lord’s vineyard.

Mr. Z. Marshall was thrown from his carriage recently, and considerably shaken up. The carriage was demolished.

There was a little strike among the section hands on the Canal Road one day last week, but when a new gang was found to take the vacant places, the strike ended.

Through the blundering of somebody in Greenfield, we didn’t get any mail here until Monday noon. Complaints are beginning to come in again the *Reporters* don’t get to Montague as soon as they ought to. Some official is to blame. Who is it?



**PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Turners Falls Signage Survey**

The Town of Montague is developing a comprehensive signage and wayfinding system for Turners Falls to improve navigation, strengthen civic identity, support local economic development, and create a welcoming, accessible environment for residents and visitors.

Technical assistance is being provided by VHB and Hired Hand Signs. The project is funded by the state’s Downtown Initiative Technical Assistance Program.

The team encourages all community members to get involved.

Next Wednesday, April 8 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the town hall, they will present project goals and expectations, review existing sign conditions and proposed sign locations, and take public comments to help guide the project.

A survey is also being conducted to help the team create signage that reflects the community’s identity and values. Your participation is an integral part of the planning process, and is greatly appreciated. The survey may be accessed via: [www.tinyurl.com/WayfindingPoll](http://www.tinyurl.com/WayfindingPoll)

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DAVID HOITT PHOTOS



Left to right: Maddie Haight slides in for the Turners Falls Thunder's first run of the season last Friday, in what would be a 14-2 home loss against Frontier Regional. Addison Talbot, pitcher Autumn Thornton, Janelle Massey, and Kaiya Adams leave the field proudly on Tuesday following the team's dramatic 11-6 victory over their state championship rivals, the Greenfield Green Wave. Madisyn Dietz plates for a run on a fourth-inning homer by Thornton during Tuesday's game.

**SPORTS** from page A1

early lead against the Falcons slip through their fingers.

**Frontier 14 – TFHS 2**

In Friday's Frontier game, much of the sideline chatter centered around the new PVIAC league alignments. Mr. Bush came prepared with a list of the 2026 Franklin East League (FEL) teams, and soon the Turners faithful were abuzz with righteous indignation.

"Minnechaug?" one fan exclaimed. "Aren't they Division 1? And don't they usually go deep into the playoffs?" (Minnechaug, I later learned, is in Division 2.)

"South Hadley! That's a city school," another chimed in.

But it turned out that a foe closer to home might be the team to watch. Frontier, who went on to mercy Turners is also in the FEL, as are the Franklin County Technical School, Greenfield, and Hopkins.

I watched the scrimmage between Franklin Tech and Narragansett be-

fore heading to Mullins Field. When I arrived, I quickly gathered my gloves and winter hat. It was so cold that spectators were bundled up in blankets and winter coats, and with the concession stand closed due to a burst pipe, there was no coffee or hot cocoa to warm people up. By the third inning, many fans were watching the game from their cars.

Frontier went down in order in the first inning, and Turners got a runner to first off a base on balls. In the second, though, the Hawks let loose, scoring five runs and leaving more runners in scoring position when Turners finally got the third out. Some mental mistakes were made by the Thunder: an error kept the inning going, and a throw to first on a third strike sent in a run.

Turners scored their first run in the third off a passed ball, and scored on an RBI bunt in the fourth. But the Hawks were unstoppable, amassing 14 runs on 14 hits – and the game was cut short via the mercy rule.

Addison Talbot and Maddie Haight scored Turners's two runs, with Haight getting the RBI.

**TFHS 11 – Greenfield 6**

On Tuesday, the Thunder hosted the Green Wave of Greenfield. Given the lopsided loss to Frontier, the hometown fans were relatively subdued, but Greenfield had just trounced South Hadley 16-1 in their season opener, and the Green fans were there in abundance. They let their presence be known, especially after the Wave scored two runs in the first inning.

In the top of the second, catcher Kaiya Adams made a spectacular catch to retire the side and Turners came to the plate trailing 2-0. Adams then led off in the bottom of the inning, and with the count 2 and 2, she cracked the ball deep into left field.

One of the regulars stood up and said, "I think that's enough!"

It was. The ball cleared the fence and suddenly, it was a 2-1 game.

Greenfield did not sit on their lead. In the third inning, a leadoff base hit gave them their third run. With the runner on second, the ball was hit into the outfield, and after she crossed the plate, the batter tried to make it to third. She was caught in a pickle, though, and was eventually tagged out on the second base line.

In the fourth, the Wave scored another run and proceeded to load the bases, but Blue got the third out before more runs could score. And after four and a half, it was 4-1 Green.

In the bottom of the fourth, Blue Thunder came storming back. Adams scored on a wild pitch, Maddie Haight and Madisyn Dietz hit RBIs, and Autumn Thornton smashed a home run to give Blue a 6-4 lead.

Turners added to their lead in the home fifth. A leadoff walk, a line drive, a Greenfield error and an RBI sac gave the team a 9-4 edge with two innings left to play. The Wavers scored two runs in the sixth, but in the bottom of that in-

ning Thornton led off with a walk, Janelle Massey batted in courtesy runner Jojo Hayman, and Adams knocked in Massey to widen Blue's lead to 11-6.

Greenfield drew a walk in the seventh, but a popup to first base ended the threat, and the Turners players and their fans celebrated the first win of the season.

**Minnechaug 15 – FCTS 6**

Meanwhile, down in Wilbraham, Franklin Tech lost to the Minnechaug Falcons. Tech scored four runs in the first inning, but were unable to hold on as the Falcons poured on 15 runs, taking the game 15-6.

Lindsey Taylor, Skylei Lapan, Emma Petersen, Sofia Melnik, and Sandra Johnson all had RBIs for Tech, while Amelia Rider and Samantha Duncan hit doubles.

The Eagles will host South Hadley this Friday. Next Tuesday, South Hadley comes back to Turners Falls to take on the Thunder.



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OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER

APRIL 2, 2026

Above: Signs of spring in the treetops of the Patch.

## The Perfect Mole Poblano, and Other Delights, in Greenfield!

By RAY DIDONATO

**WENDELL** – I was first introduced to the savory, rich, and somewhat sweet flavor of *mole poblano* on a date with my future wife, Laurie, at Sol Azteca in Brookline. We were in graduate school at the time, and my gastronomic experiences were expanding with the diverse offerings in Boston. I had grown up in Portland, Maine, which at the time was not the foodie destination it is today, and had gone to college in a small New England city with limited food offerings.

I was, of course, familiar enough with Americanized versions of Mexican cuisine, but nothing had prepared me for the explosion of deep flavor, spice, and a hint of chocolate I experienced when I first tried a dish with *mole* sauce, and I was instantly hooked.

Laurie and I still go to Sol Azteca before Red Sox games, and after nearly 30 years, the authentic flavors remain in their dishes.

Living in Franklin County for over two decades, I have always been on the hunt for *mole* dishes in this area.

With the relatively recent arrival of restaurants such as Los Agaves Grill in Athol, an expansive restaurant that offers a large menu and is always busy on weekends, El Nopalito, a cute little restaurant serving up flavor in Montague, and Cielito Lindo, a small but tasty, consistent, and hard-working food truck in Gill just after the Turners Falls-Gill bridge, lovers of *mole* sauce specifically, and other authentic Mexican and Central American cuisine in general, have many great options.

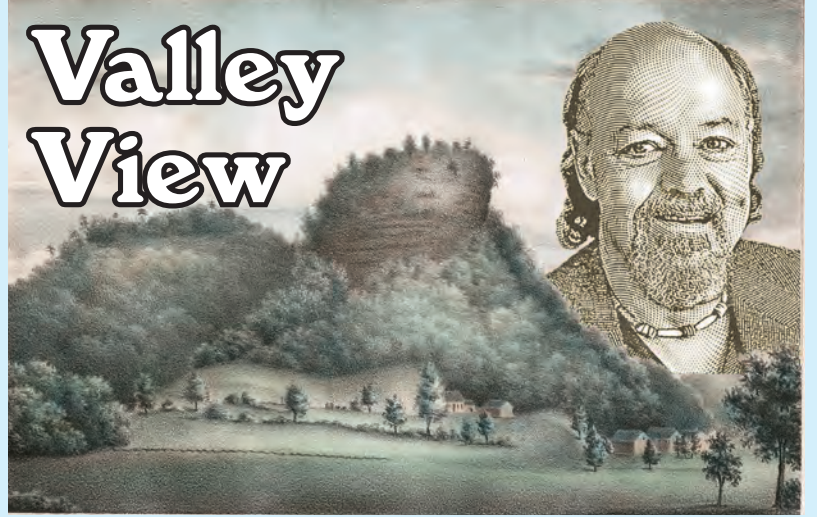
see **DELIGHTS** page B4



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Enchiladas mole poblano at Posada's Tavern in Greenfield.

## Valley View



ORRA WHITE HITCHCOCK PRINT

## Guiding Globetti

By GARY SANDERSON

**GREENFIELD** – The ghost of Mike Globetti wandered back into my sphere recently. A blast from the past. One triggered by my soon-to-be 97-year-old mother, still going strong.

So, you ask, who's Mike Globetti? Good question. Though I knew who he was, Google had to tell me who he is 40-some years later. Discovered was that the man I long ago knew as the *Boston Herald's* outdoor columnist is now media relations manager for the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control. Also, get this: He authored a humorous 1991 book that's still in print, titled *God Save the Quarterback!: American Football Goes to England*.

So, why did this faraway media-relations man suddenly reappear to me? Well, bear with me.

When I met Globetti in the early 1980s, he had recently taken the *Herald* reins from retired outdoor writer and my late friend Dix White. A tad older than my father, "Dixie" was the Williams College man and Wayland Orvis store owner who sponsored my New England Outdoor Writers Association membership in 1981. A couple of years later, he backed me for inclusion in the Outdoor Writers Association of America. I remain a dues-paying, active member of both organizations to this day.

When I met the fun-loving Dixie in the spring of 1980, I was a cub sportswriter and outdoor columnist at the *Greenfield Recorder*, and he was in Charlemont as guest speaker for a sportsmen's banquet – probably Trout Unlimited – held at Herm Prilipp's Ox-bow Motor Lodge and Restaurant.

Those were the earliest days of my weekly "On The Trail" column that for 38 consecutive years arrived on Franklin County doorsteps each Thursday. I was then nearing 30 and mired between uncertain part-time and stable full-time employment un-

der then-sports editor Bob York. Meanwhile, I was supplementing my meager income with a weekly two-hour sports talk show, *The Sunday Sports Page*, partnered with old friend and partner in crime Chip Ainsworth. The 10 a.m. till noon show was aired for more than five years by Greenfield's WPOE, AM-1520, which promoted itself, if memory serves me, as "15,000 watts for western New England."

But enough background. Let's return to Globetti and what it was that pulled him back into the picture.

My mother was "going through stuff" at her South Deerfield home across from the Bloody Brook Monument and had uncovered a few things she thought I may want. Nothing extraordinary. Just a plastic, ring-bound, 2003 softcover booklet of historical essays, *Come Home Again: As Greenfield Celebrates 250 Years*, published for the city's bicenquinquagenary, and three newspaper clippings documenting accomplishments from my own sporting past.

Two of the sports clips memorialized youthful exploits on the diamond. The third was Globetti's July 2, 1984 *Herald* column about a productive flyfishing outing I guided on the lower Deerfield River between Bardwells Ferry and Stillwater. My mother thought that the *Herald* column especially might someday, if not now, be of interest to my grandsons, so she didn't want to discard it.

After retrieving and reading through everything, what immediately struck me was that my salient memory from the Globetti adventure wasn't mentioned in his praiseful column. What I most remembered was the female friend he brought along for the ride, flyrod and waders in tow. I remembered her as "coordinator" of the state's Urban Angler Program – established in 1979 to introduce city folks to fishing – but couldn't for the life of me recall her name.

see **VALLEY VIEW** page B3



## Richie Richardson and His FAB Fashion

By MPRESS BENNU

**TURNERS FALLS** – Richie Richardson began his journey in his homeland of Trinidad and Tobago. Trinidad, specifically. He was a part of a movement of designers who became the leading movement in fashion in that region. They were invested in creating their own styles that came out of their own stories, history, and their authentic voices in fashion.

These designers were very distinct in that they weren't using or repeating European models in entering the fashion module. They invented what is called the "Caribbean Aesthetic," which means Caribbean women came in all different sizes and shapes, and so they created silhouettes for that.

Richie Richardson literally started his journey, which began in the mid-to-late 1980s, in that space. Asked what he considers his key achievements, Richie said his first would be his role in the recognition of the Caribbean as the region of fashion, which he stated he played a major role in, along with his partners.

His second accomplishment would be the fact that he's proud to continue in the tradition of his family. He's a third-generation artist, following his grandfather

see **FRONT** page B8



BENNU PHOTO

Inside FAB Fashion's Second Street showroom.

# Pet of the Week



CARMODY COLLAGE

## 'DINO'

Dino is a young Russian Blue who loves to play. His humans describe Dino as loving, easy-going, affectionate, chill, gentle, and independent. He is litterbox-trained, neutered, and good with kids.

Dino is a snoozer and sleeps most of the day, but has bursts of energy. True to his breed, Dino has a plush double coat of pale blue-gray fur with a distinct silver sheen.

His parents are rehoming this dapper gent because they are moving and cannot keep him.

There is no fee for adoption. To adopt Dino, who lives in Springfield, find "Available Community Animals" under the "Adopt" menu at [www.dakinhumane.org](http://www.dakinhumane.org). A potential adopter must submit an application, interview and meet the pet, and sign an adoption contract.

## Senior Center Activities

APRIL 6 THROUGH 10

### GILL and MONTAGUE

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

#### Monday 4/6

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

#### Tuesday 4/7

9 a.m. Chair Yoga  
10 a.m. Chair Massage  
by Appointment

12:30 p.m. Tech Tuesday  
3 p.m. Tai Chi

#### Wednesday 4/8

Foot Clinic by Appointment  
4 p.m. Mat Yoga

#### Thursday 4/9

1 p.m. Pitch

#### Friday 4/10

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

### ERVING

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

#### Monday 4/6

9 a.m. Good For You  
10 a.m. Seated Fitness  
12 p.m. Pitch  
1 p.m. Yoga

#### Tuesday 4/7

8:15 Nail Clinic

8:30 a.m. Nurse

9 a.m. Stretch and Balance

10 a.m. Line Dancing

11 a.m. Social Stringer

1 p.m. Blue Cross

Health Plan Seminar

#### Wednesday 4/8

9 a.m. Interval Training

10 a.m. Chair Aerobics

11:30 a.m. Bingo

#### Thursday 4/9

9 a.m. Barre Fusion

10 a.m. Pilates Flow

12:30 p.m. Tech Help

#### Friday 4/10

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

### LEVERETT

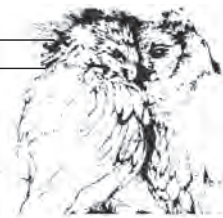
Chair Yoga classes are held Wednesdays at 10 a.m., hybrid, at the town hall and on Zoom. Foot care clinics are the third Tuesday of each month. The next clinic is April 21.

Luncheons are the fourth Friday at town hall. For more information, contact (413) 548-1022 or [coa@leverett.ma.us](mailto:coa@leverett.ma.us), or check the town newsletter or the LeverettConnects listserv.

### WENDELL

Foot care clinic is the first Wednesday of each month. The next clinic is May 6. Call Katie Nolan at (978) 544-2306 for information or appointments.

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## Sex Matters

a sex-positive health column

by STEPHANIE BAIRD

**SOUTH HADLEY** – Many of you have heard about the recent sizzling HBO Max series *Heated Rivalry*, and some of you may have recently seen *Pillion* at Amherst Cinema. This column will discuss both.

Let's start with *Heated Rivalry* (HR). These six episodes are based on a series of six romance novels by Rachel Reid – with the TV material mostly pulled from Books 1 and 2. I recently learned that there are many genres of romance books, often sorted into categories like "second chance" or "fake relationship." In the case of HR main characters Shane and Ilya, they fall into the category of "from rivals to lovers." My Our Whole Lives (OWL) sex educator colleague Kate said that some people also categorize this series as "idiots to lovers."

This may refer to the fact that the series starts out when Shane and Ilya are about 17 years old, getting prospected for the NHL draft. As I teach in OWL sex ed and in classes about adolescent development, the prefrontal cortex – the part of the brain most responsible for executive functioning and mediating behavioral regulation – is not fully developed until about age 25. Educators consider the developmental period of adolescence to last from about age 10 or 11 until age 25 or even later.

This is pretty obvious in Shane and Ilya's rudimentary communication strategies. They start out as two interpersonally inexperienced young men. Shane makes first contact with Ilya, sparking Ilya's curiosity. After a couple small interactions, two years later they have their first intimate encounter. (All this takes 15 minutes in the first episode). Being HBO, we get full backside nudity and a great deal of frontal nudity, just not the actual genitals.

I won't spoil anything, but I do want to point out some sex educator-related concepts that can help spark sex-positive conversations between parents and teen kids, and perhaps even between grandparents and younger generations.

There is a lot of verbal and enthusiastic consent in the sex scenes between Shane and Ilya. Even when Shane is having concerns about what their interactions could mean for their hockey futures, both still engage sexually only when fully enthusiastic.

If readers recall, in a previous

column I discussed "FRIES" for consent. F stands for *freely given*, R for *reversible*, I for *informed* about the activities, E for *enthusiastic* (my favorite component), and S for *specific* acts.

Shane and Ilya begin with kissing and oral sex, and after some meetups have gone by with these activities, they have a short negotiation about anal intercourse. Shane, who Ilya sees as literal and "boring" (stable), indicates initially that it "isn't the right time." Ilya asks if he is scared. Shane says "Absolutely not," and reveals that he in fact owns a dildo. Ilya simply replies with, "what color?"

Shane, the "golden boy" of hockey with the "highest hockey IQ," is definitely someone who does his research.

The consent motifs showcasing enthusiasm, agreement about specific acts, reversibility, and freely given consent hit it all right. One thing that I found missing from this first scene was an STI discussion. It is implied that Shane has none, as he tells Ilya he has never been with a man – though we don't learn about any other past partners. However, neither explicitly asks about STIs. Also, no condoms are initially used, and in later scenes in which lubrication is likely a requirement for full pleasure and ease we do not see any evidence of it.

These are my only notes on those issues. However, what is portrayed may certainly be more true to life.

At any rate, early on in the series I winced constantly at the rudimentary nature of the communication. Even when someone on Ilya's team tries to check in, asking "What's up with you?" when Ilya is fidgeting at the airport, he replies with "Fuck you," shutting down communication.

As they age about eight years over the course of the series, we happily get to see their verbal and emotional communication improve. But the years it takes for them to build these skills and comfort drives home the lack of active prosocial and caring emotional socialization of cisgender boys and men.

Shane and Ilya are poster boys for what can happen when you aren't encouraged to practice noticing and articulating your own emotions. I almost wish boys and men who need this were sent through

an emotional literacy boot camp, every day, until they have so much comfort and experience that they cry uncle.

Now let's take a look at *Pillion*. In this film Alexander Skarsgard plays a leather motorcycle dom named Ray, who initiates a dominant relationship with Harry Melling's submissive character Colin. We see a lot of similar lack of verbal communication in this movie – and much more frontal and backside nudity.

Initially, with no negotiation, Colin moves in and becomes the ultimate submissive for Ray. Eventually Colin insists on negotiating some tenets of their arrangement, such as whether Ray will meet his mother, and if he can have one day a week off.

We do see a lot of enthusiastic consent for sexual and submissive behaviors, to the point that Colin tells a friend he has been told he has "an aptitude for devotion" – my favorite quote in this film. But again, I wonder how much more improved their relationship might be if they both brought some emotional and communication verbal literacy to their interactions.

The last thing I want to say is that while people of all ages – late teen to adult – and genders have been greatly enjoying HR, it seems, as Connor Storrie said in his *Saturday Night Live* opening dialogue on February 28, that many straight women have realized their sexual orientation is "gay guy."

My OWL colleagues have pointed out that women seeing two men together playfully, sexually, and enthusiastically can allow for their own female gaze, enjoying erotic material, with safety and equality. For myself, I love seeing the physicality of all these men's erotic interactions – the mingling of jolly wrestling alongside sexual arousal. I also enjoyed the PG-13 version of this intimacy style in the Netflix series *Heartstopper*. It's simply refreshing to see all of this joy!

*Stephanie Baird is a certified OWL facilitator and an EMDR psychotherapist and consultant who encourages her clients towards thriving sexual health. She is the author of the book EMDR Therapy and Sexual Health: A Clinician's Guide (2023). She welcomes feedback and suggestions at [sexmatters@montaguereporter.org](mailto:sexmatters@montaguereporter.org).*

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**VALLEY VIEW** from page B1

Enter the AI Genie, which informed me she was Debbie Chamberlain, which immediately rang a bell I accepted.

As planned, Chamberlain and Globetti arrived well before dawn. I think we met at the Whately diner off Route 91, where we loaded their gear into my Jeep Cherokee and drove Conway backroads to one of my favorite Deerfield River access points at South Station.

We drove to the cul-de-sac looking down at the South River gorge at the end of the dirt road and took a right onto an old trolley bed soon blocked by a barway. There we pulled on our waders, gathered our equipment, and journeyed down a steep game trail to the river's western edge. Though we caught a few trout and some smallmouth bass, I wasn't thrilled with the action and suggested we pack up and circle back to Johnson's Hole, another of my favorite spots about three miles downstream.

"You never know," I told them. "The fishing might be better there. If the flow stays the same, it should be perfect."

So, off we went, eventually taking Conway's Hoosac Road to the southern end of the same trolley bed on the other side of South River to my customary parking place on a power line high above the Deerfield's west bank. From there, we descended another, even steeper, game trail following the edge of a potentially perilous ravine.

At river's edge we crossed the shallow, narrowed head of the rapids flowing into Johnson's Hole. Then we spread out, wading waist-deep into angling position along a curling riffle that emptied into a long, deep channel. The plan was to cast 45 degrees upstream into the passing current, mend line to eliminate drag, and dead-drift our weighted nymphs for the final 90-degree swing through the trout-feeding zone.

I was fishing a Montana nymph on sink-tip line, the fly colored like a bumble bee and simulating a variety of aquatic insects trout eat. My guests, too, were fishing sink-tip line and nymphs I can't remember. Because their offerings were most likely selected by me from my own fly box, they were likely casting such trusty patterns as Hare's Ears, Grey or Olive Nymphs, Revised Muskrats, March Browns, or Dark Hendricksons, all proven producers in my experience.

The problem for my inexperienced guests was that they couldn't

execute the necessary precision casts, presentation, drag-free drift, and the right depth required for success. Plus, they didn't know the water like I did. As I caught one nice rainbow after another, they couldn't buy a strike if their lives depended on it. When helpful instruction and demonstration failed to improve their success, I ultimately stood them by my side to play fish hooked by me. By morning's end, they became happy campers as I started thinking about the looming worknight of taking calls on the *Recorder* sports desk.

On our drive back to their car at the diner, we had a spirited conversation about what had unfolded: the beautiful surroundings, the rattling river and its many trout-rich tributaries. That's when Ms. Chamberlain suggested I would be the perfect candidate to write an informative Deerfield River fishing guidebook for anglers unfamiliar with the ecosystem and clueless about hidden accesses like the two I had traveled that day. It would be nice, she said, for outsiders to have a pocket-sized resource with maps pinpointing the best holes and runs, not to mention long-forgotten trolley beds, game trails, and other access routes.

I chuckled at what was, to me, an absurd suggestion. I didn't hesitate to tell her that, for selfish reasons, I was not interested in any such job. I felt absolutely no inclination to share my waters with transitory anglers. I preferred nature's solitude — peaceful tranquility backed by the percussion of the river's rattle. Heaven on earth.

As it turned out, my requested promotional services weren't needed. Within 10 years, the book Ms. Chamberlain desired hit the market, perhaps written by a willing author she convinced to do the job I refused. Close on its heels came the whitewater community, their rambunctious presence violating the quiet sought by wilderness anglers.

These days a destination for hit-and-run recreational users, the Deerfield River ain't what it used to be. Far too chaotic for anglers like me.

The river I knew and loved was a wilder place, minus occasional disruptions of passing trains on the opposite bank — sights and sounds I learned to tolerate, night or day, but could have lived without.

*Gary Sanderson lives in Greenfield. Questions and comments welcome at gary@oldtavernfarm.com.*



**HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG**

**Game Involving Nazis; Rice-Based Dispute; Stray Tire; Various Dogs Roam, Leap, Bite, Bark, and Are Found**

**Monday, 3/23**

2:23 p.m. 911 caller from I Street complaining of loud noise being created by an upstairs neighbor on purpose. Spoke with both parties. Neighbor states he dropped something by accident. Ongoing issue; mediated for now. Both parties advised to talk to landlord.

2:37 p.m. Walk-in reports receiving aggressive phone messages from a man he does not know. Officer tried to call the party making the calls, but got no answer. Advised of options. Reporting party advises that after speaking with a friend, he was urged to file a police report and provide voicemails. Reporting party emailed approximately four minutes' worth of voicemails that the caller left over the weekend. Involved party was threatening the reporting party and his son. Gunshots could be heard in the background of the voicemail. Reached out to other area PD to try to get more information on the involved party.

6:33 p.m. Caller reports that she is inside Walgreens and witnessed a juvenile get out of a vehicle, lift up a lamppost cement block, put something under it, then leave in the car. Would like an officer to investigate. Officer advises it looks like a geocaching spot.

7:01 p.m. Caller reports that he owns a video game company and released a video game today involving Nazis. Same stated that the game went viral and anti-hate groups started posting his business address online. The business address is his parents' residence. Caller concerned people will show up at the house or send hateful mail. Advised caller that sharing business info online is free speech and that if he begins receiving threats to contact us again. Also advised caller to have his parents call 911 if people show up at the house related to this. Advised caller that information would be doc-

umented and shared during roll call so all shifts would be aware of the situation.

**Tuesday, 3/24**

9:49 a.m. Caller from I Street not requesting officer response, but wanted to report that the upstairs neighbor made loud noises on the roof above her bedroom around 5:30 this morning and woke her up. Caller believes this is being done intentionally.

10:08 a.m. 911 caller from Griswold Street reports her oven is on fire. Transferred to Shelburne Control; PD responding. Officer on scene advises it is an electric stove and the fire has been extinguished. PD units clear; FD remaining on scene.

2:43 p.m. 911 hangup call; spoke to male party on call-back who said there was no emergency. Spoke to reporting party, who advised that another party became angry over an argument about cooking rice. The argument was reportedly verbal, and the other party is now upstairs in her room. Spoke with caller at length about being an adult guest in the residence and that she can now be evicted for her behavior.

3:02 p.m. 911 report of hit and run on Millers Falls Road. Area checked; unfounded.

3:54 p.m. 911 report of possible structure fire on Montague City Road; smoke coming from the basement. Building evacuated. Transferred to Shelburne Control. Under control at this time. A textbook or magazine on top of the water heater caught on fire; homeowner put it out with a hose.

**Wednesday, 3/25**

12:49 p.m. FirstLight advising rabid fox in the area on Cabot Street. Animal control officer advised; ACO reports unfounded.

3:34 p.m. Keene PD calling to see if a Montague PD officer can check an address for a vehicle that was involved in a hit and run in their town. Officer states vehicle is in driveway.

**Thursday, 3/26**

8:51 a.m. 911 caller from Our Lady of Peace reports that a transformer blew; saw a flash and smoke; nothing now. Control advised; Eversource notified. TFFD will wait for Eversource. Officer clear.

12:41 p.m. 911 caller reports he saw a dog on the side of Cabot Street and now has it. He is going to call the owner.

3:35 p.m. Caller from Turnpike Road states that a male party was walking up and down her fence line harassing her dogs; one of the dogs jumped over the fence; he chased the dog, and it bit him. ACO requested to respond to lobby to speak with the victim. Victim declined medical services. Both units followed up with dog owner. Reports on file with ACO and PD.

4:14 p.m. Multiple calls about a vehicle swerving, passing over double lines, and almost hitting other vehicles on North Leverett Road. Person reportedly pulled over, opened his door, then sped off again. Officer drove entire length of road; no sign of vehicle.

**Friday, 3/27**

11:44 a.m. Caller states that the vehicle in front of him on Turners Falls Road had a tire fall off and it bounced and hit his car, causing some damage. Report taken. One vehicle towed from scene.

2:54 p.m. 911 caller reports that a female driving a silver CR-V pulled out directly in front of her near Scotty's Store and forced her to go up on the sidewalk to avoid a collision. Caller provided a plate number, which matches the vehicle description. Offered caller police and medical response, which was declined. Referred to an officer.

9:45 p.m. Northampton trooper asking officers to check area for a male party pinging in the area of K Street in violation of a 209A order. Unable to locate.

**Saturday, 3/28**

9:25 a.m. Caller states that a dog is tied to a fence on West Mineral Road near Millers Falls Road with nobody around. Area checked; no dogs located.

10:45 a.m. Caller states that there is a large amount of shattered glass at the J Street entrance to Peskeompskut Park. DPW notified.

4:04 p.m. Report of unwanted person on Twelfth Street. Referred to an officer. Involved party will stay with her friend in Springfield for the weekend.

4:05 p.m. Caller would like an officer to check a commercial vehicle parked near the church on L

Street blocking the sight-lines of drivers trying to pull out. Officer spoke to owner/operator of truck; he will move it.

11:25 p.m. Caller reporting loose puppy or dog in area of Prospect Street. Caller states she has heard the dog barking for a while; believes it to be a white spotted beagle. Officer spoke to individuals in area; they advised they were getting their dogs together. Advised to keep noise down. Officer checked area; unable to locate dog; nothing heard.

11:36 p.m. Caller states he received a phone call from his mother, who lives on Fourth Street, reporting an unknown number of people hanging out in front of her house. Caller states she does not know what they are doing outside or why they are there. Officers advised. Female called back and requests officer back to the location as people are being loud again; wants them moved along. Officers advise they will respond to location and advise again of noise level. Involved parties reside at location and are currently in a backyard.

Officer advises individuals have returned to their homes for the night. Advised caller noise she heard was her neighbors and that they were advised to keep the noise down again.

**Sunday, 3/29**

1:19 p.m. 911 caller from Hillside Road states there is a lot of smoke coming from somewhere across the street. Shelburne Control notified. Caller called in again stating no one checked the fire earlier and the smoke is still going. Contacted TFFD; burn permit in use on Hillside Road; they drove by earlier; no issues. Will drive by again within an hour to make sure the fire is out.

1:50 p.m. Officers flagged down at Millers Falls Road and West Main Street by a person reporting a loose dog in the area. Area checked; no dogs located.

3:35 p.m. 911 caller from Millers Falls Road reporting that someone who lives diagonal from them is sitting in a chair outside with his pants pulled down. Worried as there are children who live in the area. Officers advised. Officer spoke to male party.

10:14 p.m. 911 caller from Avenue A states she has been hearing dogs barking for two hours and is worried about their welfare. Referred to an officer.

11:45 p.m. Caller from Park Street reporting loud dog barking in the area of his house; has been going on for a while. Officer checked area; no barking dog sounds heard.

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DELIGHTS from page B1

On one spring day, during a short stroll of Greenfield, Laurie and I happened upon Posada's Tavern, a newer and vibrant Salvadoran-Mexican restaurant that occupies the space vacated by the former Taylor's Tavern.

I knew we were in for something different as we were greeted by the cool neon light of a sign beckoning us into the downstairs restaurant, which features a full-service bar along with ample seating.

The staff were welcoming and brought us to our table. The restaurant ambience is vibrant, with ceilings featuring billowing white clouds along a blue-sky backdrop and art seemingly inspired by Día de los Muertos and other traditional cultural callouts.

We started with the chips and salsa, and let me tell you that dipping into both the tomato-based salsa (made with freshly roasted tomatoes) as well as the salsa verde offered standard with the chips, we were surprised by the vibrant, tongue-pleasing flavors in each bite, which had a depth and freshness I am not used to here in the States.

Laurie had the enchiladas tradicionales, featuring a red rancho sauce and topped with lettuce, queso fresco, and sour cream, while I ordered the enchiladas mole poblano with cheese, which is my "go-to" if mole sauce is on the menu.

Each dish was served with rice and refried beans, though you

can sub the refried beans with black beans.

Personally, I would stick with the refried beans. Why? Because they have a deep, pleasing flavor and robust texture that I honestly have not experienced before.

I couldn't let myself get too distracted by the immense flavor of the beans, so I moved to the enchiladas mole poblano. The sauce did not disappoint. I could feel my brain wrapping itself around the subtle notes of nuts, spices, and other rich ingredients that go into a traditional mole sauce as the flavor moved from my tongue and palate up to the dopamine centers of my brain, signaling happiness and pleasure. I was beyond impressed with the dish, as Laurie was with hers.

We have since returned and bought takeout. I've since also had the traditional enchiladas with shrimp, which was also a lovely dish, though my go-to will always be mole. Guacamole, also offered with the chips, is equally pleasing in flavor and texture.

The menu offers a wide variety of dishes: burritos and bowls; quesadillas and various enchiladas; as well as chimichangas, fajitas and dinner plates, and appetizers like fried plantains (very good also) and empanadas. I am super-tempted by carnitas, another old favorite of mine that I was introduced to at Anna's Taqueria in Boston, but my newly found vegetarianism, for health reasons, prevents that.

I reached out to Cristopher Cruz, owner of Posada's Tavern, to learn more. Cruz was born and raised in Miami. His mother is Honduran and his father is from El Salvador. The dishes and flavors are inspired by the home countries of his parents. Cruz told me he moved to Massachusetts for "better opportunities, and started working in restaurants."

According to both Cruz and a blog by local realtor Wanda Mooney, Cruz and business partner Ingrid Rivas took the bold move of opening Posada's Grill in Shelburne in 2020, when the pandemic was in full swing, beginning with a small take-out menu and expanding.

With the ambition of growth, Posada's moved into the Greenfield space in early 2024 and have been serving up their flavorful cuisine, made with passion, ever since.

The result is an amazing experience filled with welcoming and vibrant ambience, friendly service, and a dedication to quality and flavor that is hard to beat.

If you haven't been by, I encourage you to stop in and give it a try. You won't be disappointed.

Posada's Tavern is located at 238 Main Street in Greenfield. It is open from 11:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Sundays through Thursdays and from 11:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. Takeout is also available. You can also order online directly at www.posadatavern.com.



TELEVISION

Wonder Man (Disney+)

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI



GREENFIELD – I understand Wonder Man, which premiered online on January 27, is another Marvel TV series that features a superhero. I recognize him as someone I have seen in an actual comic with the Avengers, but they didn't really do much for a plot in the first episode of the show.

The episode just shows us an actor who has seen an old movie about Wonder Man, probably from the '80s, as a kid. Then they gave us an introduction to who this guy is: not a totally unsuccessful actor, but one who in a sudden moment needs to look for a new role. His name is Simon Williams.

In an Iron Man movie, Ben Kingsley played another actor who posed as a terrorist leader named the Mandarin. Because of that, it makes sense for his character – Trevor Slattery is his real name – to be in this show. He meets up with Simon, who is going to be Wonder Man in a new movie version.

This first episode only really shows us an introduction of Simon Williams on screen. Kingsley's character is a comedic one, which works because Wonder Man is a comedy. The only really interesting thing so far is that I believe

Trevor will end up hooking Simon up with the Wonder Man role. Simon's reaction to the possibility of being cast as a superhero could be very priceless to see.

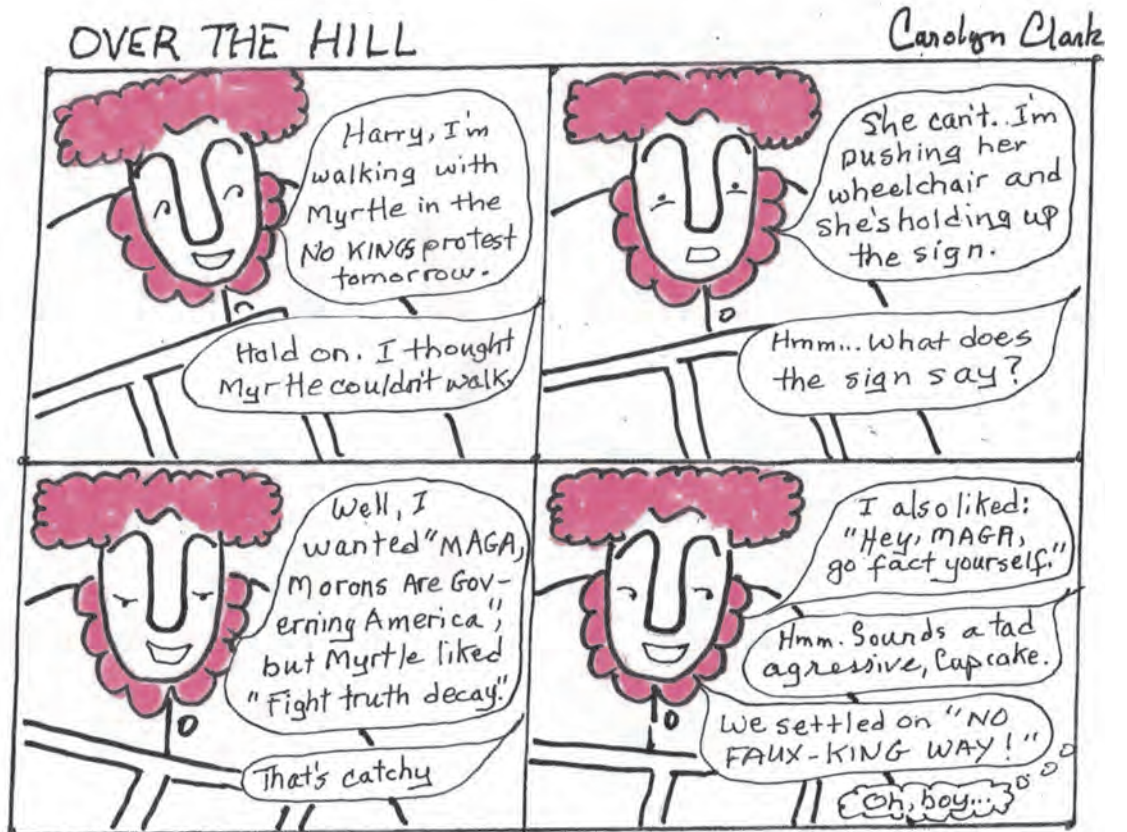
I decided to review the first two episodes, and I found the plot for the second one does much better. It turns out that Trevor's time doing the job as the Mandarin had come back to bite him, and he needed to do a favor for the government. Simon was not some random person that this guy ran into – he was being checked out.

One scene in particular shows us there is something else to Simon other than being an actor. It does get used in connection with the favor Trevor has to perform.

A perfect audition connected with the remake of Wonder Man makes sense to be in here, too. This show gets off to a slow start, but picks up nicely in the second episode.



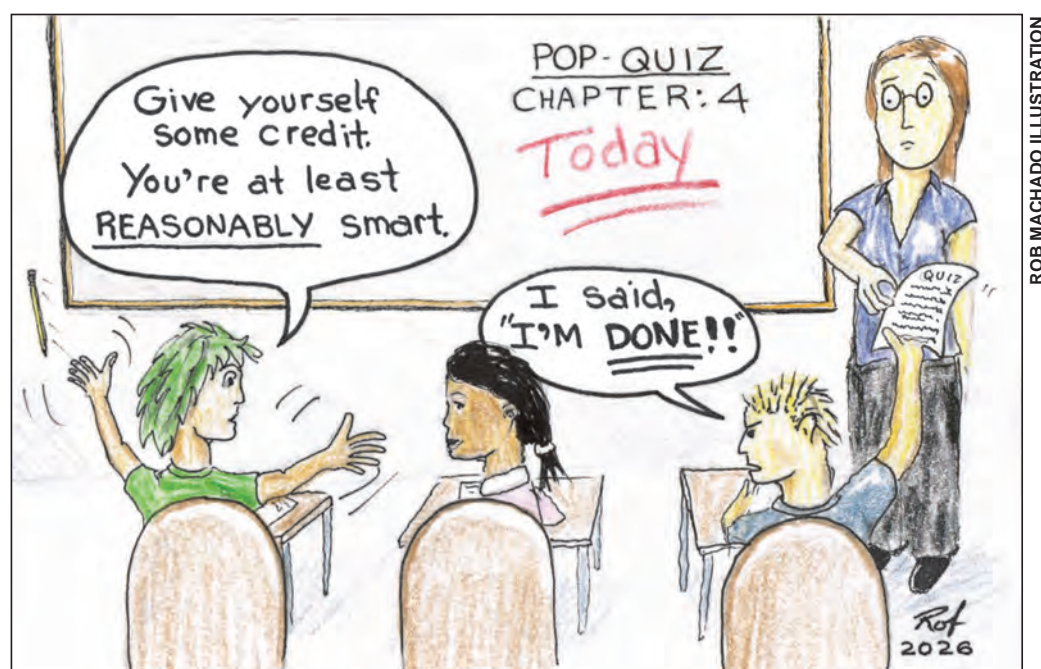
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## ANÁLISIS

# Aulas en transformación: Cómo los recortes están redefiniendo el futuro de la educación en Massachusetts

Por VICTORIA MAÍLLO DE AGUILERA

**GREENFIELD** – Los distritos escolares del oeste de Massachusetts atraviesan uno de los momentos más complejos de las últimas décadas. A lo largo del presente año fiscal, administraciones escolares en toda la región se han visto obligadas a plantear decisiones difíciles: reducción de personal, eliminación de programas académicos y reestructuración de servicios esenciales.

Desde ciudades como Amherst, Northampton, o Springfield hasta comunidades más pequeñas del Pioneer Valley, el panorama es cada vez más similar: presupuestos ajustados, aumento de costos, y una creciente incertidumbre sobre la sostenibilidad del sistema educativo público a medio y largo plazo.

Diversos análisis en el ámbito educativo señalan que esta situación no responde a un problema puntual, sino a una combinación de factores estructurales que se han ido acumulando en el tiempo. Entre ellos destacan el incremento sostenido de gastos operativos, las limitaciones del modelo de financiación estatal y la desaparición de ciertos fondos federales extraordinarios que habían servido como apoyo en años recientes.

En el caso del distrito Gill-Montague Regional School District (GMRSD)\*, la situación refleja muchas de las tensiones que atraviesan otros sistemas escolares de la región. Según datos presentados en reuniones públicas del comité escolar, el distrito se ha enfrentado a un desfase presupuestario significativo durante los últimos años fiscales, derivado en parte por de un crecimiento de la financiación estatal inferior al aumento de los costes operativos. Esta disminución obligó a realizar ajustes internos con el objetivo de evitar recortes inmediatos de mayor magnitud.

Sin embargo, las presiones presupuestarias han continuado. De cara al ciclo de 2027, y de acuerdo con información discutida en foros públicos, el comité escolar ha rechazado propuestas de contratación de nuevo personal por un valor cercano a 795.000 dólares como parte de los esfuerzos por equilibrar el presupuesto.

Asimismo, se han anunciado reducciones de puestos y la no cobertura de varias vacantes, incluyendo docentes, personal de apoyo académico y servicios especializados.

Estas decisiones generan ahorros parciales, estimados en torno a 350.000 dólares, pero también implican cambios en la estructura educativa que afectan directamente al alumnado y al funcionamiento diario de las escuelas.

Para comprender el origen de esta situación, es necesario analizar el modelo de financiación educativa en Massachusetts. El sistema se basa en tres pilares principales: financiación estatal (principalmente a través de la fórmula conocida como Chapter 70), ingresos locales derivados de impuestos municipales y fondos federales destinados a programas específicos.

Aunque este modelo ha sido históricamente considerado uno de los más sólidos del país, en los últimos años han surgido críticas desde distintos sectores. Legisladores estatales, superintendentes y expertos en política educativa han señalado que la fórmula actual no refleja adecuadamente los costos reales de la educación contemporánea.



En particular, se ha señalado que los aumentos en financiación no han sido uniformes entre distritos. Mientras algunas comunidades han experimentado incrementos significativos en los últimos años, dado que la financiación estatal se basa principalmente en el número de estudiantes y sus necesidades específicas, las diferencias no se producen tanto en la asignación directa de los fondos, sino en la capacidad de cada comunidad para complementar esa financiación a nivel local. En distritos más pequeños y con menor base impositiva, esto se traduce en mayores dificultades para asumir los costes operativos.

Esta diferencia en el crecimiento de los recursos disponibles está contribuyendo a una brecha progresiva entre distritos, tanto en términos de servicios como de oportunidades educativas, ya que uno de los factores más determinantes en la actual crisis es el aumento sostenido de los costos operativos, es decir, mantenimiento de los edificios, calefacción, reparaciones, etc.

Informes del sector educativo indican que áreas como la educación especial, el transporte escolar y los beneficios del personal han experimentado incrementos que superan el ritmo de la inflación. Estos gastos, considerados en gran medida ineludibles, representan una proporción creciente de los presupuestos escolares.

La educación especial, en particular, constituye uno de los mayores desafíos financieros. Los distritos están legalmente obligados a proporcionar servicios específicos a estudiantes con necesidades especiales, lo que puede implicar costos elevados en personal especializado, transporte individualizado o programas externos.

En comunidades pequeñas o rurales, donde el número de estudiantes es menor, estos costos pueden tener un impacto proporcionalmente mayor en el presupuesto total.

A estos desafíos estructurales se suma un factor adicional: la finalización de fondos federales extraordinarios que habían sido implementados en respuesta a la pandemia de COVID-19. Durante varios años, estos recursos permitieron a los distritos invertir en mejoras de infraestructura, tecnología, ventilación y apoyo académico. Sin embargo, muchos de estos programas eran temporales.

Su desaparición ha dejado a los distritos con obligaciones financieras – como mantenimiento o personal adicional – que ahora deben cubrir con presupuestos ordinarios más limitados. En Massachusetts, la reducción de estos fondos en 2025 afectó a múltiples distritos, obligando a replantear prioridades y, en algunos casos, a integrar gastos previamente

financiados externamente dentro de presupuestos ya tensionados.

Las consecuencias de estas presiones presupuestarias ya son visibles en numerosos distritos del oeste del estado. Entre los cambios más señalados por informes educativos y debates públicos se encuentran aumento del número de estudiantes por aula; reducción o eliminación de programas artísticos, musicales, y electivos; disminución de servicios de apoyo académico; mayor carga de trabajo para el profesorado; y reducción de intervenciones tempranas en áreas como matemáticas o lectura.

Estos ajustes no afectan a todos los estudiantes por igual. Diversos especialistas advierten que los alumnos con mayores necesidades, incluyendo estudiantes de educación especial o aquellos que aprenden inglés como segunda lengua, suelen ser los más afectados cuando se reducen los servicios de apoyo.

Uno de los aspectos más relevantes del debate actual es el aumento de la desigualdad entre distritos escolares. En Massachusetts, las comunidades tienen la posibilidad de complementar la financiación estatal mediante ingresos locales. Sin embargo, esta capacidad varía considerablemente en función de factores como el valor de la propiedad o la base impositiva disponible. Mientras algunas ciudades pueden recurrir a incrementos fiscales para mantener o ampliar servicios educativos, otras comunidades enfrentan mayores limitaciones.

En este contexto, varios municipios han considerado o implementado aumentos fiscales conocidos como *overrides* bajo la Proposición 2½. Estas medidas permiten superar los límites habituales de recaudación, pero requieren aprobación mediante voto ciudadano.

El resultado es un sistema en el que la calidad de los recursos educativos puede depender, en parte, de la capacidad económica de cada comunidad, lo que ha generado preocupación entre quienes defienden la equidad en la educación pública.

Si las tendencias actuales continúan, expertos en educación advierten de posibles consecuencias a largo plazo que van más allá del ámbito escolar. Entre ellas destacan:

- **Deterioro progresivo de la oferta educativa.** La reducción de programas y personal puede limitar las oportunidades académicas y extracurriculares disponibles para los estudiantes.
- **Cambios demográficos.** Algunas familias pueden optar por trasladarse a distritos con mayores recursos, lo que podría afectar la matrícula en comunidades rurales.
- **Ampliación de las desigualdades.** Las

diferencias entre distritos podrían traducirse en brechas más amplias en resultados educativos.

- **Impacto económico regional.** Las escuelas desempeñan un papel central en la estabilidad de las comunidades. Su debilitamiento puede influir en la atracción de nuevos residentes y en el desarrollo económico local.

- **Desafíos en el personal educativo.** La combinación de incertidumbre laboral y aumento de la carga de trabajo puede dificultar la retención y contratación de docentes.

Ante este panorama, distintos actores – incluyendo legisladores, administradores escolares y organizaciones comunitarias – han planteado diversas estrategias para abordar la situación:

- **Revisión de la fórmula Chapter 70.** Existe un consenso creciente en que el modelo actual podría beneficiarse de una actualización que refleje mejor los costos reales y las necesidades específicas de distintos tipos de distritos.

- **Incremento de la inversión estatal.** El debate sobre la distribución de nuevos ingresos fiscales en Massachusetts ha puesto sobre la mesa la posibilidad de aumentar el apoyo a distritos con mayores dificultades.

- **Cooperación regional.** La colaboración entre distritos para compartir servicios se ha señalado como una vía para optimizar recursos sin reducir directamente la oferta educativa.

- **Priorización de servicios esenciales.** Algunos responsables educativos han subrayado la importancia de proteger áreas clave como la educación especial, el apoyo lingüístico y la salud mental.

- **Participación comunitaria.** Históricamente, la implicación de la comunidad ha desempeñado un papel relevante en la toma de decisiones relacionadas con la financiación educativa.

Además de las estrategias tradicionales, algunos distritos están explorando enfoques innovadores para generar ingresos adicionales o reducir costos: instalación de paneles solares para disminuir gastos energéticos; creación de fundaciones educativas vinculadas a exalumnos; aprovechamiento de programas federales de conectividad; o uso de instalaciones escolares para actividades comunitarias fuera del horario lectivo.

Aunque estas iniciativas no sustituyen la financiación estructural, pueden contribuir a aliviar parcialmente las presiones presupuestarias.

La situación en Western Massachusetts refleja un debate más amplio sobre el futuro de la educación pública. Más allá de los números, se trata de una conversación sobre cómo equilibrar recursos limitados con la necesidad de ofrecer una educación equitativa y de calidad en contextos muy diversos.

Si bien existen diferentes perspectivas sobre las causas y soluciones, hay un amplio reconocimiento de que las decisiones que se adopten en los próximos años tendrán un impacto duradero en las escuelas, en las comunidades y en las oportunidades de las futuras generaciones.

\* Nota: Victoria Maíllo de Aguilera, colaboradora asidua de este periódico, trabaja como maestra de español para Gill-Montague Regional School District y es miembro de GMEA. Este artículo expresa su opinión y no refleja los puntos de vista del distrito o del sindicato.

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**THURSDAY, APRIL 2**

Brewery at Four Star Farms, Northfield: *Silverback Swing*. 6 p.m. No cover.

Colonial Theater, Keene: *Ladysmith Black Mambazo*. 7 p.m. \$.

Last Ditch, Greenfield: *Sarika, Alouette Batteau, Olivia Nied*. 8 p.m. \$.

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

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Hexx Head, Clock Serum, Snowbeasts, Midnight Psychic, BITCRUSHR*. 8 p.m. \$.

Tourists, North Adams: *TAKAAT*. 8 p.m. Free.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Dalton Moon, Awnthay, Cheer*. 9 p.m. No cover.

**FRIDAY, APRIL 3**

Dickinson Library, Northfield: Reception for *Squakheag*, local paintings by Christine Texiera. 10 a.m. Free.

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Nesting Birds Investigation Station*. 3 p.m. Free.

Waterway Arts, Turners Falls: *Sadie's Bikes 30th Gumball Machine Takeover*. This month's prize: rings by *Shirah Neumann*. Light refreshments. 5 to 8 p.m. Free.

Looky Here, Greenfield: Book release event for *The Truth Is Not a Narrative*, new collection by the Public Interest Postal Service. 5 p.m. By donation.

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

Looky Here, Greenfield: Film screening, *They Live* (1988). 6 p.m. By donation.

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

Northfield Mount Hermon School, Gill: *Opening reception for the annual student art exhibit*. At the Rhodes Arts Center. 6:30 to 8 p.m. Free.

Four Phantoms Brewing, Greenfield: *Game Night*. 6:30 p.m. Free.

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Youth Poetry Slam*. 6:30 p.m. \$.

THCC, Easthampton: *DC Wolves, Lostsol, Quartertone*. 7 p.m. \$.

Hutghi's, Westfield: *Choke Out, Firing Squad, Echoes In Eternity, Fury, Six Twelve*. 7 p.m. \$.

Nova Arts, Keene: *Olive Klug, Happy Just to See You, Eve Pierce*. Benefit for the Reproductive Freedom Fund of NH. 7 p.m. \$.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: World premiere, *Baker's Boy* (2026), "an absurdist transsexual short filmed across Franklin County," with cast and crew; followed by feature film *By Hook or by Crook* (2001). 7:30 p.m. By donation.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Jim McRae, Andrew Vernon*. 8 p.m. Free.

The Drake, Amherst: *The Greys, Hot Dirt*. 8 p.m. \$.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *The Meteors, Slob Drop*. 8 p.m. \$.

Marigold, Brattleboro: *The Rear Defrosters, Moon Hollow*. 8 p.m. Free.

Midnight's, Brattleboro: *Galeer, Libby Quinn, Deerest*. 8 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Bryan Gillig, Washatorium, Owen Manure*. 9:30 p.m. No cover.

**SATURDAY, APRIL 4**

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: *Used Book Sale*. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Free.

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: *Soil Block Seed Starting Workshop*. Registration req'd. 10 a.m. Free.

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: *Mara Bright*, poetry reading. 10 a.m. Free.

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

Dickinson Library, Northfield: *Dungeons & Dragons*. Single-day campaign for ages 16 and up. Register at [northfieldrec.com](http://northfieldrec.com). 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Free.

Unity Park, Turners Falls: *Peter Cottontail's EGGstravaganza*. Photo op; bake sale; egg hunt. Bring a basket. For ages 4 to 12. Rain or shine. 1 p.m. Free.

Element Brewing, Millers Falls: *Bekka Dowland*. 3 p.m. No cover.

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

Incandescent Brewing, Bernardston: *Little House Blues*. 6 p.m. No cover.

Looky Here, Greenfield: *Deflator Mouse, Voicehandler, Hollow Deck*. 7 p.m. \$.

Floodwater Brewing, Shelburne Falls: *Ch' Chunk*. 7 p.m. No cover.

THCC, Easthampton: *Accursed, Annihilus Mundi, Gravewraith*. 7 p.m. \$.

Nova Arts, Keene: *TAKAAT, Kal Marks*. 7 p.m. \$.

Full Moon Coffeehouse, Wendell: *Green Sisters*, benefit for the Friends of the Wendell Free Library. 7:30 p.m. \$.

The Drake, Amherst: *DJ Lucas, Papo2004 & Subjxcts, Finesse Fresco, Caplito & Studio Junkiez, Slaynstacy*. 8 p.m. \$.



Guitarist-singer-songwriter *Wendy Eisenberg* returns to the Brick House this Sunday, both solo and with the ensemble *Gloyd*.

Hutghi's, Westfield: *Kira Metcalf, hush puppy, Teen Driver, Honeycrush*. 8 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Love & Rage*. 9:30 p.m. No cover.

**SUNDAY, APRIL 5**

Leverett Congregational Church, Leverett: *Easter Sunrise Service*, 6:30 a.m.; *Easter Service*, 10 a.m. Free.

Leverett Town Hall, Leverett: *Community Pancake Breakfast*. 7 a.m. Free.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *First Sunday Word*. Open mic with writers Eric Wasileski and Paul Richmond. 1 p.m. By donation.

Brick House, Turners Falls: *Wendy Eisenberg, Ariel Vera, Shane "Bray" Kerr, Gloyd*. 6 p.m. \$.

**MONDAY, APRIL 6**

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: *Blood Pressure Screening*. 10 a.m. Free.

Leverett Elementary School, Leverett: *King Philip's War in Your Backyard: From Wequomps to Peskeompskut*. History talk by David Brule. 7 p.m. Free.

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

## EXHIBITS

**Waterway Arts, Turners Falls:** *Enough: A Collaboration*, visual artists' responses to pieces written in the Paper Trail Creative Writing Workshops exploring what it means to "have enough, do enough, be enough." Through May 23.

**Discovery Center, Turners Falls:** *All Our Relations*. Work by Deborah Spears Moorehead, Seaconke Pokanoket Wampanoag, and Robert Peters, Mashpee Wampanoag, focusing on pre-colonization, the 350th anniversary of Metacomb's (King Philip's) War, and the Great Falls Massacre of 1676. Through May.

**Sawmill River Arts, Montague Center:** Landscapes by guest photographer *Ray Brod*, through May.

**Leverett Library, Leverett:** *The Art of Dorothy Masterson Bennett*, a former Leverett resident who passed in 2024 at 92 years old, through April.

**Leverett Crafts and Arts, Leverett:** *Art for the Earth*. Forty artists celebrate their love for the earth in a variety of media. Through April 26, with a reception next Saturday, April 11 at 1 p.m.

**LAVA Center, Greenfield:** *TREES!*, informational exhibit on tree projects in Greenfield, through April. *Elaine VanGelder*, paintings, through April with a reception this Saturday, April 4 at 11 a.m.

**Artspace, Greenfield:** *Annual Franklin County Teen Art Show*, through April 24.

**Fiddleheads Gallery, Northfield:** *STEAM - Art & Science*, art that reflects aspects of science, technology, engineering, and math. Through May 17. Reception next Sunday, April 12 at noon.

**Hampden Gallery, UMass Amherst:** *Fragile Connections*, neon-lit sculpture and delicately engraved glass forms by scientific glass blower *Sally Prsch*. Through May 8, with a reception April 23.

**Gallery A3, Amherst:** *Flora & Fauna*, artists' books and oil paintings by *Nancy Meagher* and *Laura Holland*, through April.

**Shelburne Arts Coop, Shelburne Falls:** *Earth and Sky*, paintings by *Conway watercolorist Mary Walsh Martel*, through April.

**Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne Falls:** *Student Art Exhibit*, works by fifth- and sixth-graders in the Mohawk Trail regional school district, through April.

## CALL FOR ART

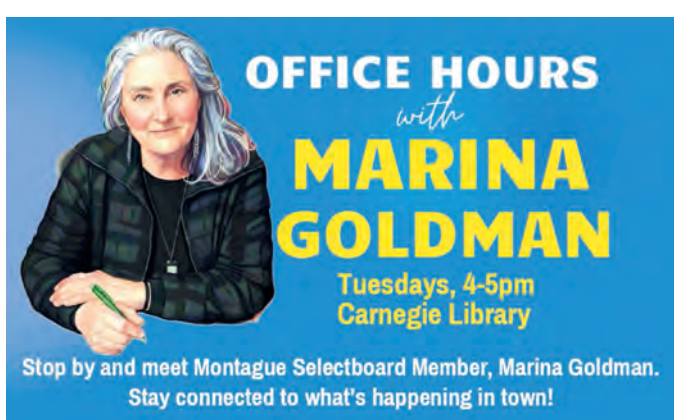
**Art for the Soul Gallery** in Springfield is taking submissions for an exhibit titled *Out of the Darkness: Positivity for 2026*. All interpretations of the theme are welcome, in any media. Deadline May 1; fee of \$35 for up to three submissions. The show opens on June 13. Details at [tinyurl.com/art4soul](http://tinyurl.com/art4soul).

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# CALENDAR



## looking forward...

### TUESDAY, APRIL 7

Olver Transit Center, Greenfield: *Jarice Hanson* presents her new historical monologue, *Martha Gellhorn: In Her Own Words*. Register at [www.tinyurl.com/MarthaGellhorn](http://www.tinyurl.com/MarthaGellhorn). 2 p.m. \$.

Millers Falls Library, Millers Falls: *An Evening with Author David Brule*. 5 p.m. Free.

Fiddleheads Gallery, Northfield: *The Art of Science Fiction: The History of Art and Imagination*, presented by Barry Deitz. 6 p.m. Free.

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: *Community Resilience Conversation*. 6:30 p.m. Free.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Jax Hollow*. 7 p.m. \$

Daily Operation, Easthampton: *R.A.P. Ferreira, JPTRSMN, Quills*. 7 p.m. \$.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *TAKAAT, Sunburned Hand of the Man, Wednesday Knudsen, Dust Witch*. 8 p.m. \$.

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8

Dickinson Library, Northfield: *Nick's Book Group*. Paula Gunn Allen, *The Woman Who Owned the Shadows*. 3 p.m. Free.

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: Matinee movie, *Hamnet (2025)*. 4 p.m. Free.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Stanley Jordan*. 7 p.m. \$.

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

### THURSDAY, APRIL 9

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

Unnameable Books, Turners Falls: *Sandra Simonds, Corbett Bresner, Zoe Tuck*. Poetry reading. 6 p.m. Free.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: Documentary screening, *Most Likely to Succeed (2015)*, about the history of education in the United States. Light refreshments. 6 p.m. Free.

Element Brewing, Millers Falls: *Trivia Night and Fundraiser*. Support the Millers Falls Library and win an Element gift card. 6:30 p.m. By donation.

Palladium, Worcester: *Poison the Well, Converge, Spy, Balmora*. 7 p.m. \$\$.

Midnight's, Brattleboro: *Bird Friend, Mimi Fang, Josh Allen*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *DJ Andujar, DJ Funkybottoms*. In the Shea's Lounge. All ages. 8 p.m. No cover.

### FRIDAY, APRIL 10

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

Greenfield Common, Greenfield: *Flag Raising Ceremony* for National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Includes a performance by Ja'Duke Theater students and remarks by local officials. 11 a.m. Free.



TAKAAT – three members of Mdou Moctar's band playing a heavier, noisier version of Tuareg-style desert blues – will play North Adams this Thursday, Keene on Saturday, Worcester on Sunday (not listed), and Easthampton's Marigold Theater on Tuesday, on a stacked bill. Readers have four chances!

Dickinson Library, Northfield: *Thomas Aquinas Children's Choir Spring Concert*. 4 p.m. Free.

Looky Here, Greenfield: Reception for *Trevor Powers's* risograph-printed photographs. 6 p.m. Free.

Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: *Square Dance with High Strung Strummers; Will Mentor* calling. Jammers welcome. 6:30 p.m. By donation.

Wendell Meetinghouse, Wendell: *Goodness Shakes*, community dance. 6:30 p.m. By donation.

Parlor Room, Northampton: *Jane Siberry*. 6:30 and 9 p.m. \$.

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *The Uncles, Eveline MacDougall*. 7 p.m. By donation.

Bombyx Center, Florence: *El Khat*. 7 p.m. \$.

THCC, Easthampton: *Concrete Ties, Cooked Alive, Price of Fear*. 7 p.m. \$.

Nova Arts, Keene: *Owsley's Owls, Grateful Dead* tribute. 7 p.m. \$.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Tony Vacca & Fusion Nomads, Massamba Diop*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Tillis Performance Hall, UMass Amherst: *Atsuko Okatsuka*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Vermont Jazz Center, Brattleboro: *Solo Jazz Piano Festival* featuring *Mathis Picard, Rachel Z*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Tanya Donnelly & Chris Brokaw, Roger C. Miller*. 8 p.m. \$.

Marigold, Brattleboro: *Olivia Nied, Brian Dickens*. 8 p.m. Free.

Hidden Temple, Florence: *Paul Vidich, Chris Gentes, Glenn Smith, Daniel Winger*. Solo pianists. 8 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Eleanor Levine*. 9:30 p.m. No cover.

Brick House, Turners Falls: *Sleep Destroyer, Feldspar 00000, Glasss, Rival Galaxies, Mibble*. 6:30 p.m. \$.

Vermont Jazz Center, Brattleboro: *Solo Jazz Piano Festival* featuring *Camila Cortina, Geoffrey Keezer*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Stage 33, Bellows Falls: *Tracy Grammer & Jim Henry, Carling Berkhout*. 3 p.m. \$.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *The Suitcase Junket, Kris Delmhorst, Julia Read, Caitlin Canty, Zak Trojano, Kate's Constellations, The Rear Defrosters*. Tribute to Kate Lorenz. 7 p.m. \$.

Institute for Musical Arts, Goshen: *Kay Turn Her and the Pages*. 7 p.m. \$.

THCC, Easthampton: *Vacant Eyes, Neonach*. 7 p.m. \$.

All Souls Church, Greenfield: *Fiery Hope, Malgorzata Lach*. Benefit for Stone Soup Café. 7:30 p.m. By donation.

The Drake, Amherst: *Magnolia & Johnson Electric Co*. 8 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Laybrum, Folly of Three, The Case*. 9:30 p.m. No cover.

### SUNDAY, APRIL 12

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Pallbearer, Knoll, Ordh*. 7 p.m. \$.

First Congregational Church, Sunderland: *GCC Community Chorus* sings madrigals, spirituals, and works by Rossi, Billings, and Brahms. 7:30 p.m. By donation.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Civil Disobedience*. 7 p.m. \$.

### TUESDAY, APRIL 14

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: *Needle-Felted Flower Workshop*. 4 p.m. Free.

New Salem Public Library, New Salem: *The Creation of the Quabbin Reservoir: The Death of the Swift River Valley*. History talk by J.R. Greene. 6:30 p.m. Free.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Knitting, Crafts & Game Night*. 7 p.m. Free.

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: Matinee movie, *Barry Lyndon (1975)*, first half. 4 p.m. Free.

Montague Center Library, Montague Center: *Local Author Book Launch*. Jennifer Acker. 5:30 p.m. Free.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Wes Brown*. 8 p.m. No cover.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Poison Ruin, Peace Talks*. 8 p.m. \$.

### SATURDAY, APRIL 11

Leverett Arts and Crafts, Leverett: *Earth Day Cleanup*. Sign up at [bit.ly/LeverettCleanup26](http://bit.ly/LeverettCleanup26). 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Free.

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: *Stop the Bleed First Aid Class*. Registration req'd. 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. \$.

Holyoke Senior Center, Holyoke: *Flywheel Zine Fest*. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free.

Leverett Library, Leverett: *Ukrainian Easter Egg Workshop*. Registration req'd. 12:30 p.m. Free.

Leverett Arts and Crafts, Leverett: Reception for *Art for the Earth*, multimedia exhibit featuring 40 artists' work. Qigong, readings, music, dance. 1 to 4 p.m. Free.

Guiding Star Grange, Greenfield: *Swedish Dance*. Intro workshop, snacks, open dancing. Live music on five-string fiddle and nyckelharpa. All welcome. 1:30 p.m. \$.

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Bob McNeil*, poetry reading. 3 p.m. Free.

Element Brewing, Millers Falls: *Ted & Tom*. 3 p.m. No cover.

Leverett Arts and Crafts, Leverett: *Multimedia & Dance Performance*. 6 p.m. Free.

Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: *Open Mic*, with featured performers *Becky Hollingworth, Van Kaynor, and Rebecca Weiss*. 6:15 p.m. By donation.

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WINNERS

# Hicks Clinches First Back-to-Back Ice Wins



SUE RICHARDSON PHOTO

Lake Pleasant, with thinning ice, back on Monday, March 9. Nineteen days was all it took to remove all ice in sight.

By DAVID JAMES

**LAKE PLEASANT** – If it had been a hand of poker, a “full house” would have been an almost certain winner, too, but it was rather the culmination of the 49th Annual Ice-Off-the-Lake contest which had melted to conclusion March 2, leaving the late Varion Hicks – formerly of Charlemont, Boston, the South Seas during World War II, and 11 Montague Avenue in this village – as the contest’s first back-to-back winner, as well as the first five-time event champion: thrice while living on the Earth Plane, in 1987, 1994, and 1998, and now twice as a dweller in the Spirit World for almost a quarter-century, in 2025 and 2026.

The contest works like this: chances are blind-drawn from a vintage pretzel jar for a date between February 22, the earliest ice was determined to be gone from the lake in 2012, and April 19, the latest ice has vanished, in 1978. Tickets cost \$1 each, and have never been adjusted by inflationary pressures.

Normally, contest judges – Jackie Stein, treasurer of the Lake Pleasant Village Association, and this writer – meet at 5 p.m. at the official judgment spot, the Raisin Rosen picket midway across the Bridge of Names, on a day seeming likely to produce a contest winner.

This year, however, unusual circumstances required judicial consultation via email the morning after the night before in order to duly render a contest verdict.

This writer had a pre-arranged tax appointment Saturday afternoon, and to make up for a 5 p.m.

absence took lake-surface viewings three times: once at 1:30-ish before he left the village; another at 5:45-ish when he returned, and a third the next morning at 9-ish, following a cold-ish night.

All three viewings produced nary a sight of a cube of visible ice.

Consequently, he inquired whether Judge Jackie had viewed the lake March 28 at 5-ish, more or less, and – if so – the results. She replied the next morning that she and consort Matt Atwood of Broadway had strolled the bridge near the appointed hour, paused long enough at the judgment picket to thoroughly scan the lake’s nooks and crannies, and observed “ditto”: “Matt and I both agree it was yesterday. Five eyes for Varion Hicks!” – meaning hers, Matt’s, and one of mine, as I am blind in the other.

Varion Hicks was the long-time housemate of the late Louise Shattuck, artist, author, sculptor, and third-generation Spiritualist medium whose family roots went back to the village’s earliest years.

Mr. Hicks did driving duties for Ms. Louise and was known to routinely lead parades around Montague with a British Union Jack flying from the vintage station wagon’s radio antenna at a top speed of 15 miles per hour, day in and day out, and not just on holidays or in front of a hearse.

If the contest had ended one day earlier, Louise “Tiny” Emond of Turner Street would have been the winner. Had it ended one day later, Marion “Totty” Linscott of Massasoit Street – also known as the Godmother of Lake Pleasant – would have pocketed the \$57 non-leap-year pot.

FRONT from page B1

and father in living, creating, and contributing to the creative economy with his work.

His third accomplishment is that he’s proud of the fact that he was able to come to the United States – New York, specifically – and to contribute to the Carnival arts. He mentioned he’s also a masquerade costume designer, and has created for various bands in New York.

He feels his contributions to New York were highlighted by his invitation by the Smithsonian to be part of the Folk Fair Festival on the mall in Washington, DC, where he was one of three designers selected to represent the Caribbean contribution to Carnival in the United States. Richie said he wasn’t the most prominent of these designers, but was selected because of his unique approach.

Richie was also recognized in New York City for his contribution to the arts; he received a proclamation in 2008. In 2025 he also received a proclamation from the Massachusetts House of Representatives for his contribution to fashion, art, and culture in the greater Springfield area, as well as a proclamation from Springfield mayor Dominic Sarno for “FAB Fashion Week New England,” which ran from October 20 through 24. Finally, in 2025 he received the Business Rate Best of 2025 awards for the Best Boutique in Turners Falls.

When I asked Richie how his work contributes to the local economy, Richie said that this is a very interesting question that he also asks himself, and that if he was to give an answer it would be his “presence,” because he has invested himself into elevating Turners Falls as a place that represents fashion. Turners Falls is very artsy and culturally astute, he explained, and many people move to the town to plug in, share, or expose themselves to the local culture, but he has been the only one making fashion in this space.

To that end, he has collaborated with and promoted individuals in the community, helping to bring the voices of creative people together and giving them the opportunity to showcase their work. He has collaborated with Swanson’s Fabrics and made several collaborations with RiverCulture, and has hosted fashion shows at the Great Falls Discovery Center.

Though there aren’t a lot of



BENNU PHOTO

The owner of Richie Richardson FAB Fashion, on Second Street in Turners Falls, shares his story with Front of the Line.

people wearing the clothing from Richie Richardson FAB Fashion in town, he said, he does feel he is contributing to the local and creative economy in some capacity.

When asked about challenges, Richie stated he likes to focus on what’s working before discussing what isn’t. What has worked is creating space for other ethnic designers to be seen, be promoted, and sell their work. He also wanted to bring a certain type of creative diversity into this region, and to Turners Falls specifically, and stated that in all of those things he has succeeded.

The challenges presented for the past eight years, since he opened the boutique, have been he has not received the same support from the community that he puts into the community. Richie stated he would like to see some of the businesses he has supported or collaborated with in the past come to visit his boutique, and just simply say “Hi.”

He told me that it is a huge challenge for him right now for the community of Turners Falls to support his business like he supports the community.

Richie stated that he does get the recognition outside of the area, but mentioned the importance of balance, and that he would love to be recognized at home by the community he loves and where he chose to open the doors of Richie Richardson FAB Fashion just eight years ago.

Richie Richardson FAB Fashion is located at 67 Second Street in Turners Falls. Its hours of operation are Wednesdays through Sundays from 1 to 6 p.m. You can also contact him directly to create a special order, and he will be more than happy to assist you. You can find FAB on all social media platforms.

In our next column, we will be hearing from Isaac Mass, the co-owner of Greenfield Garden Cinemas.



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Amanda Gorman, *The Hill We Climb*

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