

The Mount Observer

“Voices of the students of Mount Wachusett Community College”

October 23, 2024

VOLUME 19, ISSUE 2

10 PAGES

Voter Registration Closes this Friday MWCC Community Can Look to Brewer Center for Registering Before Deadline

By **Jordan Chila**
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The 2024 election is fast approaching, and surprisingly, not every state offers same-day voter registration. Massachusetts is one of those states, with a voter registration deadline of October 26, 2024. There are several last-minute ways to register: by mail, in person, or online. Since not everyone in the community is registered, take advantage of the right to vote and register today.

Massachusetts is among the 28 states that don't offer same-day voter registration, but

that doesn't mean you can't get your vote in before the deadline. MWCC students can register in person at their local election office or by mail. For those who are registering to vote by mail, be sure that the registration form is postmarked by the deadline date of October 26, 2024. For an even simpler option, there is also the option to register or vote online. Where exactly is one able to find the online registration form? Well, the commonwealth of Massachusetts provides the link here: <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/OVR/>. It takes about five

minutes, and all that is required is valid identification.

The Mount's Brewer Center holds a wealth of information on voting. Fagan Forhan, Dean of K-12 Partnerships and Civic Engagement, with assistance from Jason Zelesky, Dean of Student Affairs, shared that “voting registration cards are available all day, every day at the Brewer Center [on the table at the front of the office].” Qualifying Massachusetts residents can mail the registration cards, or the Brewer Center will mail them for

continued on page 5
“Voter Registration” >>>



Photo by Tom Hill Jr.

MCAS: To Change or Not to Change? Deciding the Future of the MCAS Graduation Requirement with Question 2

By **Princess Yeboah**
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Question 2 on the election ballot addresses the MCAS testing requirement for high school graduation. This year, Massachusetts voters will decide whether to keep or change the rule that requires students to pass the MCAS to graduate. A “yes” vote would remove the requirement that students pass MCAS, while voting “no” would mean the requirement would still be in effect. According to the Rennie Center Education Research and Policy, the MCAS became a requirement to graduate in 2003. While some find this test motivating, some educators support keeping the test but without making it a graduation requirement.

The Massachusetts Teachers Association reports that

many educators see the test as problematic, saying, “The current testing system reduces time to teach, narrows curriculum, adds stress and reduces creativity and misuses education dollars.” Educators also feel the MCAS is not ideal for “students with Individualized Education Plans, students learning English as a second language, students of color and students from groups that have been historically marginalized from a quotable and supportive education.” further calling for change in the testing requirements.

Desiree Leader, a student at MWCC and a former paraeducator for 16 years, commented on how the MCAS affects students with learning disabilities. “The only people that are exempt from the test are the ones that are allowed alternate assessments [allowed

in their] IEP's. Probably less than 5% of the population,” stated Leader.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary education (DESE) supports this statement. DESE shares on their website, “... states must limit the total number of students designated to participate in an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards (i.e., the MCAS-Alt) to one percent of the total number of students who participate in general state assessments.”

Even for most students with accommodations, the MCAS is still mandatory. While the format might differ from the standard version, students—especially those with learning disabilities—face challenges in areas like reading and mathematics. Limited resources often prevent these students

from testing at a proficient level.

While some, like Leader, believe the MCAS does not benefit all students equally, at least one Mount Wachusett Community College student reports enjoying the opportunity to take the test. Alcapone Pujols, another student at the Mount, appreciated the motivation the test provided him for his classroom learning. “It was just the stuff that they taught me for a year.” Pujols said, noting that he does not see the MCAS test as something totally unrelated to his education, but rather knowledge that has been acquired over time.

An article from Boston University Radio (WBUR) talks about Question 2 on the voting ballot for the election. A former teacher critiques the

continued on page 5
“Changing MCAS” >>>

PREVIEWS

Students and Faculty Weigh in on Upcoming Psychedelics Vote in Massachusetts

For the full article, see pages 2 - 3

MWCC Students Provide Thoughts on 2024 Presidential Debate

For the full article, see page 4

Tips & Tricks for Supporting Your Mental Health During Election Season

For the full article, see page 5

Learning Lessons Harsh and Beautiful

For the full profile, see page 6

A Brief History of Voting Technology

for the full article see page 7

What's Cookin' at MWCC

see page 9



Students and Faculty Weigh in on Upcoming Psychedelics Vote in Massachusetts



Image by Alan Rockefeller, from Wikimedia Commons

By Elysian Alder
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

This November, Massachusetts voters will decide on several statewide ballot questions, including Question 4, the limited legalization of certain natural psychedelic substances, also known as the “Natural Psychedelic Substances Act.” The proposal would legalize and regulate the supervised use of certain natural psychedelics—such as psilocybin, DMT, mescaline, and ibogaine—for adults 21 and older.

In 2020, Oregon became the first state in the nation to legalize psilocybin, commonly known as magic mushrooms, in 20 of its most populated cities, opening more than 20 service centers to administer the drug, according to NPR.

In late 2022, Colorado followed suit, voting to decriminalize psilocybin and psilocin, making it legal beginning in 2023 for people aged 21 and older to grow, share, and use five natural psychedelics: psilocybin and psilocin from mushrooms, and ibogaine, mescaline, and DMT from plants.

Although Oregon has recently recriminalized these substances, Colorado remains a state where psilocybin and related compounds are legal for adult use. If Massachusetts voters approve the ballot question, it would make Massachusetts the third state to legalize the use of these substances.

During the 2024 Massachusetts U.S. Senate debate, Democratic Sen. Elizabeth Warren expressed support for Question 4, stating that while she backs the measure, she also believes that it will “take time” to get the right regulations in place for it. Republican Sen. John Deaton opposed Question 4, explaining that he believes “we have to deal with our opiate problem” and that approving the measure for anything beyond medical use would be “pushing it too far, too fast.”

With plenty of pros and cons to consider, students and faculty at Mount Wachusett Community College weighed in with their own opinions, each bringing their own perspective to the conversation.

“I support legal access to natural psychedelic substances because [research] has shown the brain grows new connections between neurons. This process is called neuroplasticity. Psychedelics seem to boost neuroplasticity; it allows the brain to rewire itself by forming new neural pathways. This can benefit people who struggle with mental health conditions like depression, anxiety, and PTSD. I understand the concern about the safe use of this substance and maybe people will abuse them. However, if society is okay with having liquor stores almost everywhere, and we know that alcohol can be harmful, then I do not see why psychedelics should be looked at differently. I don’t see anything wrong with a substance that many will benefit from. I know a few people who have used psychedelics for mental health, and I always hear great feedback saying that mentally, they feel great. These people have a professional job and a family and function well. Often people get misconceptions about people who may use psychedelics. Overall I support Question 4,” said **Sabrina Alonso, Human Services major.**

“I would say we’re not prepared enough right now. I think we have to look at this at many levels and many processes. I think it’s important to look at what we already did before we go further. When we look at marijuana, we’ve seen problems that have come from it being a recreational drug. As for testing, there are tests for blood alcohol content, there’s no test for seeing how much marijuana is in a person’s system. Before moving on to other “natural” substances like psilocybin, two main issues need to be looked at: federal and state regulations need to align more closely, and we need to consider the risks. Both cannabis and psilocybin are Schedule 1, meaning they are seen as highly addictive with no accepted medical use. These substances might not have all the same risks as others in this category, but they aren’t without harm. The problem is that when a substance is legalized, people often think it’s harmless.

I think the medical community needs to look more at holistic alternatives like acupuncture, breathwork.. there’s all these mindfulness clinics and activities that can really help people heal themselves rather than having something given to them that just takes away what they can work on themselves.

Another thing I’m concerned about is the facilitation. If psilocybin is legalized, who will oversee its use? Will it be general practitioners who may not know how to properly handle the substances? Will they check full medical history beforehand? In Oregon, there was a 15% psilocybin tax posed on the sale of it and products, so they need to make sure they’re doing this for medical reasons and not for anything financial,” said **Professor Julie Capozzi, Department Chairman of the Substance Addiction Counseling Certificate program.**

“I voted yes on question 4 because I’m optimistic on more treatment options for those struggling inside, including myself. The side effects of antidepressants aren’t worth the results for some or the medication doesn’t work. One pill doesn’t work for all, so why not have this choice on the table?” said **Joshlynn Lugo, Art major.**

“I was able to mail in my ballot already this week with the state questions on it. The main “concerns” I’ve heard people have for this law to go into effect is the fact that it could be sold, but it sounds like the state only wants to legalize supervised medical use. In my opinion, this makes it very hard for someone to take advantage of, as it would most likely be very obvious since they need to be observed. That’s just my opinion, though. I could see why people would be concerned about illegal sales rising,” said **Julian Anderson, Media Arts and Technology (Audio Concentration) major.**

“Some of our most valuable medicines originally came from nature like digoxin from foxglove, atropine from belladonna, and penicillin from mold to name a few. I support a “yes” vote on Question 4 partly due to knowing how amazing the natural world can be at helping humans stay balanced in body and mind. I do see why there would be a need for regulation of some substances... Most medicines are expensive and not easily accessible by all. Allowing us to grow our own natural psychedelic substances can give us power over where our medicine comes from and lower costs by cutting out the “middleman.” Having therapy centers can give us a safe place to try alternatives to traditional mental health medications. I support research on psychedelics and their use in mental health therapies and can see the potential of them especially with microdosing,” said **Wendy Joubert, an environmental conservation major.**

“I’m voting yes. Who am I to deny anyone medicine that could help them recover from a debilitating disease? I’ve read Michael Polan’s book *How to Change Your Mind* and believe there’s a lot of power in psilocybin mushrooms to heal people from depression and addiction, especially in a supervised clinical setting,” said **Penny Johnson, a Law student at the Mount.**

“I am in support of this ballot measure. I think any drug that can help people medically should absolutely be legal in a medical context so that everyone can get the care that they need,” said **Sanjay Vyas, a student at the Mount.**

“I’m for the potential legalization of supervised therapeutic and regulated at home access to natural psychedelics like psilocybin for treating certain mental health conditions because it would be a great way for more people to get the help they need, and it could also help further research into those medicines if they are used more commonly. The only downside I can think of is if people abuse it or if they find out that it is addictive,” said **Jay Morris, Science major.**

“I think it would be a great opportunity to do research about what these psychedelics can do for people with mental health issues! There is a lot of potential research ideas to help assure the public that these psychedelics are beneficial. I would need to do more research on the specific psychedelics and what they individually do, but I think this proposal in general is fantastic and very progressive in finding different ways to help people struggling with their mental health who just need an extra source of support,” said **Maddy Fichtel, Biology major.**



MWCC Students Provide Thoughts on 2024 Presidential Debate



Former president Donald Trump (R) and Vice President Kamala Harris (D) shake hands at the September 10th presidential debate

By Benjamin Heffner
OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Last month's debate on September 10 between former President Donald Trump, a Republican, and Vice President Kamala Harris, a Democrat, marked the first—and potentially the only—chance for voters to see both candidates on stage discussing key issues facing the nation, including immigration, taxes, the economy, abortion, and foreign policy.

Students Matthew Infantino, Sarah Vargas, and Oren Cohen gave their thoughts on the debate.



Healthcare

Who do you feel won the debate and why?

Undecided. "Both candidates came to the table with important agendas and outlined what they intended to accomplish. But something that's always lacking in politics, especially presidential debates, is explaining "how" those agendas are going to be accomplished."

Do you feel the debate changed your opinion on who'd you vote for?

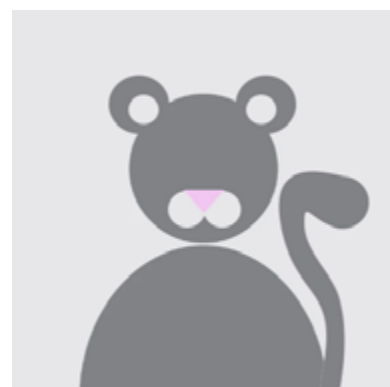
No.

How has the election affected you personally/your mental health?

"This election feels momentous. Irrespective of who wins, it'll be intense and impactful in

What is/are your biggest issue(s)?

ways that we can't necessarily predict."



Sarah Vargas began at MWCC in the fall of 2023 and is currently in the dual enrollment program. She has a lot of feelings on various issues and was able to tell us about her feelings for the candidates of the presidential race.

What is/are your biggest issue(s)?

Abortion, border immigration/ security, climate change, democracy, economic issues, education, foreign policy, healthcare rights, LGBTQ+

Who do you feel won the debate and why?

Kamala Harris. "I felt that Harris effectively counteracted Trump's arguments with well-researched responses. At the same time, I also felt that Trump

made numerous more false claims than Harris, making him unreliable and giving Harris higher favorability."

Do you feel the debate changed your opinion on who'd you vote for?

No.

Has the election affected you personally/your mental health?

No



Oren Cohen is 22 years old and in the Interdisciplinary Studies in Automotive Technology. He was able to give insight on his thoughts to some of the

questions about the presidential debate and they are as follows.

What is/are your biggest issue(s)?

Abortion, border immigration/ security, economic issues, education, healthcare rights, LGBTQ+

Who do you feel won the debate and why?

Kamala Harris. "Harris was able to seize the momentum early on. However, the moderators were understaffed and needed one more member to be able to effectively moderate and fact check. That doesn't absolve them of their lack of fact-checking Harris, nor does it mean she was entirely truthful. Throughout the debate, Harris was animated and passionate and delivered her defining moments."

Do you feel the debate changed your opinion on who'd you vote for and why?

No. "I'm currently undecided but may be starting to lean toward one candidate over the other."

Tips and Tricks for Supporting Your Mental Health During Election Season

By: Benjamin Heffner
OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Mental health is a topic of concern for many people, and awareness for mental health has been steadily increasing. Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC) is eager to contribute to this important cause. Leeanne Hadsel, Senior Mental Health Counselor of MWCC's Counseling and Wellness Services department shared some insight on the topic of mental health during election season and gave some advice about how students, staff, and faculty can manage their physical and mental health during an election season.

Hadsel stated, "It's important to recognize that we don't need to be plugged in at all times."

She shares three tips on how to support your mental health.

1. Be selective about your news sources and critically evaluate all the available information. "The more we mindlessly scroll on our phones, the more stuff that's being thrown at our face," said Hadsel. Your phone does not always have the most accurate information if you're not looking in the right place.

2. Practice self-care. According to Hadsel, "Election seasons come with high emotions. It's not necessarily about surviving

but thriving through mindful controls." Prioritize your well-being at this time.

3. Prioritize empathy and respect within relationships. "Don't be afraid to stray the conversation away from topics other than politics or the news." Sometimes the best way to help your mental health is to simply take yourself out of the conversation and lighten the mood.

One student that has already taken to Hadsel's tips is Oren Cohen, an Interdisciplinary Studies in Automotive Technology major. When asked if his mental health was being affected by the election,

Cohen responded by saying, "I've stopped following the election through traditional means. I follow by subscribing and reading Tangle on a near daily basis. That's not to say I don't watch news through the traditional news sources; I've substituted watching those channels instead of regular reality TV." Cohen found a media source that provided him with election information in a way that made him feel comfortable.

According to Hadsel, "It's important that we acknowledge our own emotions without judgment and reach out for support from the community or professionals." Regardless

of how students choose to manage the upcoming election, Hadsel says the best advice is to be mindful, support active listening, and don't be afraid to press pause.

Hadsel recommends that anyone who still requires further assistance to contact her to make an appointment. Students can text HELP to 978-630-9292. The Brewer Center for Civic Learning & Community Engagement, located on the Gardner Campus in room H133, is also currently offering election/voting related programs that engage community outreach regarding ballot measures and options.



Voter Registration

>>> continued from page 1

you (as long as they are postmarked by October 26, 2024). The Brewer Center has also added clickable banners to the student app and will host a voter registration table on October 23, 2024. Additionally, they will hold a Voting Q&A session on October 30, 2024, for those interested in learning more about the voting process.

Zelesky shed some light on why the same-day voter registration causes debate. "There are arguments on both sides – some say that same-day registration is the most equitable form of democracy while others argue that it overly complicates the process on election day and could lead to people voting more than once and/or other forms of voter fraud." According to NPR, "almost 6-in-10 Americans express concern" about potential voter fraud in the upcoming

election, despite the lack of evidence supporting these claims.

Media arts and technology student Gerry Garcia has faith in the process. "I believe that there is a level of awareness throughout Massachusetts and those who choose to follow politics are active and those who don't could care less," said Garcia—and he may be right, three students who responded on the iconnect student feed weren't aware that Massachusetts did not offer same-day voter registration. However, it seems that those who are interested in casting their votes are already registered. Liberal arts major Tabatha Gentry said, "I wasn't aware of the deadline, but it doesn't matter to me since I'm already registered." While Mckethan stated, "I was not aware, but I did receive a voter

registration card in the mail."

The 15th, 19th, and 26th Amendments, along with the Voting Rights Act of 1965, protect Americans' right to vote, ensuring that race, gender, or age cannot be used to deny this fundamental right. When asked if students should vote, Jason Zelesky responded, "It is your constitutional right to vote and participate in the democratic process. Often, elections have both national and local significance. When you vote, you are influencing the direction of your city/town and making your voice heard."

Zelesky believes students' votes matter. Whether it is for the future president or smaller statewide ballot questions, students have the constitutional right to vote, and as Garcia says, "Voting is something that we should take pride in." Register now before the October 26, 2024 deadline.

Changing MCAS

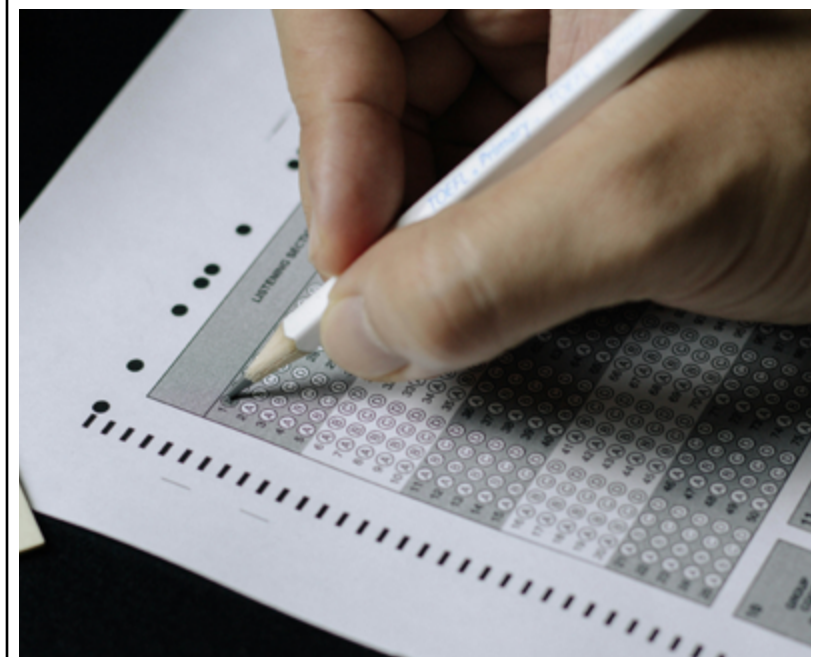


Photo by Nguyen Dang Hoang Nhu from Unsplash

>>> continued from page 1

MCAS, stating, "The MCAS simply measures the ability to be a good test taker."

MWCC President James Vander Hooven gave input on MCAS regulations saying, "Too often, teachers are in a position of teaching the test, as opposed to teaching the art of learning and critical language."

A different article from WBUR voices positivity in light of MCAS, calling it a "tool." The article explains, "It doesn't tell

us everything, but it tells us something really important about how our kids are doing in class."

The outcome of Question 2 will ultimately decide whether students have to pass the MCAS to graduate. Even if the majority votes "yes," it's important for voters to keep in mind that the MCAS will remain a mandatory test. Whatever the outcome is from the collection of votes, the decision will impact both public and some private school students' testing curriculum and how their abilities are measured.



Learning Lessons Harsh and Beautiful

Student Profile: Regulo Moreno



Photo courtesy of Regulo Moreno

By Wayne Jurgeleit
OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

One can Google terms like “global citizen” to find eloquent descriptions of those who are inquisitive about human cultures, economies, and environments, and how they are all interconnected, transcending arbitrary boundaries. Similarly, “lifelong learner” refers to someone dedicated to acquiring knowledge and skills—both personally and professionally—throughout their lifetime to improve their own life and the lives of others. To meet Regulo Moreno is to know someone who truly exemplifies these ideals.

Born in Madrid in 1969 to a Venezuelan diplomat father and a Colombian musician mother, Moreno’s cultured and educated family influenced him from the very start. His father studied international law at the University of Salamanca. His parents courted one another with poetry at the El Prado Museum in Madrid. The Latin American toddler uttered his first word,

“anne” (ah-neh), Turkish for Mom, while the family was stationed in Ankara in 1972. Travel and cultural immersion were second nature to young Moreno. “It was huge in helping me appreciate how people express themselves through art,” said Moreno.

“To see my father for the last time and be with my wife again was more powerful than any consequences or fear.”

- Regulo Moreno

His father’s work for the Venezuelan Consulate meant living in many different places—including Europe and South America—through the 70’s and early 80’s. Moreno gained an appreciation for Latin American culture; the importance of the *cena navidena* (Christmas dinner), tying *hallacas* (tamale-like delights wrapped in banana leaves) and playing the *cuatro*

(similar to a ukulele). “I finally felt Venezuelan!” he recalled fondly. Moreno attended high school in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, so he learned Portuguese. Desiring to study international affairs like his father, he studied and passed the TOEFL, a rigorous test to assess whether or not a

person is ready to study in an English speaking university. He knew that “you only learn a language by living it,” and entered the prestigious dual language program at American University, Washington, D.C. in 1988. An uncle with whom he was staying convinced him to expand his study with more of an economic focus, and after moving yet again, he graduated

from the Universidad Central de Venezuela. A successful career in the country’s oil industry began. But the political landscape in Venezuela would eventually change. Hugo Chavez’s Bolivarian revolution was devolving into autocracy, and the oil industry became

the head was the final persuader. “It was the worst feeling of powerlessness. I was really afraid I was going to die,” he said. He fled immediately, leaving his wife and everything he knew behind, first to Colombia, where family connections procured a passport for him, and then to the United States to seek asylum. He had only \$300 to his name, yet had faith he would eventually reunite with his wife, and drew strength from that to endure.

It was not easy. Saving money was difficult while navigating the asylum process, and Moreno worked multiple jobs in hospitality and gig economies in Chelsea, MA. In 2015, his father passed away, and he made the terrifying, clandestine return to Venezuela to mourn with his family. “To see my father for the last time and be with my wife again was more powerful than any consequences or fear,” he said proudly. His wife came to the US soon after, reuniting with Moreno in Acton, MA.

Moreno, now successfully running a restaurant, and his wife, who was an internationally trained dentist, finally settled into a degree of contentment. But the long hours compelled him to return to banking. He found employment as a small business banker with Bank of America. Naturally gifted with people, he excelled. “Every year and a half, God [has] promoted me!”

Happily living in Leominster, MA in 2020, with a desire to improve upon his interpersonal and communication skills, he discovered Mount Wachusett Community College. Intrigued by the curriculum and qualified for the Transitions to College program, Moreno now studies marketing and public relations, hoping to transfer to Fitchburg State and eventually get an M.B.A.

A life of learning, formal and informal, from lessons harsh and beautiful, have only inspired Moreno to continue. He emphasized, “It’s a learning process that never ends.”

A Brief History of Voting Technology



Image by Element5 Digital from Unsplash

By Kent Yang
STAFF WRITER

Since the inception of the United States in 1776, elections have been essential for choosing the next president. From colonial times until the late 19th century, elections were held, and votes were cast orally at courthouses. Presidents such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson,

and Abraham Lincoln were elected this way. However, this changed with the invention of the Acme Voting Machine.

The Acme Voting Machine was invented in Bridgewater, Connecticut, around 1880 to prevent voter fraud. With its open-slot box design, crank lever mechanism, and tabulator, it offered voters an honest,

secure and reliable way to cast their votes. In the following election officials would tear or mark ballots, making them invalid. This issue prompted the invention of the Lever Style Voting Machine in Lockport, New York. By pulling down its levers, the machine locked votes to prevent tampering, while also making the process faster and more accurate. While it was effective and efficient for its time, its maintenance was complex and it had limitations, such as only being able to tally votes internally rather than producing a verifiable record of each individual vote.

In 1961, Martin A. Coyle developed the Coyle Voting Machine in Ohio, which used an electronic hole punch system. Voters received a ballot card with the candidate’s name, and the machine punched a hole to indicate their selection, ensuring their vote was correctly recorded. Despite this innovation, the Coyle was too heavy, expensive at \$650 (equivalent to \$6,854

today), and lacked privacy curtains, a feature of the Lever Style machine. The Votomatic Punch-Card System, created by Joseph P. Harris in 1965, replaced the Coyle machine. The Punch-Card System only weighed 6 pounds and came at a cost of \$185 per unit. Punch card voting systems would become the most common method of voting to date. However, after widespread criticism in the early 2000s during the U.S. presidential election, the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) established voting standards and encouraged states to replace the punch card system with newer technologies, such as Direct Recording Electronic (DRE) systems and optical scanners. Today, voters typically use Direct Recording Electronic (DRE) systems or optical scanners. DRE voting systems were developed and introduced by several manufacturers in the 1970s, but they didn’t become widely used until after the “Hanging Chads” controversy during the 2000 U.S. presidential election.

How do DREs and Optical Scanners work? DRE systems utilize touch-screen monitors that allow voters to input their votes in this manner. Meanwhile, optical scanners require voters to mark and fill in their selections on a ballot. Those ballots are then hand-fed or batch-fed into an optical scanner, which records the results. After the 2020 U.S. presidential election, certain DRE systems were criticized for touch-screen calibration issues and security vulnerabilities. As history shows, criticism often creates opportunities for the invention of newer and more robust systems. The evolution of voting technology will continue to advance as citizens of the United States continue to identify flaws and vulnerabilities in the current system to ensure a fair, honest, and accurate voting process. Understanding the technologies in use and ensuring they uphold democratic values is crucial for the future of voting in the United States.

THE EAST WING GALLERY
Raymond LaFontaine Fine Arts Center

Copper Giloth

Drawings 2011-2024

November 7- December 5, 2024

Gallery Talk: Friday, Nov. 8 at Noon

Gallery Hours: Mon-Thurs: 8 a.m.– 8 p.m.
Friday: 8 a.m.– 5 p.m.
Open during Theatre events
Closed: Nov. 11, 28, 29

More information: j_miller@mwcc.mass.edu

Instagram: @mwccartdepartment

Follow artist:

Instagram @coppergilothstudio

<https://vimeo.com/user39846312>

 Mount Wachusett
Community College
444 Green Street, Gardner, MA

IMAGE: *Trees*, 2024, digital/photographic drawing, 12 x 16 in.





WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE YOU VOTE

Information gathered from *Massachusetts Information For Voters 2024 Ballot Questions* - Secretary of the Commonwealth, William Francis Galvin

Submitted by Desiree Leader | *Staff Writer* and Summarized by Elysian Alder | *Editor-in-Chief*

QUESTION 1: State Auditor's Authority to Audit the Legislature

Question 1 asks voters if the state auditor should be allowed to investigate and review some activities of the state legislature, the branch that drafts, debates, and passes laws

What a YES vote means: Nothing would change immediately, but it would allow the state auditor to test new investigative powers over the legislature. Lawmakers could potentially resist or overturn this authority.

What a NO vote means: No change would be made to the law.

QUESTION 2: Elimination of MCAS as High School Graduation Requirement

Question 2 proposes to remove the requirement for Massachusetts students to pass the MCAS tests to graduate.

What a YES vote means: The requirement that a student must pass the MCAS in order to graduate would be eliminated. Instead, students would need to complete certified coursework that shows they meet district standards.

What a NO vote means: No change would be made to the law. The MCAS would remain a requirement.

QUESTION 3: Unionization for Transportation Network Drivers

Question 3 proposes to allow transportation network drivers (such as Lyft, Uber) to form unions to negotiate wages, benefits, and work conditions with their companies.

What a YES vote means: Transportation network and rideshare drivers would be allowed to form unions to negotiate wages, benefits, and work conditions with companies.

What a NO vote means: No change would be made to the law, keeping the current system, where drivers don't have this collective option.

QUESTION 4: Limited Legalization and Regulation of Certain Natural Psychedelic Substances

Question 4 proposes to allow adults 21 and older to grow, possess, and use certain natural psychedelics, like psilocybin mushrooms, in supervised settings with trained facilitators. While retail sales would remain banned, licensed facilities would follow regulations for facilitation.

What a YES vote means: It means supporting the use of these substances under supervision, allowing home cultivation, and establishing a commission to regulate their use.

What a NO vote means: The laws pertaining to these substances remain the same and these activities are not permitted.

QUESTION 5: Minimum Wage for Tipped Workers

Question 5 would gradually raise the minimum wage for tipped workers to match the state minimum wage over five years.

What a YES vote means: It supports this increase, then allowing employers to pool tips for all workers, including non-tipped employees, and requiring them to pay any shortfalls in wages until the tipped wage equals the full minimum wage.

What a NO vote means: The current laws on tip pooling and minimum wages for tipped workers will remain unchanged.

WHAT'S COOKIN' AT MWCC

Recipe of the Month: Patriotic Trifle

In honor of the Presidential Election, we are sharing a simple recipe for a patriotic trifle.

Ingredients

- 2 (3.3-oz. each) boxes white chocolate instant pudding mix
- 3 cups whole milk
- 1/2 (8-oz.) container frozen whipped topping, thawed
- 12 oz. angel food cake, cubed (from 1 prepared angel food cake)
- 2 cups sliced strawberries, divided
- 2 cups raspberries, divided
- 2 1/2 cups blueberries, divided



Directions:

1. Pour pudding mix into a large bowl; gradually whisk in milk. Continue whisking until mixture starts to thicken, 1 to 2 minutes. Fold in whipped topping.
2. Arrange half of the cake cubes in the bottom of a trifle dish. Top with 1 cup strawberries, 1 cup raspberries, and half of the pudding. Arrange remaining half of the cake cubes in the dish; top with 2 cups of blueberries and remaining pudding mix. Arrange remaining 1/2 cup blueberries over pudding, in the center; arrange remaining 1 cup each of strawberries and raspberries around the edges.
3. Cover and chill for at least 2 hours before serving.

See Your Recipe Here!

Send your favorite cooking combos to us at mountobserver@mwcc.mass.edu

GET INVOLVED!

Want to join a club or participate in a community event? Then visit [InvolveMOUNT](https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/) at <https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/> and get started today!




JOIN US IN DISCUSSING WHY YOUR VOTE COUNTS.

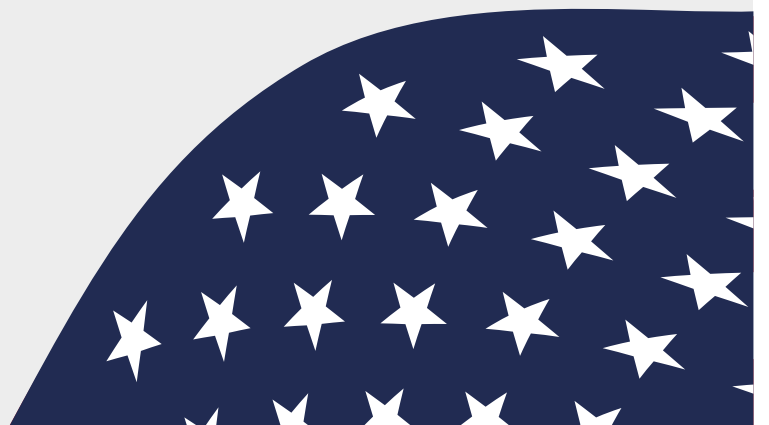
OCTOBER 30TH 12:30 SOUTH CAFE
LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED
GUEST SPEAKERS

Former Senator Stephen M. Brewer

Gardner City Councilman Dana Heath

Former Gardner Mayor Mark Hawke

Former Fitchburg City Councilwoman Dolores Thibault-Munoz



THE MOUNT OBSERVER | VOLUME 19, ISSUE 2 | October 23, 2024

Editors in Chief:

Elysian Alder
Jordan Chila

Assistant Editors:

Vana Mangiarelli
Princess Yeboah

Staff Writers:

Kent Yang
Desiree Leader

Graphic Designer:

Thomas Hill Jr.

Contributors:

Benjamin Heffner
Wayne Jurgeleit

Adviser:

Katie Fuller

Address:

Room H353, MWCC,
444 Green St.,
Gardner, MA 01440

E-Mail

mountobserver@mwcc.mass.edu

The Mount Observer reserves the right to edit and condense all submissions. *The Mount Observer* is a member of the College Media Advisers, Inc.

The Mount Observer Advertising Policy:

The Mount Observer will reject any ad that is

libelous, obscene, violates any laws or encourages discrimination against any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, age, color, creed, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, or disability. *The Mount Observer* reserves the right to edit or reject any ad copy at any time.