TURNERS FALLS MILLERS FALLS LAKE PLEASANT MONTAGUE CITY MONTAGUE CENTER GILL ERVING WENDELL LEVERETT

The Montague Reporter

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MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Trash Pickup Price May Rise; Tree Advisors 'Demoralized'

By JEFF SINGLETON

Monday's meeting of the Montague selectboard saw the latest chapter in the ongoing saga of determining who should be in charge of maintaining public shade trees, with town administrator Walter Ramsey proposing a new "operating protocol" for the tree warden, a role currently filled by the public works superintendent.

An attempt by former tree advisory committee member David Detmold to introduce a petition, signed by over 100 residents, calling for the appointment of a "public tree warden" outside the public works department (DPW) was declared out of order by selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz, but read onto the record by board member Nate Card.

The board also began the process of developing the next fiscal year's budget, with Ramsey identifying trash hauling as a major cost challenge and suggesting that trash sticker prices be increased for the first time in 19 years.

As the tree discussion began, Ramsey summarized a set of proposed protocols for the maintenance of Montague's public shade trees. These were a product of a midsummer selectboard meeting at which he had proposed to hand public works superintendent Sam Urkiel the tree warden job, which had once been elected but was now appoint-

see **MONTAGUE** page A6

ASHING PUMPKIN



NINA ROSSI PHOTO

A cautionary seasonal display, as seen on L Street in Turners Falls.

WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Wendell Joins Up With Effort Against Nuclear Annihilation

By JOSH HEINEMANN

The Wendell selectboard's October 21 meeting followed a quarterly meeting of the town's money managers, so the selectboard members and finance committee chair Meagan Sylvia had no break during two and a half hours of continuous meetings.

At the selectboard meeting Bruce Steadman, representing Mayors for Peace, a group of cities and towns that oppose nuclear proliferation, presented a packet of literature and urged the board to have Wendell join. Mayors for Peace was founded in 1982 at the Second Special Session of the United Nations (UN) on nuclear disarmament.

Member towns assume no obligation, but can participate in any of three programs: a children's art competition depicting the value of peace; an exhibition of posters showing the annihilation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; and distribution of seeds from *hibuki*, trees that survived the Hiroshima blast. Members also have the opportunity to send people to the UN to advocate for nuclear disarmament.

see **WENDELL** page A5

Town Meeting Satisfied With Explanation of School Study, Airport Bailout

By WILL QUALE

MONTAGUE – A healthy quorum of members passed all nine articles in just over two hours at Montague's special town meeting on Wednesday evening.

While three of the articles related to the airport, over a third of the time was devoted to discussion of the lone big-ticket item on the warrant, a proposed feasibility study for a renovated, expanded, or new elementary school for the Gill-Montague district.

The case for the $1.75 million appropriation – approximately 76.7% of which is expected to be reimbursed by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) – was made from the podium by capital improvements committee chair Greg Garrison and without a podium by elementary school building committee chair Steve Ellis.

Garrison related that the town's 2020 assessments of the Hillcrest and Sheffield elementary schools had focused on itemizing repairs and replacements the buildings would need over time, but had ignored the bigger picture: that both buildings

see **SATISFIED** page A3

Rendezvous Staff, Owners Unveil Plan for Cooperative



BRIAN ZAYATZ PHOTO

Logan Bryan (left), one of about 10 employees who plan to become worker-owners, and recent hire Alivia Liberty (right) at the Third Street bar and restaurant.

By SARAH ROBERTSON

TURNERS FALLS – When business owners decide they are tired of running a business they often have a difficult decision to make: to sell it, or shut it down. But some take a different path: converting their business to run cooperatively.

This week, the owners of the Rendezvous announced that they intend to do just that, selling their restaurant and bar in Turners Falls – known colloquially as "the Voo" – to employees and community members as a multi-stakeholder cooperative.

"These are people who have worked a very long time, doing very hard work, to produce quality food and drinks and experiences for the community," co-owner Chris Janke told the *Montague Reporter*. "We just want to see that work paid back."

Employees will have the option to buy an ownership stake in the Rendezvous for $1,000 each, giving them the ability to vote and run for seats on a new board of directors, and to have more of a say in how the business is run.

"I think it's honestly incredible," said Sage Thames, the Voo's front-of-house manager. "There's something about the culture here that is drastically different that I think allows for the co-op situation

see **CO-OP** page A4

More Oil Spills As Company Hopes to Finish Dam Repairs

By MIKE JACKSON

TURNERS FALLS – Locals watching the repair work on the bascule gates of the Turners Falls dam this year may have noticed a now-regular feature: floppy tubes of various lengths wrapped in fabric, floating in the water below the dam or wrapped and strewn around various parts of its machinery.

These are "booms" and "absorbent socks," and their function is to contain and sop up sheens of oily substance floating on the water surface – or to catch oils before they drip into the river.

The mechanisms that raise and lower the bascule gates – which are numbered 1 through 4 from the Turners Falls side – involve two pistons each, Pistons 1 through 8, being actuated via a hydraulic system. This machinery dates to the 1970s, and since at least early 2022 hydraulic fluid has repeatedly spilled into the Connecticut River as it breaks down.

In 2023, after a failure in a fluid line beneath Gate 2 caused an estimated 300 gallons of fluid to dump

see **SPILLS** page A3

Camper Builder Finds Beauty in Small Spaces

By BEN GAGNON

GREENFIELD – When Mark Mailloux wasn't busy working as a silversmith and a machinist, he would bring his young son Ben to the Shea Theater where they helped build sets and acted in plays.

"I was really into working at the Shea," said Ben Mailloux in a recent interview at his woodworking shop in Greenfield. "We were always building scenery and having to come up with creative solutions for things."

As Ben got older he worked with his father on their first mini-camper, a conversion of a purple Dodge van. After learning valuable lessons on the first project, he decided to try it himself by converting a Hyundai Entourage and hitting the road.

"I ripped out everything and made it into a one-person camper," said Ben. "I was determined to do the whole van life thing, so I saved up some money and left town."

He drove down the East Coast to Virginia, then headed west to Nashville and Austin before joining his girlfriend in Chicago, where he worked as a waiter. After two years he grew tired of the big city and missed western Massachusetts.

Living in Florence and working again in the restaurant business, Ben did carpentry work on the side and began to acquire more and more tools. It helped that his stepfather, Greg Perchemlides, was a carpenter by trade.

see **BUILDER** page A5



GAGNON PHOTO

Ben Mailloux puts finishing touches on a camper's tongue-in-groove wooden ceiling.

Can You Spot the Error Carefully Hidden in This Edition?

Tired of the Big City....A1
Deficient at This Point....A3
Addressing the Fluid Releases....A3
Doggedly Persistent....A4
Like Having a Turtle Shell....A5
Disbanding and Forming....A6
Stiff from Sitting Too Long....B1
Reputed to Be Witches....B1
Beyond the Long Arm of the Law....B1
Heightening the Tension....B2
Constantly Going Up and Down....B3
Determined to Cast a Spell....B4
De Manera General y Neutra....B5
Bad Indigestion, Bat Appreciation....B6
Bandit Queen, Plankton, Beak Investigation....B7
Dwelling on Worst-Case Scenarios....B8

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Letters to the Editors

A 'Yes' on Question 6

Over the past couple of weeks, I have spoken with more than 200 neighbors about Question 6, the Protect Water & Nature ballot initiative. I have heard overwhelming support for the measure, especially as people learn more about it.

My message to them has been simple: Question 6 protects local forests, farms, streams, rivers, and wildlife, while creating and improving parks, trails, and green spaces for public use – all without raising taxes.

Under this initiative, the existing sales tax on sporting goods and recreational equipment will be redirected into a dedicated account, generating up to $100 million annually to protect, restore, and create these outdoor spaces.

As of 2021, Massachusetts ranked last in the country in state park funding, despite having the nation's fastest-growing outdoor-recreation economy. Additionally, the state ranks 42nd in nature access for communities of color, with 79% of low-income residents living in nature-deprived areas.

Let's move Massachusetts to the forefront of conservation by voting "Yes" on Question 6.

Dan Leahy
Wendell

SIGN O' TIMES:



New cameras are posted down by the White Bridge in Turners Falls, and their poles bear this defensive sticker: 'Traffic Data Collection in Progress – This Is Not a Flock Camera – No Facial or License Plate Recognition'

A 'No' on Question 9

I am writing in response to Michael Dover's Letter to the Editors of October 22.

I am one of those voters who has a "No On 9" lawn sign. Mr. Dover can't imagine "why anyone would choose that path." Here is why. I wrote a book related to Massachusetts's gun laws, which is available on Amazon.com for $9.95, that explains why one would choose that path. I suggest he buy it and read it. There are many reasons to repeal this law.

Massachusetts overregulates firearms. This very lengthy, specific law contains provisions that go way beyond the purported claim to increase public safety, which I believe it does not do. I personally call it the "foot in the door" law.

This law (read the entire law), among its many other unnecessary provisions, calls for electronic registration of specific firearms. I view this as a precursor to further registration of all firearms, which is a very slippery slope that could ultimately lead to confiscation.

Smart people will vote 'No' on Question 9. The 'Yes' voters are feel-gooders with a superficial understanding of the Second Amendment to the US Constitution and don't realize how many states, specifically Massachusetts, infringe upon that Constitutional right.

Frank T. Traceski
Turners Falls

D.O. Big On 'West Along'

Thanks as always to David Brule *(West Along the River)* for reminding us where we are (and hopefully who we are) in this valley in the season in this land.

Don Ogden
Leverett

NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION



JaDuke Theater founder Nick Waynelovich (right) and employee Jonathan Diaz print a 60-inch-wide backdrop for a production of Shrek *on their HP 365 latex printer. The fabric panels for this show will take about 14 hours to print altogether, as the process requires 16 passes of ink per line and the material is heat-cured on its way through the machine. The complete set, when sewn together horizontally, will make a 40-foot-by-17-foot drop. The JaDuke Backdrops company was started in 2007, and now has 800 or so drops in stock that it rents out to theaters across the country.*

TURNERS FALLS AND VICINITY.

Compiled by MIKE JACKSON

Greenfield's premier hub for art-and-craft rascals, **Looky Here, is running a six-week art auction** as its main fundraiser this year. If you like bidding money or winning art, this is just the thing for you.

The auction opens with a reception this Friday, October 30 from 5 to 8 p.m.; the art can be seen from noon to 5 p.m. every day; and a closing celebration is scheduled for Saturday, December 12; all at the Chapman Street art space.

I had a look through the catalog online, and it's overwhelming – a hundred items, most of it art by locals, a lot of it incredible. We really live in a place, and in a time.

Speaking of time, this is the week we **confuse the cats again**. The hour from 1 to 2 a.m. Sunday will be done twice.

There are more pressing travesties than Daylight Savings Time, but that doesn't excuse it. In the old days we would at least have to reset each clock in our lives in the spring and fall manually, or even digitally, which put us at least somewhat in touch with the operation, but now a lot of them reset themselves without even asking.

And if they can do that, they can change the time on us whenever they want. Don't say I didn't warn you, people. *Don't say I didn't warn you.*

The ever-opportunistic Massachusetts Department of Fire Services is still trying to take advantage of the persistence of Daylight Savings with their "When You Change Your Clocks, **Check Your Alarms"** campaign.

"As we 'fall back' this weekend," state fire marshal Jon Davine says, according to a press release sent even to weird little newspapers, "please take a few minutes to check the manufacturing date on the back of your alarms, replace them if they're outdated, and put fresh alkaline batteries in the alarms that use them."

And, now that this boot is wedged in your attention door, change your smoke alarms every 10 years. And your carbon monoxide alarms, every five, seven, or 10 years depending on what the little sticker says.

We don't change the clocks, though! They just follow us around everywhere and change when the government tells them to. How are we ever going to remember the fire alarm batteries?

The Massachusetts Treasury's **Unclaimed Property Division** reminds you that you may have money stuck somewhere, wondering if you'll ever claim it. Daylight Savings is a great time to check for your name at *FindMassMoney.gov*.

I didn't find myself in there, so I keyed in the most recent person I had gotten an email from – a subscriber, whose name appears in this newspaper – and that person apparently has money to be claimed. You might too.

Heating fuel costs are way up this winter – like gasoline, partly because of the price of crude and mined straits and all that but partly just for profit's sake – but Massachusetts has put its **fuel assistance program** into turbo mode. This year any household that makes less than the median income is eligible for aid, if it heats with oil. If you heat with oil and you're reading this column you are likely eligible. This Daylight Savings weekend, check it out for yourself at *www.mass.gov/heatinghelp*.

Eligible, but feel you don't need it? That's great; thrift is a skill and a virtue. Consider this, though: you could apply, take the aid, and then donate exactly the exact amount of money saved to a cause that *does* need it. Food pantries, domestic violence survivor support, local art auctions, raccoon rehab, your cousin whose unemployment just ran out – you name it.

You have the power to reallocate funds to that deserving cause, and now that you have read this paragraph, not doing so is a decision you are actively choosing to make.

Greenfield Community College is hosting an open house Saturday, November 7 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. If you are interested in going, look it up – and consider this your encouragement! Walk-ins are welcome.

Computers are beginning to melt down all around us very slightly as the emergent gray goo evolves and sniffs at the cracks left open.

"Small businesses are facing a harmful technology gap that can feel insurmountable," writes Franklin County Chamber of Commerce downtown district coordinator Christian LaPlante. "You might have felt this way too."

Tuesday, November 10 at 10 a.m., the Chamber is bringing a local expert at cyber, Jeroen van der Maat of Northfield Tech Solutions, to the Montague town hall annex to lead a free workshop on **cybersecurity best practices for small businesses**. Register at *tinyurl.com/FightTheGoo* to make sure you get a seat.

Blind item: Fuck cancer.

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SATISFIED from page A1

have fundamental shortcomings in meeting the needs of students, teachers, and staff.

"From a capital planning standpoint, we need to understand what problems these repairs would solve and what problems would remain," Garrison explained. "How much more would we need to invest to meet the needs of our students, teachers, and communities for the next several decades? That is why the MSBA study matters."

Ellis didn't mince words as he took the microphone. "We have major expenses we have to pay for in order to keep the buildings we have functional," he said. "They are deficient at this point – substantially deficient. We are going to be paying one way or the other."

His tone turned more hopeful as he laid out four options the study would examine, and made clear that the cost to Montague taxpayers would be just under a quarter of the appropriation.

While town meeting must approve the entire cost up front, Ellis said he believed Montague will pay between $400,000 and $500,000, which will come from the capital stabilization fund.

In addition to determining the costs and challenges of bringing both Hillcrest and Sheffield up to code, moving all elementary school students into Sheffield, or constructing a new elementary school, Ellis said the study will explore whether elementary students can be moved into the high school.

"We don't know that that's the right plan," he noted, "but we have heard the community ask the question." He warned that the state reimbursement for that option would likely be substantially lower.



QUALE PHOTO

Members vote during the meeting in the Turners Falls High School auditorium.

"We would love questions," he concluded, "because questions are the way to truth and understanding." Town meeting members obliged for half an hour.

Addressing a concern raised by John Hanold of Precinct 5 that the town was already projected to exceed its allowed debt ratio with the recently-passed library and tech school building projects, town administrator Walter Ramsey clarified that while carrying debt payments of between 4% and 6% of general operating revenue is a "sweet spot," this was only "a recommendation – the town can absolutely go beyond that."

Precinct 4 member Fay Strongin requested to hear why two members of the finance committee had voted not to recommend the article.

"I was shocked at the cost," fin com member Leigh Rae replied, adding that "the circumstances we find ourselves in today are different" as the committee had held its vote prior to the October 6 elections on creating a Great River Regional School District and approving the tech school building. "I think it's really important for us to have the information we would gain from a study like this."

"My 'No' vote was from a need for information and specificity," lacking at the time the committee was asked to vote, Stuart Mieher explained. "Since then – in large part due to Steve and Greg presenting at the selectboard a couple weeks ago – I'm reassured on that front. I would be a 'Yes' if the vote were held today."

The discussion ran its course, and nobody felt compelled to call the question. Opposed voices were loud enough that members took a vigorous hint from moderator Lizbeth Irving and requested a tally. With 59 for and 17 opposed, the measure – which required a two-thirds majority – passed by eight votes.

Airport Hole

A requested $15,000 increase to the airport's FY'27 operating budget also drew pointed comments from several members, including Hanold, who complained that "year after year, we continue to fund the airport on a supplemental basis" and suggested that the department should better anticipate its expenses.

Matt Lord of Precinct 1 echoed this, urging airport manager Bryan Camden to "make a significant request, commensurate with your costs."

Ramsey said a "more collaborative model" was being developed to allow town hall staff to work closely with Camden and the airport commission, "to make sure things don't fall through the cracks."

Camden noted that the airport's revenues were short by $30,000 due to a long-term warehouse tenant abruptly vacating a year ago, on a request from its insurance company, and said the building would need substantial investment to make it attractive in today's market.

"When we're here in May," he said, "don't be surprised if the airport's asking for 40 to 50 thousand of additional taxation revenue."

Another article authorized the funding of eight "structural grant deficits" from free cash, situations in which anticipated payments were not received due to bureaucratic errors, long enough ago that the reimbursements are unrecoverable. Seven of the eight were airport grants from between 2021 and 2024.

Explaining that these had occurred under the tenure of her predecessor, town accountant Angelica Desroches described herself as an "end-of-the-year hawk" and promised it would not happen again.

"You think you can make everyone get their paperwork in on time?" asked Precinct 1 member Ariel Elan.

"Yes, unfortunately for them," responded Desroches.

Senior Leniency

A request by the selectboard that Montague "establish a program whereby persons over the age of sixty may volunteer to provide services to the Town in exchange for a reduction in their real property tax obligations" drew enthusiastic comments and questions which were fielded by Council on Aging (COA) director Roberta Potter.

Approved senior taxpayers would volunteer with the COA or Montague Public Libraries, and similar programs in Bernardston, Sunderland, Northfield, Erving, and Greenfield were reported to be running successfully.

It was estimated that about 10 residents would make use of the program in its first year.

With town meeting's unanimous vote, the details of Montague's program will be discussed at a selectboard meeting in November for review by the public and the board's final approval.

"We want to have folks start working in January," Ramsey said of the senior volunteers.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Discovery Center Friends Update

By LINDA HICKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – The Great Falls Discovery Center Museum Store was started over 20 years ago by the Friends of the GFDC. It sells a variety of gifts and books, mostly focused on the Connecticut River Valley and its inhabitants. The store is volunteer-run, and its proceeds help support the programs and gardens at the Discovery Center.

For the last 15 years it was managed by Karen Latka, a retired Greenfield Public Schools teacher who was also the treasurer of the Friends' board. Karen was passionate about volunteering at the GFDC, where she "worked to promote our love of our river, our heritage, and our towns. The Discovery Center is here to bring those pieces together for all who come through the doors."

Recently Karen moved far away to be near family. In her parting words at our annual meeting, she said: "We need people like you to share your thoughts, concerns, and hopes for the Center and the educational work we do for the region. I encourage you to consider becoming a member if you are not one or joining our board."

Volunteering in our Museum Store and on park cleanup days are other fun ways to become involved. For more information, please contact me at (413) 774-0204 or *Hickman.linda@yahoo.com*.

Linda Hickman is the president of the Friends of the Great Falls Discovery Center.


JANEL NOCKLEBY PHOTO

The author (left) and outgoing Friends of the GFDC treasurer Karen Latka proudly show off the litter they collected during a Park Serve Day in 2024.

SPILLS from page A1

into the river, dam owner FirstLight Power announced an ambitious project of repairing the system by removing and replacing one piston at a time. Gate 2 failed completely in June 2025, again spilling hundreds of gallons, and after the company repaired it the replacement project began with Gate 1 that fall.

The contractors returned this summer, and on August 1 FirstLight reported a new 15-gallon spill from Piston 7 to the state Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). Company spokesperson Claire Belanger told the *Reporter* this spill was "nominal," and confirmed it was "associated with the decommissioning" of the pistons.

Another spill was reported on October 8, this time from below Gate 2. Belanger said this was estimated to be a half gallon of fluid.

"We have had booms and absorbent materials in place since the onset of the work this summer," Belanger wrote, and the "releases... have been contained to the construction site and have not had a downstream impact."

Though official follow-up on the spills and their remediation had up until this point involved the town of Montague, someone has noticed that a town line directly intersects Gate 3, and the spill from Piston 7 therefore triggered the involvement of the Gill conservation commission.

"We were a little surprised by that, of course," Gill con com chair Brian Donahue told the *Reporter*. "They requested this formal emergency certification.... We made a site visit, and they showed us around and what was going on."

According to Donahue, the two towns have now agreed that Montague will have jurisdiction in matters concerning Gates 1 and 2, and Gill for Gates 3 and 4.


BRIAN ZAYATZ PHOTO

Above: Scaffolding on three of the gates' pistons; a boom and a sheen on the water.

"It's a big, complicated project," he said. "We're just keeping our eye on whatever comes on our side."

The con com voted 4-0 to grant a Wetlands Protection Act Emergency Certification Form authorizing the spill response, "per the direction of MassDEP Bureau of Waste Site Cleanup," and on September 30 the Tighe & Bond engineer serving as the Licensed Site Professional (LSP) for the project used it to file an Immediate Response Action Plan.

"Due to the replacement activities," it explains, "[Gate 3] is A-framed and the top pins of Piston 7 have been removed. After removal, it was determined that a faulty O-ring existed on this piston, causing the piston to automatically drop when the pins were removed."

Belanger said FirstLight hopes to replace all the remaining pistons this year, rather than on the original one-gate-per-year schedule.

"Given that the August and October releases were associated with the piston replacement effort," she told the *Reporter*, "completing that effort and concluding the onsite work is the final step in addressing the [fluid] releases."

"For perspective," she added, "each piston is 15 feet long when retracted, ~9 feet in circumference, weighs 14,500 lbs, and requires a crane on a barge to complete the removal and replacement."

Belanger said that after the pistons are replaced, the gates will no longer run on petroleum-based hydraulic fluid but instead on an "Environmentally Acceptable Lubricant (EAL) – a non-toxic, biodegradable product specifically designed for marine applications."

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CO-OP from page A4

to blossom." An experienced restaurant industry worker from Louisiana, Thames says she enjoys the safe and inclusive vibe at the Voo and plans to work while paying off her ownership stake in the business.

"Transitioning a business to a co-op is a way for your work to become meaningful," she said. "It gives us some sense of control over what we have to deal with as employees, when at most other jobs you just get told what to do."

Collective ownership could help the business address common staffing and scheduling issues that tend to cause burnout in the service industry, Thames said. Keeping up with all the meetings and details associated with the change, however, has been a challenge while balancing the day-to-day management.

"It's happening, we're going through it, but that's been one of the biggest struggles for me personally," she said.

Discussions about how the Voo could become a cooperative began in 2018, though progress was sidelined by the Covid pandemic.

Cambrie Carme, a Rendezvous employee since 2017, said she plans to buy a stake in the business too.

"I have stayed with the Voo for this long because I work for great people," Carme said. "[T]he community and workers will get to keep a piece of history alive that has been there for so many years and not just sold off to someone."

In its 130-year history, the bar on Third Street has served as a French-Canadian social club, a speakeasy, and a rowdy local dive bar. The first iteration named the Rendezvous opened in the 1930s, and from the 1970s to the '90s it was owned by Cambrie's cousin, Fran Carme.

Janke and his wife Emily Brewster bought, renovated, and reopened the Rendezvous as a restaurant with Mark Wisnewski in 2007. Open seven days a week for lunch and dinner, it regularly hosts live music, bingo nights, art exhibits, and other events.

"We've become a cornerstone of downtown Turners Falls," Wisnewski said. "I think a lot of people wouldn't like to see it change hands, which could mean a dramatic change in the business."

Spreading the Equity

Creating a multi-stakeholder structure has been the Voo's answer to one of the main hurdles small businesses face in converting to co-ops: employees left with significant debt after they borrow or raise funds to purchase the business.

The staff at Real Pickles raised half a million dollars to buy their Greenfield food-processing facility in 2013 and formed a worker-owner cooperative, and Dean's Beans and the Regenerative Design Group have made similar transitions in recent years, but there are few cooperative restaurants; the nearest is the Flat Iron, a café in Bellows Falls.

In 2023 a new music venue, The Heavy Culture Cooperative, opened in Easthampton as a multi-stakeholder co-op after raising enough money from community members to renovate and open its space.

"The local metalheads and punks all knew there was enough of a crowd to support something like this, but convincing a bank or prospective landlord that a niche underground music venue will be viable is a different battle," founder and board member John McLaughlin told the *Reporter*. "A lot of people also just seem to be fed up with traditional corporate structures, where the people with the most money get to drown out the other voices."

The Voo's owners had the business and its assets – including the building, with a residential apartment upstairs – appraised at $690,000, and have agreed to sell everything to the co-op for $590,000. The Cooperative Fund of the Northeast (CFNE) may loan $390,000, leaving about $200,000 to raise from the community.



BRIAN ZAYATZ PHOTO

Of the roughly 25 full-time and part-time employees, about 10 plan to buy a share of the business, according to Wisnewski. Employees who opt out will keep their jobs, but won't vote on co-op decisions.

"Asking these workers to come up with the hundreds of thousands of dollars to buy the place themselves is an unreasonable approach," Janke said. "We also see the community as one of the major beneficiaries here, so why not spread out the equity of that investment?"

Under the multi-stakeholder model, the Rendezvous would be overseen by a five-member board. Three members would be worker-owners elected by their colleagues, and two would be community stakeholders elected by fellow at-large members.

Anyone can join by contributing a one-time payment of $200, which comes with the ability to vote on major co-op decisions, serve on its committees, and receive occasional discounts on food and drinks. Nobody may own more than one share.

"We've always wanted to leave the workers with more power than community members, because it's their livelihood," Wisnewski said. "Our entire goal is to hand over a successful and profitable business to our workers…. To see it fail would be to fail at the entire reason for doing all of this."

Breaking New Ground

Suzette Snow-Cobb, associate director of the Neighboring Food Co-op Association and one of the Voo's first community owners, said she encouraged the owners to try the multi-stakeholder model, more commonly used by food co-ops.

"If we are invested in keeping businesses like the Rendezvous in our midst, it makes sense for us to have a little more commitment," Snow-Cobb said. "Their goal is not to make some other outside entity wealthier, their goal is to provide a service. It's a very simple thing, but it's a very significant thing."

The approach has not been without obstacles. The owners recently spent several thousand dollars on lawyers to determine how to transfer the liquor license to the cooperative, and how tip pooling among co-owners would work.

"They are breaking new ground in figuring that out," Snow-Cobb said. "They've been doggedly persistent."

They have also been consulting with various cooperative development agencies, including CFNE, about how to finance the transition.

"It's a trend nationally, it's a trend in the region, and that trend in particular has momentum in western Massachusetts," CFNE executive director Micha Josephy told the *Reporter*. "What I love about this work is that it's preserving something that's successful, which is always easier than creating something new."

Founded in 1975, CFNE manages a $50 million loan fund supporting 150 co-ops in New England and New York, including such local institutions as the River Valley Co-op, Collective Copies, Dean's Beans, and Real Pickles.

"I think the rural, small-town nature of those areas is particularly well-suited for existing businesses that are successful at selling to their workers," Josephy said. "When a small business closes, there's generally not another small business coming in, so you're seeing consolidation that concentrates power in corporations not based in the region."

Another local CFNE loan recipient, Northeast Biodiesel, closed its biofuel manufacturing facility in Greenfield in 2024 after 16 years of trying to develop a sustainable multi-stakeholder business model.

Today, more resources are becoming available to support worker cooperatives. The Massachusetts Center for Employee Ownership announced a new grant program this month that would cover a portion of the cost for businesses to study the feasibility of worker ownership. CFNE is also part of the Northeast Transition Initiative, which works to promote co-ops as viable exit plans for aging business owners.

"Since so many businesses are owned by baby boomers, it's having an impact on the small business landscape," Josephy said. "And it's happening at a time when co-op conversions are gaining traction."

Managers and staff at the Rendezvous will continue to handle most of the restaurant's day-to-day operations, and the current owners plan to stay on as long as necessary to ensure a smooth transition.

"We're not in a rush to make ourselves scarce," said Brewster. "We want to do whatever we can to get them to a place where they don't need us anymore."

Information sessions about the cooperative will be hosted at the Rendezvous, 78 Third Street in Turners Falls, next Thursday, November 5 at 8 p.m. and Saturday, November 7 at 2 p.m., with more yet to be scheduled.

This article was copublished with The Shoestring (theshoestring.org).

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BUILDER from page A1

"I had two father figures, and they were both handymen and carpenters," said Ben. "I learned the proper way to do things from both of them, and I'm still learning and teaching myself all the time."

Soon he built his first trailer-camper "from the ground up," and often brought it to a KOA campground in New Hampshire.

"I like the idea of a temporary house, this little enclosed world you bring with you anywhere you want to go and then you can pack up and go whenever you want," said Ben. "It's like having a turtle shell – you can be on the move, but you're at home."

After building another mini-camper under a makeshift tent in his driveway, he began to fantasize about having his own workshop and ultimately landed a 1,000 square foot space behind El Greco in Greenfield.

"At first I built the campers for fun, but then I put a picture on Facebook and one of my dad's friends bought it for a guest house in his backyard, but he didn't use it much and decided to sell it," said Ben. "One day I was walking my dog [in Montague City], and there it was in front of this big garden. Steph [George] was outside, and I said, 'Hey, I built that!'" George uses the camper as an attraction for people to pick up free vegetables and flowers.

Today Ben specializes in home renovation such as decks, doors, windows, floors, and kitchens. He has also had steady work making display cabinets for Treeworks Collective, which manufactures cannabis products in West Hatfield.

"Some days are a slog, ripping apart rotten walls that smell like mouse poop, but other days are fun, cool, and creative," he said. "I like a variety of work, making funky tables and cool furniture. I like using finishing tools to make delicate pieces and making things look pretty. I like figuring out what's needed to get from A to B, and how to get there. At the end of the day, people are always happy when their house looks better."

Ben may have inherited his sense of aesthetics from his mother, Jacinda Stone, a quilter and painter. When it comes to producing mini-campers, though, his artistic approach is both a blessing and a curse.

"I've thought about doing the campers full time, but I'm not sure how I can create the level of detail I want and still make it profitable," he told the *Reporter*. "I think it could be OK if I worked with a customer from the beginning on what they want rather than just making one on spec."

The nearly finished mini-camper now taking up space in his workshop shows how dedicated Ben is to aesthetic curves and finishing touches. The tongue-in-groove rounded ceiling creates a spacious feel, and there's a curved dormer above the hobbit-like door that was made from reclaimed wood, complete with a round window.

"It's kind of like a big mailbox," he observed. "I like it better than the store-bought campers that look like a canned ham. Now I need to cut up a mattress and make cushions." Upon reflection, Ben recalled that his inspiration may have come from his father once building a covered Conestoga Wagon with a curved top, like those used by 19th-century pioneers.

In his free time, Ben is passing on his passion for small and enclosed but comfortable spaces. He recently built a triangular-shaped tree house for his girlfriend's son where they can all watch movies at night.

"I always wanted a tree house when I was little," he said. "It's kind of like a mini-camper in a tree – they're all like little forts."

More info and photos can be found on Instagram @halfpinthomes.


GAGNON PHOTO

Mailloux peers out from the door of an almost-finished mini-camper.

WENDELL from page A1

The selectboard approved joining. The annual membership fee comes to approximately $12.60, and Sylvia approved this expense.

Bridges & Buildings

Highway commission chair Phil Delorey reported that the Farley bridge work had been completed, and that the work passed state inspection. Wendell, as the lead town on the shared project with Erving, is now waiting for the state reimbursement to come through so it can pay the contractors.

Facilities manager Stephen Broll said he had submitted a scope of work for the repair of water damage at the town hall to Town coordinator Kelly Tyler for any corrections needed before it goes out to bids.

The town's insurance policy does not require contractors to carry their own insurance, but if a contractor does not have insurance, their bid must include the cost of such insurance. Sylvia said a contractor's waiver of liability means nothing in reality. Sole proprietors are exempt from carrying workman's compensation insurance.

Broll said the space between the two bathrooms needs to be kept clear to meet the ADA requirement that both doors can be opened fully, and recommended installing a permanent sign to that effect. After the new floor is installed in the all-gender washroom, he recommended another sign to remind people that nothing should be stored there.

Design work for the installation of an above-ground oil tank at the highway garage and fire station has started, so it can go out for bids and the town can look for funding.

Broll said he had talked with state representative Aaron Saunders about the building and its many small issues. Saunders told him the state likes to help towns get projects started, and recommended applying for a feasibility grant through the One Stop for Growth portal. Treasurer Carolyn Manley suggested checking to see if the town can get a Green Communities grant for the building.

Other Business

Tyler said Wendell firefighters, being non-career firefighters, are each entitled to $808,000 in accidental life and disability insurance, but that fire chief Matt O'Donnell, as a career firefighter, is only allowed $100,000. Bringing his insurance level up to that of the rest of the department would cost Wendell $109 for the remainder of FY'27.

With Sylvia's approval, board members approved that expense.

The board appointed Bill Wait to the school committee for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Tyler said she only received one response, from Minuteman Pest Control, to survey town buildings to find potential entryways for mice. Citizen Alison Wight said she had issues with Minuteman, and Tyler agreed to talk with her, but board members agreed to use Minuteman's services if there is no other choice.

Tyler said she had collected and bagged the bait traps from the town office building, and that the bait had probably expired anyway. Selectboard member Paul Doud said he had not seen any mice in the newer snap traps yet.

Manley told the *Reporter* that at the money managers' meeting, the purchase of a new digital lockbox for the town hall key was approved.

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The Town of Leverett Municipal Light Plants is seeking bids to complete repairs and new installations and maintain as-builts as needed to maintain the Fiber to the Home active ethernet system built between 2013 and 2015.

All Bidders must be qualified to work in electric space. Bid documents and specifications are available by emailing *townadministrator@leverett.ma.us*.

Questions regarding the specifications or IFB requirements will be accepted in writing only to *townadministrator@leverett.ma.us* until **November 13, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.** A response will be published to all questions received as an Addendum.

Sealed bids, plainly marked "Bid for Fiber Optic System Maintenance" and addressed to Marjorie McGinnis, LMLP Manager, 9 Montague Road, PO Box 300, Leverett, MA 01054, **must be received no later than December 7, 2026 at 2:00 p.m., at which time the bids will be publicly opened and read.**

The Town of Leverett reserves the right to reject any and all bids in whole or in part, and to waive irregularities and informalities, when at its sole discretion it is deemed to be in the best interest of the Town and to the extent permitted by law.

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MONTAGUE from page A1

for three years. Ramsey had promised to establish clear protocols for the trees, as well as the relationship between the DPW and the town's tree advisory committee.

This had received a negative reaction from many of the residents at that meeting, who said that the warden has tended to cut down trees without the public hearings required under both state law and the town's own tree bylaw, and that the position was falling into the lap of a public works superintendent who did not have time to do the job properly. Card also said he saw a "conflict of interest" in having the public works department, which was primarily responsible for infrastructure, make decisions about the town "canopy."

The board had then voted to whittle Urkiel's appointment down to one year, with a "check-in" in six months, and tasked a committee composed of Ramsey, Urkiel, and one member each of the selectboard and tree advisory committee with drafting protocols.

The discussion at this week's meeting was a "first reading" of the draft document, which Ramsey said had been written with Card, reviewed by Urkiel, and also sent to the tree advisory committee "a few months ago" for comment. Only one member, professional forester Hayden Stebbins, had responded, Ramsey said, but "he gave some really good comments," "pretty much all of which" were used in the draft.

There was very little discussion of the nine-page document, which would give the public works department near-total authority over when and where to plant and remove trees. For example, the often controversial decision to declare a tree an "imminent risk," and therefore subject to removal without a hearing, is left up to the tree warden, though they must apply a standardized rating system. All removals must then "be reported to the Tree Advisory Committee after the fact, at least annually."

Former tree committee member David Detmold then came before the board with a petition, bearing 112 signatures of local residents, that called on the board to rescind its July vote to appoint Urkiel as the tree warden and instead appoint "a public tree warden who does not work for the DPW."

Card read the petition, which said the signers "deeply respect" the work of the DPW, onto the record in full.

Detmold began to discuss it in more detail, but was interrupted by Kuklewicz, who suggested that it was out of order. "We're not here to discuss the petition, just the protocols," Kuklewicz said, asking Ramsey to put the petition on a future meeting agenda.

Detmold later told the *Reporter* that he felt the tree advisory committee, which he described as "demoralized," should consider disbanding and forming a new committee independent of the town that could advocate for and organize tree planting, as is the case in Greenfield.

This idea has the support of tree advisory committee chair Bill Codington, who said his committee has not been able to obtain a quorum for meetings in recent months.

Disbanding the advisory committee would require revising the draft protocols, which, while not granting the committee decision-making power, are littered with references to it acting in an advisory capacity.

This includes the final sentences, which portray the DPW's role as a work in progress:

"This protocol should be reviewed after six months of use and then annually, or sooner if directed by the Selectboard. The review should include the Tree Warden, Town Administrator, and representation from the Tree Advisory Committee."

Card said he hoped the tree advisory committee could reorganize in the coming months in order to advise that process.

Driven By Trash

The selectboard approved a two-year trash and recycling hauling contract with Casella Waste Management, as well as a 10-year contract with the state Department of Transportation for Chapter 90 highway repair aid. The board then heard an initial review of the next fiscal year's town revenue and expense projections from Ramsey.

"The cost of everything keeps going up," Ramsey reported, estimating that the town currently faces a $578,000 gap between annual revenues and expenses, approximately 1.7% of a total of $33.29 million. The revenue projection assumes that the town would maintain the same "excess capacity" – the amount below the taxation limit set by the state law known as Proposition 2½ it chooses to tax – as it has for the current fiscal year.

Though Ramsey noted that much of the growth in expenses would be driven by contractual increases in staff wages and benefits, he focused on a projected 16.9% increase in the public works budget, driven primarily by trash hauling costs in the newly-approved contract with Casella. "That's our biggest budget gap we have control over," he told the board.

It soon became clear that by "control," Ramsey meant the authority to increase trash sticker prices. He recommended an increase from $3 to $5 for each basic trash bag sticker, and from $156 to $260 for the annual barrel fee. He estimated that these increases would nearly eliminate the department's budget gap.

Though the board did not need to make a decision on that issue immediately, Ramsey said he would soon be issuing guidance to departments for their initial draft budgets, which will be due in December. As in recent years, he said, he plans to request budgets reflecting both "level funding" and "cost reduction" scenarios.

Kuklewicz noted that collaboration with the finance committee, which serves as the financial arm of town meeting, was a key part of the budgeting process. Ramsey said he planned to propose a "financial summit" involving the selectboard, the fin com, and the capital improvements committee in early March.

Other Business

The selectboard authorized assistant town administrator Chris Nolan-Zeller to apply for Montague's participation in the state's Clean Energy and Environmental Legacy Transition (CELT) fellowship program, which pays college students to assist municipalities in developing decarbonization and clean energy projects.

After a number of announcements about upcoming events, including the Rag Shag Parade down Avenue A at 5 p.m. this Saturday and the Soap Box Races at Unity Park at noon this Sunday, the board retired into an executive session to discuss the town's strategy for negotiating with the New England Police Benevolent Association.

The next selectboard meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 2.



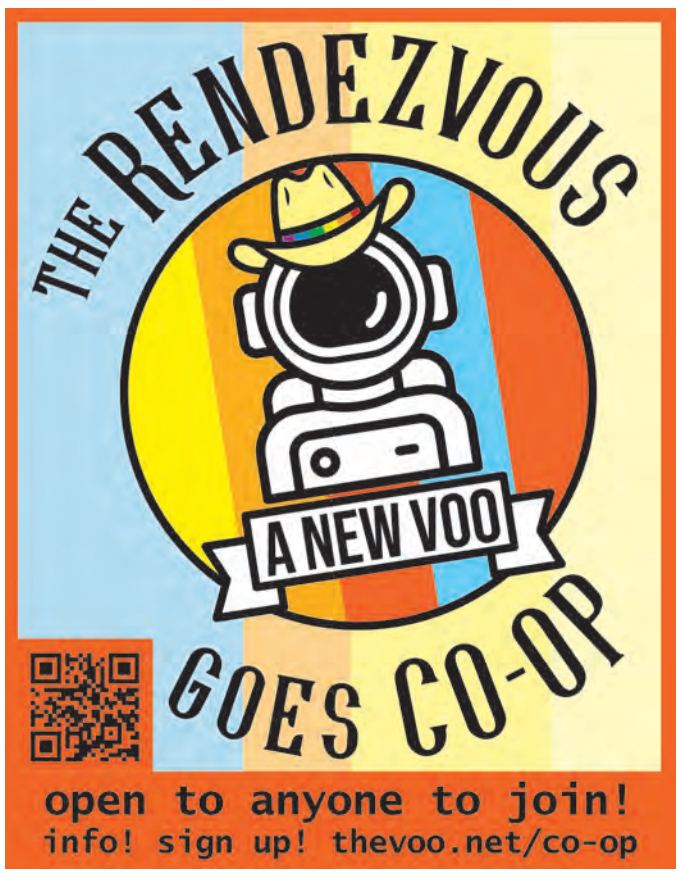


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Year 24 – No. 42

B1

MoRe

features@montaguereporter.org OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER OCTOBER 29, 2026

WILLIAM HAYS PHOTO

Above: Leisurely autumnal scenes on Avenue A.

The Week in High School Sports: FCTS Teams Continue Into Playoffs

By MATT ROBINSON

TURNERS FALLS – The regular fall season ended this week, and the PVIAC Western Mass and Vocational playoffs kicked off. The Franklin Tech golfers competed in the state Golf-Off before hanging up their bags, and the Football Eagles used their ground attack to declaw the Athol Red Bears.

This week I only went to games on Tuesday and Wednesday, due to illness and attending the *Clue: Murder Mystery* play at the high school. While Wednesday's volleyball and field hockey stats came in too late to publish, Tuesday's soccer game was off the rails, as the Franklin Tech boys cleared the PVIAC first round in double overtime.



DAVID HOITT PHOTO

Franklin Tech's Josiah Muniz (in front) fires one into the goal as Tech overpowered the visiting Libertas Academy Charter School 7-0 in Turners Falls last Thursday.

Girls' Volleyball

FCTS 3 – SICS 1
Mohawk 3 – TFHS 1
SSTHS 3 – FCTS 2

On Monday, the Franklin Tech Eagles defeated visiting Springfield International Charter School in the quarterfinal round of the Western Mass Class C volleyball tournament. The Eagles lost the first set but rebounded and swept the next three for the victory, advancing to the semifinal round against the Pioneer Valley Christian Academy.

The Turners volleyballers traveled up the Mohawk Trail the next night to take on the Warriors in the Class D quarterfinals.

After dropping the first set 25-18, the Thunder bounced back to

see **SPORTS** page B2



Finding Our Way Through the Holidays

By LEE WICKS

MONTAGUE CENTER – The holiday season is coming around too fast. Some stores are already selling Christmas decorations while people are just starting to plan for Halloween and Thanksgiving, and not everyone is eager for the festivities to begin.

This is not a joyous season for all, especially elders who have watched their families dwindle while friends die or struggle with age-related conditions. The holidays can be a painful reminder of loss.

Also, travel can be daunting for elders. We get stiff from sitting too long, no longer drive at night, need frequent stops for bathroom breaks, and dread driving on the most traveled days of the year.

I remember a long-ago year when family in Brooklyn, New Jersey, Queens, and Massachusetts tried to gather for Thanksgiving. One person refused to drive across the George Washington Bridge. Uncle Marty had to stay close to the dialysis facility. My mother didn't like large gatherings where her hearing aids only amplified all conversations, making her feel overwhelmed by background noise. We gave up, and I was annoyed at all the elders. Now I understand.

Over time, various people in my family became vegetarian or vegan (no turkey or butter), stopped eating gluten (no stuffing), gave up dairy (no pumpkin pie), observed restrictive low-fat diets (no eggs or gravy), or gave up Thanksgiving completely. After learning, from friends and online sources, that Thanksgiving combines harvest gathering, political mythmaking, and the violent displacement of Indigenous peoples, the knowledge was enough to send members of my immediate family to Plymouth where there's an annual Day of Mourning.

What happened to the good old days, I sometimes ask, and then pause to examine the reality. When I was growing up, relatives gathered at our house in Brooklyn for Thanksgiving. My father, who owned a grocery store and worked impossible hours leading up to the day, could barely keep his eyes open; my aunts didn't

see **ELDERS** page B8



POLLY FRENCH ILLUSTRATION

WEST ALONG THE RIVER

BLUE RUIN AND THE STOWELL WITCHES

By DAVID BRULE

MILLERS FALLS – This is the season for stories of the dark power and forces that surround us and draw us in, if only for a short period, as we approach the Dark Month that is November.

It is the time of year to harken back to the days of Granny Stowell and her daughter Dycie. Dycie's full name was Boadicea, the ancient pagan name of a very strong woman of mystery and legend.

The Stowells lived at the mouth of the Millers River, described in the *Harper's Magazine* of 1882 as a landscape of "brooding hills, with the dark angry Millers River below."

Now if you are familiar with that beautiful and placid site of today, it is difficult to imagine the site described by *Harper's*. Today the mouth of the Millers is typically a stretch of flat calm waters entering the Connecticut, just below the French King Bridge. On the rocky shore still sits the property known as Cabot Camp.



Witch Flying On A Broom, from Harper's Magazine, 1858

But in the 1880s and before, the Stowell homestead was set against the gentle slope just below the sprawling hillside farmed since the 1920s by the Waidlich family.

Local legend has it that the Stowells lived on this site, and that the two Stowell women were reputed to be witches. Now, looking at Granny and Dycie from the 2026 perspective, we have to be careful to not leap too quickly in passing judgment on these two women. Some of our best friends are of the wiccan persuasion, and given the horrific stories that linger in and about Salem, we should be circumspect in our opinions.

Granny's husband himself, however, was convinced that he had married a witch, and that he had heard her selling herself to Satan out behind the barn one winter's night.

Now back in those days, there was an infamous tavern along a deserted stretch of the Connecticut River, just upstream from the Stowell home. Granny, Dycie, and that tavern are forever entwined in a mysterious local legend.

The Durkee Tavern was located in an all-but-forgotten place known as Point Pleasant, just up from the French King Rock.

According to historical record, three generations of Durkees ran the tavern, and farmed at Point Pleasant. The tavern was built by Thomas Durkee and was run by Thomas and his son Jeremiah. Two of Thomas's grandsons, Oscar and Lauriston, were born in the tavern and kept the farm going into the 1920s.

Built along a traditional Indian path to Squakheag (Northfield), the tavern was well situated when that trail became a stagecoach road in the 1770s. The tavern became a regular stop on the Hartford-to-Brattleboro line.

As the region developed, locks and canals were built in the 1820s to help move goods up the rapids surrounding the French King Rock, and by the 1880s came the advent of the legendary log drives on the Connecticut.

The tavern, just far enough out of any town to be slightly beyond the long arm of the law, became infamous and legendary in local lore for raucous nights on the riverbank, a gathering place for storytellers, riverboat men, log drivers, carousers, and drinkers of the bad, low-quality Jamaican rum known locally as "Blue Ruin."

Lauriston Durkee, born in 1840, became an influential and wealthy entrepreneur. Perhaps owing to the experience of his father and grandfather in the tavern business, Lauriston made his money in importing and selling liquor, especially the rotgut rum he brought in from Jamaica.

Dycie and the Durkee tavern became eternally entwined when

see **WEST ALONG** page B4

Pet of the Week


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Senior Center Activities

NOVEMBER 2 THROUGH 6

GILL and MONTAGUE

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

Monday 11/2
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
2:30 p.m. Drop-in Quilling Group
Tuesday 11/3
Closed for Elections
Wednesday 11/4
9 a.m. Veterans' Agent
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
1 p.m. Bring Your Lunch Bingo
4 p.m. Mat Yoga
Thursday 11/5
10:30 a.m. Brown Bag Lunch
1 p.m. Pitch
3:30 p.m. Montague Neighbors Board Meeting
Friday 11/6
SHINE Counselor by Appointment
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
2 p.m. Chair Dance

LEVERETT

Chair Yoga classes are held Wednesdays at 10 a.m., hybrid, at the town hall and on Zoom. Foot care clinics are the third Tuesday of each month. The next clinic is November 17. Luncheons are held on the fourth Friday of each month at town hall. For more information, contact (413) 548-1022 or *coa@leverett.ma.us*, or check the town newsletter or the Leverett-Connects listserv.

ERVING

Open Mondays through Fridays from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 1 Care Drive. Daily snacks and coffee. Fitness room and pool table open.
Monday 11/2
8:15 a.m. Nail Clinic
9 a.m. Good for U
10 a.m. Seated Fitness
12 p.m. Pitch Game
1 p.m. Yoga
Tuesday 11/3
9 a.m. Stretch and Balance
10 a.m. Line Dancing
11 a.m. Social Stringer
Wednesday 11/4
9 a.m. Interval Training
10 a.m. Chair Aerobics
11:30 a.m. Bingo
1 p.m. Veterans' Services
Thursday 11/5
9 a.m. Barre Fusion
10 a.m. Pilates Flow
12 p.m. Brown Bag Lunch
Friday 11/6
8:30 a.m. Quilting/Open Sew

WENDELL

Foot care clinic is the first Wednesday of each month. The next clinic is November 4. Call Katie Nolan at (978) 544-2306 for information or appointments.

For Senior Health Rides, contact Nancy Spittle at (978) 544-6760.

SPORTS from page B1

even it up 25-16 in the second, but the Warriors won the next two to ice the win. Abby Moffatt finished with 19 digs, Maddie Haight gave 13 assists and Jakhia Williams, made nine kills.

On Wednesday the Eagles fell in five sets to the visiting South Shore Tech Green Vikings in the semifinal round of the MVADA vocational school tournament. This Thursday they travel to Springfield for the PVIAC semifinal, against the top-ranked and undefeated Pioneer Valley Christian Academy Eagles.

Football
FCTS 44 – Athol 14

Last Thursday the Football Eagles used their ground game to bury the visiting Red Bears.

Because of the team's pound-and-ground rushing attack, Mason Bassett only threw three passes the whole game, going three-for-three for 57 yards and two touchdowns. His targets were Hunter Donahue and Cole Bassett.

On the ground the Eagles amassed an incredible 362 yards, with eight different players carrying the ball, spearheaded by Brady Gancarz (199) and Wyatt Whitman (73). Scoring points for the Eagles were Gancarz (18), Whitman (10), Donahue and Cole Bassett (6 each), and Justin Lent and Jaxon Silva (2 each). Defensively, Donahue and Cole Gamache made sacks, while Donahue and Silva grabbed interceptions.

The Eagles strap their helmets back on this Friday for a home match against Mahar.

Golf

Franklin Tech's golfers went out to Stockbridge on Monday for the state finals and placed ninth, just two strokes behind Ipswich. Competing for Tech were Jack Day (81), Breaden Talbot (82), Brady Wood (87), Grady Deery (97), Everett Eichorn (98), and Colton Kingsbury (108).

Field Hockey
FCTS 4 – Mahar 1
FCTS 5 – Montachusett 0
TFHS 1 – Palmer 0

On Monday the Sticking Eagles won their last regular-season game against the Mahar Senators in Orange, earning them a 13–3–1 record. Leah Meattey, Amelia Rider, Emmy Godfrey, and Abi Dobias all scored goals for Tech, while Dobias, Nora Cutting, and Ava Worden gave assists. In goal Redyn Gutierrez made two saves.

On Wednesday the Eagles blanked Montachusett in the MVADA small vocational tournament, shutting the Monty Tech Bulldogs out 5-zip and advancing to the state finals.

The top-seeded Eagles will first take on Hampshire this Thursday, however, in the semifinal round of the PVIAC Class C tourney.

And across Millers Falls Road, the Turners Falls Blue Thunder went out on a positive note, shutting out Palmer 1-0 in a consolation dustup.

Boys' Soccer
FCTS 7 – LACS 0
Westfield Tech 2 – FCTS 0
FCTS 2 – Pathfinder 1 (2OT)

Tech's soccer team completed their regular season last Thursday with a drubbing of the Lions of Libertas Academy Charter School, earning a 13–1–1 season record. Their seven goals were scored by seven different kickers – Cody Yetter, Nathan Gheorghita, Kaiden Price, John Gheorghita, Santiago Buri Rosales, Josiah Muniz, and Westin Tela – with assists from Price, Conner Herzig, Axel Martin, and Jacob Thomas.




DAVID HOITT PHOTOS

Top: Franklin Tech's Jaxon Silva (right) intercepts a pass intended for Liam Flynn (left) during the Eagles' 44-14 rout of the Athol Bears last Thursday. Assisting in the play is Tech's Jed Niquette (center).

Above: Turners Falls's Rooney Galvez-Mendez (left) and Zeke Diaz (right) join in celebrating Brian Solano's goal last Friday against Pioneer Regional School. Turners' JV squad ended their season's final game in a 3-3 tie with the Panthers.

On Monday, the Eagles suffered what was only their second defeat of 2026 at the hands and feet of Westfield Tech, eliminating them from the state vocational tournament in the semifinal round.

The next day, however, they advanced in the Western Mass Class C PVIAC tournament after outlasting the Pathfinder Pioneers in the second overtime.

The first thing I noticed as I entered Tuesday's game was the greeter at the gate. In lieu of the admission price, they were accepting donations for longtime supporter and standout singer Kevin Hollister, who is facing a major medical setback. During the game, instead of calling out "family" when they entered the field, the team instead chanted "Kevin."

The second thing I noticed was the volume of sound from the benches. While most of the spectators were bundled under blankets and winter coats, the two coaches were screaming so loud their voices carried into the parking lot. By the end of the match, both were hoarse.

There were plenty of preteen kids at the game, playing on the sidelines under the full Hunter's Moon. These are the times they will remember, outside in the dark on a cold autumn night. I certainly remember going to sporting events as a kid, playing with my friends and trying to stay warm.

The first goal came at 6:42 of the first half, putting the Eagles in a 1-0 hole. But at 24:34 of the second half, Dorin Marin took possession on the near sideline and shot the ball across the crease where Cody Yetter was positioned. Yetter shot it into the net to tie it up.

This seemed to give the Eagles momentum, and for the rest of the half they kept the play in Pioneer land, making several shots on goal. But the Pathfinder goalie stopped every kick, keeping the game knotted up through the end of regulation.

In the first sudden death overtime, coach Dan Prasol begged his players not to leave anything in the gas tank. Tech ran attack after attack, but each one was thwarted, and the first overtime ended in a stalemate.

"I don't want to go into a shootout," Prasol called out to his players as they broke for the second OT. The fans on both sides of the pitch, who had been sitting on their hands for most of the contest, began revving up, calling encouragements of their own to the players.

And finally Tech scored, and the crowd erupted – but the officials waved it off. "It was offsides right before the ball entered the goal," one ref called to both benches.

And the game dragged on until the clock froze at two minutes, heightening the tension. The Eagles kept the pressure up on the Pioneer defense, until finally Gheorghita got the ball and fed it to Yetter, who scored a game-winning goal, elating the home crowd and earning the Eagles their way into the semifinal round.

They face the sixth-seeded Lenox Millionaires in a home game this Friday, Halloween Eve.

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LOOKING BACK:
10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here's the way it was on October 27, 2016: News from the Montague Reporter *archive.*

Two Finalists Interview

This Thursday, the Montague selectboard will interview two finalists for the top position at town hall. The meeting is open to members of the public, and votes may be taken.

The first candidate, Andrea Llamas, served as town administrator in Ashfield from 2005 to 2008, and since then has held the same position in Buckland. She is a past chair of the Small Town Administrators of Massachusetts. The second, Steven Ellis, is a former Montague town meeting member who works as a senior research manager at UMass's Donahue Institute.

According to executive assistant Wendy Bogusz, they are the only two candidates being interviewed. One or the other may be hired to replace Frank Abbondanzio, who announced in July that he expected to retire December 6.

Pumpkins Line Up

The Franklin County Pumpkinfest will enliven Avenue A this Saturday, October 29. The event is in its seventh year, and has grown into a very popular festival, drawing thousands of visitors to Turners Falls for the day-long festivities.

While the total amount of jack o'lanterns may fall far short of the Keene Pumpkinfest record set in 2013 of over 30,000 – the official count here was 725 for last year's festival – there are always plenty of inspiring and original designs to view and the orange glow of hundreds of pumpkin heads up and down the Avenue spreads a great deal of seasonal cheer.

20 YEARS AGO

Here's the way it was on October 26, 2006: News from the Montague Reporter *archive.*

Bandshell Rises

With rain in the forecast, subcontractors Pesto & McLaughlin stayed overnight at the French King Motel and worked through the weekend erecting the Peskeompskut Park bandshell.

The town of Montague provided $47,000 to make over the downtown park. The balance, $295,408, came from Community Development Block Grant funding to provide new walkways, a tot lot, new loam and plantings, and the first bandshell for the town on Montague since the much-loved structure at Unity Park was torn down decades ago.

School Closing Hearing Centers on Montague

At Tuesday's public hearing on elementary school configuration, Ron Lenois, Sr., of Coolidge Avenue told the Gill-Montague school committee, "If you look at cold facts, Montague Center has to be the school to close…. It's a wonderful school, with great teachers. The problem is, it's not possible to keep it open any more."

Jane Oakes, who resides in Gill and has taught at the Hillcrest School for 33 years, said, "It is very difficult emotionally for people to talk about closing schools." She said younger children would find a school of nearly 500 students at Sheffield intimidating, and spoke of the plusses Hillcrest offers them.

140 YEARS AGO

Here's the way it was on October 27, 1886: News from the Turners Falls Reporter *archive.*

Turners Falls and Vicinity

Last night when it was as dark as pitch with a heavy rain, the electric lamps showed off to the best advantage, and the avenue presented a fine sight.

Today's rain is appreciated by all who have been fearful the springs and wells would not be well supplied this winter.

The funeral of the late John Keith was held at his late residence on Union street, Greenfield, Friday afternoon, the attendance being large, including many prominent paper manufacturers and business men from different parts of the country.

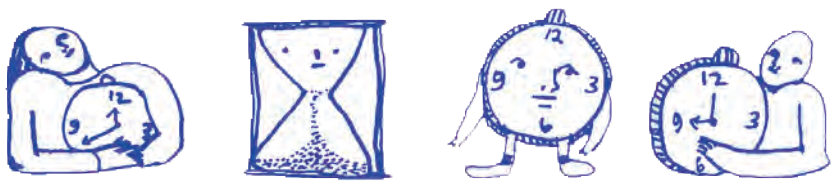
An autopsy by Drs. Coy, Walker and Deane revealed what had been expected would be found to be true, that John Keith died from an attack upon the kidneys complicated with a general breaking down of his whole system.

The Farren house has been officially designated as a league hotel for bicycle riders.

Another meeting was held of persons interested in a trotting park, and it was decided to increase the capital stock to $3,000, and proceed to organize a stock company under the laws of the state.

The value of our mutilated coins – those with holes punched in them – have been fixed by the United States treasurer department as follows: Double eagles, fifteen dollars; silver dollars, seventy-five cents; quarter dollars, eighteen cents; and dimes, five cents.

Another King of Dentists has been in town. How many broken jaws there are in the village we have not been informed.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Guy Should Be Dumped; Duo Diverts Homeowner, Breaks In; Raccoons Act Off & Squirm; A Dog Bites; Hot Tub Is Fraudulent

Monday, 10/19

7:18 a.m. Caller from Jamrog HVAC states that a Kia with Florida plates and flat tires has been in their parking lot all weekend. Vehicle operator called business while officer was there and advised that they will pick the vehicle up within the hour.

9:08 a.m. Walk-in reporting adult son as missing. Party entered as missing into NCIC.

11:01 a.m. Caller states that all four tires on his car were slashed at some point last week. Officer had the vehicle towed from the lot across from the Farren on October 15; he advised that the tires were slashed prior to the vehicle being towed. Will document when he is next on duty.

12:55 p.m. Caller states that while trying to leave a Montague location recently, her boyfriend threw a rock at her car window and broke her door handle to try and prevent her from leaving. Officer dropped off statement form at caller's residence in Greenfield. Caller requesting incident be on record. Advised of options.

Tuesday, 10/20

6:36 a.m. Caller from Third Street states she was woken up by the downstairs neighbor as he was making loud booms. She didn't like it; wants it on record; will report any further noise.

9:43 a.m. Caller from Meadow Road states that around 10 p.m. last night, he and his wife were awoken by banging and knocking on their back door. They got up and looked around but saw no one. Services rendered.

11:56 a.m. Walk-in reporting that early this morning, a female neighbor on the second floor of a Second Street building was irate that they were walking up and down the stairs due to a sick dog. The neighbor began yelling at them and then threatened to burn down the whole building if they didn't stay quiet. This is an ongoing issue. Referred to an officer. Advised to call anytime neighbor was harassing them so it can be properly documented.

1:25 p.m. Walk-in from Second Street reporting ongoing harassment from a neighboring business owner. Officer spoke with caller at length. Advised to follow up with landlord and to reach out to police right away if issues continue.

6:06 p.m. 911 caller requesting officers to location; states that a male he is working with started attacking him verbally. Peace restored; courtesy transport provided for one party.

7:59 p.m. 911 caller reports that a known female and an unknown male are trying to break into his residence on North Leverett Road. States female called and asked him to pick her up in the parking lot of Energy Park in Greenfield. He then received a notification on his home cameras that she was there with a male party attempting to break into the residence. He is on his way back to the residence. Officers responding. Caller called back in stating that the female and male had gained entry. Both parties gone upon officers' arrival. Officers requesting drone and K9; later cancelled. Report taken.

Wednesday, 10/21

10:32 a.m. Disabled FRTA bus in the middle of the intersection of Turnpike Road and Walnut Street; attempting to get fixed at this time. Officer will be directing traffic around the hazard. Bus moved from intersection and back in service.

7:19 p.m. Caller from Avenue C reports a loud exhaust on a white four-door vehicle that has been constantly going up and down the street. Unable to locate.

8:36 p.m. Second report of loud vehicle on Avenue A. Unable to locate.

Thursday, 10/22

8:02 a.m. Caller reports that a tractor-trailer unit is pulled over on First Street near Unity Park; three men are attempting to direct traffic poorly, almost causing an accident. Officer advises delivery to park; two or three more pallets to unload. He will stand by to assist with traffic.

4:26 p.m. A 30-year-old Millers Falls woman was arrested on a default warrant.

5:27 p.m. Caller from Meadow Road reporting a stumbling raccoon in the area; unsure if something is wrong with it. Second caller reporting raccoon acting off in the area of Red Fire Farm. Units tied up on another call; advised caller call would be logged.

7:13 p.m. Caller states that there is a raccoon at Fifth and T Streets that is squirming in the roadway; believes it needs to be put down. Officer checked area; raccoon gone on arrival.

10:44 p.m. Caller states that a female party is behind the Cutlery Block attempting to light leaves on fire. Caller states leaves do not appear to stay lit. Officers out with female in alley between Second Street and Shea Theater. Officer advises not as reported; female party was using a lighter to look through her bag, and a spark caught a leaf. Caller was moved along and will be headed home for the evening.

Friday, 10/23

8:27 a.m. Caller from Turners Falls Road states that around 12:20 a.m., a small girl approximately 11 to 14 years old came up to their front door and knocked. The girl can be seen on video trying to open the door; two adults could be seen standing in the background. Officer made contact with caller, who shared video footage of the incident.

1:56 p.m. Caller from Avenue A requesting female be removed from his apartment while he is not home. She may have apartment keys in her possession. Landlord would like to be notified when she is gone so he can change the locks for his tenant. No answer at door. Party called and states the landlord would be willing to assist. Officer advised.

2:13 p.m. Caller states that when he walked into Crestview Liquor, he was bitten twice by a dog that was inside, which may belong to an employee. Referred to other agency.

4:43 p.m. Caller from Main Street states that his neighbor has dogs outside in her yard that bark constantly all day; requesting officer check on dog owner and call him back after contact is made. Officer advised party to contact animal control officer (ACO); party states he will do so on Monday.

5:03 p.m. Caller reports someone struck her parked vehicle on Avenue A while she wasn't in it; however, her daughter was in the vehicle when it was struck. Caller states there are no injuries but no vehicle is on scene at this time; advises damage to her vehicle's rear bumper. Officer spoke with caller and took pictures of damage. Report taken.

Saturday, 10/24

2:37 p.m. 911 caller was driving by a Turners Falls Road address and saw a brush fire near the home. Transferred to Shelburne Control.

11:13 p.m. Caller from Bernardo Drive reports that his neighbor is having people show up and go in and they leave the cars running, possibly making drug deals. Wants it logged as this has happened several times in the past. Referred to an officer.

Sunday, 10/25

7:24 a.m. Caller from Broadway states that a neighbor in the area operates a skid steer or something with loud back-up beeping and bright lights at all hours of the day and night. Caller would just like on record at this time; will call back if it continues.

9:23 a.m. Walk-in reporting ongoing harassment from a neighbor and her son; advises that her landlord wanted her to report the incident so it would be on record. Report taken.

10:01 a.m. Caller states he called yesterday to speak with someone about a fraudulent purchase on Facebook Marketplace. Caller states he purchased a hot tub from someone in Millers Falls, and it doesn't work. Caller states he spoke with someone yesterday and was told it's a civil issue, but today he has proof that the person knew it was not working because they posted a couple of weeks ago that it had stopped working and were looking for help. Caller would like to speak with an officer about the fraud. No call from yesterday located. Officer attempted call back; no answer; voicemail unavailable. Caller called back stating he is available now. Officer called back several more times with no answer and no way to leave a message.

11:25 a.m. 911 caller states that a neighbor with whom he's had problems was standing outside near the road and recording him while flipping him off. Female then started yelling that he is harassing her. Caller states he just needs these things on record as he is working with a lawyer and will be going to court.

6:40 p.m. Manager from Walgreens requesting officer; states male party made a Western Union transaction for $3,000; he took the money and counted it and handed it back and there was only $1,200. Male is no longer on scene. Manager had to call store security before calling PD. Officer advised. Security footage and ID pending management. Report taken.

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WEST ALONG from page B1

she was taken on as a servant at the tavern.

There, Dycie fell in love with a riverboat man by the name of Will Darby. The problem for Dycie, however, was that Will was already engaged to be married to a young Millers Falls woman, a local schoolteacher.

Dycie was determined to cast a spell over young Will by baking a cake for him, in which she had placed some of her own hair. Somehow the young schoolteacher heard of the plot concocted by Dycie and rushed to the tavern to prevent Will from accepting and eating the cake.

Granny Stowell suspected something and also rushed to the tavern to warn Dycie that the fiancée was on the way to destroy the cake. A furious struggle broke out at the tavern between the two women, and in the melée the cake was destroyed, just as a violent lightning storm broke out. The very first lightning bolt struck a huge elm at the tavern, which fell on poor Will Darby and killed him.

Of course everyone assumed it was the Stowell witchcraft that was responsible for the tragedy, and apparently Granny didn't mind boasting for years that it was indeed Dycie's spell that had ended the romance.

The postscript to this dark tale is even darker. When Granny finally died, she was buried late at night in the old cemetery on East Mineral Road, just up from the mouth of the Millers.

Local legend has it that Granny's husband makes his way there every Witches' Sabbath on October 31 to dance on her grave.

Indeed, a few of us venture to Granny's grave every October 31 to wait for Granny's widower. But that grave tells no secrets, and no widower comes to dance on the grave. And, to be sure, every October 31 finds us feeling sheepish, and we drift away leaving Granny in peace.

MONTAGUE CRYPTOJAM !!!

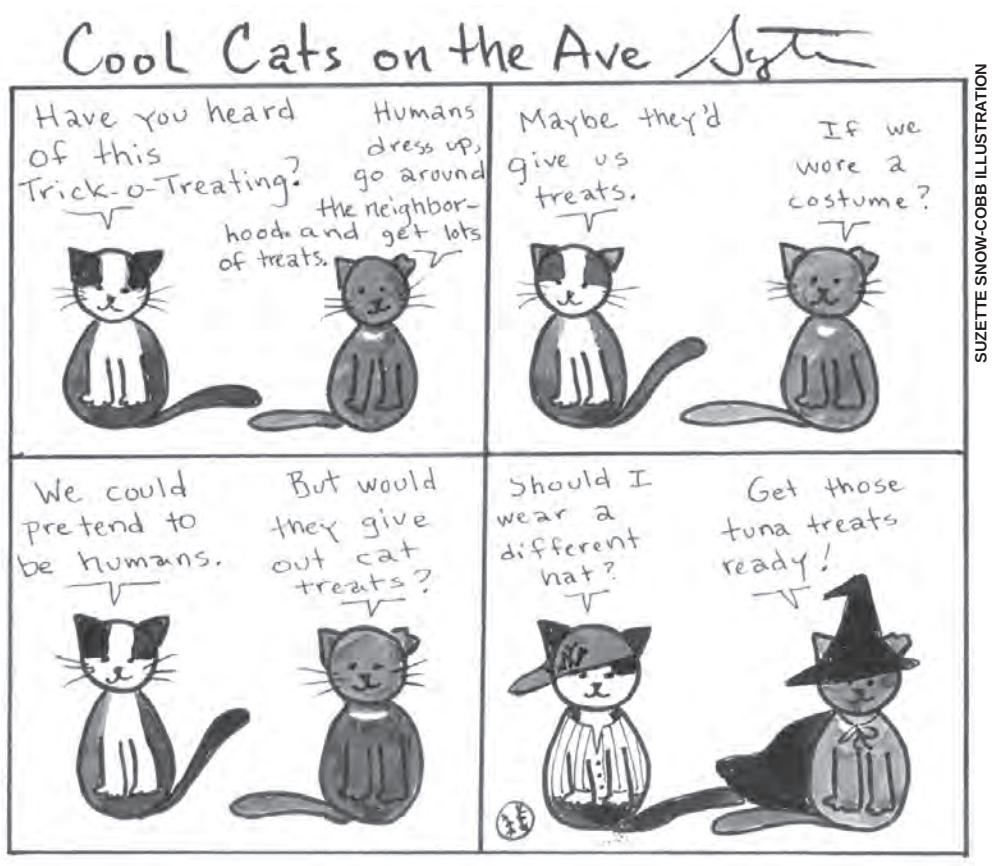
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Aquí se habla español



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

Massachusetts en las urnas:
Una guía fácil en español para votar el 3 de noviembre.

Por VICTORIA MAÍLLO DE AGUILERA

GREENFIELD – El próximo martes 3 de noviembre, los votantes de Massachusetts tendrán la oportunidad de decidir sobre nueve preguntas estatales y elegir representantes para distintos cargos públicos. Para quienes utilizan el español como lengua principal, o todavía están aprendiendo inglés, entender la papeleta puede resultar difícil: combina términos legales, instituciones con responsabilidades diferentes y propuestas que no siempre son fáciles de interpretar.

En esta guía quiero explicar, de manera general y neutra, qué se vota y qué significan las preguntas. No se trata de recomendar votar a favor o en contra de ninguna propuesta, mi objetivo es ayudar a que se comprendan las opciones y puedan tomar sus propias decisiones.

Empecemos por el principio: ¿Qué son las elecciones de mitad de mandato?

Las elecciones de noviembre de 2026 se conocen en Estados Unidos como *midterm elections*, o elecciones de mitad de mandato, porque tienen lugar a mitad del período presidencial de cuatro años. No se elige al presidente, pero sí se renueva la Cámara de Representantes federal, parte del Senado y numerosos cargos estatales y locales. Los resultados influyen en los próximos dos años acerca de quién redacta y aprueba leyes, cómo se distribuyen los fondos públicos y qué prioridades se debaten.

Y ahora la parte más complicada en las papeletas de Massachusetts: Las nueve preguntas estatales.

En primer lugar, las preguntas 1 a 8 son propuestas de nuevas leyes presentadas *mediante iniciativas ciudadanas*. En cambio, la pregunta 9 es un *referéndum* sobre una ley ya existente. En las primeras ocho, un voto afirmativo aprueba la propuesta; en la novena, un voto afirmativo mantiene la ley actual y el negativo la deroga.

Pregunta 1: *Acceso a los registros públicos.* La propuesta quiere hacer públicos la mayoría de los documentos de la Legislatura estatal y de la oficina del gobernador a la Ley de Registros Públicos. Incluye excepciones para ciertos documentos relacionados con el desarrollo de políticas públicas y determinadas comunicaciones de legisladores con personas que piden ayuda para obtener servicios o prestaciones gubernamentales.

Un voto afirmativo amplía el acceso a esos registros públicos; uno negativo mantiene las reglas actuales. La cuestión es cómo equilibrar la transparencia pública y la protección de ciertas comunicaciones y procesos de trabajo de nuestros gobernantes.

Pregunta 2: *Negociación colectiva para empleados de defensa pública.* La propuesta reconoce expresamente a los empleados del Committee for Public Counsel Services (CPCS), que proporcionan representación legal a personas con derecho a defensa pública, la posibilidad de negociar colectivamente con su empleador, es decir, *pertenecer a un sindicato laboral.* Tras alcanzar un convenio, el organismo debe solicitar al gobernador los fondos necesarios para financiarlo.

Un sí a esta pregunta establece ese marco de negociación; un no dejar tal y cual aparece vigente la legislación actual. El derecho a negociar y la disponibilidad de fondos para cumplir un convenio son cuestiones relacionadas, pero totalmente distintas.

Pregunta 3: *Cambios en las elecciones primarias.* La propuesta sustituye las elecciones primarias separadas por partido por una primaria única en la que aparecen candidatos de todos los partidos. Los votantes podrán elegir entre todos ellos y los dos más votados pasarán como candidatos a las elecciones generales. También cambiaría ciertas reglas para el reconocimiento de partidos y hará obligatorio que las candidaturas a gobernador y vicegobernador se presenten conjuntamente.

Un sí adoptaría este nuevo sistema; un voto negativo mantendría las reglas actuales.

Pregunta 4: *Registro de votantes el mismo día de las elecciones.* La propuesta permitiría que ciudadanos estadounidenses que cumplan los requisitos legales se registren para votar o actualicen su dirección en su centro de votación el mismo día de las elecciones.

Se exigirá documentación como prueba de residencia y una declaración jurada; también se contempla el voto provisional en determinadas circunstancias. La medida no estaría disponible hasta el 1 de enero de 2028 y no permite cambiar de afiliación política ese mismo día.

Un sí validará esta nueva opción; un voto para el no mantendría el sistema actual.

Pregunta 5: *Límite de ingresos estatales y devolución a contribuyentes.* La propuesta establece un límite para los ingresos estatales, calculado a partir de los ingresos netos del año anterior y ajustado según el crecimiento salarial medio de Massachusetts durante los tres años previos. Si los ingresos superasen el límite, el exceso se devolvería a los contribuyentes al año siguiente. La propuesta incluye ingresos del impuesto adicional sobre rentas superiores a un millón de dólares y entraría en vigor el 1 de julio de 2027. Un voto afirmativo aplicaría el nuevo límite y el mecanismo de devolución; uno negativo dejaría tal y como están las reglas actuales. El debate incluye tanto posibles devoluciones como la planificación de los servicios públicos.

Pregunta 6: *Fondo para la conservación de recursos naturales.* La propuesta crearía el fondo "Nature for All" para financiar iniciativas de conservación y restauración de recursos naturales.

Recibiría una parte de ciertos ingresos fiscales relacionados con artículos deportivos, vehículos recreativos y el uso de campos de golf: el 50% durante el primer año y, a partir del 1 de julio de 2028, el 100%, conforme al texto de la propuesta. Los fondos estarían sujetos a asignaciones presupuestarias y podrían apoyar la protección de tierras, bosques, agua potable, parques, senderos y lugares de importancia cultural nativo americana.

Un sí permitiría la creación de este fondo; un voto negativo dejaría vigente el sistema actual.

Pregunta 7: *Construcción de viviendas unifamiliares.* La propuesta permitiría determinadas viviendas unifamiliares en parcelas de al menos 5.000 pies cuadrados, unos 465 metros cuadrados, con al menos 50 pies de frente a una calle o vía pública, aproximadamente 15 metros y acceso a servicios públicos de agua y alcantarillado. Los municipios podrían seguir regulando aspectos como altura,distancias, espacios abiertos, estacionamiento y alquileres de corta duración dentro de los límites propuestos.

Un voto afirmativo cambia las reglas para las parcelas que cumplan los requisitos; un voto negativo mantendría la legislación actual. Los efectos concretos dependen siempre de las condiciones locales de cada ayuntamiento.

Pregunta 8: *Venta comercial de marihuana recreativa.* La propuesta derogaría la ley actual que legaliza, regula y grava la venta comercial de marihuana recreativa para adultos.

No supondría una prohibición absoluta de la posesión personal: mantendría determinadas cantidades permitidas para adultos y establecería sanciones civiles y otras medidas para personas de 21 años o menores. Los negocios recreativos autorizados podrían solicitar un procedimiento acelerado para obtener licencias de dispensarios medicinales, y la Comisión de Control del Cannabis pasaría a regular solamente el mercado medicinal. La medida entraría en vigor el 1 de enero de 2028.

Un voto afirmativo aprobaría estos cambios; uno negativo mantendría las mismas condiciones respecto al uso, y venta de marihuana. Conviene leer el texto oficial para conocer con precisión las cantidades, excepciones y sanciones.

Pregunta 9: *Regulación de armas de fuego.* Esta pregunta se refiere a una ley estatal aprobada en 2024 que regula, entre otros asuntos, armas de fabricación particular sin posible rastro (ghost guns), licencias, armas de estilo militar, determinados dispositivos, transporte y posesión. También incluye disposiciones sobre órdenes de protección por riesgo extremo, formación de los solicitantes, inspecciones de los vendedores y recopilación de datos.

A diferencia de las anteriores preguntas, aquí un sí mantiene la ley existente y un no, la deroga. La propuesta comprende muchas disposiciones distintas, por lo que es útil el texto oficial.

OPINIÓN
¿Qué significa para los contribuyentes la aprobación del nuevo edificio de Franklin County Technical School?

Por VICTORIA MAÍLLO DE AGUILERA

TURNERS FALLS – La votación del 6 de octubre pasado ha dado luz verde a la construcción de un nuevo edificio para Franklin County Technical School. El proyecto, valorado en 236,6 millones de dólares, recibió 4.106 votos favorables frente a 3.522 contrarios repartidos entre las 19 localidades del distrito. El sí ganó con el 53,8 % de los votos emitidos.

Es importante destacar que el número de votantes fue muy reducido. Warwick fue el pueblo en el que mayor número de votantes acudieron a las urnas con un 28%, y en Orange solamente votaron a esta pregunta el 4%.

La decisión está tomada, pero sus consecuencias económicas y la necesidad de rendir cuentas seguirán siendo relevantes durante muchos años, pese a esta participación ridículamente pequeña.

¿Y cuánto costará esta decisión a los contribuyentes? El presupuesto total asciende a 236,6 millones de dólares. La *Massachusetts School Building Authority* podría aportar hasta 113,8 millones, mientras que la parte que deberán financiar los municipios se estima en 122,8 millones. Ese dinero no se pagará de una sola vez: se financiará mediante deuda, con repercusiones en los presupuestos municipales y en los impuestos sobre la propiedad durante años.

Según las estimaciones publicadas por el proyecto, el incremento medio anual para una vivienda en Montague sería de unos 205 dólares. La cifra variará según el valor fiscal de cada propiedad y las condiciones finales de financiación. Por eso, los residentes deberían poder consultar proyecciones claras, actualizadas y fáciles de entender, así como saber cómo se calcularon.

Por supuesto, hay razones educativas que deben tomarse en serio: el edificio actual tiene unos 50 años y, según la documentación del proyecto, necesita importantes mejoras en sus instalaciones y espacios de enseñanza.

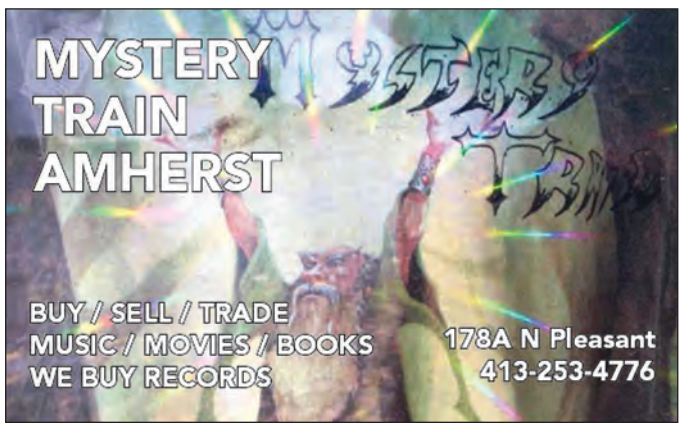
En mi opinión, es legítimo preguntarse cómo se evaluaron las alternativas, qué costes se compararon y qué mecanismos garantizarán que el presupuesto no se dispare.

Un proyecto de esta magnitud no termina con una papeleta depositada en una urna. Requiere información pública accesible, seguimiento de los gastos, explicaciones periódicas sobre los avances y transparencia ante cualquier cambio de presupuesto o calendario. Los contribuyentes de las 19 localidades, tanto quienes votaron sí como quienes votaron no, tienen derecho a saber cómo se utiliza su dinero. Es necesaria una transparencia acerca de cómo funciona el comité escolar, cómo son elegidos sus miembros, por quiénes y las razones para ello.

El resultado autoriza a FCTS a seguir adelante con el proyecto. Ahora corresponde a los responsables demostrar, con datos y publicación de cuentas, que la inversión se ejecuta de forma responsable y que sus beneficios educativos justifican el compromiso económico asumido por las 19 comunidades.

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EVENTS

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29

LAVA Center, Greenfield: Screening, *Nosferatu* (1922). Light refreshments. 6:30 p.m. Free.

Colonial Theater, Keene: *Josh Ritter*. 7 p.m. $$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Jordan Bashaw*. 9 p.m. By donation.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Kidleidoscope Story Hour: Bats.* For ages 3 to 6. 10:30 a.m. Free.

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Landscapes of Montague Plains*, natural history talk with geologist Richard Little, ecologist Mike Akresh, and MassWildlife staff. Register at *tinyurl.com/montagueplains*. 5 p.m. Free.

Miles Street, Greenfield: *Rockin' Puppies*. Outdoor set during the Greenfield Arts Walk. 5:30 p.m. Free.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Cloudgaze Productions presents *A Happening VI: Salvage*. Immersive art experience. 6:30 p.m. $.

Unity Park Nova Stage, Turners Falls: *Zombies With Attitude, Hot Rod, Sam Mulligan*. Costumes encouraged. 7 p.m. By donation.

Incandescent Brewing, Bernardston: *Jimmy Just Quit*. 7 p.m. No cover.

New City Brewery, Easthampton: *40 Lashes, Radical Joy, Glass, Sleep Destroyer*. 7:30 p.m. $.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Carol Devine & The Mighty Fine*. 8 p.m. $.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Max Creek*. 8 p.m. $.

Palladium, Worcester: *Disco Biscuits, Thought Process.* 8 p.m. $$.

Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center, Great Barrington: *Jeff Tweedy, Case Oats*. 8 p.m. $$.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Cloudgaze Productions presents *A Happening VI: Salvage*. Immersive art experience. 9 p.m. $.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31

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

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Wildlife Costume and Bat Appreciation*. Wear costumes and learn about bats. Refreshments. 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Free.

Element Brewing, Millers Falls: *Jamey Wolff*. 3 p.m. No cover.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Cloudgaze Productions presents *A Happening VI: Salvage*. Immersive art experience. 6:30 p.m. $.

Darlings, Northampton: *"Tom Petty," "Bill Withers," "Kate Bush,"* more. Other costumes encouraged. 7 p.m. By donation.

Brick House, Turners Falls: *"The Sundays," "Suicide," "Violent Femmes," "Grizzly Bear," "Ween," "Bob Weir," "Iron & Wine."* Other costumes encouraged. 7:30 p.m. Free.

Marigold, Brattleboro: *Dead Collective*, Grateful Dead tribute. 7:30 p.m. Free.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Max Creek*. 8 p.m. $.

Firehouse, Worcester: *AFK, Abbatia, Film & Gender, Cursed Image*. Wear a costume. 8 p.m. $.

Palladium, Worcester: *Disco Biscuits*. 8 p.m. $$.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: Screening, *Begotten* (1989); preshow music, *Son of Earth Flesh on Bone Trio*. 8:30 p.m. $.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Observation Room, Midnight Psychic, Burial Woods, Seva, St. Intel.* 8:30 p.m. $.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Cloudgaze Productions presents *A Happening VI: Salvage*. Immersive art experience. 9 p.m. $.

Victoria Bar, Greenfield: *Masquerade and Costume Ball*, with *DJ Dad of the Year*. 9 p.m. No cover.

Last Ditch, Greenfield: *Puppy.Synthesis, Cinnabun & Eris Electra,* DJs. 10 p.m. $.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1

Unity Park, Turners Falls: *Montague Soapbox Races*. 12 p.m. Free.

Wendell Meetinghouse, Wendell: *The Gift of Life*, songs by Steve Alves. 4 p.m. $.

Feeding Tube Records, Florence: *Solum, Matt Krefting*. 4 p.m. By donation.

No Fun, Troy: *Swamp Dogg, Front Biz*. 7 p.m. $.

Cold Spring Hollow, Belchertown: *Mummies and Wolves, Veticles Skäl, Death Spiral, Starrmachine, 666 Minutes of Bad Indigestion,* costume contest. 7:30 p.m. $.


MIKE JACKSON PHOTO

The Montague Soapbox Races are back at last, and as of press time, the weather forecast for this Sunday, November 1 is looking good! The races start at noon on First Street in Turners Falls – just head to Unity Park. Above: New Salem's Elijah Eckert won Best Paint Job in the 2022 race for The Queen, placing third in the Kids' division.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 2

Montague Center Library, Montague Center: *The Mill River Flood of 1874: Who Was Responsible?* 5:30 p.m. Free.

Greenfield Garden Cinemas, Greenfield: Screening, *Mister Roberts* (1955). Preshow discussion with theater historian Jonathan Boschen. 6:30. p.m. $.

Cold Spring Hollow, Belchertown: *Lead Mask, Mouths Agape, Scald Hymn, Angel Louis, Job History*. 7 p.m. $.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3

Midnight's, Brattleboro: *Matt Fero, Lone Cricket*. 8 p.m. $.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4

Dickinson Library, Northfield: *Readers' Choice Book Group*. Niall Williams, *This Is Happiness*. 10 a.m. Free.

EXHIBITS

Waterway Arts, Turners Falls: *Revisit*: *Exploring Nostalgia and Memory,* giftable small works by 45 local artists. Through December, with an opening reception next Friday, November 6 at 5 p.m.

Ritual Bowl, Turners Falls: *In Watercolor,* paintings by Reiner Wilhems-Tricarico. Opens with a reception next Friday, November 6 at 5 p.m.; continues through November.

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Migrations,* colorful works depicting scenes of village life, history, and Mayan culture in Guatemala, through November. A *Day of the Dead Altar* built by local families will be on display until next Tuesday, November 3.

Sawmill River Arts, Montague: Guest artist *Emet Aron* displays prints, ceramics, and wearables; guest jeweler *Chelsea Dupuis*. Both through November.

Montague Center Library, Montague: *Flower Show*, paintings by Kate Spencer. Through November, with a reception Monday, November 9 at 5:30 p.m.

Leverett Crafts & Arts, Leverett: *Susan Mulholland: New Paintings* and *Friends Who Paint,* a group show, both through November, with a joint reception Sunday, November 15 at 3 p.m.

Rhodes Arts Center, Northfield Mount Hermon, Gill: *Breathing Room*, paintings, drawings, and monoprints by NMH faculty member Clara Cruz. Through December 18 with a reception this Friday, October 30, at 6:30 p.m. Viewable by appointment: *mseno@nmhschool.org*.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *Seventh Annual Community Art Show* on themes of "Home" and "Resilience." Opens with a reception Saturday, November 7 at 11 a.m.; continues through December 19.

GCTV, Greenfield: *Headspace 3,* immersive installation of over 150 large multimedia illustrations and sculptures by Connor O., through December.

Greenfield Library, Greenfield: *Coalescence,* group show by Laura Davis, Jorie Morgan, and Whitney Robbins, closes with a reception this Friday, October 30 at 5:30 p.m.

Fiddleheads Gallery, Bernardston: *Beverly Phelps,* tribute in honor of DVAA's 95th anniversary. October 30 to November 8. Reception Sunday, November 1 at 1 p.m. with the Falltown String Band.

Shelburne Arts Coop, Shelburne Falls: *Imagine,* group show by gallery members, through November.

CALL FOR ART

Brattleboro Museum & Art Center seeks designs for Artful Ice Shanties on the theme of "Illumination." Submit a design by December 15, for your construction that can withstand nine days of winter weather; installation February 2027 at the Retreat Meadows in Brattleboro. For specifications and details, see *brattleboromuseum.org*.

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CALENDAR

Leverett Library, Leverett: *Elders Asking for and Accepting Help: Vulnerability as Strength*. Registration req'd. 12:30 p.m. Free.

Montague Center Library, Montague Center: *Cook Book Club*. Alison Roman, *Nothing Fancy*. Registration req'd. 6 p.m. Free.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Ben Falkoff Trio*. 8 p.m. No cover.

The Drake, Amherst: *Steve Gunn, Spectre Folk*. 8 p.m. $.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5

Dickinson Library, Northfield: *Environmental Book Group*. Stan Ulanski, *The Gulf Stream: Tiny Plankton, Giant Bluefin, and the Amazing Story of the Powerful River in the Atlantic*. 10 a.m. Free.

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

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Bird Beak Investigation*. Learn how birds have adapted to eat different foods. 3 p.m. Free.

The National Spiritual Alliance, Lake Pleasant: *Home Recording and Mixing Basics,* musician workshop with Ethan Lindblom. Register at *spiritualallianceusa.org*. 6 p.m. $.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *An Evening With Double Edge Theatre*. Documentary screening and book talk. 7 p.m. $

Deep Thoughts, Northampton: *Bob Desaulniers, Girshwin, Junk Orbit*. 7 p.m. By donation.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6

Leverett Library, Leverett: *Computer and Internet Basics*. 1 p.m. Free.

Spinner Park, Turners Falls: *Pumpkin Swap*. Drop off your pumpkin for composting by the Montague Transfer Station; receive a slice of pumpkin pie. 5 to 7 p.m. Free.

Mystic Cat Pinball, Turners Falls: *Grand Opening Gala*. 5 to 10 p.m. $.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Drew Paton*. 6:30 p.m. $.

Greenfield Records, Greenfield: *Aaron Russell, Michael Slyne, Parashi-Rambutan duo*. 7 p.m. By donation.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: Screening, *Spectrum Hunter* (2012), with preshow music by *God's Wisdom*. 7 p.m. $.

Living Room, Florence: *Kristine Leschper, Hoonah, Mr. Michael Motorcycle*. 7 p.m. By donation.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Misty Blues, Little House Blues*. 7 p.m. $.

Holyoke Media, Holyoke: *Marty Ehrlich/Tomeka Reid Duo*. 7:30 p.m. $.

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

THCC, Easthampton: *Deragon, Brujo, Gloons, Andy Beresky & The Whispers In His Ghost*. 7 p.m. $.

Holyoke Media, Holyoke: *Marty Ehrlich Rites Quartet*. 7:30 p.m. $.

Nova Arts, Keene: *Slob Drop, Young Other, Deadweight*. 7:30 p.m. $.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Friday, November 6 marks the inaugural booking by regional chamber music nonprofit Ashuelot Concerts at the Montague Retreat Center, and the first of a five-concert season there in partnership with the The HeARTbeat Collective.

Violinist Louisa Stonehill, cellist Edward Arron, and pianist Nicholas Burns will perform Romantic piano trios by Rachmaninoff, Gade, and Ravel.

Tickets, available at ashuelotconcerts.org, *are $35 generally; $10 for adults under the age of 30; free for K-12 students; and $50 for the two front rows.*

Marigold, Brattleboro: *Lexi Weege, Bandit Queen of Sorrows, Moon Hollow*. 8 p.m. Free.

Midnight's, Brattleboro: *Deerest, Libby Quinn, Virgo's Moon*. 8 p.m. $.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Daniel Lanois Trio*. 8 p.m. $.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7

The National Spiritual Alliance, Lake Pleasant: *Winter Makers Market*. Local art, handmade gifts, jewelry, bake sale, more. 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free.

Dickinson Library, Northfield: *Dungeons & Dragons*. Single-day campaign for ages 16 and up, all XP welcome. Register at *northfieldrec.com*. 11 a.m. Free.

Leverett Library, Leverett: *Friends of Leverett Library Annual Meeting*, followed by a concert tribute to *"Fats" Waller*. 1 p.m. Free.

Roundabout Books, Greenfield: Book release, *Hector Fox and the Snowy Surprise* with author and artist Astrid Sheckels. 2 p.m. Free.

Two Ghosts, Turners Falls: *Figurine, Sable Island Pony, Hauzu*. 6:30 p.m. $.

Living Room, Florence: *Jeff Coyne, Purse, beetsblog, Jetties*. 7 p.m. $.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Wooden Horse*, dual America and CSNY tribute. 8 p.m. $.

Blackbird, Northampton: *Loaded,* Velvet Underground tribute with members of Dust Witch, Owsley's Owls, Mibble, and Hung Trucker. 8 p.m. $.

Tin Can Alley, Southampton: *Sleep Destroyer, Two Point Oh, Saliba, Dolly Sods*. 8 p.m. $.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Riot Frog*. 9:30 p.m. $.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8

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

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Autophobic, The Cheese Priests, Cold Hard Truth, Zoe Montgomery,* many more. 6 p.m. $.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *ALOK*. 7 p.m. $.

No Fun, Troy: *Sweeping Promises, Sky Furrows, Baddreamadventure*. 7 p.m. $.

Second Congregational Church, Greenfield: *GCC Community Chorus* fall concert, "Songs of North America." 7:30 p.m. Free.

CitySpace, Easthampton: *Open Air: The Saxophone Quartet Compositions of Julius Hemphill*. 7:30 p.m. $.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9

Montague Center Library, Montague Center: *Artist reception* for Kate Spencer flower show. 5:30 p.m. Free.

Shutesbury Public Library, Shutesbury: *Richie Davis*, reading and author talk. 6 p.m. Free.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10

Millers Falls Library, Millers Falls: *Montague Housing Production Plan Community Input Session*. 5 p.m. Free.

Tilton Library, South Deerfield: *Richie Davis*, reading and author talk. 6:30 p.m. Free.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11

Shutesbury Town Hall, Shutesbury: *Community Sing-Along*, sponsored by Neighborhood Aging and Dementia Support. 2 p.m. Free.

Hutghi's, Westfield: *Sam Wenc, Connect Four, Diapason, Solum*. 7 p.m. $.

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

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12

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

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *LAVA Film Festival Opening Reception*. Meet filmmakers, watch trailers, consume light refreshments. 5 p.m. Free.

Millers Falls Library, Millers Falls: *Book Club*. Rebecca Solnit, *The Beginning Comes After the End*. 5:30 p.m. Free.

The National Spiritual Alliance, Lake Pleasant: *Tea & Crumpet Society*, reading group. 6:30 p.m. Free.

Marigold, Brattleboro: *Holy Basil, Moose, Oscar Shaw*, poetry by *Daryl Gussin*. 7 p.m. Free.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Valley Voices Story Slam*. 7:30 p.m. $.

Nova Arts, Keene: *Lafayette Gilchrist, Hearing Things*. 7:30 p.m. $.

The Drake, Amherst: *Kaleta & Super Yamba Band*. 8 p.m. $.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13

Brick House, Turners Falls: *when the time comes, yourarmsaremylegs, Farewell Sarathael, Halfhearted Comeback*. 6:30 p.m. $.

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *John Stacey & Friends*. 7 p.m. By donation.

Hutghi's, Westfield: *Subjects, Identity Shock, Period Bomb, Demented FX, Human Ignorance*. 8 p.m. $.

looking forward...

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *LAVA Film Festival.* Experimental films and comedies; Q&A with filmmakers. 7 p.m. $.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14

Shelburne-Buckland Community Center, Shelburne Falls: *Christmas Fair*. Crafts, gift items, bake sale, auction, food, raffles, more. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15

Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: *Taylor Ho Bynum Quintet, Montague Marching Band*. Fundraiser for Common Hall accessibility. 6:30 p.m. $.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19

The National Spiritual Alliance, Lake Pleasant: *Booking and Touring for DIY Musicians*, workshop with Phil Simon of Simon Says Booking. Register at *spiritualallianceusa.org*. 6 p.m. $.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21

De La Luz, Holyoke: *Omar Sosa*. 7 p.m. $$.

Full Moon Coffeehouse, Wendell: *Rani Arbo & daisy mayhem*. Benefit for the Foundation for Community Justice. 7:30 p.m. $.

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

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29

Erving Public Library, Erving: *Connecticut River Flute Choir*. 35 seats; first come, first served. 2 p.m. Free.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30

Deep Thoughts, Northampton: *Frank Hurricane, Tara Zorthian, bobbie*. 7 p.m. $.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6

CitySpace, Easthampton: *Valley Arabic Music Ensemble*. 6 p.m. $.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18

The Drake, Amherst: *Amber Wolfe, Nora Knight*, album release; *Stella Kola, Beth Kaplan*. 8 p.m. $.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 1

Iron Horse, Northampton: *NRBQ*. 7 p.m. $.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 2

Iron Horse, Northampton: *NRBQ*. 7 p.m. $.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 29

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *The Meditations*. 8 p.m. $.

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ELDERS from page B1

like each other; my mother wasn't much of a cook; the cousins wished they were at home in their own neighborhoods; and my brothers and I couldn't wait to get out of the house and join friends on the street.

It turns out that the holiday season makes me miss something I never really had. Now, my husband and I gather with friends who feel like family. We remember those who have passed, feel grateful for the lives we have, and try to avoid talking about our aches and pains – or politics. It's a challenge.

I'm writing this less than two weeks before the midterm elections, wanting to believe the polls but remembering how wrong they can be. To keep myself from dwelling on worst-case scenarios, I'm making myself focus on the good parts of this season while acknowledging that some people just want to crawl under the covers until it's over.

Here's some evidence in favor of joy. Halloween in Montague Center is a spectacle that delights hundreds of children. Thanksgiving provides a chance to express gratitude. When I step away from headline news and look around my community and the beauty of farm fields on foggy mornings when the sun starts peeking through, I nearly drown in gratitude. The Solstice marks the shortest day of the year and signals hope for the return of the sun. The story of the birth of Christ can reaffirm one's faith and extend to rebirth of every kind. The constancy of light unites Hanukah, Christmas, and the Solstice.

And sometimes miracles happen at this time of year. During the First World War, British soldiers and German soldiers ceased firing on Christmas Eve 1914 and sang "Silent Night" in the cold, muddy trenches. The battle resumed the next day, but this must have helped those soldiers believe that peace was possible.

I want to believe that. There's too much conflict in our troubled world right now.

When I feel despair, I think about regular people who are performing small miracles all the time. Soon newspapers and social media will list places where people can go for a holiday meal. Volunteers will give up the day to serve strangers. A restaurant in Greenfield has a "pay it forward" program so that anyone who is hungry can eat. Volunteers with Montague Neighbors do big and little things for people over 60 who are trying to stay in their homes. Local gardeners harvest what they cannot use and donate it to food pantries and farmers markets.

We are surrounded by acts of kindness. I will remember that when the stores put those annoying *Christmas with The Chipmunks* songs on repeat, and the roads become congested with shoppers. I'll take a detour around it, up the back roads to home.

MR Wrapping Paper Edition • Artist Profile #4

By REPORTER STAFF

TURNERS FALLS – This summer we invited people to submit design proposals for our fifth special Wrapping Paper Edition, to be printed in November. This fundraiser for the *Montague Reporter* will feature full color designs printed on double pages of newsprint, meant to wrap presents in. We received 34 submissions to our call, and we have selected seven artists, including one Youth artist, for our edition this year.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

We can't wait to bring these wonderful designs to life in this special edition, which will go to press on Thanksgiving week! We are introducing the artists to you by asking each the same three questions.

Max Neiberg of Sunderland won with his drawings of garlic bulbs. He provides the answers this week.

MR: *What would you want your wrapping paper to say, and feel like, for the person it is being gifted to?*

MN: I'd want anyone who receives their gift wrapped in my paper to feel cared for the way they like best. Garlic is versatile. It can be roasted, fried, fermented, grated – you name it, she can do it.

I want recipients to feel the full-body joy you can only get from a sip of hot, garlicky soup on a chilly day, or maybe the zing of a shared kiss after you've both eaten garlic bread on a night out. Maybe don't pick this one for your vampire friends, though…

MR: *What gifts would you want to receive wrapped in your paper?*

MN: I'll always be overjoyed by a pair of thick wool socks. Especially ones with a quirky pattern.

MR: *What other gifts have newspapers given you over the years?*

MN: I'm always looking through the recipe section and at the comics. There's something really special about cutting out my favorites, and having them in print.

Thanks so much for doing this – it's such a fun opportunity!

TV REVIEW

A Solid Start to *NCIS: New York*

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – The TV show *NCIS* has created a number of spin-offs in its universe, including a prequel, *NCIS: Origins*, which I don't care for. The whole basis of these shows is the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, whose agents investigate military personnel involved in crimes.

One spin-off, *NCIS: Los Angeles*, lasted 14 seasons. That featured LL Cool J as Special Agent Sam Hanna, an NCIS agent and former Navy SEAL. Another was *NCIS: Hawaii*, which lasted three seasons. LL Cool J's character did a season-long storyline on that show.

Sam also appeared in a couple of episodes in a recent season of *NCIS*, the show that started all of this. *NCIS: Sydney* is also going strong and will have a Season Four.

Now CBS, the network almost all of these shows are on, has decided to try bringing this character back with what he was doing in the Los Angeles spin-off on a new show, *NCIS: New York*. The show premiered on October 7.

NCIS: New York will also feature a couple of other famous actors, including Jennifer Beals and Scott Caan. Caan's character will be his new partner, and I believe Beals plays his new boss.

Sam comes onto the scene in New York to look into an NCIS case involving a friend of his. Another interesting character on this new team is a young adult named Sullivan, played by Devin Druid, who works on the computer for them. Sullivan had hacked into the NYPD pension fund, and is helping the NCIS as part of a plea deal.

Caan's character and Sam appear to fit nicely together as partners. It probably won't be unenjoyable to watch them on screen, though I wondered what their storylines will be in future episodes. It seems like a fresh setup when it comes to making another spin-off within this universe.

The premiere episode was solid, and I enjoyed watching it. It showed that Sam Hanna will probably be stationed in New York for a while.

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