

"Just one small positive thought in the morning can change your whole day." – Martin Luther King Jr.

Country Journal

Devoted to the Needs of the Hilltowns

Becket, Blandford, Chester, Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery, Otis, Plainfield, Russell, Sandisfield, Westhampton, Williamsburg, Worthington

A TURLEY PUBLICATION | www.turley.com

January 4, 2024 | Vol. 45, No. 37 | 75¢

www.countryjournal.turley.com

2023 Year in Review

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

With a New Year just begun, it is time to look back at events in Huntington and surrounding towns.

JANUARY

The year kicked off with

outstanding news for the town of Worthington, when Congressman Richard Neal announced the award of \$2 million in grant funding through the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee.

Funding will go toward building a new Senior Center for the town.

This project has been several years in the making following a planning process spearheaded by the Hilltown Community Development

2023, page 6



Finalists for Gateway's 2023 Golden Achievement Awards, from left, are Olivia Kanner, Olivia Dame, Liam Bowler, Lucy Pitoniak and Nancy Mueller. *File photo*

BORN ON NEW YEAR'S DAY



Welcome Elliot

The first 2024 baby born at Cooley Dickinson Hospital was Elliot James Krason. His parents are Sarah Jeanne Boyle and Christopher Michael Krason. He was born on Monday, Jan. 1 at 5:14 a.m., weighed 6 pounds 8.1 ounces and was 20 inches long. He is the first grand baby on both sides of his family. He shares his birthday with his father's twin sisters, who were born on New Year's Day as well.

Submitted photo

BLANDFORD

Transfer Station to get new swap building for residents

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

Coming this year to the Transfer Station, residents with appropriate stickers will have the opportunity to Swap 'til You Drop at the new swap building.

Board of Health Chair Bret Hartley and supervisor of the Transfer Station said that the 20 foot by 30 foot building will help keep some items out of the landfill.

It will be used for "unwanted furniture, books, fixtures, dishes, silverware and whatever else" for which

residents no longer have a use or purpose. Residents can bring their still useable things and leave them and swap them out for something that may be of use. "People can help themselves," said Hartley.

Construction has already started with the cement foundation platform already in place. The Board of Health plans to complete the structure with the help of grant funding.

Other 2024 goals for the BOH include access and par-

SWAP BUILDING, page 3



Board of Health Chair and Transfer Station Supervisor Bret Hartley stands on the cement slab foundation of the new Swap Building at the Transfer Station. *Turley Photo by Mary Kronholm*



PAGE 8

Blandford.....3	Huntington.....2	Otis.....2	Schools & Youth.....5
Business Directory.....8	Middlefield.....2	Pittsfield.....9	Stockbridge.....2
Chesterfield.....2	Northampton.....2	Plainfield.....2	Westhampton.....8
Classifieds.....10	Obituary.....11	Public Notices.....11	Worthington.....8
Haydenville.....5	Opinion.....4, 5	Puzzle Page.....9	



NORTHAMPTON

Retiring Cooley Dickinson Hospital leader raises \$34,000

NORTHAMPTON – Cooley Dickinson Hospital's chief community relations and communications officer, Jeff Harness, announced his retirement and is seeking to raise \$34,000 in support of the hospital's New Beginnings program.

The goal represents his 34 years of service to the organization. New Beginnings is a program that promotes education and support for pregnant and postpartum people in or working towards, recovery from substance use. The goal of the program is to help foster a connection between parents and their new babies, growing parental confidence and sustaining their recovery.

"It has been an incredible privilege to be part of Cooley Dickinson Hospital

for more than three decades and this is a program that means a lot to me, because it's a shining example of what our organization is all about," said Harness. "The focus of New Beginnings is helping the newest members of our community get off to a healthy start in life, so I'm grateful for any support individuals and organizations can provide."

New Beginnings, which began in 2018, is open to Cooley Dickinson OB/GYN and Midwifery patients, who are pregnant or up to two years postpartum. Topics discussed in the program include discomforts of pregnancy and comfort measures, stress management, relapse prevention, nutrition during pregnancy, neonatal abstinence syndrome (neona-

tal withdrawal), expectations, scoring system and how to soothe a baby with withdrawal symptoms, labor and birth, postpartum planning, what to expect from social work/DCF, breastfeeding and newborn care.

Those interesting in donating can do so by visiting cooleydickinson.com/givenow (select "Jeff Harness – New beginnings" from the dropdown menu), by calling 413-582-2256 or by mailing a check to P.O. Box 329, Northampton, MA 01061.

Since he began at Cooley Dickinson in 1989 as a part time inpatient behavioral health counselor, Harness has held numerous roles throughout the organization including as director of the Western

Massachusetts Center for Healthy Communities, director of integrated care and population health and director of community health and government relations.

Cooley Dickinson Hospital (cooleydickinson.org) is a not-for-profit, acute care hospital that offers community-based programs and services in Northampton. A member of the Mass General Brigham System, Cooley Dickinson has been advancing the health of people in the Pioneer Valley since 1886. The organization includes community-based primary care and specialty practices in Hampshire and Southern Franklin counties, and a VNA & Hospice program that provides home health and hospice nursing and rehabilitation visits.

STOCKBRIDGE

Stockbridge Grange hosts community dinner Jan. 14

STOCKBRIDGE – The Stockbridge Grange is having a community dinner Sunday, Jan. 14 featuring baked beans and ham with dessert choices of chocolate cream or lemon meringue pie.

Dinner is \$15 per person and is take out only with pickup at the

Stockbridge Grange Hall, 51 Church St. from noon-1:30 p.m. Orders may be made by calling 413-243-1298 or 413-443-4352. Reservation deadline is Thursday, Jan. 11. Grange Community Dinners are designed to raise money for non-profit projects and building maintenance.

MIDDLEFIELD

Middlefield Council on Aging announces this week's menu

MIDDLEFIELD – The Middlefield Senior Center, 169 Skyline Trail on Wednesday, Jan. 10 will serve lunch at noon.

The menu is eat in or take out. The choice is broccoli mushroom quiche or butternut squash soup,

French Bread, garlic green beans and fruit crisp. People should call 413-623-9990 to reserve a meal the previous Friday, Jan. 5.

Suggested donation is \$3. The Council on Aging Board will meet at 1 p.m.



FREE FLY TYING CLASSES

Sponsored by the Western Mass Fly Fishermen, the Ludlow Elks Lodge 2448 and Turley Publications are starting January 11th, 2024.

Held at the Ludlow Elks Lodge located at 69 Chapin St. Ludlow Mass.

Thursday nights for eight weeks from 7PM to 9PM.

The classes are open to the public with children 8 years and up accompanied by an adult.

Classes are geared to the beginner or novice.

Course materials and tools will be supplied.

Should you have your own tools, feel free to bring them.

No Registration is Necessary!

Should there be Bad weather please contact the Ludlow Elks after 4:00 PM for any cancelations at (413) 583-2448 or check our website <http://www.wmffclub.org>

HUNTINGTON

Domestic Task Force to meet

HUNTINGTON – The Southern Hilltown Domestic Violence Task Force will meet in person on Wednesday, Jan. 10 from 1-2:30 p.m. at Gateway High School, 12 Littleville Road, in the Career Center, second floor.

Those unable to attend may email southernhillstvtaskforce@gmail.com and a zoom link will be sent to them. There were some issues with the audio connection last month and in an effort to correct it, the task force ordered a microphone/speaker.

PLAINFIELD

Plainfield Fire Association votes to retain same officers for 2024

PLAINFIELD – The Plainfield Volunteer Firefighters Association voted to retain their leadership for the new year.

The PVFA voted Dan Shearer, President; Debbie Stevens, Vice President/Secretary and Andy Stevens, Treasurer for 2024 at their annual meeting. The PVFA had a very successful year supporting the Plainfield Volunteer Fire/EMS Department.

This support included allowing the fire department to replace Car 1, a 2005 government surplus Ford Expedition that was at the end of its serviceable life due to exterior rust and rot, with a 2015 Expedition from Georgia with no rust and in excellent running condition. The cost of this new (used) vehicle was over \$20,000 and paid for by the PVFA, not



Plainfield Volunteer Firefighters Association replaces Car 1 with 2015 Ford Expedition. Submitted photo

taxpayer, funds.

The support of the PVFA's fund raising activities by residents and property owners allows the PVFA to fund needed purchases for the volunteer Fire/EMS department not in the annual budget.

CHESTERFIELD

Church holds monthly breakfast

CHESTERFIELD – The Chesterfield Congregational Church, 43 Main Road, will be having its monthly breakfast on Sunday, Jan. 14 from 8-10 a.m.

The cost is a voluntary donation. The menu features pancakes with or without blueberries, French toast, pure

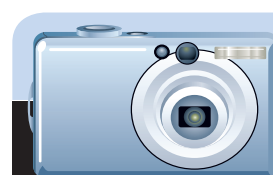
Chesterfield maple syrup, free range, organic, farm-fresh eggs any style, breakfast sandwiches, sausage, home fries and excellent homemade corned beef hash, juice, tea, and coffee. In addition, the special item for this breakfast will be breakfast apple cake.

OTIS

Transfer Station closed Jan. 15

OTIS – The Transfer Station will be closed for Martin Luther King Jr. Day holiday on Monday, Jan. 15.

The Transfer Station will be open on Tuesday, Jan. 16 from 7 a.m.-3 p.m.



Send Us Your Photos!

countryjournal@turley.com

BLANDFORD

Town officials look toward the New Year

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

BLANDFORD – Select Board Chair Cara Letendre, considering where the town is now, said, “I would like to appoint a qualified, eager town administrator who will continue to move Blandford forward.”

“And I would like to continue the work needed to present a plan for a new fire department and/or highway department that the majority of townspeople are comfortable with,” Letendre also said.

Board member Theodore said, in agreement, “I wish we can do it all,” and

added that he just wants “us all to get along.” When asked what he meant by that, he responded that people post on social media and “those people should attend the Select Board meetings” to get correct information.

The Finance Committee will have its vision for the coming year firmed up at their Jan. 20 meeting. Their meetings are open to the public.

Eric Kinsherb’s firm, Eric Kinsherb CPA handles the town’s accounting. He said he looks “To continue to be part of the great work that is being done in Blandford as well as developing a solid working relationship with the new Town Administrator.”

Census information mailed

BLANDFORD – Doris Jemiolo, Town Clerk will mail the 2024 Street List/Town Census forms this month.

The forms must be completed and returned to the Town Clerk’s office in the pre-addressed envelope accompanying the form. Failure to respond to this mailing will result in removal from the active voting list and may result in the removal from the voter registration rolls.

Every household must update their form, correct anything that has changed or needs to be added or deleted, like the birth of a child or a member of the household moving out.

The form does not register anyone to vote, nor is it possible to change political party or affiliation by writing it on the form. That must be done separately with the Town Clerk.

“Having correct information annually is important to the town for grants, state funding and school population,” said Jemiolo. The state requires all households to respond to the street list within ten days, even if there are no changes.

If anyone has not received the form to update information or has any questions, they may call Jemiolo at 848-4279, extension 203.

Blandford COA hold luncheon and breakfast

BLANDFORD – The first of the New Year’s Council on Aging luncheons is set for Friday, Jan. 12 at noon the Town Hall.

The menu features chicken kabobs, salad, twice-baked potato and for dessert, brownie a la mode.

Breakfast is Friday, Jan. 26 at 10 a.m. and will be tater-tot casserole, fruit salad and banana bread.

Chef Joann Martin and Director Margit Mikuski ask that reservations be made by calling 413-848-4279,

extension 400 and leaving the name and number of people planning to attend.

While there is no charge for either the luncheon or breakfast, a recommended donation of \$5 or more will support the ongoing meal program.

The Monday morning, 11:30 a.m. exercise program will continue in the gym at the Town Hall. Mikuski said that there are still some Covid tests available on the COA table or by calling the COA at the Town Hall.

Open burning season begins

BLANDFORD – Open Burning begins Jan. 15 and continues through May 1.

Permits are available through the Fire Department online via the town’s website at townofblandford.com. If a resident does not have internet access or has difficulty online, burning permits are available by telephone by calling the Fire Department at 413-848-4279, extension 600. Requests for burning permits must be made every time anyone wants to burn.

The following regulations must be observed: You may only burn brush. All other materials are illegal. No leaves, grass, hay, stumps, building debris or any other materials may be burned.

All open burning must be a minimum of 75 feet from buildings or structures. Burning starts at 10 a.m. and must be extinguished by 4 p.m. Any open fire

must be attended at all times by the permit holder.

No person shall set, maintain or increase a fire in open air at any time except by permission. People must be 18 years or older to apply for a permit and/or set, maintain or increase a fire once permission has been granted by the Fire Department.

You must have an appropriate means to extinguish an open-air fire completely at the end of the day or if requested by the Fire Department.

The Fire Department can refuse or cancel a permit at any time. Reasons include violation of permit regulations or change in weather conditions. Permits are only issued between 8:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. and only on the day anyone wants to burn. No permits will be issued in advance due to the potential change in weather conditions.

SWAP BUILDING

from page 1

ticipation in a state-wide data base through the State Department of Health. This will be used for all inspections, food and houses and the state, at no cost to the town, will provide a computer tablet for this purpose. According to BOH member, Jennifer Girard, this will be very helpful.

The board is also working with the Department of Environmental Protection for grants for homeowners to be able to rectify problems with their septic systems. There will be a window for application time and there will be a limit on the number of homes that can benefit from this program that provides loans to homeowners from the Board of Health. For more information people may email the Board of Health at boh@townofblandford.com.

The board also plans to have its permit applications included on the town’s permitting module, Permiteyes.

News and photo publication policy

As a community newspaper our focus has always been local news. While we try very hard to run upcoming events as a public service whenever space allows, space does not allow us to run an upcoming event repeatedly. Our policy is to limit publication of upcoming events to one article in advance of the event and, space permitting, a second brief reminder article the week prior to an event, and to run those articles in only one section of the paper, and not in multiple sections simultaneously.

All such public service announcements and photos are subject to space limitations and deadlines, therefore publication cannot be guaranteed. Whenever copy for the week exceeds allotted space, news copy will take priority, and public service copy is the first area to be cut. We also reserve the right to edit for style and space, and are under no obligation to print lists of sponsorships, or articles that arrive after deadline, unless time and space allows.

Deadline is Monday at NOON, on holidays it is Friday at 2 p.m.



The Blandford Fire Association would like to thank the following sponsors for their continuing generosity and support for helping us to make our pancake breakfast a big success.

Bob Twyman
Laurie & John Bocon
Tom & Linda Van Werkooven
Ann & George Reichert
Don Brainard
Pam Rideout
Williams/Nye
Trish & Kim Berland
Ripley Family
Knox Inn Trail
Bruce’s Hardware
Margit & Bill Mikuski
The Blandford Store
Gateway Farm and Pet
The Blandford Crafters
Break Basket
Blandford Animal Hospital
Blandford Country Club
Pat Hebert
Nancy Ackley

Stetz Family
Westfield Feed
Auto Zone
Brookman Carol Company
The Student Prince
The Seven B’s
Russell Inn
Chrissy G Bakery
The Tavern
Westfield Auto
Kara Albert
Colorado Ski Shop
Ray Hultay
Chaffee Family
Baudelin Family
Zajko Family
Starbucks Coffee/Westfield Turnpike
Blandford Recreation Committee
Letendre Family

OPINION

EDITORIAL



If my wife claims now, will it hurt my Social Security Amount?

Dear Rusty

I am 69 years old, and my wife turned 70 early this year. I am still working full time. My wife is not working, but she got a letter from Social Security saying she should take her Social Security as soon as possible.

My question is: since my wife has reached her full retirement age, can she take her SS without it affecting mine when I claim? I plan to work at least another year, depending on how the economy goes I may have to work longer if it doesn't get better. I have IRAs and a 401k to pull from when I retire.

Signed Anxious Husband

Dear Anxious

The reason your wife received a letter from Social Security suggesting she claims now is because her benefit reached maximum some time ago at age 70. Thus, there is no reason for her to wait beyond age 70 to claim. By delaying past age 70 your wife is losing money so she should apply as soon as possible.

I suggest your wife call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 or your local office right away to request an appointment to apply for her benefits and she should be sure to request six months of retroactive payments. SS will pay up to six months retroactively.

If your wife has a "my Social Security" online account, she can also apply online at www.ssa.gov/apply, but she should be sure to request six months of retroactive benefits in the "Remarks" section of the online application. Because your wife is more than six months past age 70, getting six months retroactive benefits will not reduce her age 70 benefit amount. Nor will your wife claiming her benefits now negatively affect your Social Security when you later claim.

Even though you plan to continue working, likely beyond 70 years of age yourself, you should not wait beyond age 70 to claim for the same reason, your benefit will reach maximum when you are 70. You can apply for your benefits up to four months in advance and specify you want benefits to start in the month you turn 70.

If you haven't already done so, you may wish to create your own "my Social Security" online account now at www.ssa.gov/myaccount, which will make it easier for you to apply online at www.ssa.gov/apply when the time comes next year. Applying online is, by far, the most efficient way, but you need to have your online account set up first to do so.

Just so you know, there is no need to worry that you won't get credit for work income earned after you have applied for your benefits. Even after you are collecting benefits, Social Security will automatically review your earnings each year when that information is received from the IRS, after you file your income tax return.

If your most recent earnings are higher than those in any of the 35 years of lifetime earnings used to calculate your benefit

SECURITY, page 5

Corrections policy

If you notice a factual error in our pages, please let us know, so that we can set the record straight. Email information to countryjournal@turley.com, or call us at 413-283-8393.

Corrections will be printed in the same section where the error originally occurred.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Resident thanks Fire Department

This is a letter of thanks and appreciation for the Huntington Fire Department.

During the big rainstorm in December, my cellar collected two feet of water, lapping above the bottoms of the furnace and water heater. I turned off the furnace and water heater and called 911, who called the Fire Department.

Members of the department arrived within minutes, bringing a pump. They got that pump going, revived my sump pump

and advised me what to do about the furnace and heater. They stayed until they were sure the water was going down, all the time treating me with great kindness and concern. One member returned the next day to be sure everything was okay. I feel lucky to live in a town with such good people and I'm forever grateful to our Fire Department.

Susan McIntosh
Huntington

GUEST COLUMN

Native plants often need to be coaxed into germinating



Are you interested in starting your own perennials from seed this year? This column, straight from the archives, will be of use to you! Sadly, not all seeds sprout as quickly and easily indoors as tomatoes do.

Some seeds can be a bit tricky to germinate, and we must go through extraordinary measures to get them to sprout. In the grand scheme of things, you will learn that this is actually a good thing.

Take the Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) for example, and imagine what would happen if this late bloomer dropped its seed on the ground in October and the seed came up immediately? Likely, the seedlings would be so small and tender that they would not survive the winter.

On the other hand, if germination occurred in early spring (and it does!), success could almost be guaranteed.

The Cardinal Flower, along with many other native plants, has a built-in dormancy that is broken only by a period of moist-cold. Until "winter" has passed – either for real or simulated by us, these plants will simply not sprout.

In addition to Cardinal Flower, Columbine, Delphinium, Gas Plant, Great Lobelia, Lupine, Iris, Monkshood, Border Phlox, Primrose, Purple Coneflower and probably more that I am unaware of, all benefit from what is called "stratification." The term, which admittedly sounds a bit intimidating, refers to the practice of "stratifying," or storing seeds in layers alternating with moisture-holding material and exposing them to cold temperatures.

This can be accomplished both indoors and out, and I will go through the pros and cons of each.

No doubt the easiest way to expose seeds to a period of moist-cold is to sow

them outdoors in the fall in a nursery bed or cold frame. They will go through the winter and when conditions are right (cross your fingers!) germinate neatly in their rows.

But because you are outside, seeds can sometimes disappear thanks to ants, rodents and birds. Weeds can also pop up in the seed bed, making it hard to tell which plant is which!

The elements can likewise take their toll and unless the beds are protected, soil can either dry out or get completely waterlogged.

Another way to stratify seeds outdoors is by using the milk-jug method. Taking a gallon size clear milk container and starting just below the handle, cut it almost all the way across.

If you begin just after the handle on one side and end up just before the handle on the other, you will make a hinge. Punch a few drainage holes in the bottom and a couple more on the sides, up and down from the cut so that you can "twist-tie" the jug shut after you are done.

Fill the bottom half with well-moistened seed starting mix and plant the seeds according to the directions on the packet – if they are tiny don't cover; simply press them into the soil. Connect the two halves of the jug with twist ties (or just use duct tape) and label with pencil.

Keep the cap off to provide ventilation, then place in a spot protected from hard winds. As seedlings emerge in the spring you can flip back the top on nice days, but remember to replace each night and water as needed.

If you prefer to start your seedlings indoors you can mimic winter by placing your seeds in the refrigerator to "chill." Don't put them in there in their seed packets, though, since they must also be kept moist.

If you have enough room in the refrigerator, you can simply sow them in their flats, cover the flat with a loose plastic bag and place it inside for the recommended length of time, usually anywhere from one to three months. Afterwards, set them out to germinate as you normally would, with

GARDEN, page 5

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor should be 500 words or less in length. We require letter writers to include his or her name, town of residence and home telephone number. We must authenticate authorship prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions deemed to be libelous or contain unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks, defamation of character and offensive language. All unknown or alleged facts and quotations offered by the author need to cite credible, unbiased sources.

Mail letter to Country Journal, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069 or mail your letter to: countryjournal@turley.com.



Digital Photos

TURLEY PUBLICATIONS, INC.
Purchase a photo that recently ran in one of our publications. Go to newspapers.turley.com/photo-request

ISSN NO. 0747-2471

Country Journal TEAM



EDITOR
Ellenor Downer
countryjournal@turley.com



ADVERTISING SALES
Wendy Delcamp
wdelcamp@turley.com

The Country Journal (USPS 483-550) is published every Thursday by Turley Publications, Inc., 24 Water St., Palmer, Mass. 01069. Telephone (413) 283-8393, Fax (413) 289-1977. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Turley Publications, Inc., 24 Water St., Palmer, Mass. 01069.



@ Country Journal

WEB
countryjournal.turley.com

PATRICK H. TURLEY
CEO

KEITH TURLEY
President

DEANNA SLOAT
Graphics Manager

Turley
Publications, Inc.

www.turley.com

Turley Publications, Inc. cannot assume liability for the loss of photographs or other materials submitted for publication. Materials will not be returned except upon specific request when submitted.

OPINION

HILLTOWN HISTORY

Water falls and the Westfield River roars

By Deborah Daniels
Correspondent

Happy New Year, instead of writing about the worst New Year's Eve party, my attention was caught by the roaring Westfield River.

Thus you were spared from the usual, boring account of holiday work party behavior like hard drinking, bad gossip and more.

Stay with me now. So hiking with the Hilltowners' in Blandford this Friday, Dec. 29 felt like monsoon weather was transforming the environment into pre-flood conditions. Water flowed down a beautiful quartz and granite highway paved by nature, heaving glaciers, at Henry Brook.

It revealed glistening striations in the stone. It was really stunning to see. Oh for a pick ax and ox to help lug some back home

The ground here at what was on top of a peak was wet and swampy. Well it had rained the previous two days so damp conditions were to be expected. What are flood conditions one had to ask? Well the Westfield River has flooded twice in recent years and I use the term recently very loosely. Once in August 1955 after two hurricanes had come through the area less than a month apart accompanied by heavy rainfall.

Despite the dams and levees built to retard flooding, the Lake Shore Limited train that ran from Boston to Chicago was derailed in Woronoco due to washed out tracks. The train rolled into the riverbed and the surrounding area including where the Tekoa Country Club was, was flooded so rescue vehicles could not immediately respond.

This was not the picture the federal government wanted to see after having the Knightville Dam built in 1941 on the East Branch of the Westfield River and the Littleville Dam built in 1953 on the Middle Branch of the Westfield River. There is no dam on the West Branch of the Westfield River and don't for-

get the Little River running rogue right beside the West Branch. It could make one pause and consider building a second story or purchasing flood insurance should you live down river.

The second time the Westfield River flooded was in March of 1936. That was attributed to 14 days of torrential rain and snow melt that caused all the rivers in the Northeast to flood.

There were two weeks of damage due to flooding and to ice that plugged up the rivers and when the ice was freed up it acted like a battering ram downstream. It was estimated that 150-200 lives were lost and property damage was extensive. One example of damage that occurred here was the Holyoke Dam was breached by a nine foot water wave that sheared off a 1,000 foot wide by five foot high section of the granite dam. The damage was done by the Connecticut River, which had created a new river bed to get around an ice jam.

Once the jam was broken up, the flooding river headed with a vengeance for the dam. This was the flood that triggered the Army Corps of Engineers to get the go ahead to build levees, dams and reservoirs to prevent flooding. It was enacted by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

The Westfield River drains some 200 square miles of mountainous land upstream from 23 towns. It conducts the flow of water to the Connecticut River in Agawam where it then empties into Long Island Sound and the Atlantic Ocean.

Be glad there are three branches to conduct the flow of water and respect the tributary of the Little River to keep this water in check. You can monitor the reservoir of water behind the two dams to get an idea of suspicious water activity or you can check the river flowing through the Chesterfield Gorge or from one of the Keystone Arch Bridges, if you dare.

Route 112 commuters heading south, be ready to boat to work if you notice the ground getting squishy. Chester, Huntington, Russell and



Stream water flows through a spillway in a pond dam.
Photos by Deborah Daniels



Hilltown Hikers walk along a ledge of quartz and granite in Blandford.



This is a close up of the stone striatum on a hike in Blandford.



The beaver and muskrat pond in Blandford, found on the hike on Friday 12/29/23.

Westfield folks head for the Hills and get your boots out.

Let's all make 2024 a good one, be safe and stay out of trouble.

SECURITY

from page 4

when you claim, Social Security will automatically increase your monthly payment amount. In other words, you shouldn't delay past age 70 to claim Social Security because you're working; you'll still get credit for those earnings, automatically.

So, I suggest that your wife take fast action to apply for her Social Security benefits to avoid losing any more money and that you plan to apply for your benefits to start when you turn 70. There is no financial advantage to waiting beyond age 70 to claim, even if you continue working.

The Association Mature Citizens

Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. This article is intended for information purposes and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the Association Mature Citizens Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. To submit a question, visit amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

GARDEN

from page 1

supplemental light and bottom heat (in other words, fake spring this time around!).

Most folks don't have a spare refrigerator to fill up with seedling flats. In this case put a small amount of moist seed-starting medium in a tiny plastic bag and sprinkle in the seeds.

After "winter" has elapsed, sprinkle the contents on to the top of moistened soil in your container and firm down. Large seeds can be covered with an additional sprinkling of growing medium. Proceed as above to promote germination.

If you plan to order perennial

seeds by mail, do so soon, so that you can stratify and have them sprout at the normal time. This may sound tricky, but it's really pretty simple, and the pay-off is lots of new plants for your perennial border!

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 31 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO RECYCLE THIS NEWSPAPER

HAYDENVILLE

Sen. Paul Mark announces staff hours for January

BOSTON — State Senator Paul W. Mark announces his staff will host office hours in Williamsburg for two days in January.

Staff will be in Williamsburg on Tuesdays, Jan. 9 and Jan. 23 from 1-3 p.m. in the Town Offices, 141 Main St., Haydenville.

Residents of any of the 57 municipalities in the Senator's Berkshire, Hampden, Franklin and Hampshire District are encouraged to share ideas on current or potential state legislation or to ask for assistance with issues involving any state agency. Appointments are not required.

SCHOOLS & YOUTH

Fitchburg State holds winter graduation ceremony

FITCHBURG – Fitchburg State University awarded more than 400 graduate and undergraduate degrees during the winter ceremony of its 127th commencement exercises Friday, Dec. 22.

Local graduates were Kristin M. Burke of Florence received a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing RN to

BS and Mikki D'Amaral of Pittsfield, Bachelor of Science in nursing RN to BS.

In his keynote remarks, Fitchburg State President Richard S. Lapidus highlighted several graduating students for embodying the university's motto of perseverance, meaning persistence.

2023

from page 1

Corporation and funded through a Community Development Block Grant. Despite the funding news and planning progress, the town faces several hurdles including raising the additional funds needed, as of last January, the estimated need was for an additional \$1.4 million, rising material costs and upcoming building code changes going into effect.

Grant funding news that benefitted the Gateway Regional School District was also announced in January. Midway through the fiscal year, Gateway had already won \$3,071,153 in competitive and non-competitive grants, including competitive grants to support after school programs at the elementary and middle schools, wrap around services, before and after school and summer camp programs. Allocation grants included funding for Title I to support reading at elementary schools, Title II to mentor new teachers, Title IV to support the social, emotional and academic needs of all students, and several grants for special education and preschool services.

Chester and Littleville Elementary Schools welcomed Broadway actor Ben Bogen to their schools in January to conduct a four-day enrichment program with students. The project concluded with a student performance at each school. Bogen was one of the youngest understudies to cover the role of Frankie Valli in the national tour production of Jersey Boys. His other acting credits include "The Flamingo Kid" at the Hartford Stage Company, "Frozen" and "Wicked" on Broadway; as well as a television performance in POSE on FX and leading movie role in the indie film "Sunday Brunch".

Gateway siblings Sean P. Forgue and Evan F. Forgue were selected by audition to perform in the Massachusetts Music Educators Association Western District Concert Band. This marked the fifth consecutive year that senior Sean, a tuba player, was selected. Evan, a bassoonist and sophomore, had been selected for three consecutive years (in both the junior and senior district festivals). The music festival was held at UMASS in January.

FEBRUARY

In February, Gateway Superintendent Kristen Smidy announced that veteran teacher Jenna K. Kakimoto would receive the 2023 "Excellence in Teaching Award" from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. Kakimoto has taught in Gateway schools for the past 24 years, teaching special needs students at the former Russell and Blandford Elementary Schools, along with the Middle School, Littleville Elementary and currently, Chester Elementary School. She was nominated within the district by Chester Principal Vanna Maffuccio and colleague Amy Provost. As a small district, Gateway may submit one award-winning teacher every two years.

While revealing the details of the 2023 Westfield Wildwater Canoe Races, organizers announced that 2023 marked the 30th anniversary of three crucial milestones: the river's national "Wild & Scenic" designation; host-

ing the American Canoe Association's Whitewater Nationals Race; and the local race's own 40th Anniversary.

Also in February, rising local band "The 413's" returned to Stanton Hall for an appreciation concert and fundraiser for the Huntington Recreation Committee, who had granted them their very first performance as a band a year earlier. With Julian Greve on vocals, Dylan Nicolle on guitar, and brothers Liam McKellick (drums) and Daniel McKellick II (bass), the band's style was described as "boogie rock with a blues kick". This performance would mark the first of many local concerts in 2023 for the band, who have also begun releasing original music on Spotify.

MARCH

On March 5, Chester and Middlefield town officials welcomed new state Senator Paul Mark to the Chester Railway Museum for a meet and greet with town and school district officials. On the agenda were fully funding Rural School Aid and the West-East Passenger Rail Corridor, which proposes a train station in the town of Chester. Mark vowed to make it clear to his colleagues that the Chester Train Station is very much wanted by the town, and pledged to continue to work with the rural school caucus on the issue of Rural School Aid.

Also in March, the Select board named Jennifer Peloquin as Huntington's first Town Administrator. "She was already doing the work, really," said Chairman Ed Renauld. "There's a little bit more to it now, as now she will supervise and manage departments. But she was already doing the rest of it. We did a study of local town administrators; she was making, for the most part, half. We didn't feel that she was being paid fairly for the work that she was doing for the town."

At their March 8 meeting, the Gateway Regional School Committee voted to adopt a \$17,377,333 budget for FY'24, which begins July 1, 2023. The six member towns of Blandford, Chester, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery and Russell will pay 58.2% of the school budget, in assessments totaling \$10,108,661. While this represented a collective increase to the towns of 2.5%, the numbers varied by town based on their percentage of student enrollment. For the town of Huntington, which saw a smaller increase in enrollment than the other towns, this rare occurrence allowed the Huntington Select Board to correct salary discrepancies across town positions and advance a 7% Cost of Living increase for town employees to help address the prior year's inflationary spike.

Over half of the people attending a sit-down with State Representative Nicholas Boldyga and State Senator Paul Mark on Tuesday, March 28 were parents of current or former students of the Gateway Regional School District. Chaired by Superintendent Kristen Smidy, the event also included student leaders, district teachers and administrators-several of whom were also alumni.

Discussions included the slow growth of Rural School Aid, the unfair-



Emma Peloquin rides in the antique fire truck driven by Chipper Dazelle on Memorial Day in Huntington. File photos

ness of Chapter 70 funding to rural schools and small towns, and the unfair ability of Vocational Schools to raise their tuition by 5-10%, while Gateway strives to hold to a 2-1/2% increase. This would mark the first of numerous advocacy efforts by Gateway students and leaders in 2023 to improve state funding.

APRIL

Indeed, the following month a contingent of Gateway students, staff and administration traveled to the Massachusetts State House on Monday, April 13 to testify before the joint Ways and Means Committee. At issue: advocating for full Rural Aid funding in FY '24. Students Jordyn Dubour, Salem Painter, Joey Pisani and Nariyah Renaud were joined by high school math teacher Val Zen, district library paraprofessional Karen Leis and Superintendent Kristen Smidy. This action was the latest in an effort to improve the financial and educational outlook for the district and its member towns.

Tasked with a mission to make fresh, local food affordable to everybody, the Hilltown Mobile Market expanded their operations to include a year round storefront location at Sawyer Farm in Worthington, which opened in early April. In a business model designed to benefit both farmers and consumers, the Hilltown Mobile Market store was open Tuesday through Saturday, meaning shoppers now had the option of picking out food in person, or continuing to order on-line for delivery on specific days in specific towns.

For a small fee, customers are also able to have their pre-ordered food items delivered at home this summer. This non-profit grocery store is the first in the country and its development has been steered by farmers. According to organizer Hunt Chase, this model has been developed to address what he calls "food apartheid," systemic problems that create barriers for both farmers and customers.

Also in 2023, Gateway grew its Vision Impairment Program (VIP) to a fully staffed model that could accept out-of-district students. According to Director of Pupil Services Kurt Garivaltis, "We had several visually impaired students and were paying through the nose for contracted services that weren't delivered consistently per their IEPs (Individual Education Plans)."

The district believed it could develop a better program in-house and hired VI teacher Amy Mason to create and deliver high quality services for Gateway's VI students-a number that was slowly growing. Gateway was able to fully utilize these resources by opening the program to surrounding school districts, via tuition.

MAY

Gateway's middle/high school drama club presented "The Brothers Grimm Spectaculathon" in May. This

play mashed up all 209 stories from the Brothers Grimm, including the classics Snow White, Cinderella, and Hansel and Gretel, as well as the lesser known stories of The Devil's Grandmother and The Girl Without Hands.

The Gateway Education Foundation, which since 2010 had funded 150 projects totaling \$125,000 and was designed to enhance educational opportunities and inspire Gateway students, resumed full operations following a Covid shutdown. For FY '23, the foundation provided over \$11,000 in funding to projects ranging from robotics to a series of efforts with local business partners to fulfill a theme, "Gateway Goes Green," which included gardening supplies for preschool classrooms as well as establishing gardens for the middle school's after school and summer programs. In addition to fundraising drives, GEF held its Annual Trivia Night fundraiser at Strathmore Park in May.

Chester on Track took place in downtown Chester, on Saturday, May 20 and featured family-friendly activities throughout the day, including food, a parade, train exhibits, live music, a craft fair, a petting zoo and much more. This not only marked the 32nd annual event, but the 182nd year since the Western Railroad was opened: the first to go over a mountain, to go through wilderness and, of course, to go through Chester.

Events kicked off with breakfast offered in the Blue Caboose at the Chester Railway Museum/Station and the Chester Foundation continued to offer a hearty railroad man's menu throughout the day, where patrons are 'hobo style' in an antique wooden boxcar. Later in the year, the museum held their annual Hobo Harvest Supper and other fundraising events.

Chester Elementary School students and staff were engaged in learning about agriculture, which included tapping trees, boiling syrup, setting up composting, and establishing a hydroponic classroom that allowed each student to take home a head of lettuce, Swiss chard or bok choy by the end of the school year.

JUNE

In what might have been a record-breaking Annual Town Meeting, voters jogged through 18 articles in just 56 minutes in Huntington on June 5 at 7 p.m., in addition to resolving expenditures and transfers at a special meeting preceding ATM. Two articles dealt with changing the Town Clerk position from an elected to appointed position. Renauld announced that the current Town Clerk, Linda Hamlin, has announced that she does not intend to run for re-election and plans to retire Jan. 31, 2024.

"It's a very important job and some towns (that haven't made this change) have not had good results. We've done this with other positions," Renauld said. "It's a very important job. You don't want somebody with 8 friends to win on a write-in vote."

A second article related to this issue was to allow the Select Board to petition the General Court for "home rule" legislation changing the town clerk to an appointed position. Both articles passed with just one opposed.

With summer approaching, Gateway, the Huntington Recreation Committee and area town libraries offered numerous programs for area youth. Thanks to a \$210,000 Massachusetts 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant (Supporting Additional Learning Time), 98 Gateway students entering grades 5 - 9 tackled real-world problems over five weeks last summer. STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics) was the theme for the program, which was free of charge to the students and included free lunch, daily transportation, and a weekly field trip. A culminating activity of the program was the



State Representative Nicholas Boldyga, from left, Superintendent Kristen Smidy and State Senator Paul Mark met with advocates for rural school funding from Gateway Regional.

2023

from page 6

creation of murals depicting the natural life of the Westfield River, which were mounted onto the softball and baseball dugouts on Gateway's athletic fields and can be seen from Littleville Road. The Rec Committee offered a five week program that ran from 9 a.m. to noon on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, with field trips held on Wednesdays. A registration fee of \$50 covered the entire five weeks, including field trip transportation and admissions. All of the local hilltown libraries sponsored summer reading programs for area children, although Huntington took it one step further to offer programs for adults, as well.

Kyleigh Benson, a sophomore at Gateway Regional High School, competed in Early Childhood Education at the Skills USA Massachusetts State Conference in Marlborough. She was among approximately 1000 Career and Technical Education (CTE) students from the state competing in 104 vocational contests. Benson advanced after earning a gold medal in her district competition, which included a multiple choice written test, with questions in the vocational content area, employability and OSHA. At states, the Early Childhood competition was 6 hours long and consisted of a written test, planning, preparing and presenting a group lesson for preschool children in front of judges and spectators. In addition, a resumé and written lesson plan were required.

In June, Principal Jason Finnie announced the five finalists for the 2023 Golden Achievement Award: Liam Bowler, Olivia Dame, Olivia Kanner, Nancy Mueller and Lucy Pitoniak. Finalists are nominated by the student body, with faculty voting for the top five on the basis of academic achievement, leadership, and service to school and community. At the senior awards ceremony, Nancy Mueller was awarded both Valedictorian (highest grade point average) and Golden Achievement Award. Rachael Austin was announced as Salutatorian (second highest GPA). Several days later, 41 seniors graduated on Booster Field under threatening skies, but with precipitation holding off throughout the ceremony.

Staff and committee member recognition took place at a reception preceding the final meeting of the Gateway Regional School Committee for the 2023-24 school year. On Wednesday, June 14 Superintendent Kristen Smidy and Chairperson Sarah Page honored eight retiring staff members, one member of the school committee who was stepping down, one current staff member for years of service and two current staff members who earned outside awards.

Retiring staff members were Christine Bresnahan, Linda Coffey, Anne Fisk, Stephanie Flinker, Donna Morrissey, Kathy Murray, Melinda Slowey, and Karen Smith. Cheryl Miller Harper was honored for 42 years of service. Jenna Kakimoto, this year's recipient of the Pioneer Valley Excellence in Teaching Award, was also acknowledged at the meeting. Assistant Superintendent Stephanie Fisk was recognized for receiving a Friend of MASBO award from the Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials. Terri Garfield, who had served on the Gateway Regional School Committee since 2014, was recognized for completing her third three-year term on the committee, representing the town of Blandford.

Also in June, Gateway Superintendent Kristen Smidy announced that Melissa (Albano) McCaul will become Principal of Littleville Elementary School, effective July 1. In addition to being a Gateway alumna, McCaul began her educational career at Gateway as a physical education teacher, high school girls basketball coach, becoming a classroom teacher in grades 2, 3 and 4, and, earlier in 2023, becoming Littleville's Student Support Leader.

JULY - AUGUST

Entertainment abounded through



Littleville Elementary School students in Huntington celebrated the 100th day of school last week in early February.

the summer with events presented by the Huntington Community Events Committee and the North Hall Summer Arts Festival. Concerts took place on the town green on Thursday evenings during July and August, and kicked off with a community picnic and local favorites "The 413's." The North Hall Arts Festival took place on Sunday afternoons at historic North Hall. It included a range of performance styles as well as staged readings. All of these events were offered free of charge to the community.

In addition to concerts, plays and youth programs, living in the hilltowns of Western Massachusetts was further enhanced by local community fairs in Blandford, Cummington and Littleville.

Long-time Montgomery town official Jane Thielen was feted with a party in her honor on Saturday, July 22 at the town hall. As she concluded a 48-year career with the town, where she served as town treasurer, tax collector and select board secretary, Thielen was honored by about 40 people who attended—representing 21% of the total population in town (838).

Seventeen Gateway students took part in paid internships tied to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields last summer. From bee keeping to manufacturing technology, students gained 100 hours of paid, practical workplace experience while trying out potential career fields. Directed by Gateway's Program and Communications Coordinator Martha Clark, the project was funded by a \$59,500 grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Education. Employers who took on a student were reimbursed for student's pay, which averaged \$16 an hour. The grant also covered students' travel expenses and provided for any special equipment or materials needed for the placement, such as steel-toed shoes or medical scrubs.

Under funding through the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, the town of Huntington formed an "Age and Dementia Friendly" Task Force that hosted three community listening sessions on topics such as transportation, housing, aging in place, health, community services, communications and public safety. Input from the listening sessions, which ran from September through November, will be used to create a plan to address unmet needs of the town's senior citizens.

The 101st Littleville Fair took place on Aug. 4 - 6, with the fairgrounds showcasing numerous improvements and new events. Over the past two years, volunteers have upgraded many buildings on the fairgrounds, including the dining hall, concession stand, cattle barn and information booth. A new post and beam craft shed was used for the first time this year.

Saturday, Aug. 5 marked the groundbreaking for a new handicap-accessible bath house. The project is slated to cost \$310,000 and the Fair has received a \$110,000 matching grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council. To date, the Board has raised \$160,000 and more than met the match. The project will not only improve the accessibility of the fairgrounds, but offer showers for

exhibitors who stay overnight.

The first person in the Gateway Regional School District to publicly break the news that Rural School Aid had increased for FY'24 was rising senior and student leader Joey Pisani. On July 10, he posted in the Parents of Gateway Regional Facebook page, "Shout-out to all of our rural school aid advocates across the district. From parents, students, to staff, faculty, administrators and community members! Today Governor Healey approved \$15 million for Rural School Aid, that is double what was proposed in the original budget." Pisani himself had testified at the statehouse with a contingent from Gateway last spring, and the outcome signaled the success of earlier advocacy efforts this year and the hard work of rural legislators. Despite the progress, Gateway learned in late October that their allocation of \$832,654 fell short of what they'd planned for (\$1,096,272). Smidy urged continued advocacy to raise the state level of Rural School Aid to the \$60 million called for by the Commission on the Health Of Rural School Districts in their 2022 report.

After over 30 years of operations, the Huntington Country Store—and home of "the wrapple"—announced that they would close on Oct. 22. Owned and operated by Rebecca and Randy Butler for the last 17 years, the store opened in 1992 and was originally run by Rebecca's parents, David and Carol Majercik, who also created the Williamsburg Country Store in 1977. In addition to a bakery, ice cream, and fresh salads and sandwiches, the store had a huge variety of items for sale, including kitchen supplies, fresh herbs and spices, cookbooks, greeting cards, puzzles, Christmas items, jewelry, wind chimes, clothing and toys.

Two other local stores were in the news in 2023. The Pease Store in Chester was selling off inventory of everything from boots to bathing suits, while also bringing in new items such as hats and sweatshirts promoting numerous small towns in the region. And the former River Cafe on route 112 in Huntington was taken over by Dale Rogers, who moved her business Gray Catbird Pottery studio and gift shop down from the Montgomery Marketplace, which had closed. The shop features hand-crafted gifts and artwork, baked goods and offers pottery classes.

SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER

Local author Steven V. Cormier released his newest book, "Life and Times of Parley B. Hutchins: the mystery continues..." about an 1880 murder in Huntington that made national headlines. Cormier was available to speak with readers at numerous events, including the 10th Annual Harvest Fair on the Huntington Town Green in September, and at Stanton Hall for the Huntington Historical Society in November.

Both the hilltowns and the Gateway Regional School District received wonderful grant awards in 2023. Huntington Fire Chief Josh Ellinger submitted a successful bid of \$650,000 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency

to cover 95% of the cost of replacing outdated Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus for the fire departments in Blandford, Chester, Huntington, Montgomery and Russell. The Gateway Regional School District won a \$100,000 grant from the Barr Foundation, described by the Superintendent as a "transformational opportunity" for the high school.

The first phase of the year-long project was to collect data (including and input from students, staff, parents and community members. Gateway met all of its participation targets for the online Youth Truth Survey, with rates ranging from a low of 67% of middle school staff to a high of 100% of staff and families at Chester Elementary School. The project will continue into 2024 and will culminate in a plan to elevate the educational experience for students.

The weekend of Sept. 30 and Oct. 1 saw numerous events throughout the area, including the tenth annual Fall Festival on the Huntington Town Green and the fifth annual Open Studios Tour from Plainfield to Huntington and featuring 32 area artists with mediums that included printmaking, glasswork, painting, fiber and jewelry making.

Other fall community events included a health fair in Huntington, apple picking at High Meadows Farm, and a huge Trunk or Treat and bonfire event for Halloween in Huntington.

On Oct. 26, domestic violence survivors, supporters, allies and dignitaries gathered to mark the 25th anniversary of the Southern Hilltowns Domestic Violence Task Force. In addition to opening a local agency (Hilltown Safety at Home) in the underserved hilltowns, the Task Force was recognized for creating a high-risk assessment guide, numerous bystander ad campaigns, and launching the first social norms campaign on teen dating violence in the country.

Throughout the year, the Huntington Select Board grappled with a number of recurring issues. Perhaps none were more persistent and time consuming than pulling together a fully staffed highway department. In late fall, new highway superintendent Brad Curry took the helm and began working to fill in personnel before winter arrived.

As 2023 closed, towns, schools and local agencies worked together to sponsor a toy drive for It Takes a Village, as well as numerous holiday-themed activities such as gingerbread house making and a tour of holiday lights. Gateway welcomed area senior citizens to their annual holiday brunch and concert.

Finally, Dr. Michael Purdy, was named Chief Executive Officer for Hilltown Community Health Centers, Inc. Purdy has worked for HCHC since 2010, establishing the Center's optometry department and creating an optometry program at the Gateway School-Based Health Center. In 2013, Purdy was named HCHC's Clinical Director and in August, 2023 became the Interim Chief Executive Officer with the resignation of former CEO Eliza Lake.



Dr. Michael Purdy is Chief Executive Officer of Hilltown Community Health Centers, Inc.

WESTHAMPTON

Westhampton Master Plan wins 2023 Planning Award

WESTHAMPTON – The town of Westhampton has been awarded the 2023 Comprehensive Planning Award by the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Planning Association for its 2023 Resilient Westhampton Master Plan.

At the award ceremony, held in Concord on Dec. 8, Alison LeFlore, APA-MA President, said “We are impressed with the important work that Westhampton has undertaken to redefine and reimagine the role that Master Plans play in creating resilient communities.” Westhampton was one of five plans submitted for review to the Awards Committee which consisted of planning professionals from each region in the State.

Funded by a Municipal Vulnerability Action Grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, in 2021, Westhampton initiated a simultaneous Master Planning project alongside an update to the Town’s Open Space and Recreation Plan.

“It is the Town’s first Master Plan, our collective vision for the future and includes strategies and actions for the Town over the next 10-20 years,” said Susan Bronstein, former Chair of the Planning Board and Select Board member. The Master Plan Working Group



Shown from left, are Alison LeFlore, APA-MA President; Susan Bronstein, Westhampton Select Board Member; James Riordan, Weston & Sampson Project Manager; Teri Anderson, Westhampton Project Manager and Kenneth Comia, Deputy Director Land Use and Environment Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and APA-MA Vice President.

Submitted photo

consisting of town residents and board members partnered with consultants to help with the process. Weston & Sampson helped to manage the project and to integrate resilience planning and solutions throughout the plan.

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission assisted with data and mapping for the Plan, drawing on their regional knowledge especially for demographics, hous-

ing, economic development, and historic and cultural resources. The Grinspoon Foundation Cooler Communities Program worked with school administrators, teachers and students at Hampshire Regional High School located in Westhampton to design student projects related to sustainability and climate resilience which were displayed for the community at the annual Westhampton Fall Festival in October 2023.

At the foundation of the plan is a vision for a resilient, equitable and sustainable Westhampton. The plan defines resilience principles at the outset, a new approach to shaping the themes within a Master Plan.

“As a small rural community with abundant natural resources, strong community spirit, and a local economy based on farming, forestry, mining, and small home-based businesses, we recognized at the outset that climate change will impact the resources that Westhampton residents cherish most” said Teri Anderson, local project manager for the Town. Each element of the plan includes the role of climate resilience, equity, and

regional context.

There is a chapter that focuses specifically on social and community resilience. The Town hired Human in Common, an organization specializing in diversity, equity, and inclusion DEI training to host workshops offering residents, staff, and board members an understanding of what diversity, equity, and inclusion means, its importance to town government, and to build communication skills supporting effective dialogue around differences.

In addition, aligning the Resilience Master Plan process with the Open Space Plan update ensured that strategies for open space and recreation would relate directly to the vision for land use, natural resources, and other elements in the Master Plan.

The Plan emphasized the importance of public participation. Hundreds of community members, many Town staff, and several key community organizations were involved in the process. Over 22 months, Town residents, board members and staff carefully considered how the plan could best support residents, businesses, community organizations, and Town government.

It identifies areas of consensus, areas of differences and seeks to balance solutions. It includes a detailed implementation plan to sustain the momentum generated through the process with tangible next steps for putting the plan into action.

The Select Board is in the process of establishing the Master Plan Implementation Committee. Interested residents should contact Doug Finn, the Town’s Administrative Assistant. APA-MA President LeFlore said “Comprehensive master plans are constantly evolving and incorporating novel approaches.

Many touch on sustainability, resilience, and equity, but few highlight these as fundamental principles in the way that the Resilient Westhampton Master Plan does. This plan serves as an example for other communities.”

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

George PROPANE INC.
PROPANE GAS PLUMBING • HEATING
 (413) 268-8360
 TOLL FREE 1-800-464-2053
 Family Owned & Operated
 3 Berkshire Trail West (Route 9), P.O. Box 102, Goshen, MA 01032
www.georgepropane.com

Paul's Plumbing & Heating
238-0303
 PAUL GRAHAM
 Mass. License 23299

AQUA PUMPS WATER SYSTEMS
 Water Pumps • Sewer Pumps
 Water Conditioners
 46 Pitcher Street
 Montgomery, MA 01085
 Donald Washburn
 862-3301

Kirke R. Henshaw, Inc.
 Water Well Drilling, Water Pump Sales & Service
 Water Testing System Evaluations
 Water System Repairs HENSHAW Hydrofracture to Increase Flow
 800-232-4725 • Fax 413-296-4565
Charles R. Henshaw
 130 Cummington Rd., W. Chesterfield, MA • 413-296-4725

FEED • PET SUPPLIES • CLOTHING • COAL
 WOOD PELLETS • WILD & CAGED BIRDSEED
 POOL SUPPLIES • MOTOR OILS • FENCING
 LAWN & GARDEN SUPPLIES • FERTILIZER
GATEWAY FARM & PET
 Poulin Grain RED WING SHOES Carhartt
 59 RUSSELL ROAD, HUNTINGTON, MA 01050
1-413-667-2279 M-F 8am-5pm
 Sat. 8am-4pm
 TARA GRENIER • PAUL GRENIER

DOWN TO EARTH EXCAVATING INC
 Highly Regarded Professionals: Complete Site Work,
 Septic Development and Repairs. Fully Insured.
413-667-5269
 Paul & Randy LaPointe, Owners Huntington, Mass.

Dale's Structural & Carpentry
 Home Improvement • Additions • Restorations • Repairs
 Post & Beam Repairs
 Sagging Floors - Beams - Columns
 Sill Timbers - Termite Damage
 Foundation Repairs - Piers & Footings
 Chimney Rebuilds
 FULLY LICENSED & INSURED
 Huntington, MA • 413-667-3149
dalestructuralandcarpentry.com

ARCHITECT JEFFREY SCOTT PENN
 77 Worthington Road, Huntington, MA 01050
 Tel. 413-531-1868
 Fax. 413-667-3082
 Email: jpsped@verizon.net
 new construction, renovation,
 historic preservation

Contact Wendy to advertise at
413-283-8393
 or email:
welcamp@turley.com

Jeff's Oil Burner Service
 • Tune Ups
 • Installations
 • Oil Tanks
 Huntington, Massachusetts
 Office 413.667.0245
 Cell 413.530.7037
jeffoilburnerservice@hotmail.com

WORTHINGTON

Date change for COA Coffee Hour

WORTHINGTON – The Worthington Corners Council On Aging Newsletter for January 2024, stated that there was to be a Coffee Hour on

Monday, Jan. 15 with a presentation at the Town Hall.

This day has been cancelled and a new date is yet to be determined.



Santa pays a visit during the Worthington Council on Aging holiday luncheon held on Monday, Dec. 11.

Submitted photo

COA hold holiday luncheon

WORTHINGTON – The Worthington Council on Aging held its annual Holiday Luncheon on Dec 11 at the Comfort Kitchen and Bar in Huntington.

There were 65 guests that attended to relax and enjoy the conversation of others. Even Santa was there to brighten

the spirit of the holiday.

Three large storage containers were filled with donated new socks to be distributed to local homeless shelters.

If people are still interested in donating new socks, they may label them and leave them in front of the COA office.

PITTSFIELD

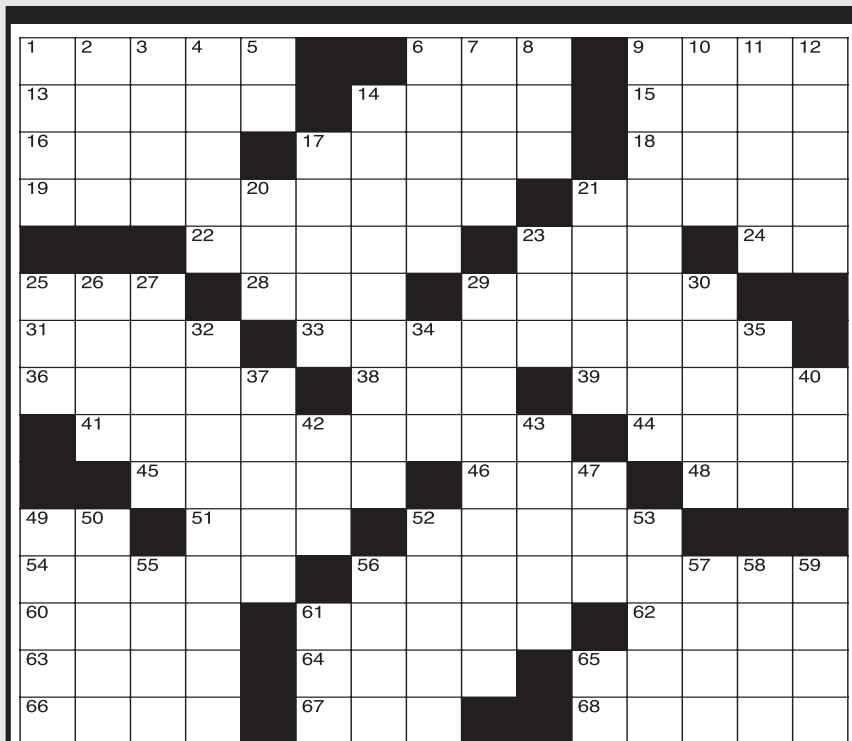
Berkshire Lyric Chorus rehearsals begin Jan. 8

PITTSFIELD – The Berkshire Lyric Chorus begins rehearsals for their spring Masterworks Concert on Monday, Jan. 8 at the Pittsfield Unitarian Church on Wendell Avenue

and Broad Street. Interested new singers are admitted by audition. People may call director Jack Brown at 413-298-5365 to schedule an appointment.

The annual spring Masterworks Concert takes place on June 2 at Tanglewood's Seiji Ozawa Hall and will feature works by Bruckner, Brahms and Arvo Part.

The 100 voice chorus will be accompanied by an orchestra. People may visit www.BerkshireLyric.org for more information about singing with the Berkshire Lyric Chorus.



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Bleated
- 6. Snake-like fish
- 9. Database management system
- 13. Russian-American violinist
- 14. Wendy's founder Thomas
- 15. Ancient Italian-Greek colony
- 16. Negatives
- 17. Rescued
- 18. Self-immolation by fire ritual
- 19. Assigns tasks to
- 21. Island nation native
- 22. Trade
- 23. Detergent brand
- 24. Famed NY Giant
- 25. Before
- 28. Split pulses
- 29. Extremely angry; highly incensed
- 31. Body part
- 33. American state
- 36. David __, US playwright

- 38. Move one's head slightly
- 39. Secret rendezvous
- 41. Improved
- 44. A place to exercise
- 45. 18-year astronomical period
- 46. Automobile
- 48. You can take it
- 49. A radio band
- 51. Jaws of an animal
- 52. Short-billed rails
- 54. Chinese province
- 56. Shameless and undisguised
- 60. Horizontal passage into a mine
- 61. Adult males
- 62. Fail to entertain
- 63. Dried-up
- 64. City in north-central Utah
- 65. Southern U.S.
- 66. German river
- 67. Oxygen
- 68. Make law

- 1. Curved segment
- 2. Wings
- 3. From pentane (Chemistry)
- 4. Gradually gets into
- 5. Commercial document (abbr.)
- 6. Overhang
- 7. Christmas and New Year's have them
- 8. Type of bulb
- 9. Lacking a plan
- 10. Tattle
- 11. Rockers like it "heavy"
- 12. One who's been canonized
- 14. Indicate time and place
- 17. Nobel Prize winner in physics
- 20. The voice of Olaf
- 21. Fragmented rock
- 23. They __
- 25. Master of Philosophy
- 26. Backside
- 27. Landmark house

- in L.A.
- 29. An act of undue intimacy
- 30. From which a later word is derived
- 32. Equal to 10 meters
- 34. Neither
- 35. Computer language
- 37. Sacred book of Judaism
- 40. A woolen cap of Scottish origin
- 42. A way to dedicate
- 43. Challenges
- 47. British Air Aces
- 49. Large, influential bank
- 50. Portended
- 52. Cavalry-sword
- 53. Vaccine developer
- 55. Napoleonic Wars general
- 56. Italian Seaport
- 57. Hip joint
- 58. __ Clapton, musician
- 59. Insect repellent
- 61. Decorative scarf
- 65. Delaware

CLUES DOWN

THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPES

ARIES

Mar 21/Apr 20
Aries, someone you care about or admire could come under scrutiny this week. Whether it is deserved or not, this person will be in the hot seat and can use your support.

CANCER

Jun 22/Jul 22
Cancer, see what is going on with friends this week, as you are likely in the mood to have some fun. You'll never know what's on the agenda unless you ask.

LIBRA

Sept 23/Oct 23
Libra, a personal relationship that was derailed will get back on track this week. After some conflicts, it finally seems like you're both on the same page once more.

CAPRICORN

Dec 22/Jan 20
Try to put yourself in someone else's shoes this week, Capricorn. When you're so focused on your life you may miss how it affects others around you.

TAURUS

Apr 21/May 21
Taurus, you could project an intensity this week that has other people running for cover. Consider adding a little sugar to your presentation. You'll still get your point across.

LEO

Jul 23/Aug 23
Leo, you may run into a little interference with a project due to someone's ego getting in the way. This person seemingly is not a team player and it could affect your plans.

SCORPIO

Oct 24/Nov 22
Scorpio, do not let it get you down if you're paired with someone on a project who is not your first choice. Focus on the task at hand and you may find you work well together.

AQUARIUS

Jan 21/Feb 18
Aquarius, start coming up with some new ideas to keep your brain busy. You might need to delve into a different career or a new hobby to challenge yourself.

GEMINI

May 22/June 21
Gemini, make an effort to gain greater control over your finances. Develop a budget and stick to it. Soon you'll enjoy a new level of financial freedom.

VIRGO

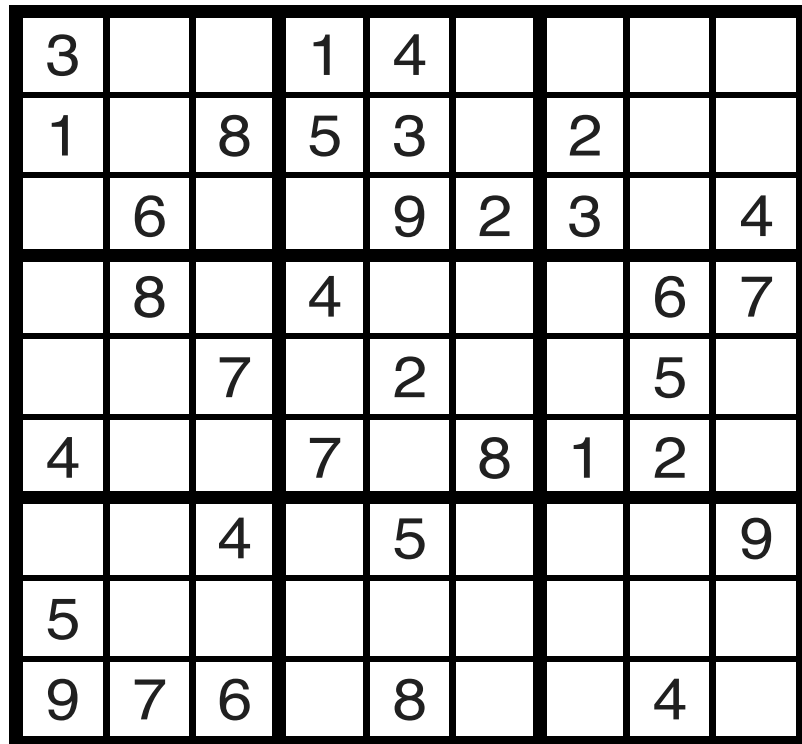
Aug 24/Sept 22
Visualizing what you want is not a waste of time, Virgo. In fact, it can help you map out a plan of attack to accomplish your goals. Start making a to-do list.

SAGITTARIUS

Nov 23/Dec 21
Sagittarius, even if your life seems to be a mystery right now, you do not have to figure out all the answers right away. Take time to mull things over.

PISCES

Feb 19/Mar 20
Pisces, after some initial upheaval this week, your life starts to calm down a little. There may be one lingering issue that needs to get worked out, but you'll handle it.



SUDOKU

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

answers

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9			
13					14			15			
16					17			18			
19				20				21			
		22					23		24		
25	26	27		28			29		30		
31			32		33		34		35		
36				37		38			39	40	
	41				42			43		44	
		45				46		47		48	
49	50		51			52			53		
54		55				56			57	58	59
60					61				62		
63					64				65		
66					67				68		

WESTFIELD AUTO PARTS INC

AUTO PARTS & SUPPLIES

NATIONALLY ADVERTISED MERCHANDISE FOR ALL MAKES & MODELS

WHOLESALE RETAIL

★ Complete Auto Machine Shop Service ★ Engine Rebuilding Of All Kinds
 ★ Authorized Caterpillar Hydraulic Hose Dealer ★ Hydraulic Hoses

Call "DALE" 8-12 BIRGE AVE., WESTFIELD

Dial 568-8944 or 568-1611 FAX # 568-1554

Now stocking Car Quest Filters made by WIX, Amalie Oil, Bailing Twine & Tractor Parts

Classifieds

12 WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS | SERVING 50 LOCAL COMMUNITIES

A TURLEY PUBLICATION | www.turley.com

COMMUNITY MARKETPLACE

Call us at 413.283.8393

FOR SALE

MAXIMUM EFFICIENCY. EXTRAORDINARY performance. Central Boiler certified Classic Edge Titanium HDX OUTDOOR WOOD FURNACE. Call today **413-296-4320**.

FIREWOOD

FIREWOOD
Fresh cut & split \$200.00
Seasoned cut & split \$300.00
All hardwood.
Tree length available
*Also have seasoned softwood for outdoor boilers (Cheap). Quality & volumes **guaranteed!!** New England Forest Products **(413)477-0083**

MORE HEAT LESS WOOD. Central Boiler Classic Edge HDX Outdoor Wood Furnace. EPA Certified. Titanium Stainless Steel. 26% Tax Credit. Call **(508)882-0178**

WANTED

WANTED TO BUY

ANTIQUES AND OLD STUFF WANTED **BUYING** Bottles, Crocks, Jugs, Pottery, Costume Jewelry, Toys, Games, coins, sterling, Glassware, Silver-plated items, watches, Musical instruments, typewriters, sewing machines, tools, radios, clocks, lanterns, lamps, kitchenware, cookware, knives, military, automotive, fire department, masonic, license plates, beer-cans, barware, books, oil cans, advertising tins, hunting, fishing, signs, and more Donald Roy **(860) 874-8396**

Read your local newspaper online at www.newspapers.turley.com

JUNK REMOVAL

A Call We Haul FAST REMOVAL
Junk, Appliance, Cleanouts.
We load it & take it.
413-531-1936
CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED

SERVICES



2***A & B HOUSEHOLD REMOVAL SERVICE*******

Cellars, attics, garages cleaned, yard debris. Barns & sheds demolished. Swimming pools removed. Cheaper than dumpster fees and we do all the work. Lowest rates. Fully insured. **(413)283-6512, cell (413)222-8868**.

A DUMP TRUCK
Cleaning out attics, cellars, garages, estate cleanouts, scrap metal removal. **413-569-1611 or 413-374-5377**.

CHAIR SEAT WEAVING & refinishing - cane, fiber rush & splint - Classroom instructor, 20+ years experience. Call Walt at **(413)289-6670** for estimate.

HOME IMPROVEMENT

HOME IMPROVEMENTS. REMODELING Kitchens, baths. Ceramic tile, windows, painting, wallpapering, siding, decks. Insurance work. Fully insured. Free estimates. **(413)246-2783** Ron.

SERVICES

HOME REPAIR & REMODELING for all your interior & exterior needs. Carpentry, woodworking, porches, patios, windows, doors, painting, drywall, siding, landscaping, clean-outs. Competitive pricing, References. Please call Brendan **(413)687-5552**

LANDSCAPING

A+ ROZELL'S LANDSCAPING & BOBCAT SERVICE
Excavator Services
Overgrown property?
Extreme Brush Cutting!
Shrub, Stump, Tree Removal
Lawn/Arborvite Installed
Loam, Stone, Mulch, Sand
Storm Clean-up
Small Demolition/ Junk Removal
Insured
Josh Rozell 413-636-5957

MASONRY

STOP WET BASEMENTS

ABC MASONRY & BASEMENT WATERPROOFING
All brick, block, stone, concrete. Hatchway doors, basement windows, chimneys rebuilt & repaired, foundations repaired, basement waterproofing systems, sump pumps. BBB+ rating. Free estimates. Lic #14790. Call **(413)569-1611, (413)374-5377**

PAINTING

DUTCH TOUCH PAINTING
Interior only \$199.00 for average 12x16 room. Very neat, references, prompt service call **(508)867-2550**

SERVICES

FORBES & SONS PAINTING & STAINING Interior, residential, commercial and new construction, wall-paper removal, sheetrock and plaster repairs. Quality products. Since 1985. Free estimates. Fully Insured. Call Brad Forbes at **413-887-1987**.

RUBBISH REMOVAL

BOB ROBILLARD'S RUBBISH REMOVAL Attics, Cellars, Garages cleaned, Pools/Hot Tubs Removed. Family owned/operated since 1950 **(413)537-5090**

TREE WORK

DL & G TREE SERVICE- Everything from tree pruning, tree removal, stump grinding, storm damage and brush chipping. Honest and Dependable. Fully insured. Now offering a Senior Citizen and Veteran discount. Call today for free estimate **(413)478-4212**

STUMP GRINDING

DL & G STUMP GRINDING Grinding stumps of all sizes, insured & certified. Senior discounts. Call Dave **413-478-4212**

SERVICES



SAW Stump Grinding
Call for a Free Estimate,
Veteran Owned, Fully Insured
413-213-5470

RUBBISH REMOVAL

BOB ROBILLARD'S RUBBISH REMOVAL Attics, Cellars, Garages cleaned, Pools/Hot Tubs Removed. Family owned/operated since 1950 **(413)537-5090**

AUTO

CASH FOR JUNK AND REPAIRABLE CARS
FREE TOWING FAST SERVICE CASH PAID AS IS CALL OR TEXT 413-219-6839

HELP WANTED

TOWN OF PALMER

INSPECTOR OF BUILDINGS/ BUILDING COMMISSIONER

The Town of Palmer is seeking qualified applicants for the full-time position of Inspector of Buildings/ Building Commissioner. Must have certification as a local inspector by the State Board of Building Regulations and Standards and obtain Certification as an Inspector of Buildings/ Building Commissioner within the time limit allotted in Massachusetts State Building Code 780 CMP Section 110.R7. For a full job description please visit www.townofpalmer.com/jobs. Qualified and interested applicants should submit their cover letter and resume to Robert Reed reed@townofpalmer.com.

REAL ESTATE

FOR RENT



EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

ALL REAL ESTATE advertised herein is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act, which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation, or discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin, or intention to make any such preference, limitation, or discrimination." We will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. All persons are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised are available on an equal opportunity basis.

Classified Advertising DEADLINE MONDAY AT NOON

FILL OUT AND MAIL THIS MONEY MAKER

MAIL TO: Classifieds, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069 or call: 413-283-8393

DEADLINES: MONDAY AT NOON

CATEGORY:			
1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28
29	30	31	32
33	34	35	36
37	38	39	40

Quabbin Village Hills
Circulation: 50,500

Hilltowns
Circulation: 9,800

Suburban Residential
Circulation: 59,000

All Three ZONES for \$26.00 for 20 words plus 50¢ for each additional word.

Name: _____ Phone: _____
 Address: _____
 Town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Number of Weeks: _____ X per week rate = \$ _____
 Credit Card: MasterCard VISA Discover Cash Check# _____
 Card #: _____ Exp. Date _____ CVV _____
 Amount of charge: _____ Date: _____

GREAT VALUE!
ALL 3 ZONES NOW FOR THE PRICE OF ONE!

OUR CLASSIFIEDS REACH 50 COMMUNITIES EVERY WEEK!

OBITUARY

Nancy Susan Sena Penn, 86

October 31, 1937 - December 27, 2023

Nancy was one of five children of Christine Zapka Sena and Andrew Sena of Park Hill Orchards in Easthampton, Massachusetts. Both of her parents were of Slovak descent and active in the local Slovak community of Easthampton. She was predeceased by her immediate family including brothers Donald, David, Larry and sister Midge (Margaret). She is survived by her sons Jeffrey Scott Penn (and wife Susan Dion, children Nijel and Ashlin Dion) and Joel Stuart Penn (and wife Kim Penn, children Jacob Penn, Christopher Fulton and great-grandchildren Leah, Ariaiah and Charlotte Fulton).



She grew up in Easthampton with a close and loving family in a vibrant community. In High School, she participated in Glee club and was a cheerleader and Class Secretary. She loved to sing and was a member of the choirs at St. John's Lutheran Church, Hatfield, Trinity Lutheran Church, Easthampton and Russell Community Church. She trained briefly at Smith College in Opera.

Nancy married in 1959. After adventures in Greely, Colorado and Windsor Locks, Connecticut, she settled in Huntington in 1961 to raise her sons,

divorcing when they were adults.

Her work included secretary at a hospital in Greely, CO and at Pratt and Whitney in Hartford. She was a Stanley Home Products hostess and returned to school to earn her Masters in both Business and Education at Westfield State, along with many other certifications. She went on to be a special education educator, caring for and turning around many youth at several institutions including substituting at Gateway School District, and full-time teaching at West Springfield Job Corps, Pace Center, Peck Middle School in Holyoke and Springfield Public Schools. She never forgot her students and always held on to her love of teaching.

Friends and family will never forget her fire-cracker spirit, intelligence and generosity.

Nancy was an amazing mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, always up for adventure and fun, and ready for mischief and silliness.

A wake for Nancy Penn will be held at Mitchell Funeral Home at 15 Park Street, Easthampton, Massachusetts on Thursday 11 January 2024 from 10am to noon with a Celebration of her life at 11:30 followed by burial.

Read the Country Journal online at countryjournal.turley.com

REGION

Legislators present check to Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts

SPRINGFIELD – Local legislators presented a \$200,000 check from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to the Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts to support its 413Cares initiative on Monday, Dec. 18 at 9:30 a.m. at PHIWM offices, 127 State St., fourth floor in the Community Music School of Springfield building.

Representative Michael Finn, Senator Adam Gomez, Senator Jacob Oliveira and other state legislators from Western Massachusetts joined the Public Health Institute to present the state funding secured for 413Cares in the FY2024 state budget. Funding was secured through the Department of Public Health.

Launched in 2019 by PHIWM, 413Cares.org is an online community resource database for Western Massachusetts. Thousands of people have utilized 413Cares.org to access critical information, resources, and referrals to community-serving organizations, all from one online portal. The platform has reached over 100,000 searches, and over 111,000 interactions with programs.

The funding is the result of a legislative earmark of the FY24 state budget, sponsored by Representative

Finn and Senator Gomez. PHIWM has received funding from the Commonwealth in the past two legislative budgeting cycles to support 413Cares, which is managed by PHIWM. Resources from the State have been used to collect data during and after the pandemic and have also been utilized to improve and update the 413Cares.org website, and raise awareness of the resource in the region.

This year the resources are funding three new regional partners to provide outreach, promotion and support of the platform: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, Quaboag Hills Community Coalition, and the Hilltown Community Health Center. This is in addition to existing regional partner Community Action of Pioneer Valley, funded by Baystate Health.

The Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts was formed over 20 years ago with the goal of using data and its convening power to create collaborative partnerships in building a public health system through a health equity lens. The Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts is building this through community engagement, collaborative partnerships, research and evaluation and policy advocacy.

MassDOT launches plans to establish a network of electric vehicle chargers

BOSTON – The Massachusetts Department of Transportation is reaching out to vendors to establish a network of reliable fast charging stations for electric vehicles on state roadways.

A Request for Responses has been issued which will result in a list of pre-qualified vendors from which MassDOT may select one or more vendors to enter into a pre-development agreement, obligating the vendor(s) to evaluate sites that are identified for National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure.

Following the completion of the evaluation and confirmation by MassDOT as to particular sites, MassDOT will then issue a Task Order to vendors which are under pre-development contracts; vendors will then design, permit, build, operate, and maintain NEVI Direct Current Fast Charging stations at the identified locations.

“MassDOT is excited to be taking this step towards a brighter future for our environment and for ourselves with the installation of a state-wide network of reliable fast-charging stations for electric vehicles,” said Transportation Secretary and CEO Monica Tibbitts-Nutt. “Fast-charging stations at convenient locations along major roads will absolutely lead to reduced air pollution, fewer gas-guzzling cars on our roads and a willingness by people to make smarter choices which will help combat climate change.”

“This initiative from MassDOT is an incredibly welcomed step toward achieving our climate goals,” said Climate Chief Melissa Hoffer. “Electric vehicles are key to reducing our state’s reliance on fossil fuels and increasing the number of charging stations across our roadways will incentivize people to take that step toward a more sustainable form of transportation.”

Initial Responses to the Request for Responses will be due on Jan. 11, 2024 and the RFR process is expected to conclude in May 2024.

MassDOT will use funding from the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Formula Program to implement DCFC stations. This program was established via the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act signed in November of 2021.

The NEVI Program makes funding available to all states for the purpose of establishing a network of reliable fast chargers. In September of 2022, MassDOT submitted its initial NEVI Plan outlining how the state intended to utilize its allocated NEVI funding.

Core requirements of each NEVI charging station are that they shall have a minimum of four 150 kW Combined Charging System chargers, each able to simultaneously charge at 150 kW, spaced no further than 50 miles apart along the federally designated Alternative Fuel Corridors.

DEATH NOTICE

PENN, NANCY SUSAN SENA

Died Dec. 27, 2023

Celebration of Life Jan. 11 at 11:30 a.m.

Country Journal OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$225, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.



PHONE

413.283.8393

Fax: 413.283.7017

Subscriptions: 413.283.8393

EMAIL

Advertising Sales
Wendy Delcamp
wdelcamp@turley.com

Editor

Ellenor Downer
countryjournal@turley.com

Subscriptions

cgriswold@turley.com

\$31 per year pre-paid
(\$36 out of state)
Newsstand: \$.75 per copy

WEB

www.countryjournal.turley.com

[f](https://www.facebook.com/CountryJournal) @ Country Journal

The Country Journal is published by
Turley Publications, Inc. • www.turley.com

PUBLIC NOTICES

Worthington Conservation Commission Notice of Public Hearing

The Worthington Conservation Commission Public Hearing planned for **Thursday, December 21, 2023, at 7:15 PM** at Town Hall to consider the filing of a Notice of Intent (NOI), for the Route 143 Reconstruction Project - Phase Two, has been rescheduled. **The new date is Thursday, January 18, 2024** - same place and time. 1/04/2024

LEGAL NOTICE of
PUBLIC MEETING
WILLIAMSBURG

CONSERVATION COMMISSION, Williamsburg MA 01039

The Williamsburg Conservation Commission, in accordance with MGL Chapter 131, Section 40, the Wetlands Protection Act, will hold a public meeting on: 11 January, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. zia zoom (access link available on agenda, www.burgy.org) to review a: **Request for Determination of Applicability** submitted by: **The Town of Williamsburg**. The subject area or activity is located at: **16 Main Street, Williamsburg, MA 01096**. 1/04/2024

PUBLIC NOTICES ARE NOW ONLINE

- 1 Email all notices to notices@turley.com
- 2 Access archives and digital tear sheets by newspaper title.
- 3 Find a quick link to the state of Massachusetts' public notice web site to search all notices in Massachusetts newspapers.

Public notice deadlines are Mondays at noon,
Fridays noon for Monday holidays.

visit www.publicnotices.turley.com

Digital Photos
TURLEY PUBLICATIONS, INC.
Purchase a photo that recently ran in one of our publications. Go to newspapers.turley.com/photo-request

\$12.50 Each

HILLTOWN HIKING ADVENTURES



Tom and Greg look out over Dalton.

Submitted photos



Hilltown Hikers and their canine companions rest on some of the boulders on the Prairie in Dalton.



This hiking companion enjoys exploring the Prairie.

Taking a hike on the Prairie

DALTON – Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers traveled to the Prairie in Dalton.

In the mountains of the Chalet Wildlife Management Area, they hiked to the most unusual destination... a glacial striation or the scratches or gouges cut into bedrock by glacial abrasion. Hiking in from old Anthony Road, they passed old growth wolf trees and a 1999 plane crash site.

They then continued up the mountainside through beautiful hemlock and moss forest to where the forest changed

to a quartzite bouldered woods, they knew they were close. Off the old road just a short walk uphill where the power lines cut through, the hikers came to the Little Prairie, a small area with no boulders, and a pure bedrock floor with beautiful Spruce trees.

Crossing a stream they walked onto what seemed like the moon. It was a very large area about 250 by 250 yards with boulders on bedrock and some moss, the Prairie. This surreal area is an exceptional example of what the hills looked like after the glaciers scraped the earth.



These two Hilltown Hikers enter what is called the Prairie.

When You Need It Done Right!
Call 413-568-3164

COOPER EXCAVATING
And Trucking Inc.

- Excavation & Site Work
- Drainage
- Gravel & Asphalt Driveways
- Septic Design, Installation & Pumping

Serving Hampden & Berkshire Counties
413-568-3164 | cooperexcavatingma.com

BUY DIRECT & SAVE \$\$\$

USDA INSP. FRESH BONE-IN ASSORTED PORK CHOPS.....	\$1.99 lb	USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS BEEF STRIPLOIN CUT FREE \$5.55 lb	USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS BEEF SHORT RIBS	\$7.77 lb
USDA INSP. FROZEN COUNTRY STYLE PORK RIBS	\$1.19 lb	USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS BEEF TOP ROUND ROAST or STEAKS	USDA INSP. FROZEN CHICKEN THIGHS TRAY PAK	59¢ lb
USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS PORK BUTT STRIPS.....	\$3.33 lb	\$3.88 lb	USDA INSP. FRESH CHICKEN DRUMSTICKS 10 LB BAG.....	62¢ lb
SLICED IN OUR DELI WUNDERBAR BOLOGNA....	\$2.99 lb	USDA INSP. FROZEN WHOLE ROASTER CHICKEN.....	99¢ lb	
TAILGATE SPECIALS		USDA INSP. IQF FROZEN 51/60 CT RAW SHRIMP 2 LB BAG.....	\$6.99 ea	
USDA INSP. STORE MADE KOREAN BBQ MARINATED BONELESS PORK STRIPS	\$3.35 lb	USDA INSP. GROUND FRESH DAILY 80% LEAN GROUND BEEF 7 LB BAG		
USDA INSP. STORE MADE CAROLINA GOLD MARINATED BONELESS CHICKEN THIGH ..	\$2.99 lb			
USDA INSP. FROZEN FULLY COOKED BBQ MARINATED BABY BACK RIBS	\$3.99 lb			

SALE DATES: 1/4/24-1/10/24 BUY DIRECT FOR SAVINGS • SELECTION • SERVICE

90 Meat Outlet
90 Avocado St. Springfield
413-737-1288
www.90meat.com
We reserve the right to limit quantities.

HOURS: Mon. - Wed. 8-4
Thurs. 8-6 • Fri. 8-6 • Sat. 8-3



Glacial striation or scratches cut into the bedrock by glacial abrasion is clearly visible.

NOTICE

ERRORS: Each advertiser is requested to check their advertisement the first time it appears. This paper will not be responsible for more than one corrected insertion, nor will be liable for any error in an advertisement to a greater extent than the cost of the space occupied by the item in the advertisement.