

The Montague Reporter

Year 24 – No. 23

MAY 14, 2026

\$2

editor@montaguereporter.org

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

montaguereporter.org

Zoning Board Orders Three-Week Moratorium On Flashing Church Sign



MIKE JACKSON PHOTO

Officials at Our Lady of Peace say they have already dimmed, and slowed down, the announcement sign installed last year on the church's front lawn.

By JEFF SINGLETON

TURNERS FALLS – On Wednesday evening Montague's zoning board of appeals (ZBA) heard an appeal of an order from the town's building inspector, Bill Ketchen, that an electronic sign in front of Our Lady of Peace Church on Seventh Street in Turners Falls was violating town bylaws.

The meeting, held on the second floor of town hall, was packed with parishioners and supporters of pastor Reverend Stan Aksamit, known to many as "Father Stan," as well as by residents of the neighborhood, many of whom felt the church's sign breached the norms of an area zoned for "Neighborhood Business."

At the beginning of the meeting, ZBA clerk Ellen Lamoureux read Ketchen's order, which found that the internally illuminated electronic signage in front of Our Lady of Peace violated both the zoning

of the neighborhood and a variance the church had been granted by the ZBA on December 11, 2024.

The order stated that postings on the sign were changing more quickly than the minimum of 60 seconds required under the zoning bylaws, and that the sign was brighter than allowed, particularly at night. These conditions, he wrote, were "affecting neighborhood property and the operation of vehicles on the public ways."

Father Stan moved up to the front table and responded to these complaints, reading a prepared statement. He said that the board had granted the church a variance from the specifics of the Neighborhood Business zoning rules at the December 2024 meeting, which was attended by a representative of the Chicopee-based Sign Dynamics, Inc., the company which installed the signs.

Aksamit also said that the sign see **SIGN** page A6

Next Tuesday In Montague: First of Five 2026 Elections

By MIKE JACKSON

MONTAGUE AND GILL – Voters head to the polls next Monday, May 18 in Gill and next Tuesday, May 19 in Montague, electing town officials as well as members of the towns' shared school committee.

In Gill there are no competitive races on the ballot, but a debt exclusion question which would authorize the town to borrow funds for a new roof for Gill Elementary may attract turnout to the polls.

Greg Snedeker is stepping down peacefully from the selectboard after 12 years, and only one candidate, Jennifer Waldron, has filed papers to claim the seat. All other open seats have either one candidate or none, a juicy opportunity for late-breaking write-in campaigns.

Voting takes place from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday on the second floor of Gill's town hall.

School committee members are elected by a totaled vote of both towns. Bill Tomb is running unopposed to remain in a seat reserved for a Gill resident, and the same is true of Cliff Spatcher in Montague. A second Montague seat is opening up because Steve Ellis, who plays in a rock band with Snedeker, is also stepping down; Lake Pleasant resident Sue Richardson is on the ballot.

Montague voters may go to the polls from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., and must vote according to their precinct. Montague Center, Precinct 1, votes at that village's fire station, and Precinct 5, downtown Turners Falls as far as the north sides of see **ELECTIONS** page A6

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Mill's Ground-Up Bricks Would Fill Its Foundations



BRYAN ZAYATZ PHOTO

The engineers hope to have the demolition plan ready for bids by late summer.

By JEFF SINGLETON

Focus groups, public input, and the potential for more grants to demolish old factory buildings or construct new housing, playgrounds, and paths dominated Monday's Montague selectboard meeting.

The board held a public session to analyze the town's options for demolishing and cleaning up the former Strathmore paper mill property, as required by the funder, the federal Environmental Protection

Agency (EPA). The discussion began with a presentation by Todd Kirton of the engineering firm Tighe & Bond, which drafted the brownfields cleanup analysis.

After reviewing the history of the mill, which the town took for back taxes in 2010 – and noting that the 1.9-acre site does not contain significant soil or groundwater contamination – Kirton focused on three potential options and their cost.

The first, "no action," was ruled see **MONTAGUE** page A7

WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Concerns Over Ex-Pond

By JOSH HEINEMANN

The first order of business at the Wendell selectboard's May 6 meeting was electing a chair for the coming year. Member Paul Doud nominated Laurie DiDonato, who won a landslide victory – unanimous, in fact.

Wendell resident Cecelia Aldrich used the public comment time early in meeting for her ob-

servations and questions about the demolition in January of the Bowens Pond dam, and what lies ahead for the former pond. She wanted to know who is monitoring the situation, and asked if the plantings expected after the dam was removed will be held to a schedule.

A fence still blocks access to the area immediately around the former dam site, and Aldrich said people see **WENDELL** page A4

High School Sports Week: A Crosstown Reckoning

By MATT ROBINSON

TURNERS FALLS – This week the Turners Falls boys' tennis team was knocked off the unbeaten path, the Franklin Tech baseballers beat Greenfield by a run and the Turners team got a win on the road, both schools' softball teams lost by a run in the seventh inning, and track and field athletes from Tech competed in a championship meet.

On Tuesday, the baseball and softball teams from both schools went bat to bat.

Boys' Tennis

TFHS 4 – Springfield Central 1

Frontier 5 – TFHS 0

TFHS 3 – HCSS 2

Last Thursday the Turners boys out-swung the Springfield Central Golden Eagles 4-1 in the first contest of a tennis-tennis-softball triple-header at home.

When I arrived at the courts, the visitors were still stretching. "We came from a long way," Central's coach Keeley Von Hollander said as she fist-

bumped me. "That's why we're late."

When I asked how her team is faring, she smiled and said, "Well, we're all beginners. Even me." They were fortunate that the Thunder's number-two player was at a job interview, and Turners had to make some roster adjustments. Later in the evening, Mário Pareja was the announcer at the softball game. Off mic, he said he got the job. Good work, buddy!

Noah Kolodziej, who retained his first singles spot, swept his match 6-1, 6-0 while Daniel Lapinski won a third-set super-tiebreaker to take third singles 7-6 (7-4), 4-6, 10-5. The first doubles pairing of Nethanel Martin and Daniel Morales took their match 6-3, 6-0, and Connor Glennon and Noah Blanchard won second doubles by forfeit.

The final battle raged in second singles. Vaughn LaValley, who moved up a spot when the roster was jumbled, is an interesting player: he serves with one hand, then quickly switches and plays with the other. He put up a good fight, but lost his match 6-3, 6-4.

see **SPORTS** page A8



DAVID HOITT PHOTO

Franklin Tech senior Lindsey Taylor heads for the plate after hammering a home run during the top of the second inning as the Thunder hosted the Eagles on Senior Night at Turners Falls High School on Tuesday.

Erving Knocks Out Annual Town Meeting In Two Hours

By KEITH WATERS

The town of Erving held its annual town meeting on Wednesday evening. Sixty people were in attendance to vote on the town's issues. There were 34 articles on the warrant, and all 34 were passed in an hour and 51 minutes using automatic handheld voting machines.

The closest vote of the night was on the town's FY'27 operating budget of \$8,105,149. It passed with 41 yeas, 17 nays, and one abstention.

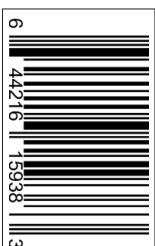
The meeting approved pulling \$2,059,860 from the capital stabilization fund for a number of projects, including \$600,000 toward the redevelopment of the International Paper mill, \$420,000 to replace fire apparatus, \$378,000 for reconstructing Ridge Road, and \$350,000 for building security systems.

They then voted to move \$1,780,000 into capital stabilization.

Borrowing of up to \$1 million for upgrades at the Erving Center wastewater plant, POTW#2, was see **ERVING** page A5

First There Is A Paper, Then There Is No Paper, Then There Is

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| Brighter Than Allowed.....A1 | Sprouting Up Around Town.....A7 | These Full Layers of Sound.....B4 |
| All the Cranks Kept at Bay.....A2 | Caught In a Pickle.....A8 | Until It Trembles Slightly.....B5 |
| Destruction and Fragmentation.....A2 | Crowded With Fairy Shrimp.....B1 | To Help the Struggling One.....B6 |
| Woes and Youthful Hijinks.....A3 | Breaks the Mirrored Surface.....B1 | Gather to Check Out the Flow.....B7 |
| To Span the Entryway.....A4 | Challenged By These Patterns.....B2 | Rocking Puppies, Fruiting Plants.....B8 |
| Elements of the Sculpture.....A5 | A Whole Volume of Cast-Iron Laws.....B3 | The Poms, The Meanies, The Spatulas.....B9 |
| Displayed Static Images Only.....A6 | Directly Into the Sallyport.....B3 | The Smallness of Toads.....B10 |



The Montague Reporter

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August 2002

That Ominous Gurgle

On February 5 we wrote that it was "the time of year nomination papers go out.... [W]e're hearing rumors of fruitless recruitment drives. Volunteering for the difficult work of administering austerity is no one's idea of a good time."

A seasoned municipal veteran, Jacquie Boyden, just won a competitive race for a seat on Erving's selectboard, but that kind of story is increasingly exceptional. Here in Montague voters have a choice of two candidates who are clearly smart and civic-minded, but also

both recent arrivals to town, and brand new to its political arena.

They should be lauded for their sense of service, but whoever wins will have his work cut out for him learning the ins and outs of this very idiosyncratic town, and to make that harder, will surely be descended upon by all the cranks kept at bay in recent years by a stout technocratic consensus at town hall.

There are sharp corners ahead, and we should all be careful. Montague's slumbering giant, its Facebook demographic, may be stirring.



Cindy and Angelo Ferrer paint the Avenue A storefront of their new business, Ritual Bowl, which opens in June. Cindy plans to serve cold-pressed juices, fruit smoothies, açai bowls, and other "healthy and yummy things." Other offerings will include art-making, herbalism, sound healing, and meditation. Cindy is the primary manager, with Angelo helping out when his other business — Adventure Time Landscape, featured on this page last October — allows him the time. Updates are available @ritualbowl on Instagram.

Letters to the Editors

'Trail' Raises New Issues

I am writing regarding George Brace's May 7 article, *Leverett Springs for Sawmill*, which summarized Leverett's Town Meeting.

Rather than considering the existing pedestrian-only access to the King meadow (blueberry field) adequate and relinquishing the goal of public vehicular access, Leverett voters approved funding at Town Meeting for a drivable trail. In reality, this is a road that will be constructed through wetlands if approved by the Conservation Commission and MEPA.

This gravel road would be 575 feet long and 12 feet wide with pull-offs and a bridge over the stream. These wetlands have been deemed less valuable because of the presence of trash, but that seems intended to justify constructing an unnecessary road through wetlands. The wetlands were valuable enough for 2010 Special Town Meeting voters to approve the Conservation Commission purchasing the parcel for "conservation purposes."

The current proposal is not the first time wetlands concerns have taken a back seat to efforts to secure public vehicular access. Wetlands on the Evans's property were also not treated as a concern during the

eminent domain easement attempt.

Has there been adequate consideration of the negative ecological impacts of the road such as habitat destruction and fragmentation? Depending on how it is constructed, the road could impede wildlife movement between wetland areas or increase the risk of road mortality for wildlife attempting to cross it. The current narrative is that the road is needed not only for public vehicular access, but also for access to maintain the meadow and prevent it from returning to forest. This is incorrect. Access for maintenance purposes has always been allowed, and still is, via the access way on private property which has been at the center of the lawsuit.

At Town Meeting, one resident stated that invasives were spreading because the meadow was not brush-hogged last year. If this is the case, it was not for lack of access.

Many Leverett residents embrace concern for the environment and the natural world that surrounds them. Yet when it comes to public vehicular access to the King meadow, those environmental principles seem easy to set aside.

Maureen Ippolito
Montague

Hopes Library Will Serve Seniors

Kudos for the massive accomplishments of the committee developing the Montague Library expansion. Looking at the layout I am happy to see space, and presumed programming, for Children and Teens.

I have trusted the good community efforts of the planners to include specific mention of programming and spaces for the se-

nior citizen demographic. Perhaps I missed it. Raising this in advance of the Town-wide vote is relevant.

Given the looming expenses of a new Tech school, elementary school costs, and renovations to the Carnegie, there is little hope for a new or expanded Senior Center in Turners Falls.

Programming and space needs which are specific, and accessible

to seniors is vital; I am concerned this demographic will be overlooked though many seniors' tax bills will be impacted.

I look forward to clarification and learning how Senior Citizen needs have been configured for this terrific project.

Mary Feeney
Turners Falls

Shaking Hands, Tightening Belts

Let's talk about doing more with less.

When I decided to run for Montague Selectboard, I also committed to running a zero-dollar campaign: no fundraising, and no spending on new campaign materials. I made that choice intentionally because I believe government works best when platforms are built on relationships and conversations rather than money and advertising. Here in Montague, relationship-building and genuine engagement matter far more to me than how big my budget is.

This approach also reflects the kind of mindset I intend to bring to the Selectboard. Montague, like most small towns, has to make difficult decisions with limited resources. I believe thoughtful budgeting is often less about dramatic cuts and more about consistently making careful, practical choices that add up over time. Small decisions about how and when we spend money can have a lasting impact on the town's long-term financial resilience.

I also believe keeping local campaigns free of finance helps keep public service accessible. People should feel that they can run for local office without needing wealth or fundraising networks. At a national scale, I would like to see Citizens United overturned; but change trickles up, not down.

I think it is worth demonstrating that local cam-

paigns can succeed outside of finance if we want to see the same principles reflected in our state and federal governments.

As one expression of these principles, I chose not to produce new plastic campaign signs, which are often used for only a few weeks before becoming waste. Instead, I've been repurposing old signs with paint and paste. It's a small decision, but one that reflects my broader belief that we can do more to use resources thoughtfully and avoid unnecessary waste or spending.

If this approach resonates with you, I hope you'll consider two requests:

1. Think about how a new library could amplify these values throughout Montague, and vote yes to invest in our future on June 24.

2. Share this story with a few friends or neighbors, and encourage them to do the same. I might be the one in the candidate's seat, but I do so as a representative: this is our story to tell together. Elect Nathanael Card Schiffbauer for Selectboard on May 19.

You can learn more about me, my priorities, and where I'll be around town, at about.me/natecard.

Nate Card
Turners Falls

CORRECTION & CLARIFICATION

Sharp-eyed reader Fallon Paxton pointed out that last week's Events Calendar seemed to describe the May 16 Brick House 5K race as a "non-competitive, 1.3-mile course," but that 5 kilometers is 3.1 miles. An untimed 1.3-mile course is offered as an alternative for walkers and others "who want to take their time," and our calendar was confused.

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TURNERS FALLS AND VICINITY.

Compiled by MIKE JACKSON

This Saturday marks the **350th anniversary of the massacre at the Falls.**

Commemorative and memorial events are planned from the morning through the afternoon, starting with a ceremony at the newly installed interpretive signs near Unity Park, lasting for several hours on the lawn of the Discovery Center, and traveling across the bridge at 3:30 p.m. to Gill, to the *other* local interpretive signage, the 1900 monument to Captain Turner.

Details are in our Events Calendar, and a program flyer is posted in this edition alongside David Brule's *West Along the River* column.

As I mentioned last week, it's a busy day... I'll be "sweeping the route" of the **Brick House 5K** to help track the progress of the rearguard. An ad on this page also indicates there's a **tag-bake-and-plant sale** at the Montague Center church.

The League of Women Voters of Franklin County is hosting its annual **Civics Trivia Night** next Thursday, May 21 at 6 p.m. at the Mohawk Trail Regional School library. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., and entry is free.

The questions will feature a variety of civics-related topics, "from political movies to current affairs" and beyond. Kay Lyons and state senator Paul Mark will serve as quizmasters. The top three teams will win prizes.

See lwvma-franklincounty.org for more info!

Ann Fisk shares this announcement:

"The annual **Memorial Day Observance** will be held Sunday, May 24 at 11:15 a.m. on the Montague Center Common. This is sponsored by the Montague Center Firefighters Association.

"Lee Evers, 103 years old, will be the guest speaker. Lee served with the 5th Bomber Squadron in the Army, South Pacific during WWII. He resides in Montague Center with his son, David.

"The service will honor all fallen veterans that served our country."

The National WWII Museum reports that only 45,418 of the 16.4 million US veterans of that cataclysmic event, **less than one-third of one percent**, were still alive as of last year.

The museum estimates that as of next year, 20,239 will remain.

The time when our entire society mobilized to fight against Fascism, and made a crucial contribution to its defeat, is passing from living memory, and it's no coincidence.



WILL QUALE PHOTO

Will Quale, who has written for the *Reporter* but is quite busy this season, **spotted this line** at the Country Creemee last week. "Warm weather is good for business," he observes.

Here's another relevant announcement:

"The Franklin County Solid Waste District is working in conjunction with the Franklin County Tech School to host a **fix-it / repair event** on Saturday, May 30 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Franklin County Tech School, 82 Industrial Boulevard in Turners Falls.

"A combination of Tech School students and instructors and other 'fixers' will help residents fix household items, sharpen knives and other equipment, and glue broken items. Fixers are being sought. If you are interested in volunteering, contact the Solid Waste District.

"This event is free and open to all residents in Franklin County. There is no registration. More information will be available in the coming weeks at franklincountywastedistrict.org or by calling (413) 772-2438."

Same day, same time, elsewhere in town, if you're more the dyeing type than the fixing type:

"On Saturday, May 30 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Elizabeth James-Perry (Aquinnah Wampanoag) will lead a free **cloth-dyeing workshop** at the Unity Park riverfront.

"Elizabeth will share her deep knowledge of coastal ecology and tribal heritage to this drop-in style workshop," reads the info-blurb we were sent. "Working with natural materials including seaweed, chlorophyll, oak gall, black walnut and logwood, participants will dye a piece of cotton fabric according to traditional Wampanoag practices. Participants will also have an opportunity to experiment with traditional fish printing and leave with their unique, handcrafted creation."

Save the date: Diemand Farm is planning a 90th anniversary party for Saturday, September 12. The third-generation farm began in 1936...

And, staying up in the eastern hills: The Wendell Meetinghouse received a grant this year to fund its **Community Arts & Conversations** series, and selected 12 individuals and groups from a larger pool of applicants as presenters.

These exhibitions, performances, and classes are already underway, and stretch into the fall. Check out the rearmost page of this edition for a full listing of the winning presenters, and the dates and content of their offerings. Cool stuff.

Pretty much at the same time as these pages were getting to the printer, the **Massachusetts Nurses Association** union members and their supporters were planning on going to Big Y in Greenfield to present the grocery company's chief operating officer – a member of the Bay-state Health board of trustees – with a community petition urging the hospital conglomerate to settle a fair contract in Greenfield.

The MNA sent the petition out to the press in advance of this action, and it was fun to scroll through the list of over 700 signatories. Readers, I spotted a number of your names.

Are you listening to the *Montague Reporter Podcast*? We just uploaded our 111th episode! And apparently, "111 signifies that things in your life are coming into divine alignment." There's a link on the top of the *MR* website to get you started. It's often a good look behind the scenes at the paper, a breaking of the fourth wall.

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

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Two More Letters to the Editors

1894-Pilled

Love, love, love the historical insert to the *Montague Reporter*. It transports me to a time not so very different from today, yet completely distinct.

All the woes and youthful hijinks seem the same as they are today. People getting drunk and annoying their neighbors. Young people on high speed sleigh rides are similar to today's youth on their high-speed e-bikes and scooters.

It's all just a wonderful glimpse back in time to discover that humans haven't changed all that much in a hundred years.

Thanks for that.

Dan Croteau
Gill

The Returns on Library Investment: MEDIC Chair Offers More Sources

In response to Mr. Seeley's letter last week regarding my previous op/ed on the economic development benefits of the new library, here's a link to a Google Doc with more than a dozen reliable sources and peer-reviewed academic studies, showing the return on investment of a new, modern, library: tinyurl.com/librarybenefits

Even at the lowest estimates, it's a great ROI.

At the bottom is a breakdown of who uses a library, showing that all economic and demographic groups use the library about equally, but differently.

There's no magic bullet, but things add up, and all contribute. The library effort doesn't stand alone as we work together to future-proof the town.

Every piece of added value counts.

Construction jobs are always temporary, but they bring an immediate influx of highly-paid workers to town who can buy breakfast or lunch, stay for beers, maybe attend something at Shea.

The Farren and Griswold sites will present a significant source of new residences to share the tax burden.

Developers, who will be investing millions of dollars of their own money, need confidence in the community to justify the risk.

We can structure the RFPs for this housing so that local developers share in the work and more money stays local.

We need to continue our track record of successful grant proposals, not put that at risk by turning down library funding. We need affordable zoning rules and to lobby for practical building codes to control construction costs. We need to encourage Accessory Dwelling Units as a way to help seniors age in place and generate needed income for them, and for the town.

This is hard, unceasing work, but we're well on our way.

Vote yes for the new library on June 24.

Robert J. Steinberg, *Chair*
Montague Economic Development & Industrial Corporation (MEDIC)

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WENDELL from page A1

driving by slow down to look. In her work, she said, she has seen government contractors stop work before they complete plantings. She called eliminating the pond and leaving a trickle of a stream "destruction of an ecosystem," and "a real shame."

Tom Robinson, who owns the property, connected to the hybrid meeting via Zoom, but kept his camera off and offered no comment.

DiDonato first suggested that Aldrich connect with highway commissioners Phil Delorey and John Bowers, but their concern is more the culvert where the stream goes under Wendell Depot Road.

She then suggested the conservation commission, and conservation agent Mary Thomas. DiDonato said no single body is really watching.

Medium Purchases

Town coordinator Kelly Tyler said treasurer Carolyn Manley believes Wendell should focus its conversation about legal procurement on contracts between \$10,000 and \$50,000.

Contracts and purchases over \$50,000 can be navigated by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) on behalf of the town, and for purchases under \$10,000 town staff can use "best practices."

Board member Adam Feltman said he supported Tyler taking the training offered, but not while she is still flooded with work. He said that at his job, even with a robust team, one project had to scrap three bids because the procurement rules were not followed precisely.

Manley said Delorey uses FRCOG routinely.

Other Business

The wood bank has reportedly used all of its grant money. Manley asked if the selectboard would be willing to allow it to use \$308.96 of unallocated conservation funds, from "who knows where." That money would not pay for a gate to block off the wood bank, but might



HEINEMANN PHOTO

Bowens Pond, which was on private land, was drained on January 13 after its dam was dismantled. Mass Audubon, the fiscal sponsor of the dam removal, views it as an act of habitat restoration, but abutters and a number of other local residents have voiced concerns that it will also destroy the habitat that has developed in the 250-plus years since the pond was first dammed.

pay for a chain to span the entryway.

Board members approved using the money, but DiDonato said her property has a chain blocking a road that can be had for the trouble of taking it off with a bolt cutter.

Manley reported that the wood bank has received 24 applications for firewood, and that the state is coming with more logs to be cut, split, and seasoned. She suggested the wood bank could earn some revenue by renting out its splitter, but then considered the liability.

The New Salem town meeting failed to pass an override budget, which would have been necessary to meet the budget requested by the Swift River school committee. The assessments the two towns pay into the shared elementary school are set at a fixed ratio.

At the May 6 meeting the Wendell selectboard approved a draft warrant for the annual town meeting, Saturday, May 30 at 10 a.m. The final warrant must be posted to the official posting location, which is now the town website, one week in advance. A brief summary can be found on this page.



Town Meeting Warrant Still a Work In Progress

By JOSH HEINEMANN

WENDELL – The 30-article draft warrant for Wendell's annual town meeting, which begins at 10 a.m. Saturday, May 30, has the usual operating articles, and three resolutions to be forwarded to the Massachusetts legislature.

The town's proposed FY'27 operating budget is \$4,150,000. That figure does not include other routine expenses. It does not include debt payments for broadband, town building construction, and Swift River School door and window repair, a total of \$191,344. New this year is the first debt payment on the new fire department tanker, \$71,904, bringing the total debt service to \$163,248.

Article 21 would use \$100,000 to lower the tax rate, and Article 22 would move \$20,000 from free cash into the snow and ice removal

fund, to cover a deficit in that account in the current fiscal year.

Article 27 would declare Wendell an "apartheid-free community," joining others in calling for an end to discriminatory laws in Israel's territories and elsewhere, and direct the selectboard to send the resolution to the Massachusetts legislature.

Article 28 would have Wendell support legislative initiatives for more equitable payments *in lieu* of taxes (PILOTs), and the creation of trust funds and regional representation for Quabbin watershed towns.

Article 29 would have Wendell support House bill H.1405 and Senate bill S.860, "an Act to establish Medicare for All."

All of this is in draft form at this time. The final warrant must be posted before 10 a.m. on Saturday, May 23, after one more regular selectboard meeting on May 20.

SCENE REPORT

The United Arc Gardening Day and Barbecue: Fun, Flowers – and Pride

By REPORTER STAFF

GREENFIELD – *Montague Reporter* correspondent and freelance photojournalist Joe R. Parzych reported from the scene of the fifth annual United Arc planting event and barbecue, which took place at the organization's Greenfield office last Friday.

Steve McConley, the official maintenance man at the United Arc, hosts the annual gardening event, which gives clients and staff plants to bring home.

"There was a lot of great food, and everyone had a good time," Parzych writes. "Everyone enjoyed some awesome fish that was caught by the river by Steve. Also, we had an early celebration birthday cake for his birthday.... The weather was good and we had hot dogs and hamburgers, and the staff were very excited."

The United Arc, a nationwide organization, has provided services in Franklin County since the 1950s. Parzych said he is currently active with the Pioneer Club advocacy group, which meets Wednesdays,



and that the Arc hosts events every Thursday night.

"Everyone was gathering and doing all kinds of things with flowers and planting," Parzych says of Friday's barbecue, "but mostly everybody got to see everyone and talk about their day at their jobs, their education, their favorite hobbies and everything... We've been working on different things, with everybody improving their lives as individuals with developmental

and intellectual disabilities."

Executive director Fred Warren was among the staff members attending the gardening event, Parzych writes.

"We talked to Steve," he continues. "Steve said he was so happy and so proud to do everything he does at the United Arc, that the staff and everyone else meant the world to him, and that his mother is looking down from heaven and smiling at what he does best at the United



JOE R. PARZYCH PHOTOS

Arc. He's a very awesome person."

Parzych adds that his own mother, Rita Gagne Parzych, a retired nurse's aide and occupational therapist, used to help out with the organization's grandparents group, and is also an awesome person. "I'm going to celebrate Mother's Day with her, and I hope all the mothers in the world have an awesome Mother's Day," he writes.

Everyone at the Arc "can't wait" for the organization's next event,

Parzych reports: the annual Flutie 5K for Autism, which takes place on the morning of Saturday, June 13 at Pratt Field in Bernardston. Readers interested in participating in this fundraiser may find a link to register at www.theunitedarc.org.

"We are very proud of the history in the making at the United Arc," Parzych writes. "We change lives every day, and we make a difference... And [there's] lots of hugs, love, and caring."

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ERVING from page A1

approved. The expense will not require a debt exclusion vote as it remains under the levy limit.

A museum committee was formed to oversee the Pearl B. Care Museum. The committee is already fully staffed, with five members.

Erving, it seems, has been undercharging for cemetery lots. The current price of \$25 per lot will not be maintained after the town expands its cemetery, which was approved at Wednesday's meeting at a projected cost of \$1 million.

Cemetery commissioners Laura Bezio and Holly Fitzpatrick were on hand, and explained that some other towns in the area have questioned Erving's rates, and were relieved to hear they would be coming up to "market rates" in the near future.

The new cemetery will have room for 100 traditional burial lots, and areas designated for cremated

remains and green burials.

The selectboard also held a brief meeting – about 17 minutes long – before the town meeting began.

Highway superintendent Glenn McCrory notified the board that he has observed that another culvert is failing, and advised that it may be an expensive fix. The culvert is long – it runs along Kavanaugh Street and then under Route 2 and Moore Street before draining at Fire Station 2 – and McCrory said it looks like at least 80 feet of it will need replacement. Outside vendors will also be required to deal with asbestos.

Two new police officers, Officer Alexander Meisner and Officer Joe Doescher, were sworn in.

Mike Jackson provided additional writing. Thanks to Bernardston-Northfield Community Television for the live broadcast on this newspaper's publication night.



MORE NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Sticker Shock: Sole Bid for Modular Office Comes In at Double the Budget

By **KATIE NOLAN**

Erving issued a request for proposals in January for a modular office building for the town's public works departments. Only one proposal was received – with a price tag of \$318,178, double the \$154,955 appropriated.

At Monday's selectboard meeting, on the recommendation of town administrator Bryan Smith, the two board members present, James Loynd and William Bem-bury, voted to reject the proposal and "fail" the procurement.

"We need to explore a different solution," Smith concluded.

Because voters approved changing the town treasurer position from elected to appointed at the May 4 town election, the board reviewed the job description, as well as the community profile that will go out with the advertisement. Loynd and Bem-bury discussed the number of hours per week the position should be posted at, and decided on 25 to 30 hours per week. They planned to review the description once more before advertising for a treasurer.

Gunn Street property owner Robert Niedzwiedz asked the board to focus on reducing speeding on Gunn and other nearby streets, possibly by reducing the speed limit from 25 to 20 m.p.h., installing an electronic speed monitor, and seeking out grants funding pedestrian safety measures.

Loynd, Bem-bury, and Smith all assured Niedzwiedz that the board is aware of the speeding problem in the area. Loynd told him the town has tried traffic-calming measures, selective enforcement, and target-

ed patrols in the area. He added that for the portion of Route 63 that passes through the area, any safety measures would need to be coordinated with the state Department of Transportation.

According to Smith, it might be possible to install signage or other traffic-calming equipment on the Lester Street shoulder.

Loynd cautioned, "It won't be solved tonight," and said the board would continue working to reduce speeding in the area.

Unwanted Items

The board held a "first reading" of surplus equipment requests from the senior center, Erving Elementary School (EES), and the library. Three readings are required before a vote.

The carport at the senior center is located in the designated van-accessible parking spot, and must be removed. It is also larger than needed. The senior center plans to give the structure to the highway department for large equipment storage.

EES is proposing to discard a cafeteria proofer, a leaf blower, a tractor mower deck, a weed whacker, a wheelbarrow, a snow blower, and a tractor snow blower, all of which are damaged and have already been replaced.

The temporary "reading circle" sculptures at the library – three wooden benches and a tree with an eagle and a bear – have been in place beyond their intended October 2024 removal date, and need maintenance. According to Smith, the sculptures are "popular parts of the library." EES will take selected elements of the sculpture, and the remainder will be scrapped.

Designed For Dementia

The board also held first readings of town policies concerning flexibility in vacation leave for new hires; overtime pay for call firefighters who are full-time town employees; and "age-and-dementia-friendly" streets, parks, and outdoor public spaces.

The age-and-dementia-friendly infrastructure policy was the most discussed of the three. Smith explained that it would "inform decision-making bodies" to "consider the range of abilities" as they plan improvements.

"My only concern is what effect the policy would have on the cost of projects," Bem-bury commented. He said he felt the policy, as written, was vague. "We need a lot more in-depth conversation about it," he said.

Loynd agreed that more accessible infrastructure could increase costs, but said that "planning in advance prevents change orders later."

Other Business

Loynd announced that the Clean Sweep bulky waste recycling collection will be held this Saturday, May 16 at the Erving highway garage, Mohawk Trail regional high school, and the Whately transfer station, and that the town's Memorial Day celebration will be held Monday, May 25, starting at 10 a.m. at Fire Station 1 and continuing at the veterans' memorial in Erving'side.

The board decided not to schedule a special town meeting for June, as it seemed as if the only items ready to go on a warrant were a town property parking bylaw and a bylaw concerning the senior center revolving fund.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Help Plant Trees at Millers Meadow!

GREENFIELD – Millers Meadow is an essential piece of Greenfield's vision for open space, recreation, and climate resilience.

Since its inception in 2024, this "people-powered" initiative has seen more than 150 volunteers transform the former Wedgewood Gardens trailer park on Colrain Street into a thriving, biodiverse floodplain. Last year, we planted 650 trees and shrubs at the meadow. This year we hope to reach a goal of 1,100 trees planted.

No prior experience is necessary to participate; the city will provide on-site training, tools, and refreshments. Volunteers are encouraged to bring their own gloves and a water bottle.

Volunteer days are three Saturdays, May 16 and 30 and June 6, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. (Rain dates are the following Sundays.)

To sign up, contact Peter Wackernagel at p.wackernagel@gmail.com, or simply arrive at Millers Meadow on the scheduled dates.

Montague Community Television News

How To Find MCTV Videos Online

By **HANNAH BROOKMAN**

TURNERS FALLS – If you have been trying to find a video on MCTV but are having trouble, here is a handy guide!

Our Vimeo Page is easily found linked from our website, MontagueTV.org, by clicking the "Videos" tab. There you will also find folders directing you to our recorded Montague selectboard meetings, as well as our Gill selectboard meetings, in which you will find both the most recent meetings and all of our previous recordings.

If there is a video you would like to search for, you need to find the small black magnifying glass below the

title "Montague Community Television's Videos," and click there. If you try to search for an MCTV video in the search bar at the top of the screen, you will instead search all of Vimeo, and will have a harder time finding what you are looking for.

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

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

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FREE REGIONAL REPAIR EVENT
 Hosted by the Franklin County Solid Waste District and the Franklin County Tech School
Saturday, May 30 - 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
 Tech School, 82 Industrial Blvd. Turners Falls
 Students, instructors, and local fixers will be on hand. Every effort will be made to repair your item(s). Antiques and heirlooms cannot be fixed at this event.
BRING:
 • Lamps and household electrical items
 • Items needing to be glued
 • Knife sharpening (limit 3 per household)
 • Garden tool sharpening (limit 2 per household)
 • Mending (sewing); darning; wool repair
 • Lawn mower blades for sharpening (drop-off)
 • Chainsaw chains for sharpening (drop-off)
 • Jewelry (gluing and restringing beads)
 • Wooden furniture repair
ALSO!
 • Blood pressure checks
 • Sadie's Bikes will offer repairs that do not require parts. For example, adjust brakes, oil chain, etc. They will also provide instruction on repairs.
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**LEVERETT BOARD OF HEALTH
NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING**

The Board of Health will hold a public meeting June 1, 2026, at 7:30 PM at the Leverett Town Hall, 9 Montague Road, Leverett, MA to act on a request for variances under Chapter 218 of Leverett Code provisions 218-4 and 218-9. The applicant/owner is the Friends of North Leverett Sawmill, Inc. 77 Jackson Hill Road, Leverett, MA 01054 for work (construction of a new onsite sewage disposal system) at 63 North Leverett Road. Copies of the request, exhibits and plans can be obtained by contacting Foresight Land Services, Inc. 413-499-1560.

**MONTAGUE ZBA
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

Notice is hereby given that the Montague Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing on **Wednesday, May 20th, 2026 VIA ZOOM** and **IN PERSON** at the Montague Town Hall upstairs conference room, One Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA to review a Special Permit Request from **Robert Wasielewski** for a front setback reduction from the required 15 ft to 8 ft, in order to construct a deck under Sections 5.5.1 and 5.5.3(b) and 9.2 of the Zoning Bylaws located at **8 Unity Street (Parcel: 07-0-017), 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.

Joshua Lively, Chairman
Montague Zoning Board of Appeals

**PUBLIC HEARING – TOWN OF MONTAGUE
FY2024 CDBG Program Updates**

The Town of Montague will hold a public hearing on Monday, June 1, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. during the Montague Selectboard Meeting. The meeting will be held in person in the Selectboard Meeting Room at 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA, and via ZOOM (please check the Town's website (<https://montague-ma.gov/g/46/Selectboard>) for a link to log in). The purpose of this meeting is to update the public on the status of the Town's FY 2024 Massachusetts Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) programs. Grant programs being administered by the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) on behalf of the Town of Montague include 7 units of Housing Rehabilitation, Parking Lot Re-Paving Projects, and 4 Social Service Agency Programs. The Town may also discuss the re-allocation of uncommitted Parking Lot Re-Paving Project funds toward a CDBG-eligible project.

The town of Montague encourages residents to attend the meeting, where any person or organization wishing to be heard will be afforded the opportunity. A representative from the HRA will be on hand to discuss program activity and answer questions.

The Town will make reasonable accommodation for any member of the community with accessibility or language needs with seven days prior written notice to the Selectboard's office. Accommodations will be made for handicapped and non-English speaking residents. Additionally, interpreters will be available as necessary (with advanced notice) to accommodate hearing impaired and non-English speaking residents.

If residents are unable to be present at the Public Hearing written comments can be made to Christopher Nolan-Zeller, Assistant Town Administrator, Montague Town Hall, 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA 01376.

The Town of Montague is an equal opportunity provider.

SIGN from page A1

showed a wide range of messages, not only about free meals at the church but also announcements from the Gill-Montague senior center, the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, and the Gill-Montague school district. He argued that it would be unreasonable to require that each of these must be posted for 60 seconds, and that therefore the sign's cycling time was reduced to every 15 seconds.

In Aksamit's written appeal, he had indicated that "if each item needs to remain one minute, that goes against the purpose of the sign. It would have been a waste of money. Sign + installation \$25,000+."

At Wednesday's meeting Aksamit explained that he had been "in dialogue" with the church's neighbors, and as a consequence had "turned down the brightness" starting at 8 p.m. each night rather than at 11 p.m., as the agreement with the ZBA had allowed. According to a timeline in his appeal, the sign had originally shown videos, but has displayed "static images only" since April 2025.

His comments were seconded by Our Lady of Peace communications director Charlene Currie, who is in charge of the sign's operation. "We've tried to adjust so that we could be good neighbors," she told the board.

During the extensive public comment time allowed by ZBA chair Josh Lively, several supporters of the sign asked why the building inspector and the board had supported it in December 2024, but now said it violated the zoning bylaws.

"We were given the parameters of the sign," said member Richard Ruth, "and the violation is outside the parameters."

Willie Walker, who lives across the street from the church and had lodged one of the complaints that led to Ketchen's finding of a violation, said the 15-second changes in the sign's screen coincided with the definition of the word "flash" given in the zoning bylaws.

He went on to say that when it is cloudy outside, when the light on the church's sign turns green, "our living room turns green."

Walker's partner, Stephanie Stroud, said that on Valentine's Day she had heard their young daughter



MIKE JACKSON PHOTO

Montague's bylaws define a "flash" as "any change in lighting intensity or messaging by an illuminated device that is less than one minute," and state that "No sign shall flash..." The church was granted a variance before installing the sign, but ZBA members said on Wednesday that its operation exceeds what was discussed.

say "Heart, heart!" after an image that included a heart symbol was broadcast into their home.

Another resident, who said he lives "very close" to the church and gave his name as Brendan, said that while he sympathized with his neighbors' concerns, the zoning bylaws needed to be more specific, with "clear and concise definitions" on the issue of brightness. Allowing residents to define the term, he said, would lead to subjective enforcement.

"Suppose we had someone who said they have a light sensitivity," he asked. "So, 'I want them shut down completely.' Well, that doesn't seem fair."

According to the written appeal, the sign's daytime brightness was originally set to 7,000 to 10,000 lumens, but has since been reduced to a maximum of 4480 lumens. After 8 p.m., it states, the maximum is now at 420 lumens.

A number of residents said they believed the sign is brighter than

those levels, which led to a conversation about the sign's technical operation. ZBA member Bob Obear suggested that its light sensor, which is used to regulate output, might be malfunctioning.

After the public comment period ended, Ruth made a motion to reject Aksamit's appeal and endorse the decision of the building inspector that the church had violated the bylaws and the 2024 variance.

A good deal of discussion followed, during which the members agreed on a desire to keep the hearing "open" until early June, and to encourage the parties to attempt to reach a compromise solution in the coming weeks. The question also arose whether to allow the screen to remain on in the interim, and if so, with what conditions.

In the end the board voted unanimously to support Ketchen's finding, reject Askamit's appeal, continue the hearing on June 3, and require that the sign be shut off until that date.



ELECTION from page A1

Fifth, Central, and Unity streets and Hillside Avenue, votes at the Gill-Montague senior center. The other four precincts all vote at Franklin County Technical School.

There are two competitive races on Tuesday's ballot: four names for three seats on the public library trustees, and two for a spot opening up on the selectboard, Nathanael Card Schiffbauer (Nate Card) of downtown Turners Falls and John Snyder of Chestnut Hill.

Both towns also face primary elections, and likely a school regionalization question, on September 1; a vote to approve a new county tech school on October 6, which will entail a debt exclusion; and national elections on November 3.

Montague, however, faces a fifth election this year, a Wednesday, June 24 debt exclusion for a new downtown library. Voter registration for that election is open until June 13.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL-MONTAGUE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

A Nine-Month 'Test'

By **MIKE JACKSON**

GILL-MONTAGUE – The regional school committee met for an hour on Tuesday.

Justin Mickiewicz, hired midyear as principal at Gill Elementary, came seeking retroactive approval for the sixth-grade Nature's Classroom trip last week to Maine. "I thought this had already been presented to you," he apologized. It was approved 9-0.

Montague member Heather Katsoulis said it was "inequitable" that Sheffield Elementary sixth-graders do not have the same opportunity, and this year the conversation went further than usual, up to the idea of approaching "generous civic groups" before planning starts in September.

Chair Jane Oakes announced that on May 1 the district entered a "270-day readiness test" for the planned

elementary school consolidation project. The town of Montague, which owns Sheffield and Hillcrest, must appoint a building committee, and town meeting must agree to fund a feasibility study, before the Massachusetts School Building Authority moves it to the next phase.

Business manager Joanne Blier said that if confirmed, the construction timeline is roughly five years. Carol Jacobs said it had taken eight in a district she had worked in.

It was Montague member Steve Ellis's final meeting, with elections on May 18 and 19 and the committee's next meeting on May 26.

"I've publicly said I'm willing to work on a related committee that could be in the game for several years," he pointed out.

The last day of school is June 17 for students, and June 18 for staff.

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MONTAGUE from page A1

out because “the chances of impacting the environment” through the structures’ potential collapse into the Connecticut River would be substantial, and cleanup would be very costly.

The second option would involve abatement of existing building materials, demolishing buildings, disposing of the debris, and then filling in the site with materials primarily trucked in from outside. This would produce a clean site, but would require importing a large amount of fill to even the grade from the power canal down to the Connecticut River. The cost of this option was pegged at \$6.2 million.

The third option, which Kirton recommended, would also abate and demolish the buildings in the complex, but crushed bricks from the structures would be used as fill, as allowed under a special state permit known as a Beneficial Use Determination. Reusing these materials would reduce the estimated cost to \$4.6 million.

There was no discussion of the separate cost of stabilizing “Building 9,” a small hydroelectric plant within the complex owned by a company named Eagle Creek which must remain standing. The projected cost of shoring up the power plant, required under a deed sold by International Paper in 2001, has been pegged at nearly \$10 million. “That’s not part of the demolition, but it’s certainly part of our project,” said Kirton.

The \$4.9 million EPA grant, part of a bipartisan infrastructure bill passed during the Biden administration, is only one source of funding for the Strathmore demolition. There is also a \$5 million earmark, sponsored by former state representative Steve Kulik, which has been lingering unspent since 2018 and is being administered by the state Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Public libraries trustee Will Quale asked whether, given the timing of the mill’s demolition and the possible construction of a new library in Turners Falls, there might be “a chance to utilize some of the bricks from the Strathmore, as it’s demolished, as decorative elements in the façade of the new library building.”

Kirton said he did not know if he was “the right one to speak to that,” but that Tighe & Bond is “going through [the] Mass. Historical Commission for this project... and there is a component of trying to reuse some of the brick, because we’re going to be doing a new brick façade around Building 9.”

Selectboard chair Matt Lord

urged Quale to contact assistant town administrator Chris Nolan-Zeller about the idea.

Montague historical commission chair Janel Nockleby said she was glad to hear about the reuse of bricks for Building 9, but that her commission had not been given an update on the project as promised. She said the commissioners are interested in the possibility of preserving foundations from the mill buildings, “leaving a footprint behind of the industrial past.”

“We definitely want to connect at some point soon regarding that,” said Nolan-Zeller, adding that the town has “spent a good deal of time with Tighe & Bond talking about those historical mitigation measures.”

The board did not take any votes on the matter. Nolan-Zeller said the period for public comment on the brownfields cleanup ends on May 30. Kirton added that because the town is already drawing from the EPA grant, the analysis will be submitted to the agency as presented after that deadline.

Kirton added that a wetlands permit has been requested from the conservation commission, and that the firm hopes to prepare the project for bidding in late summer.

Developer Hookups

Grant-related discussion continued onto the topic of another large, currently town-owned property: the former Farren Hospital site in Montague City.

Nolan-Zeller said the town is considering applying for aid in funding infrastructure needed to redevelop the site, and timing it to coincide with a request for proposals (RFP) to find one or more developers. Consultants who have been assisting the town, he said, recommend that Montague apply for \$300,000 to \$500,000 from the state Housing Works Infrastructure Program to cover the design, engineering, and permitting of a roadway and utilities, as well as extending and reorienting the Canalside Rail Trail bike path.

Nolan-Zeller said the RFP for developers could “run parallel” to the grant application this summer, in order to “help us avoid a situation where we design infrastructure, then find out it isn’t marketable or feasible or attractive to developers for some reason we did not anticipate.”

The assistant administrator presented a broader strategy for applying for grants through the state’s “Community One Stop for Growth” portal, which combines 12 municipal funding programs under a single application.

In addition to the grants for the

Farren infrastructure design, he said, the town is considering seeking funding to design “wayfinding signage” in downtown Turners Falls, and to construct an accessibility ramp on 102-112 Avenue A.

The selectboard voted to authorize Nolan-Zeller and “associated town hall staff” to apply for these grants through the portal.

Spaces Left Open

Town planner Maureen Pollock requested the selectboard’s support of the town’s newly updated Open Space and Recreation Plan. The 152-page plan, which will guide the town for the next decade, includes an analysis of local demographics, an “environmental inventory,” and an inventory of open space and recreation land. The final chapters include an analysis of the town’s needs and goals and a 10-year action plan, and are followed by a 45-page appendix.

Pollock did not tackle this formidable document in her 15 minutes on the agenda, but instead pointed to the various forms of “public input” that had contributed to drafting the plan. These included a focus group with “landowners and stewards,” another about “access and equity,” and a third with local officials, as well as a public survey.

Turners Falls resident Betty Tegel commented that she would like to see more residents and people with disabilities involved in the process, and wondered if the document changes the town’s 2018 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan.

Pollock said the open space plan would not change the ADA plan, but “supports the mission of making public spaces universally designed and accessible for everyone.”

Town administrator Walter Ramsey reminded the board that open space plans have helped the town qualify in the past for grants, such as for the Unity Skate Park and the Montague Center playground.

The board voted to endorse the plan, which will be submitted to state agencies.

Habitat and Schooling

The board voted to approve a fourth extension of a purchase-and-sale agreement with Pioneer Valley Habitat For Humanity, until December 15, for the municipal parking lot on First Street.

The original agreement in 2023 for the property, on which Habitat seeks to construct six affordable homes, was delayed after hazardous fill was discovered under the lot. That material has now been removed with the EPA’s assistance.

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Ramsey discussed the application to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) for a potential consolidation of the Hillcrest and Sheffield elementary schools. The proposal would close Hillcrest, which currently houses pre-kindergarten to the first grade, and build an addition on Sheffield, which is now grades 2 through 5. Montague, which owns both buildings, is coordinating with the Gill-Montague school district on the proposal.

MSBA, which provides matching funds for school construction projects, has invited the town and district into a 270-day “eligibility phase” as of May 1. If a building committee appointed by the selectboard can satisfy seven benchmarks, the project will advance to the agency’s “feasibility phase.”

Ramsey told the board it needs to endorse the process and appoint an 11-member committee that includes town and school officials, residents, and a teacher.

Montague Center resident and town meeting member Ariel Elan said she felt joining the process was “premature,” due to the declining school-age population and uncertainty about housing projects, such as the one at the former Farren site, and about a school regionalization proposal which goes to a vote this fall.

Board members said they had similar concerns, but in the end unanimously endorsed moving forward with the process and establishing a building committee, though they did not yet appoint its members.

Other Business

Acting as the personnel board, the board voted to update the personnel

policies manual, having been granted broad authority to do so by town meeting this month, and amended police chief Jason Haskins’s contract to clarify the number of personal and sick days he is entitled to, as well as his stipend for overseeing the department’s information technology until a private firm takes it on.

The board unanimously approved revised wording of the June 24 ballot question which asks if a majority of voters endorse borrowing to build a new central library downtown. Lord read the question aloud from the election warrant:

“Shall the Town of Montague be allowed to exempt from the provisions of proposition two and one-half, so-called, the amounts required to pay for the bond issued to fund the assessment, planning, feasibility and/or design, permitting, constructing, equipping, and furnishing a new main library to be located at 38 Avenue A in Turners Falls, and for all other costs incidental and related thereto.”

Signs for and against the new library have been sprouting up around town.

Under “topics not anticipated,” Ramsey announced that the Turners Falls water department will be working on Third Street in Turners Falls from Kostanski Funeral Home down to L Street, causing that section of the street to be closed next Monday and Tuesday, May 18 and 19. Traffic will be rerouted down First Street.

The board retired into an executive session to discuss its contract negotiating strategy with non-union personnel, to wit, Ramsey. Its next meeting will be held May 18.



MIKE JACKSON PHOTO

The nonprofit that owned the Farren Care Center — formerly the Farren Hospital — in Montague City transferred its residents to Holyoke in 2021, demolished the building in 2023, and gave the land as a gift to the inhabitants of Montague in 2024. The town’s goal is to find a developer willing to build dense housing on the lot (pictured above), but to sweeten the deal, it plans to first improve its access and utility bookups.

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SPORTS from page B1

On Monday, the team's perfect record was torn asunder by a 5-0 loss to the Frontier Red Hawks. Before the match began, Turners celebrated Senior Night. I stayed for the ceremony before heading to the Tech school. Coach Touloumtzis put a lot of thought and effort into the celebration – along with the usual snacks and balloons, Coach T. came prepared with laminated cards listing each senior's accomplishments.

Unfortunately for Blue, the team was swept by Frontier. Kolodziej split the first two sets 4-6, 6-2, but in the second he began to limp. He was in obvious pain, but instead of forfeiting, the teams agreed to play a best-of-10 third set. He did the best he could, but dropped the third set 10-6 before limping off the court.

Pareja and LaValley lost on the other singles courts, and Martin and Lapinski and Morales and Glennon dropped first and second doubles.

On Tuesday Turners hosted Hampden Charter School of Science, the first dustup in a home *quadruple* header. Kolodziej, nursing his injury, watched from the sidelines. This meant Pareja had to assume first singles duty, and LaValley took on Hamden's second player. To even the slate, Hamden had to forfeit third singles.

Pareja stepped up, beating the Science's best player 6-1, 6-1. After the victory, he came over to talk. He spoke about his serves and returns, and then said, "I'm undefeated in first singles!"

I asked how many times he played first singles. He smirked and said, "Just today."

Martin and Lapinski won a marathon first doubles match 7-6 (8-6), 6-1, and Blanchard's third singles win by forfeit gave Blue three points. LaValley dropped his match to give Hamden one point. The last match going was second doubles.

The HCSS van was warming up, most of the equipment was stowed, and the girls were beginning to take the courts, but Morales and Glennon were still playing. With the score tied 1-6, 7-6 (8-6) and the win already in the books, the coaches decided to play a 10-point tiebreaker. The duos battled on and on, with the Scientists finally taking the match 10-7.

Girls' Tennis

TFHS 4 – Mohawk 1

Northampton 3 – TFHS 2

On Thursday, after the boys beat Central, the girls took to the courts. The match, originally postponed but then back on, was a late addition to the docket, and I decided to stay in town instead of traveling to catch the Tech-Greenfield softball game.

First singles ace Olivia Wolbach made quick work of her opponent 6-1, 6-2, but in second singles, Gianna Marigliano was in the fight of her life. She dropped the first set 3-6, tied it up by winning the second 6-3, and then dug deep to win the third 10-5.

Makayla Craig and Destiny Rodriguez won first doubles 6-0, 6-3, and Layla Hammond and Olivia Cody the second doubles 6-2, 6-4. Mohawk's sole win came against Kenzie Flaxington in third singles.

In Tuesday's second tennis battle, Wolbach and Flaxington won first and third singles respectively, while Marigliano lost in second, and the duos of Rodriguez and Jesi Berry and Cody and Viviana Rosa dropped first and second doubles.

Softball

Greenfield 2 – FCTS 1

Hopkins 6 – TFHS 5

FCTS 10 – TFHS 6

Later on Thursday, Franklin Tech and Turners both lost their games by one run scored in the seventh inning. Because I was unable to attend the Tech-Greenfield game, I listened to it on Bear.

Tech drew first blood in the third inning. Amelia Rider reached first on a walk, proceeded to steal second, and was batted in by Lindsey Taylor. In the bottom of the third, Green scored on a bases-loaded walk. The score would remain knotted at 1-1 until the bottom of the seventh, when Green hit a walk-off home run.

An hour later, the Turners Falls-Hopkins game kicked off. It was a brisk 57 degrees and windy when the game began, and after the sun went down the temperature dropped 10 degrees.

In the bottom of the first, Autumn Thornton reached on an error and was relieved by courtesy runner Myaa Reed. Janelle Massey then belted the ball over the fence, giving Blue a 2-0 edge.

Over the next two innings, Turners made some wonderful plays. A running catch by Ivy Lopez in the second inning and a double play in the third kept the shutout going. In the home third, Madisyn Dietz got a base hit and Thornton hit a double, advancing Dietz to third and placing Reed on second. Madison Haight hit a sacrifice to send Dietz home, and then Reed stole third. Next, Massey hit an RBI sac to plate Reed and give Blue a 4-0 edge.

Turners increased their lead in the fifth. Dietz got on base on an error, she stole second and after a pop out, Haight hit a line drive sending Dietz home. Then Massey beat the throw to first while Haight took third. Massey then stole second giving Turners two runners in scoring position but two quick strikeouts ended the threat so going into the sixth, Blue was ahead 5-0.

In the sixth, Hopkins made some timely hits and took advantage of Thunder errors to tie it up.

In the top of the seventh, a one-out walk put a runner on first, and the next batter hit a grounder. The ball was thrown to second for the second out, leaving a runner at first. The next two batters hit safely, giving Hopkins the lead. A batter was then hit by a pitch, loading the bases but a pop out to the short-

stop ended the side with Turners down by a point.

Dietz, the leadoff batter in the home seventh, hit a ground ball and barely beat the throw to first, then took second with a sliding steal. After a pop-out, Dietz took third on a fielders' choice, giving Turners two outs and a runner at third. Unfortunately for the home crowd, after an intentional walk, a high pop to second ended the game.

As I was packing up I noticed that some of the girls seemed to be taking the loss pretty hard. I understand the pressure they feel, but it's okay to lose, and it's okay to make mistakes as long as you learn from them. And in the long run, it doesn't really matter that much at all – it's only a game.

On Tuesday, the Eagles came to Turners Falls High for a baseball-softball double-header.

They started strong: leadoff batter Taylor cracked the ball to the fence for a standup double; Brayleigh Burgh followed up with a single, Sandra Johnson was walked to load the bases, and Charley Knight batted in two runs.

Turners got the next two runners out, but an E4 on a strikeout reloaded the bases, and then Alison George was hit by a pitch, sending another run home. After a shot to third ended the inning, Turners came up to bat trailing 3-0.

After two high pop-outs, Haight got a base hit and Massey scored her with a long triple. Lopez walked, putting runners on the corners, and then stole second base. Abbey Moffett batted Massey and Lopez both in to tie it up.

In the second inning, Taylor broke the tie with a booming home run, but Turners caught back up on an error and a Haight RBI. They then took a two-run lead in the third, with Lopez scoring off a Kaiya Adams RBI and Reed scoring on a wild pitch.

Tech made it a one-run game in the fourth with an RBI double by Knight, and in the home fourth, Dietz reached on a bunt but a double play and a K ended the inning. It would be the last hit by the Thunder.

That's when two faculty members raced away. While the baseball game was still raging, the sprinklers on the field had activated. This was a pretty funny sight, but most of the softball fans took little notice, keeping their concentration on the one-run game.

In the fifth, Tech again loaded



Franklin Tech's Levi Clark books it for first as he drives in a run against the Thunder on Senior Night at Turners Falls High School. As in the night's softball matchup, the Eagles soared ahead, 14 to 4.

the bases, setting the table for Taylor to clock a long triple – and then score on a wild pitch. They added a final run in the sixth to take the game 10-6.

The crosstown win improves the Eagles' record to 5-11, while the Thunder slipped to 6-10.

Baseball

FCTS 2 – Greenfield 1

TFHS 5 – Mahar 0

FCTS 14 – TFHS 4

It was still pretty chilly at Monday's Tech-Greenfield game, and folks were joking about a year without spring. A lot of Greenfield fans were in attendance, but the Eagle supporters still outnumbered them.

In the first, Green batters smacked the ball soundly. Their first hit was a triple to the fence, and the next three batters all hit the ball deep into the outfield. They could only put one run in the books, though, because Tech made three catches at the warning track to retire the side.

In the bottom of the first, a long hit and an error put Hunter Donahue on third base and he was batted home by George Gutierrez, Jr., on a sacrifice to tie it up.

And that was it – Greenfield kept hitting balls deep into the outfield, but the Tech defense made fantastic catches. On the other side of the diamond, the Green Wave racked up strikeouts, and neither team could break the tie. Green got runners to second and third in the fifth, but relief pitcher Joe Bobala ended the threat; a bunt in the sixth put a Green runner on base but he was picked off.

In the bottom of the sixth, Donahue led off with a long double. Nicholas Prasol just beat the throw, putting runners at the corners. Then Gutierrez hit another sac RBI, and Tech had the lead. The first two Greenfield batters in the seventh reached base, and a bunt out advanced them to second and third, but a strikeout and a catch deep in left handed the Eagles the one-run win.

That same night, Turners blanked the Mahar Senators in Orange. The Thunder scored three runs in the first inning and one each in the sixth and seventh, taking the game 5-zip. Kainen Stevens and Ethan Eichorn had RBI doubles while Porter Dubow, Julian Kaiser, and Curtis Kretchmar also batted in runs. On the mound, Kaiser finished with 11 strikeouts, two

walks, and two hits.

On Tuesday, the Tech Boys crossed Millers Falls Road to spoil the Thunder's Senior Night.

In the first inning, Donahue reached on an error. He attempted to make it to second but was caught in a pickle. This broke the tension because it seemed that every Turners player positioned themselves between first and second. The ball was thrown back and forth until he was finally tagged out.

Jackson Cogswell led off the home first with a ground ball base hit. Stevens hit safely, sending him to third, and then Dubow hit into a fielders' choice, putting Stevens on second. A double error then sent both runners home.

In the second, though, everything fell apart for the Thunder. Cody Yetter and Wayde Bardwell were both walked, and then a wild pitch sent them to second and third, and Levi Clark batted them in, tying it up. Aiden Winn was walked and Donahue was hit by a pitch, loading the bases, and then a wild pitch put Franklin ahead 3-2 and advanced the runners.

That's when Turners switched pitchers, but after error, a long double, another walk, and two bad bounces, Tech's lead increased to 8-2 after two complete.

By this time the softball crowd was getting loud, and I walked to the Mullins diamond as the seniors were getting introduced. Both teams scored two runs in the third, but the Eagles added three more in the fourth and one in the sixth to take the game 14-4.

The win improves Tech's record to 11-5, while the Thunder fall to 4-12.

Track & Field

On Monday, track and field athletes from Franklin Tech competed in the MVADA Small Schools Championship at Blue Hills Technical.

Samuel Bodenstein, Wyatt Whitman, William Hutchinson, William Thomas, Carson Couture, Maxon Brunette, Justin Lent, Dustin Reade, Liam Bliss, Dillon Laffond, and Jackson Morey all cracked the top 20 for their individual boys' events.

In the girls' meet, Abby Lenois, Laura Fuess, Sofia Sinclair, Izzy Thompson, Izzy Allen, Molly Howe, Mara Gray, Cici Laflamme, Tristan Bliss, Shelby Senn and Anya Livingstone all finished in the top 20.



Turners Falls's Madison Haight (left) is safe at first, and would soon score the Thunder's first run as they hosted the Franklin Tech Eagles on Tuesday. The Eagles came out on top in the end, though, winning 10 to 6.

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MAGGIE SADOWAY PHOTO

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OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER

MAY 14, 2026

Above: By 8:30 a.m. on Friday morning, May 1, two teams in watercraft and another on the Turners Falls shore had put all 52 orange and white safety buoys in place.

RECIPES

CHIVES AND SCALLIONS: NATURE'S MORE REASONABLE ONIONS



HOPLEY PHOTO

By **CLAIRE HOPLEY**

LEVERETT – Poking around the yard after the snow retreats in March, I always find emerald chives punching their way through the brown leaf litter. They're the first herb to reappear. Not only do they show up early, they hang on to the bitter end when frost shuts them down.

That qualifies chives for a spot in any yard or in a plant pot. Like most herbs, they're easy to grow.

A member of the onion family, chives have their characteristic flavor, though way more mildly than onions themselves. But that onion-y hint adds a savory vibe to scrambled eggs and omelets, and to any dish that includes cheese. Chives are also perfect with fish, because their flavor doesn't overpower it. They make a pretty garnish scattered on soups, deviled eggs, and sliced vegetables.

Though recipes generally call for chopped chives, chopping can squish their cylindrical stems. Snipping them with scissors is easier, and the result more attractive.

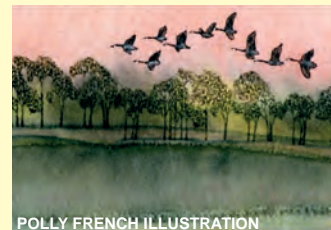
Use snipped chives to make chive butter. Simply mix two tablespoons of snipped chives into a stick of room-temperature butter. Shape it into a log or block and keep it in the fridge or freezer. Cut a bit off when you need it for garnishing steak or vegetables.

The mildly-flavored petals of the mauve pom-pom blossoms that bloom in May are lovely garnishes, too. Simply pull them off the head and scatter. For chive-blossom vinegar, pack as many blossoms as possible into a small clean jar and fill it up with clear vinegar. Leave it in a sunny window for a few days

see **RECIPES** page B5

Chives are easy to grow and last all season.

What, though, can be done with them? Here are some recipes using chives and their less tactful cousin, scallions.



POLLY FRENCH ILLUSTRATION

WEST ALONG THE RIVER

WILL THE RIVER TESTIFY?

By **DAVID BRULE**

PESKEOMPSKUT – May mornings dawn these days under dark skies, then sometimes bright sunshine. It depends, it's May.

The broad Connecticut River in this place, dammed up at the falls of Peskeompskut, thunders no more. The days of the raging cataract here have passed into memory. Springtime tree swallows skim the placid surface of the imprisoned and deafened mighty river.

A great fish breaks the mirrored surface. Could it be one of our emblematic prehistoric sturgeon? We can hope so.

The musket fire of May 19, 1676 has long fallen silent, as have the falls whose mighty roaring lasted 15,000 years.

The dam has drawn a line through the river; the bridge spans the dam overhead. The two structures effectively cancel the falls, striking from the riverscape this joyous place that welcomed Indigenous nations for 10,000 years, and effectively muffling the cries of those 300 who died on this spot.

There now are deep silences after the passing of their torment.

Here, where the fisher stood and speared his prey; Thanked the Great Spirit for this paradise,

Shall stretch the broad highways from shore to shore, And din of traffic and its roar shall drown The thunder of the falling flood below.

Josiah D. Canning, a Gill poet, delivered these lines in 1876 at exercises commemorating the 200th anniversary of the "Falls Fight."

More recently Martin Espada, the esteemed professor and acclaimed poet, writes

"The River Will Not Testify" – and indeed, how could it?

The wide river is tamed and held back. Is there still anger in those placid depths behind the dam? Or have we turned a page and forgotten?

Three hundred and fifty years ago, in May 1676, more than 300 Indigenous people were camped on this traditional fishing site at the head of the falls.

They hoped to find some refuge from the devastation of the war that had driven them here, the war we nowadays call King Philip's War, or Metacomet's Resistance of 1675-76. We don't know what they called it.

What they did know was that they needed to get back to a place of sanctuary and respite from a relentless invasion that was driving them from their homes, destroying see **WEST ALONG** page B2

Wordly Matters

By **CHARLOTTE MURTISHAW**

FRANKLIN COUNTY – Readers, celebrate! Forecasts predict this week rounding out with some steady precipitation: joyously dig out your rubber boots and slickers. Glasses-wearers, pack a good polishing-cloth.

Rainy days invigorate mosses, mushrooms, and frogs, to name a few, and they should invigorate you, too. Thanks be to my friend Jess, who kindly pointed out that my blustering argument, re: an open-minded approach to inclement weather, provided the right gear (yes, it's a privilege, etc.), is part of a Montessori education. I might have known this myself if my older sister hadn't gotten herself gently recommended out of continuing Montessori preschool.

Ignore the small-talk bores peering anxiously out the window and opining as to whether a day is "good" or "bad." Out in the

world in all this wet weather you might be fortunate to stumble upon not only puddles but amphibians, such as toads and salamanders, making their migration to vernal pools sonorous with spring peepers and crowded with fairy shrimp.

This jaunt is especially fun knowing that the word *amphibian*, concocted in the 1630s, is more poetic than it appears, meaning "having two modes of existence; of doubtful nature," from the Greek *amphibia*, the neuter plural of *amphibios* ("living a double life"), from *amphi* ("of both kinds" + *bios* "life"), from the Proto-Indo-European root *gwei- ("to live").

These slanting glances at subjectivity make the word evocative; anyone memetically-minded and undergoing a mild identity crisis might well cry out "Me too, me too!" (Nowadays, instead of "two modes of existence," we might just say "surf 'n' turf," which is more of a "Yes please!")



MURTISHAW PHOTO

Hot stuff: A yellow-spotted salamander (*Ambystoma maculatum*) the author spotted on Mount Toby.

In its early days, *amphibian* seems to have quickly transcended species not only as a rough classification, but as a useful disparagement. It was for John Trapp, who Wikipedia calls a "Bible commentator," as

he cast shade on dual citizens of the sacred and secular in his 1654 tract *A commentary, or, exposition upon the XII. Minor prophets*: "Amphibians, that will conform to

see **WORDLY** page B10

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If you're the one for Asher, begin the adoption process by calling the Dakin Humane Society at (413) 781-4000 ext. 1, or by emailing springfield@dakinhumane.org.

WEST ALONG from page B1 their villages, leaving their crops burned and their kinfolk killed.

What should have been for them a pause in this war, perhaps a chance to negotiate, to decide a direction towards further war or peace, instead became a death trap where hundreds would die.

On that day in May, Captain William Turner and 150 Englishmen descended on the camp at dawn and destroyed the fishing camp at the falls and all of its inhabitants.

What the sword and musket did not claim, the river did. It swallowed up those who tried to flee by leaping into its rushing torrent, casting them upon the jagged rocks below the falls.

That was then, and this is now. Three hundred and fifty years years later.

Now is the time for healing, but when will it be the time to forgive? Maybe we could forgive William Turner when Abenaki and Nipmuck women put their shoulders to that dam and topple it. Maybe we could forgive those 150 settlers when the river flows free again.

Yet we still gather on its shores, at the foot of the great falls even though they are now silenced, and we remember.

On May 16, 2026 many more will join us on the knoll overlooking the falls and bear witness, testify, to what the river no longer can.

We will remind the world that Turner did not succeed, that the past 350 years did not end or erase the presence, perseverance, and resilience of the Indian Nations who were pushed to the brink of extinc-

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Several Indigenous artists and artisans

tion all those years ago.

The great medicine drum will echo across the falls, up the broad avenue and down the side streets of the village that bears the name of the perpetrator of the atrocity.

The great drum will challenge the attempt at erasure, will refuse the cowardly triumph of those who massacred the innocent and defenseless.

The woodlands flute will lend sweetness to the springtime air, and the voices of the Nipmuck and Abenaki leaders will ring out, carrying the messages of defiance and survival all the way across the river to the monument that celebrates the

shallow victory Turner achieved.

We will then cross over to that site, to that despicable monument, and turn the page. We will take possession once again of that plot. The Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association has ceded the land back to the tribes. We will soon place our own memorial for all the lost Indians, to let those victims whose names cannot be known understand they are not forgotten.

Their descendants are here in large numbers to honor them, to bear testimony that in spite of all odds, they are still here.



Artist Profile: Elaine VanGelder

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – It would seem that the LAVA Center is turning out to be a good place for me to find artists to write about. Elaine VanGelder is the latest one. She had an exhibit there from April 4 to 24.

VanGelder's art consists of mandalas, which she has been experimenting with for "about three years."

The show at the LAVA was VanGelder's first art show. Some of this information I got from her, and the rest from the LAVA website.

VanGelder has a bachelor's degree in education from Eastern Illinois University, with art as a minor, and a master's in special education from Northeastern. She and her husband live in Conway.

Her artist's statement says that she is "fascinated and challenged by these patterns in nature, such as the skin of a pineapple in a bowl of fruit, the nautilus shell on a beach, or the fractal design of branches in a tree. Challenged to create an accurate representation, I discovered Sacred Geometry.... I started studying the Seed of Life and continued into fractals, Islamic geocentric patterns, and other sequences."

The mandalas are based on geometric and Islamic patterns. One inspiration for her art is Stephen Meakin's mandala designs. "Sometimes I start with a theme in mind," she also added, "and then let the painting evolve."

She used to paint in watercolor, but has moved on to make her mandalas using casein paints. She decided at first to make nine canvases before painting on her first one, and she practiced on paper before painting the canvases. It usually takes a month or so to do each



One painted mandala from Conway artist Elaine VanGelder's April show at the LAVA Center.

painting, with lots of think time.

I personally find her art fascinating. The patterns are very nice to look at. One piece in the show was different than the other patterns. It has a blue butterfly in the center of it. It's enjoyable to look at, too.

VanGelder mentioned on the LAVA Center's website that once she began the series, "it became my daily meditation practice. The paintings themselves... take a life of their own, the end result different than what I initially imagined them to be."

That sounds like something that happens to me when I write.



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LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here's the way it was on May 12, 2016: News from the Montague Reporter archive.

Erving Chooses Bryan Smith

After spending all day May 7 interviewing three candidates, the Erving selectboard has offered Bryan Smith a \$65,000 a year, 40-hour a week position as the town's new administrative coordinator.

Smith, who holds a master's degree in public policy, is currently a program coordinator at Greenfield Community College. The board asked that he begin work by June 6.

Early Retirement Leaves Town in the Lurch

Last December, Bob Trombley, who has worked at the Montague wastewater treatment facility for 22

years and is now the superintendent of the Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF), submitted a plan to the town's finance and capital improvements committees calling for eliminating his position and elevating two current staff members to "administrator" and "chief operator."

The process was stalled from December until late March, when town administrator Frank Abbonanzio stated he had received an opinion from town counsel that the proposal could not be publicly discussed because it involved collective bargaining.

At Monday's selectboard meeting, WPCF operator John Little argued that neither employee union "had a problem" with the proposal.

After saying that he was told not to discuss the fate of his reorganization plan for the same reason, Trombley announced his resignation effective June 30, well before his scheduled December 18 retirement.

20 YEARS AGO

Here's the way it was on May 11, 2006: News from the Montague Reporter archive.

Ja'Duke Plans Expansion

Nick Waynelovich, who has brought 60 musicals to the 347-seat Shea Theater, plans to build a performing arts educational center and performance space next to the Franklin County Tech School. He said that when he and his daughters Kimberly and Lisa first opened the

Ja'Duke Center for the Performing Arts two years ago, "we expected 30 students. We opened to 100 students. Now we have 200."

Although he has been offered space in Greenfield, Waynelovich said, "We want to be in Turners. That's where my identity is."

The 85,000-square-foot building will cost at least half a million dollars, and should be ready next summer. Town planner Robin Sherman said that will leave only one 14.68-acre plot open at the industrial park.

140 YEARS AGO

Here's the way it was on May 12, 1886: News from the Turners Falls Reporter archive.

Turners Falls and Vicinity

Dr. Coy drives a new horse, a high-headed animal of great beauty.

Mrs. Dr. Deane of Greenfield advertises for a girl for general household work. It is a good home for a girl.

A reward is offered for the return to this office of a ladies' gold bar pin with stone cameo.

The foot-race fever has subsided, and the ten dollar notes are not so freely circulated as formerly in consequence.

A warm spell after the cool rain of the past few days will send vegetation along with a rush. The season is already three weeks ahead of the average.

The members of the "Witenagemote club" have tired of the name, and now it is the "Peskeomp-skut club." The latter was the Indian name for Turners Falls.

The interest in temperance in the French church continues unabated. About three hundred have taken the pledge against drunkenness and all public drinking.

How odd it is that the saloon keeping politicians will whoop it up for all they are worth for eight hours' work for "the poor laboring man," but it takes a whole volume of cast iron laws and a front and a back door policeman to prevent the saloon men from working 24 hours a day, including Sundays.

The owners of gardens on Pleasant Plain live in constant fear of depredations of horses and cattle that are allowed to roam in the neighborhood at their own sweet will. No money consideration can replace a tree that has had constant care until it has become thrifty, therefore an effort should be made to enforce the laws against marauding cattle. Of course few laws apply to Montague, but then we think this one ought to be enforced.

The owners of dogs who have not secured licenses are liable to prosecution at any time. The fine is \$15 and costs, which sum would go a good ways in buying a whole cartful such as may be found running around the streets every day.

Rev. T.A. Batson announced that he would speak next Sunday evening on the labor agitation. "Justice to the laborers" is his subject.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Abandoned Vehicle of Interest; Wildfire from Cigarette; Cat Seekers; Snapping Turtle, Small Bear, Injured Seagull

Monday, 5/4

8:50 a.m. Manager of an Avenue A property advises that a resident is screaming and yelling for an unknown reason and is disturbing her neighbors. Responding officer reports that the involved party, possibly intoxicated, is experiencing dental pain and is unable to find a ride to the dentist. Medical attention offered but declined.

11:20 a.m. While on foot patrol, an officer located a male party with an active warrant. A 27-year-old Turners Falls man was arrested on a straight warrant.

5:44 p.m. Caller from J Street requesting a call back regarding a camper that has been parked across the street. Caller feels that it is drug-related. Officer attempted call back; no answer.

6:24 p.m. 911 report of a two-car accident near the basketball court at Unity Park. No fluids; no injuries. Report taken.

8:10 p.m. Caller from Mormon Hollow Road reports that as of 7 p.m. last night no one was supposed to be on the property, but he just saw a truck with a trailer pull in. Would like them removed. Officer advised.

Caller called back in stating they are now cutting something and sparks are flying on the property, and that he is not responsible for their actions. Second caller states she drove up to the property and a party there was recording her; she told them they are trespassing and need to leave. States they were served an order by the Board of Health that they needed to stop coming onto the property as of May 3 at 7 p.m. Officer on scene speaking with involved parties. One reporting party very unhappy that involved parties were not being removed. Was unable to provide paperwork showing they had been trespassed; advised that landlord would have to file a trespass order with the sheriff's office. Incident on record.

Reporting party observed to be intoxicated during this time.

9:51 p.m. Fourth of four 911 calls from a party on Avenue A; services previously declined, but she now wishes to speak to an officer. Officer requesting EMS. Control contacted; TFFD on scene. Female requesting male be removed from apartment. Male escorted to his apartment. Medical attention declined at this time.

1:14 p.m. Detail officer reporting a hit-and-run by a white SUV on L Street. Report taken.

1:40 p.m. 911 caller from Family Dollar states that a female in a green jacket just threatened to assault her. Female and her husband had previously been verbally trespassed from the store. The two parties are walking with a three-legged dog through the park next door. Per officer, employee advised of procedure to obtain a formal trespass complaint against the two involved parties.

2:15 p.m. Caller from Mormon Hollow Road states that a female drove towards her and her two children in an erratic and aggressive manner and yelled vulgar things at

Tuesday, 5/5

5:04 a.m. Caller from Prospect Street states that her neighbor has a dog that has been barking throughout the night. Caller states involved dog ends up on her porch and property. Caller states she has called about this several times and would like something done. Dog is not on caller's property at this time. Advised caller message would be passed along to animal control officer.

9:10 a.m. Caller from Montague City Road would like an officer to assist her with identifying the other people using her internet and to help with dealing with Comcast because they leave her on hold for too long. Officer tried to return call, but caller did not answer and has no voicemail.

9:22 a.m. Cumberland Farms employee reporting to officer that a white SUV with Connecticut plates has been parked in their lot for several days. Newtown, CT police called because they received a notification after Montague PD ran the plate. The vehicle was last driven by a male who picked up his 18-month-old daughter in Connecticut and never returned.

Child last seen on April 20; entered as missing by Newtown PD on April 29. Officer requesting tow for vehicle; vehicle towed to station, directly into the sallyport. Officer requesting phone ping; location mapped to Bridgeport, CT at 11:32 a.m. Requesting surveillance footage from Cumberland Farms corporate. Investigated.

10:24 a.m. Caller from Chestnut Hill Loop would like an officer to speak with her neighbors, who have been trespassing on her property. Ongoing issue. Unable to return call due to call block on caller's phone.

1:14 p.m. Detail officer reporting a hit-and-run by a white SUV on L Street. Report taken.

1:40 p.m. 911 caller from Family Dollar states that a female in a green jacket just threatened to assault her. Female and her husband had previously been verbally trespassed from the store. The two parties are walking with a three-legged dog through the park next door. Per officer, employee advised of procedure to obtain a formal trespass complaint against the two involved parties.

2:15 p.m. Caller from Mormon Hollow Road states that a female drove towards her and her two children in an erratic and aggressive manner and yelled vulgar things at

her. Had conversation with caller regarding ongoing property dispute. Caller believes the situation has become criminal in nature due to continuous harassment. Caller was advised to compose a statement of fact on three separate occasions for review. Caller also advised of court options via a harassment order.

3:45 p.m. Control advising they received a complaint about a black Toyota Camry that brake-checked a tractor-trailer unit on the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge. No accident; no plate provided.

4:58 p.m. Multiple 911 calls reporting that a driver threw a cigarette out the window and it started a fire that is quickly spreading along the woodline on Federal Street. Transferred to Shelburne Control. Road closed from Lake Pleasant Road to Swamp Road; later reopened.

10:48 p.m. Caller from Randall Wood Drive reporting a noise complaint; states a male has been using a nail gun since 5 p.m. tonight. Officer advises quiet upon arrival.

Wednesday, 5/6

6:47 a.m. 911 caller reporting car and dirtbike driving aggressively toward each other on Wendell Road. Connected caller to Shelburne Control. MPD officers checking area. Officer out with dirtbike in the area of Norman Circle. Operator of dirtbike denied any involvement.

7:53 a.m. Walk-in looking to speak to a detective regarding ongoing issue of threats with a former student. Officer advised parties to seek a restraining order in district court; also advised them to inform away team schools of situation so other PDs are aware. Party following up with DA office.

9:43 a.m. 911 report of two-car accident at Avenue A and First Street. No fluids or smoke. Services rendered.

2:35 p.m. 911 open line from Old Greenfield Road; nothing heard in background. Line disconnected. Called number back; caller states that a male is chasing her around the house and threatening her and she feels like she's going to have a heart attack because of him. Officer *en route*; reports all is OK at this time; he will be clear.

Thursday, 5/7

3:03 a.m. Caller from South Street states that he has about a dozen cameras on his property and a couple of people have been wandering around for a couple of hours. Officer advises that they spoke

with a neighbor, who stated they were out looking for a cat that ran away. Notified caller of same.

9:14 a.m. Officer advising he was called in for an emergency meeting at the high school.

9:34 a.m. Caller from Fourth Street reports that since 6 a.m., the neighbor has been outside screaming, and now his mother is screaming at him to stop. Caller calling back in on 911 stating that the mother left and the male is still outside screaming and hitting himself. Officer advises no one outside, but mother has returned and he is speaking with her. Peace restored at this time.

11:49 a.m. Caller from United Arc reporting large snapping turtle on property, possibly injured. ACO advises turtle is fine; moved to grassy area.

2:42 p.m. Multiple 911 calls reporting car vs. pole on South Prospect Street. No smoke/flames. Control contacted for EMS evaluation. Officer advises airbag deployment; female has cuts and bruising and is standing by for EMS. Operator of vehicle has a Massachusetts ID only.

Tow *en route*; Eversource advised and on scene; requesting two officers for detail. Investigated.

10:41 p.m. Walk-in reporting broken toilet pieces in the road near the airport; would like DPW to pick them up. Tried one DPW employee; no answer. Tried a different employee, who would like a better description. Officers checking area. Officer states items have been removed.

Friday, 5/8

12:31 p.m. Employee requesting lockout assistance for an elderly patron of the Carnegie Library. Entry made.

2:12 p.m. Caller from O Street states that a small black bear is going in and out of people's yards in the area. ACO notified. Area checked; unable to locate.

2:16 p.m. Program director from the Northeast Foundation for Children reports that around 30 minutes ago, a male tried to open some of the locked doors to their building on the Third Street side; male also kicked the building. Male eventually left and has not been seen in the area since. Advised to call if they see him in the area again.

4:04 p.m. FD looking for police backup for a fire they are putting out on Turners Falls Road. Fire extinguished without incident.

5:07 p.m. 911 caller reporting that she has been following a GMC Sierra since Greenfield; vehicle

see MPD next page

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MPD from previous pg was swerving, not using blinkers, went off the road into shrubbery and then sped off. Vehicles are now pulling into Nouria. Male approached vehicle and asked if female has an issue with him. She is not comfortable and is keeping the window up. Responding officer spoke to both parties; all units clear. No impairment noted.

5:26 p.m. Walk-in looking to speak to an officer and get some advice regard-

ing ongoing issue with his neighbor. Advised to call police when harassment is taking place and to go to court to seek a 258E order.

11:19 p.m. Caller from Third Street reports a female party in a nearby apartment is screaming and throwing items around; has been ongoing for the past 15 minutes. Officer advises quiet upon arrival. No answer at involved female's door.

Sunday, 5/10
10:11 a.m. Caller states

that there appears to be an injured seagull in a field by the airport fence. ACO located bird and now has it with her.

10:14 a.m. Caller states that two vehicles have been speeding around the Patch all morning. Officer located both vehicles in the parking lot on Migratory Way and advised the two parties with the vehicle of the complaints.

6:33 p.m. Caller reports that her daughter's car was parked at an Edward

Avenue address today; they just returned, and the back window of the vehicle has been smashed out. Investigated.

7:21 p.m. Caller reports he was walking his dog in Peskeompskut Park and a camper is parked draining sewage into a bucket, which is overflowing into the park. Officer advises nothing seen on arrival; occupants state they don't use the bathroom in the camper.



Franklin County Punks Make Puppet Musical; Only Perform It Outside of Franklin County. *Could Have Skipped.*

By MANDY MUDBALLS

GREENFIELD – I just had the worst weekend ever, following around the members of Free Pile Productions on the inaugural “tour” of their puppet musical *The Living Room* like they were the Grateful Dead, watching all three of its debut performances. I say “tour” because, while they proudly proclaimed this fact, they never left the confines of the seventh-smallest state in the country, opting instead to drive back and forth across it multiple times a day in a five-car caravan.

The Living Room is the third evening-length puppet musical this production company wrote in the last year alone. Maybe these office-job-havers should commit slightly less time theft, and start opting for quality over quantity.

The show follows a dysfunctional couple as they attempt to clean out their living room, in the process uncovering a portal to the land of the dead – a phrase that is as overused throughout the show as it is difficult to say – where they learn the lesson, from their dead loved ones, that it is better to hold onto memories than physical objects.

The members of the company clearly didn't learn this lesson themselves, as their set is composed of truly thousands of trash bags' worth of knickknacks.

“We only had two rehearsals the month leading up to the show,” says

Noh Bailey, the show's director, with a grimace on her face, explaining that every member of the company had a completely opposing work schedule, leaving one singular hour of overlap each week for them all to meet.

Let me tell you, I don't think more rehearsal time would have saved this train wreck. First and foremost, the level of actor cruelty taking place on this stage was absolutely flooring. One sat motionless in a chair costume for two sweltering hours at the top of each show, all for the payoff of one slapstick gag. The ratio of suffering to delight made me want to make a protest sign, like the woman who protests the Wee Wee Little Pigs' Race every year outside the Franklin Country Fair.

Next, I'd like to bring your attention to the fact that the show combined far too many disciplines of art. On display were music, dance, installation, lanterns, horizontal cantastoria, hand puppets, parade puppets, hand-and-rod puppets, shadow puppets, and crankies. This was much too multimedia to create a cohesive world, and left me, a viewer, unsure if they have any skills whatsoever.

My largest critique is that the show was completely devoid of political commentary. You would think that this group of transgenders – and one straight woman, who inexplicably played the gay-guy puppet – would have had something useful to say about the state of the world, but instead of any insight into that, they served up a palatable message for everyone. This left many members of the audience in tears, likely because of how heavy-handed it all was.

“People keep asking us ‘Do you know Sourdough & Circus’ to which we say ‘It's actually called Bread & Puppet and we're nothing like them, thank you very much,’” says the show's worst actor, Bella Levavi.

Additionally, I would be remiss not to point out that the troupe, if you couldn't already tell by the description of their work, is all white. I guess someone still has to point out to them that being queer and Jewish does not equal being racially diverse. This is not the only group in Franklin County that needs that intervention. Luckily for them, they come from a long lineage of unemployable white people making puppets in New England, so maybe it is a systemic issue.

I just hope they don't make a puppet show about it.

TLWFYITE,
Mandy Mudballs

Monty
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Ralph White, Tracks
(Compact Disc Records CD, 2026)

MYSTRA REVIEWS #13

Review by **J. BURKETT** and **TROY CURRY**

TURNERS FALLS – A new release here by Ralph White, who is a very singular musician and goes beyond all categories – though we could mention old-timey, post-punk, folk, Cajun, bluegrass, Irish, and more. And while he has 30-plus releases under his belt, we always welcome more!

The second release on the Mystra label was actually Ralph's first solo LP, post-Bad Livers: *Navasota Devil Squirrel*. It was co-released in 2009 with Spirit of Orr (thanks Ron!), and is a heck of a good place to start listening.

The Bad Livers are worth checking out, too, if “acoustic/punkabilly versions of Metallica” sounds OK to you...

JB: Troy, are you ready to talk about Ralph's new CD? It's funny, it starts with him coughing... It's kinda like “Um, excuse me, I'm still around!”

TC: Hi Josh – happy new day. Ralph is really magic. Did you get the CD there?

JB: Yeah, he sent it over and I have been listening a lot.

TC: I've been listening on Bandcamp. When I first really heard this new one, I was driving through Virginia. There is something with these full layers of sound on this release, there's a really dreamlike quality to it. I can't tell if it's the way he's playing banjo, but it creates a very strange, trance-like headspace.

This whole album sounds like he made it into one composition, Josh.

JB: Hi Troy. He uses a lot of thumb pianos (mbira), which he got in Africa. And yeah, he has banjos and a gourd banjo. I'm pretty sure he's been recording at home, and

then someone else masters it.

I feel like he's digging deeper into his thing now. It's so impressive... and darker than usual.

TC: Like way deeper! Like it's grittier, and that's the tricky part with his layered sound – it has a very gritty, intense presence, yet one could by chance drift into this dreamy strange atmospheric quality it has to it.

It's a tricky listen. He is a master, and you really just cut to it, Josh – it is dark. Really dreamlike and haunting.

JB: Troy, he has these newer, more political songs, which are intense, but I think they work! Plus I love the instrumentals... He's such a great player.

TC: “This revolution – fat chance!” “And then Evolution!” His instrumentals are great, and the accordion pieces. They show his playing ability. It's really insane the way he plays! There is a great part on “Bless You” that's just so cool.

JB: “Bless You” is great, and yeah, I really think this CD is an important chapter in his journey.

TC: This is a massive music event for us all! Yes, absolutely. I feel the same way, Josh. I'm not even sure how to describe it.

JB: I think this CD is all about persevering... and really digging in. It's so different from Devil Squirrel, though he does some of those songs.

TC: It's very different from anything else I've heard by Ralph. The amazing sound he gets... There's this raga, almost drone, quality.

JB: At first I didn't even know how to take it in, but I love it now. Have you heard Cellphone In A Silo? He recorded it in a silo, with his phone... That one is all one piece, too.

TC: No, Josh, but this is really a strange and remarkable album. Parts of it are like pre-war gospel, really left-field minimalism. I have recommended this recording to a few people. Was there something that really stood out to you when you heard this recording?

JB: Troy, it sounded different! But similar to his other albums. You can tell he dug in deeper than usual.

TC: It sounds alien at times. It's a real favorite, a super magic album.

JB: I think Ralph's recordings are often alien. And I feel like... if you have followed his releases and shows, it's been an amazing adventure. And really fun.

TC: Thank you. Yes, it has been super fun. I'm really appreciative.

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RECIPES from page B1

and the vinegar will become a gorgeous shade of raspberry pink. At that point, discard the spent blossoms. Use the vinegar to flavor salad dressings.

Though scallions are a close relative of chives, their flavor lacks the same tactfulness. It's closer in strength to that of onions. Indeed, Chinese cooks often use scallions where Western cooks would use onions.

Since they cook quickly, scallions are good in cuisines that tend to have quick-cooking recipes – hence their popularity among Asian cooks. Many Chinese, Korean, and Japanese

recipes feature beef plus scallions.

Classics include Japanese *sukiyaki*, a mixture of steak with scallions, noodles and vegetables. Korea has *bulgogi*, a mixture of beef and other meats with flavoring vegetables often cooked at the table, while Indonesia and Singapore have *satay* beef with a scallion-flavored dipping sauce.

In this country, the most well-known Chinese scallion dish is scallion pancakes – a perennial favorite in restaurants, but harder to make at home, because their flaky pastry requires a deft hand.

But using those cute scallion brushes as

garnishes is easy. Just take the three-inch bottom ends, discard a thin slice off the root end, and make several one-inch cuts down both ends. Drop them into a bowl of ice wa-

ter and leave for two to three hours, until they have curled.

More recipes for scallions and chives follow.



CHIVE PESTO

- 3/4 cup snipped chives
- 1 Tbsp. chopped parsley
- 1 big clove garlic, minced
- 3/4 cup finely grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/4 cup olive oil, or as needed
- 1/2 cup pine nuts or chopped walnuts, plus 2 to 3 Tbsp. more for serving
- salt to taste

If using a food processor, put all the ingredients except 2 Tbsp. of the nuts and the salt into it.

Pulse two or three times. Check. Stir the mixture from the sides into the center, and pulse a couple more times until you have a smooth mixture about as thick as Greek yogurt. Add more olive oil if it is too stiff, and salt if needed.

(To use a stick blender, put the chives, parsley, garlic,



half the Parmesan, and the oil into the vessel and blend until well-mixed. Gradually add the remaining Parmesan and the nuts, and blend until combined and smooth.)

Toast the remaining nuts

for 2 minutes in a dry frying pan or microwave. Use as garnish. Good with pasta, roasted potatoes, scrambled eggs, or in omelets.

Serves 4 to 6.

CHEDDAR & CHIVE SCONES

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 4 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 Tbsp. sugar
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. dry mustard, or a dash of cayenne
- 1 stick butter
- 2 cups grated extra-sharp cheddar
- 1/4 cup snipped chives
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- about 1/2 cup milk

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees and grease a baking sheet, or line it with baking paper.

Mix the flour, baking powder, sugar, salt, and mustard or cayenne. Cut the butter into slices and rub them in with your fingers – or, if using a processor, pulse a few times – until the mixture looks like breadcrumbs. Reserve a tablespoon of cheddar, but stir in the remaining cheddar and chives.

Mix the egg with a couple of tablespoons of the milk, and add it. Stir or process to pull everything together, adding more milk a little at a time to make a dough.

Divide the dough into 10 portions, and shape them into rounds about 1 inch thick. Place them an inch or so apart on the baking sheet. Brush lightly with milk, and sprinkle the reserved cheddar on top.

Bake for 20 to 22 minutes. They're



HOPLEY PHOTOS

done when a skewer poked into the center comes out clean. Cool but serve warm – reheated, if necessary – with butter. Good at breakfast or with soup.

Makes about 10.

SCALLION-GINGER SAUCE



Fish topped with scallion-ginger sauce, with a scallion brush laid alongside as garnish.

- 1/2 cup chopped scallions (the white and tender green parts)
- 2 Tbsp. finely grated fresh ginger
- 1/4 cup canola or other flavorless oil
- 2 Tbsp. soy sauce
- 1 tsp. vinegar
- salt to taste
- a few drops sesame oil (optional)

Put the chopped scallions in a small serving bowl. Peel the ginger – easily done with a teaspoon – and then grate on the finest teeth of a grater. Add 2 tablespoons to the scallions.

In a small frying pan, heat the canola oil until it trembles slightly on the surface, then pour it over the scallions and ginger. The mixture will sizzle up. Stir and add 1 tablespoon soy sauce, 1 tablespoon cold water, and the vinegar. Taste, and add more soy sauce and a pinch of salt if you think them necessary, and a few drops of sesame oil if you like the flavor. Stir.

Leftovers are okay in the fridge for two to three days. Serve on broiled or steamed fish, or with meat.

CHINESE-STYLE BEEF with SCALLIONS AND TOMATOES

- a bunch of scallions (about 8)
- about 15 grape or cherry tomatoes
- 12 oz. beef strips, minute steak, or other thinly-sliced steak
- 1 1/2 Tbsp. cornstarch
- 1 tsp. five-spice powder
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 1 1/2 to 2 cups beef or vegetable stock
- 2 tsp. minced ginger
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 3 Tbsp. bland vegetable oil

Trim the coarse green tops off the scallions, leaving the tender green parts and white base. Chop the trimmed bits and reserve. Wash the tomatoes, and with a serrated knife make an inch-long nick in the skin of each. Set aside.

If the beef is not in strips, cut into pieces about a half inch wide by 2 or 3 inches long. In a medium bowl, mix the cornstarch and five-spice powder. Make a well in the center and pour in the soy sauce, stirring to combine. Stir in a cup of the stock, the ginger, and the garlic. Add the beef strips and the chopped scallions bits. Cover and leave for at least 30 minutes or up to an hour.

To cook, heat the oil over medium heat and stir in the trimmed scallions. Cook for 2 minutes. Now pour in the beef mixture. Increase the heat and let it bubble for 3 more



minutes, stirring all the time and adding the tomatoes after 1 minute. Add more stock to thin the sauce to the thickness you like.

Serves 4.

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MONTAGUE REPORTER



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Our June 12, 2025 edition featured readers visiting New Mexico, Austria, Italy, and the Yukon Territory –

ON THE ROAD

Leverett subscriber Annaliese Bischoff brought them to the Pyramids of Giza. Her report: "It was amazing!!!"

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

CONCERT REVIEW

The Community Chorus Celebrates the 250th

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – I decided to review the spring concert that the Franklin County Community Chorus gave last Sunday afternoon at Greenfield High School (GHS). It was apparently a celebration of America's 250th. That made it appealing for me to look into.

Paul J. Calcari, GHS's music director, was part of it, and Timothy H. Rogers was an accompanist.

They started the event with some individuals dressed as Revolutionary War soldiers marching on stage. They were some kind of color guard. One was holding an American flag. The first song, fittingly, was "The Star-Spangled Banner." The next was called "The Pledge of Allegiance," by Francis Bellamy. It wasn't surprising to me that this was part of the concert, but I didn't know it was also a song.

"Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor" is a famous line from a poem by Emma Lazarus, which they put on the Statue of Liberty. It makes sense that a song named this would be part of the event.

Several other similar songs were performed. One, called "Golden

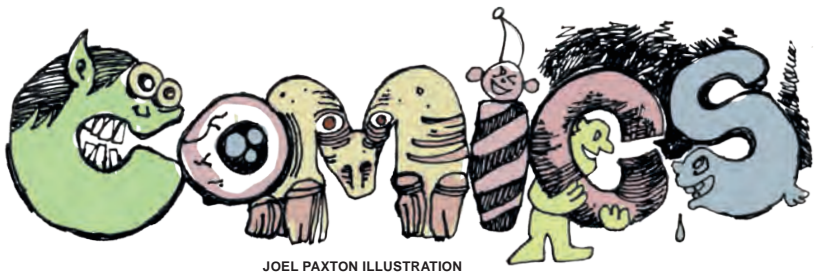
Dream," was connected to the Apollo 11 landing, Kennedy's speech about going to the moon, and Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech. They played audio recordings of those speeches during the song. It was very cool to hear.

Other songs performed were "You Never Walk Alone," "A Tribute to Armed Forces," and "United We Stand." The chorus, along with some GHS students, played instruments as people sang, and performed very well. One set of students were bass and wind players, and others were called The Jam Band.

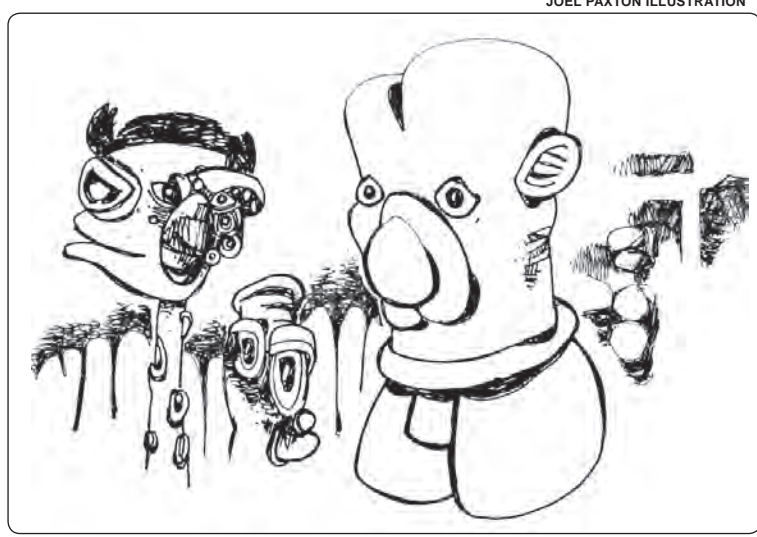
One more cool thing was that during "A Tribute to Armed Forces," they asked for anyone from the different branches of the military to stand. When each of the branches was named, some people in the audience did just that.

I really enjoyed hearing some of the songs. "United We Stand" was given the right name, because it spoke of doing that throughout the song. Several soloists performed songs, including "The Navy Hymn" and "God Bless America." One was named Erica Caron.

This concert did a good job of honoring America's 250th.



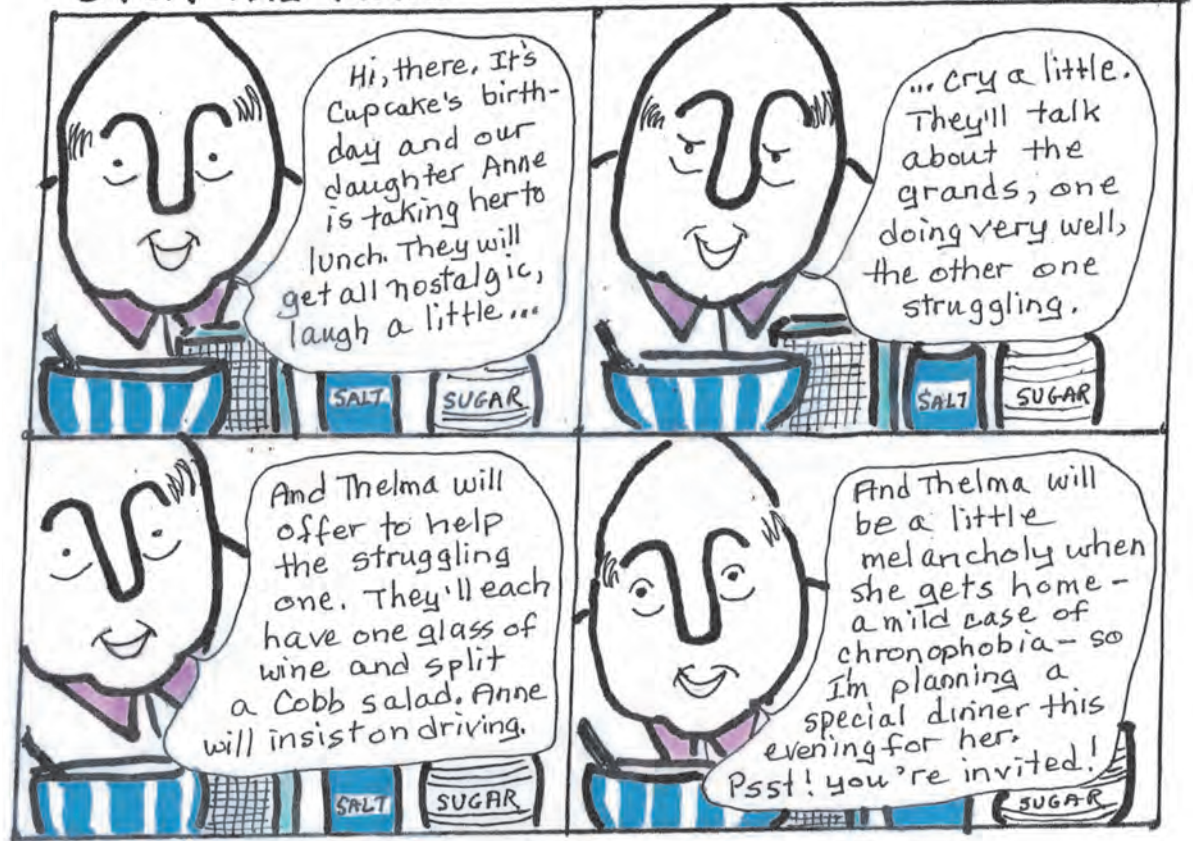
JOEL PAXTON ILLUSTRATION



JOEL PAXTON ILLUSTRATION

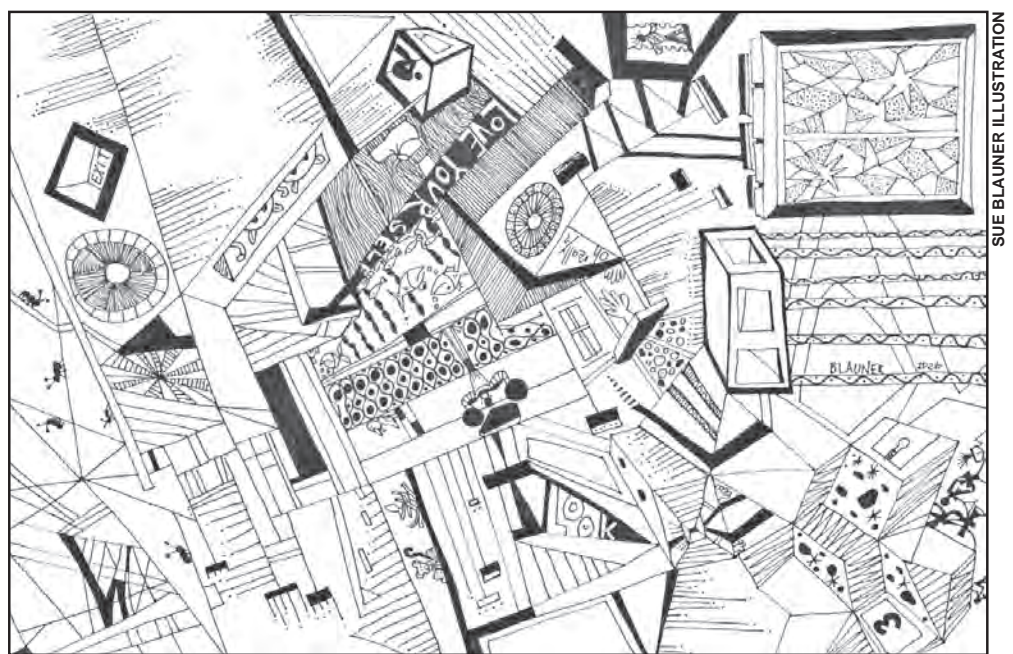
OVER THE HILL

Carolyn Clark



Cool Cats on the Ave

Suzie



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Food You Need from the Land You Love

the
poetry
page

It is difficult
to get the news from poems
yet men die miserably every day
for lack
of what is found there.

- William Carlos Williams

edited by Janel Nockleby
Readers are invited to send poems to
the *Montague Reporter* by email at:
poetry@montaguereporter.org
(Please note we are no longer
accepting mailed submissions.)

Our May Poetry Page

Old Friend

The people are friendly, the food is great
Hurry up my friend, don't you be late

I came into town on the bus today
Walking through the shops made me want to stay

The lady that fishes had a twinkle in her eye
She spoke of a big fish, it just made me sigh

The bridge of Flowers is finally done
The tourists stroll by and bask in the sun

Bicycles gather to check out the flow.
The beauty of the flowers put on a show.

Lazily the day has drawn to an end
Shelburne Falls is the trusted old friend

- The Fisherman
Bernardston

Vernalocity

sun warms nose
squirrel draws waves
leaves unfurl

they bring you home
home to me
home is me

dry hands on pants
unlock door
take one step down

hear a song
close eyes to look up
sun warms nose

one deep breath to steady

- Star
Turners Falls

Bridge of Flowers

The colors of the flowers are amazing to see
Red, purple and blue all there for you and me

The sweet smell of flowers floats in the air
People stroll the bridge without a worldly care

Wild and free nature's singing a song
The bees and butterflies will join right along

Daisies daffodils and zinnias too
Like an artist painting shades in every hue

Soon the season will end for the long winter's sleep
Awakening again in spring the colors will keep

- The Fisherman
Bernardston

Nature's Glory

Rays of sun shone down on my face
Wondering when I get out of this place

The wind blew through my ample hair
Peaceful not caring if anyone's there

My heart was in a loving cradle
Not stirring a pot with a steaming ladle

Needing to get to a peaceful flow
Smiling, sighing what a magnificent show

Nature in its very grandest form
Beautiful, breezy, fuzzy and warm

- The Fisherman
Bernardston

Brad's Place

Brad's is a down home friendly little place
Sarah greets everyone with a warm smile on her face

The local crowd gathers at the counter to talk
As local folks casually pass by on the walk

The food is good as Dan creates a meal
It is a pleasant environment your soul it can heal

The place draws you back as it stands the test of time
Fulfilling your wonder like being at the scene of a crime

- The Fisherman
Bernardston

Contributors' Notes:

Star wakes up every day grateful for unending curiosity, characters in town who shine bright, and limitless chances to transform. She hopes you take a second to close your eyes, look up, and feel the sun warming your nose.

The Fisherman grew up in Bernardston, and is a proud western Mass native.

ILLUSTRATION: WILLIAM BLAKE, ANGEL OF REVELATION, CA. 1805

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THURSDAY, MAY 14

Erving Senior Center, Erving: *Painting Class and Luncheon.* Paint Monet's *Bridge at Giverny* with artist Teri Magner. Materials provided. Lunch includes macaroni and cheese, Swedish meatballs, cupcakes, more. Call (413) 423-3649 to reserve a spot. 12 p.m. \$.

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

Gill-Montague Senior Center, Turners Falls: *Sheryl Faye*, historical performer, portraying Susan B. Anthony. 1 p.m. Free.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Jody Stewart, Lauren Marie Schmidt*, poetry reading with an open mic. 7 p.m. Free.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Richard Shindell.* 7 p.m. \$.

Palladium, Worcester: *Kreator, Cold Steel, Carcass.* 7:30 p.m. \$\$.

Tourists, North Adams: *Glenn Jones, Liam Grant.* 8 p.m. Free.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Josh Allen.* 9 p.m. No cover.

FRIDAY, MAY 15

Nova Arts, Keene: *Yasmin Williams, Delicate Steve, Emily A. Sprague, Big Blood, Dinger, Jack in the Green.* 4 p.m. \$.

Brick House, Turners Falls: *Sam Mulligan* album release, *Hot Rod, The Rocking Puppies.* 7 p.m. By donation.

St. Kaz, Turners Falls: *Three Women Karaoke.* 7 p.m. No cover.

Shutesbury Athletic Club, Shutesbury: *Zepptunes, Led Zeppelin* tribute. 7 p.m. No cover.

THCC, Easthampton: *Necralant, Troll Milk, Hexrot.* 7 p.m. \$.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Charlie Marie, These Wild Plains, Rosie Porter & Band, DJ Brewfoot.* 8 p.m. \$.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Space Bar.* 8 p.m. No cover.

Last Ditch, Greenfield: *So Over It, Cliffrose, cmputergrl.* 8 p.m. \$.

Marigold, Brattleboro: *Jeopardy, Olde Bard, Woundlicker.* 8 p.m. No cover.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *They Are Gutting a Body of Water, Taxidermists.* 8 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Buttersnakes, Josh Burkett, George Groth.* 9:30 p.m. No cover.

SATURDAY, MAY 16

Peskeompskut Park, Turners Falls: *Great Falls Farmers Market.* SNAP accepted. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. \$.

Multiple venues, Greenfield: *Greenfield Bee Fest.* Lectures, costume parade, scavenger hunt, makers' market, family-friendly activities, music, food vendors, and more. Full schedule at www.tinyurl.com/beefestgf. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free.

Unity Park, Turners Falls: *Brick House 5K.* Prizes from local vendors. Alternate non-competitive 1.3-mile course along the Canalside Rail Trail bike path for walkers and rollers. Register at www.tinyurl.com/BrickHouse5K. Fundraiser for the Brick House Community Resource Center. 9:30 a.m. \$.

Millers Meadow, Greenfield: *Tree Planting Day.* Volunteers welcome. 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Free.



The Eastern Medicine Singers, an intertribal Algonquin-language drum group, will perform this Saturday morning at a ceremony with local and Native officials commemorating the 1676 massacre and unveil new historical signage, and again later that day at the Great Falls Discovery Center.

Just Roots Farm, Greenfield: *Spring Festival and Seedling Sale.* Abundant selection of vegetable starts, fruiting plants, herbs vermicast; craft vendors, thrift pop-up. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free.

Canalside Bike Path, Turners Falls: *Commemoration Ceremony: Battle of Great Falls / Wissatinnewag-Peskeompskut.* Remarks by representatives of the Nipmuck and Abenaki communities, ceremonial drumming by the Eastern Medicine Singers, "unveiling" of new signs. 10:30 a.m. Free.

Nova Arts, Keene: *Natural Information Society, Kalie Vandever, Cole Pulice, Gregory Uhlmann, Undertow Brass Band, Monadnock Music,* more. 12 p.m. \$.

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Day of Remembrance.* Commemoration of the Great Falls Massacre and King Philip's War, presented by the Nolumbeka Project. Presenters include the Eastern Medicine Singers, Strong Eagle 'Many Feathers' Daly, Liz Coldwind Santana-Kiser, and more. 12:30 p.m. Free.

Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: *Swedish Dance.* Intro workshop, snacks, open dancing. Live music on five-string fiddle and nyckelharpa. All welcome. 1:30 p.m. \$.

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: *Pokemon Club Launch Party.* 2 p.m. Free.

Four Phantoms Brewery, Greenfield: *Just Fine Thank You.* 6 p.m. No cover.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Ramshackle, Yankee Dixon Band, Ultra Violet, Torie Jock & Damage Control,* more. 4 p.m. \$.

Unnameable Books, Turners Falls: *Christian McEwen, Edite Cunhã, Maria Lauenstein, Trish Crapo,* readings. 6 p.m. Free.

Incandescent Brewing, Bernardston: *Hendersons Blues Band.* 6 p.m. No cover.

Belltower Records, North Adams: *Steve Wynn, Creative Writing.* 6 p.m. \$.

Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: *Open Mic* with featured performers *3 Faces.* 6:15 p.m. By donation.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Best of the '70s.* 7 p.m. \$.

EXHIBITS

Waterway Arts, Turners Falls: *Enough: A Collaboration*, visual artists' responses to pieces written in the Paper Trail Creative Writing Workshops, 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.

Montague Center Library, Montague: *Captured Glimpses of Sunset in Our Town*, familiar landscapes photographed by Barbara Folan, through May.

Leverett Library, Leverett: *Convergence*, pastel and acrylic paintings by the Friends Who Paint group, through June.

Leverett Crafts & Arts, Leverett: *Time Traveler*, scanography by Marty Klein, and *Pieced Together*, quilts and heads by Susan Boss and Mark Brown. Through May, with a reception this Sunday, May 17 at 3 p.m.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *Four Rivers School Art Show*, through May; *The Peace Birds Exhibit*, artistic and community responses to the events ongoing in Palestine, through July.

Looky Here, Greenfield: *Trevor Powers, Looky There*, risograph-printed photographs, plus artists' books and a free zine, through May.

ArtSpace, Greenfield: *Big Random*, work by visual arts seminar students at GCC. Through June 5.

Fiddleheads Gallery, Northfield: *STEAM - Art & Science*, art that reflects aspects of science, technology, engineering, and math, through this Sunday, May 17.

Gallery A3, Amherst: *Sue Curran and GK Khalsa*, collage and paintings, through May.

Mill District Local Art, North Amherst: Forty-plus artists show work on the theme of *Charmed*, through June 25.

Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne: *Q Li Holmes*, recent paintings by the Ashfield artist; *Stay in the Day and Have the Long View*, mixed media by Dale Schwarz. Both exhibits through June.

CALLS FOR ART

Leverett Library Community Mini-Art Show: Pick up your 3" by 3" canvas from the library and get creative! Return your completed canvas by June 30 to be included in a community exhibit over the summer. For all ages. More details available at the library.

Gallery A3 in Amherst seeks artwork for their eleventh annual juried show this August. This year's theme is *Everyday Sublime*: "When the world can feel unnervingly tamed or overwhelmingly all-consuming, where and how does the Everyday Sublime present itself?" Details online at gallerya3.com.

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CALENDAR



looking forward...

TUESDAY, MAY 26

Greenfield Library, Greenfield: Author talk, *Where Have All the Hippies Gone* by Nina Keller. 6 p.m. Free.

FRIDAY, MAY 29

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *Major Stars, Mountain Movers, Rose Thomas Bannister*. 7 p.m. \$.

Hutghi's, Westfield: *Chained to the Bottom of the Ocean, Anthropophagous, Worm Altar*. 8 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, MAY 30

Incandescent Brewing, Bernardston: Emanuel Casablanca. 7 p.m. \$.

FRIDAY, JUNE 5

Brick House, Turners Falls: *Matthew Thornton; Adam Bosse, Brian Gibson, Dakota Gill trio; Sleep Destroyer*. 6:30 p.m. Free.

SATURDAY, JUNE 6

Marigold, Brattleboro: *Slob Drop, tragwag, McAsh*. 8 p.m. No cover.

SATURDAY, JUNE 13

Wendell Town Common, Wendell: *Misfit Prom Parade* begins. 6 p.m. Free.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Wendell Misfit Prom*. Music by *Lady Pop, Carol Devine and the Mighty Fine*; food by Diemand Farm. Benefit for Good Neighbors. This year's theme: "That '70s Prom." 6:30 p.m. \$.

FRIDAY, JUNE 26

The Drake, Amherst: *Victor Wooten & The Wooten Brothers*. 8 p.m. \$.

THURSDAY, JULY 2

Great Falls Harvest, Turners Falls: *Miranda & The Spatulas, Animal Piss It's Everywhere*. 8 p.m. \$.

THURSDAY, JULY 30

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Yellowman*. 7 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 8

Palladium, Worcester: *Dimmu Borgir, Suffocation, Hulder*. 7 p.m. \$\$\$.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

Big E Arena, West Springfield: *Brad Paisley*. 7:30 p.m. \$\$\$.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9

Academy of Music, Northampton: *David Cross*. \$\$\$. 8 p.m.

Leverett Crafts & Arts, Leverett: *Native Land Conservancy* presentation about "how Indigenous knowledge guides local land stewardship." 7 p.m. Free.

Floodwater Brewing, Shelburne Falls: *Sunny D and the Tangy Originals*. 7 p.m. No cover.

Midnight's, Brattleboro: *Ashen Horde, Chained to the Dead, DBB, Goblet*. 7 p.m. \$.

THCC, Easthampton: *Viqueen, Loss Becomes, Held Captive*. 7 p.m. \$.

Hutghi's, Westfield: *Danny Pease and the Regulators, The Pimps, Go Static, Slob Drop*. 7 p.m. \$.

Colonial Theater, Keene: *Ghostface Killah, Sammus*. 7 p.m. \$.

Haze, Northampton: *Folly of Three, It's Mandy, Sexwave, Consumables*. 9 p.m. \$.

SUNDAY, MAY 17

Wendell Community Garden, Wendell: *Plant Share/Swap*. Bring plants you want to share or swap and take home some new ones. Near the gazebo on the north common. 12 p.m. Free.

Greenfield Records, Greenfield: *Unagi, Dome Lettuce, DJ Toro Bravo, Trinker*. 12 p.m. By donation.

Nova Arts, Keene: *Woods, Saintseneca, Thanya Iyer, Habitat, Nova One, Edsel Axle, Mary Elizabeth Remington*. 12 p.m. \$.

399 Main, Greenfield: Screening, *The Voice of Hind Rajab* (2025). Discussion follows. 12:30 p.m. Free.

Buckland-Shelburne Elementary School, Shelburne Falls: *Great Strides Walk for Cystic Fibrosis*. Two routes, 2.5K or 5K. See tinyurl.com/GreatStrides2026 to register or donate. 1 p.m. \$.

Bombyx Center, Florence: *Fiddle Orchestra of Western Mass, Annika Amstutz, Van Kaynor*. 1 p.m. \$.

Unnameable Books, Turners Falls: *Luke Fischbeck, Mary Walling Blackburn,brahim El Guabli*, readings. 2 p.m. Free.

Montague Center Library, Montague Center: *Classics Book Club*. Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*. 4 p.m. Free.

Brewery at Four Star Farm, Northfield: *Briezy Jane & the Hurricane*. 4 p.m. No cover.

Feeding Tube Records, Florence: *Dalthom, Servitor, Astral Chill, Terrierman*. 4 p.m. By donation.

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Brad Mehldau Trio*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

TUESDAY, MAY 19

Greenfield Public Library, Greenfield: Documentary, *Earth's Greatest Enemy* (2025), on US military's environmental impacts. 5 p.m. Free.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Southern Culture on the Skids*. 7 p.m. \$.



Left: As of press time, tickets were still available to see Ghostface Killah, inarguably the best rapper in Wu-Tang Clan, in Keene this Saturday.

Right: Wendell resident Molly Doody will be the featured speaker next Thursday at the Wendell Meetinghouse "spirit circle." Friends of the Meetinghouse president Court Dorsey explains these monthly events, free and open to the public, as a "peer ministry series, recognizing the spiritual authority of community members to help guide one another."

Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: *Swedish Dance*. Intro workshop, snacks, open dancing. Live music on five-string fiddle and nyckelharpa. All welcome. 1:30 p.m. \$

Wendell Meetinghouse, Wendell: *Spirit Circle* with Molly Doody. 7 p.m. By donation.

Four Phantoms Brewing, Greenfield: *Pub Sing*. 7 p.m. No cover.



WEDNESDAY, MAY 20

Energy Park, Greenfield: *Mental Health & Wellness Fair*. Forty-plus organizations including mental health and substance use services, crisis response, housing, food access, more. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free.

Montague Center Library, Montague Center: *Your Library, Your Voice*. Question-and-answer session on the proposed new main library. 6 p.m. Free.

Greenfield Public Library, Greenfield: *Beneath the Interstate: Uncovering the Story of Nash's Mills*, local history talk by Patrick McGreevy about the neighborhood dismantled for Route 91. 6 p.m. Free.

Our Lady of Peace, Turners Falls: *Meet Pope Leo XIV through the Eyes of a Villanova Classmate*, talk by Father Raymond Dlugos. 7 p.m. Free.

Taproot, Williamsburg: *Nash Otter, Carly Lara, Joseph Tracy*. 7 p.m. \$.

THCC, Easthampton: *Fuakata, HardCar, Marcie!*. 7 p.m. \$.

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

THURSDAY, MAY 21

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

FRIDAY, MAY 22

Camp Keewanee, Greenfield: *Dirtwire, Pink Talking Fish, Leon Trout, King Saison, Outer Style, Neighbor*, many more. 12 p.m. \$.

Unnameable Books, Turners Falls: *beetsblog, Ruby of Thanks*. 6 p.m. Free.

Last Ditch, Greenfield: *Two-Step Night*, with *Les Taiouts, Honky-Tonk Angels*, country karaoke. Masks req'd. 7 p.m. \$.

Pink Edwards, Greenfield: *The Maladaptive, Henning Ohlenbusch, Alex Leff*. 7 p.m. \$.

Shutesbury Athletic Club, Shutesbury: *The Pistoleros*. 7 p.m. No cover.

THCC, Easthampton: *The Agonizers, Knock Over City, Bastard Leg*. 7 p.m. \$.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *2 Car Garage*. 8 p.m. \$.

The Drake, Amherst: *Bunnies, Sunburned Hand of the Man, Wet Tuna*. 8 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Sleep Destroyer, Grazer, Feldspar 00000, Lula Fortune, Amateur Club*. 9:30 p.m. No cover.

SATURDAY, MAY 23

Northfield Mountain, Northfield: *Bird Walk* with local naturalist David Brown. Dress for the weather and bring binoculars. Meet at the center to carpool. 8:30 to 11 a.m. Free.

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WORDLY from page B1

world, and yet seem to be for the Lord.” (Trapp’s criticism enjoys an afterlife as a top historical reference in the expanded Oxford English Dictionary.)

Amphibian, like *reptile* (late 14th century, “creeping or crawling animal; one that goes on its belly on the ground on small, short legs,” from Old French), was a descriptive term before it was adopted as part of a rigid taxonomy. Many creatures lingered in the hazy overlap of *amphibian* and *reptile*, to the all-the-more marked exclusion of the snake, which was labeled a secret third thing, *serpent*, due to a lack of legs.

And, with the ignorance of a public school education and the cadence of astrologer and fellow Cancer Rob Brezny, let me ask: Wouldn’t our lives be better if we considered humans at least a little amphibious? Why splash at the beach, but not in the rain?

Many subjects are slippery when wet, especially if *slippery* means “semantically unstable.” Ever think about how *to slip* is to lose footing, often due to liquid, or to mispeak, revealing a truth; a *slipper* is a shoe; but *slippery* gets you back to water and deceit? *Cloud* literally means “mass of rock, hill” (Middle and Old English) – related to the word *clod*; furthermore, the cloud sub-type *cumulus* itself means “heap.”

The linguistic origin of the amphibious – that’s its modern scientific classification – *salamander* has been lost, but for centuries salamanders were elementally associated with fire – ergo the modern commercial broiler brand, Salamander Broilers, and its more historic kitchen counterpart, often a flat metal disc on a stick which would be heated in a fire and used to brown dishes.

For a time in early modern Europe, rumors persisted of a fire-resistant material named “salamander’s wool” – according to the O.E.D., the first reference was in

1626, prior to “amphibian.” The legendary cloth is now assumed to have been made with asbestos.

Asbestos itself (Greek for “in-extinguishable”) was a word that had initially been applied to quicklime, because of the intensely hot thermodynamic reaction caused by pouring water on that chemical compound. It’s ironic, then, that in modern usage asbestos is the name of a material which is inflammable even when exposed to flame.

And so on – you get the semantic drift.

For the weeks that *amphibian* has been tumbling around my head, so, too, has a particular phrase from the title of a Silvia Federici essay: *re-enchanted the world*. In her essay Federici pushes against the strict ordering of the world through capitalism, and the promotion of certain knowledge systems as totalizing fact.

To draw a thin connection between the two: As much as researchers, scientists, and David Attenboroughs have uncovered and shared about the nature of flora and fauna, there still remain mysteries, and statements now assumed factual which time will render ludicrous, or as tenuous as the salamander’s one-time reputation as a fire spirit.

Wonder, as much or more than knowledge, creates a satisfying relationship to the world. I guess my hope is that by gently probing these scientifically-coded words we can reintroduce a bit of mysticism – to live alongside, rather than lord over, the smallness of toads and the inconveniences of rain.

In her short story “Such Gentleness,” Clarice Lispector writes of the quiet peace of a storm: “I am at the window and this is all that happens: I see the rain with benevolent eyes, and the rain sees me in harmony with me. We are both busy flowing.”

Write in to wordly@montaguereporter.org with questions... or corrections!



The Wendell Meetinghouse congratulates selected performers, artists and event organizers!



2026 COMMUNITY ARTS & CONVERSATIONS

Seal LaMadeleine – All Voices Cabaret: Sap Rising! (April 25)

River (Sam) Stone – Conversations and Practice: A Tapestry of Peace & Action (April 6 and 20, May 4 and 11)

Jonathan von Ranson – Memoir reading, Discussion: A Wendell Path to Belonging (May 29)

Kady Woods – Workshop: Experiments in Block Printing (June 6)

Robbie Leppzer – Film Screening: An Artist Responds to War (Bread and Puppets’ Peter Schumann) (June 27)

Michael Nix – Lecture, Discussion, Performance and Workshop: New Classic Banjo Project (July 21, 23, 25 and 26)

Nisse Greenberg – Storytelling Workshops and Performance: Decades of Franklin County - Stories of our Time Here (July 29 and 30; Aug 2, 15 and 16)

Joe Laur – Show: Live Edge Comedy Club with guest comic, Hartford’s Darren Rivera (Sept. 10)

Re/emergence Collective – Devised Theater Workshops and Performances: We Are The People In the Room - Radical Connection in the Wake of Profound Isolation (July 19 and 24; Sept. 18, 19 and 20)

Chris Joseph – Installation: WeMailCoconuts Annual Retreat and Public Celebration (Sept. 3-6)

Rene Pfister – Musical Theater: What I Learned from Years of Therapy ... If Anything (Sept. 25 and 26)

Paul Richmond, Tony Vacca and John Sheldon – Workshops and Performance: Do It Now’s “Chuckie the Rooster” (Nov. 14)

This series is made possible with support from the Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts (CFNCM). Please join us & help us spread the word on these local and regional offerings in this community space.

For more information:
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