

"Our greatest weakness lies in giving up." – Thomas Edison

# 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

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## CHESTER



Tom Schreiber and Chris Baker, from Equitable Advisors, launched lessons on financial literacy with third and fourth graders at Chester Elementary School in December. Submitted photo

## Students learn about financial literacy

By Wendy Long  
Correspondent

Tom Schreiber and Chris Baker, from Equitable Advisors—a wealth management company—delivered a lesson on financial literacy to 25 third and fourth graders at Chester Elementary School in December.

Each child was given their own copy of the workbook, "The Nickels, Dimes and Dollars Book: A Wise Kids Guide to Money Manners" by Ellen Sabin. The very first step was turning to the opening page and writing their own name in as "co-author."

Schreiber and Baker

then asked students to explain what money actually is. "Money is like coins and dollars. The coins are nickels, dimes, pennies and quarters. And there are different kinds of dollars," noted one student. "You can use money to get food and drink and water," said another. A third student

added, "For every birthday my Grampa brings his coffee cup filled with money and I get to take two scoops of it."

Leaders confirmed that money is used to purchase the things we need and want. But they added that

STUDENTS, page 3

## HUNTINGTON

## Select Board hears school updates

By Wendy Long  
Correspondent

The Huntington Select board met on Wednesday, Jan. 3 with Gateway Superintendent Kristen Smidy, the sole guest at the meeting.

Smidy meets regularly with member town Select Boards to provide updates about the regional school district. She opened by commending Huntington Police Chief Bobby Garriepy, who conducted a safety training with Smidy for after school staff, including coaches, after school program staff and custodians. The safety training was also attended by the

SCHOOL, page 2

## BLANDFORD

## Select Board discuss MOU with Chester

By Mary Kronholm  
Correspondent

The Select Board met with members of the Chester Water Commissioner Bob Daley and Chester Finance Committee member Andy Myers, Chair of Blandford's Water Commissioners Michael Keier and Water Superintendent Gordon Avery Monday night.

Their discussion took the first 40 minutes of the meeting. In an effort to come to some sort of equitable terms regarding the Memo of Understanding for Chester and Blandford to support a "shared services" Community Compact grant of \$178,000 for the two towns as an efficiency and regionalization effort.

Chair Cara Letendre opened the discussion informing the two departments that the board had held off in approving invoices for a truck purchased by Blandford's Water Department until it is known that the purchase can be considered for grant funds.

SELECT BOARD, page 8

## BLANDFORD

## Select Board hires Town Administrator



Shown from left are Select Board member Jeff Allen, Chair Cara Letendre, member Theodore Cousineau and new Town Administrator Michael Szlosek, Esquire.

Turley photo by Mary Kronholm

By Mary Kronholm  
Correspondent

The Select Board dealt with more regular business during the latter part of their Monday night meeting.

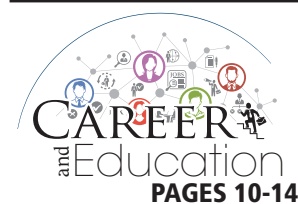
Michael Szlosek, Esq. accepted the position of Town Administrator and attended the meeting. A few contractual details were tweaked and he will assume his official duties on Monday, Jan. 29. His contract will run through June 30, 2024 with a six-month review. He begins at \$80,000 a year and following a successful review there will be

an increase to \$85,000.

### Beagle Club Road plowing

Before hearing from Highway Superintendent David Waldron, Beagle Club Road resident Staci Iglesias said that private way had not been plowed. Chair Cara Letendre said that the board never received a letter requesting winter maintenance for that road, but Iglesias said a letter had been hand delivered. It was apparently mislaid somewhere along the way, but the matter will be corrected.

HIRES, page 8



Becket.....5	Cummington.....7	Huntington.....2, 3	Otis.....9
Blandford.....8	Easthampton.....9	Lenox.....9	Public Notices.....7
Business Directory.....2	Florence.....9	Middlefield.....9	Puzzle Page.....6
Chester.....3	Goshen.....7	Montgomery.....7	Schools & Youth.....5
Classifieds.....15	Haydenville.....9	Opinion.....4, 5	Worthington.....7



# HUNTINGTON

## SCHOOL

from page 1

Massachusetts State Police and John Warren of Homeland Security. Garriepy and Smidy are starting to build an after school safety program plan, which Gateway has not had to date.

She polled other districts but was unable to find a model that they could work from. "I just wanted to commend Bobby Garriepy to you for this work. It's a true collaboration and we work really well together," Smidy said. "I wanted to make sure you know." This work came about because of past incidents that took place after school that staff did not know how to deal with. State Police will be creating a generic after school plan for a model, so they had attended to observe.

### Visual Impairment Program

Gateway's Visual Impairment Program now has tuition students from Chicopee, Lee and Southwick Tolland Regional School District. This is bringing in \$313,000 in revenue; funds are used to purchase each student a laptop, which is required for the program at a cost of \$3,000 apiece.

The balance of the tuition is helping cover current staff members, who include a teacher of the visually impaired, a Brailist and several paraprofessionals. They are studying the program's capacity at the current level of staffing, to deter-

mine when they'd either need to stop taking in additional tuition students or add more staff. Smidy noted that the district's other teachers have additional duties when VIP students are in their classes such as getting their lesson plan materials to the Brailist ahead of time.

### Administration Changes

Smidy also announced two changes to Gateway's administration. Missy McCaul has served as the Interim Principal at Littleville Elementary School since last summer. A search for a new principal was recently conducted and McCaul was chosen for the position. Also, Jason Finnie is leaving at the end of the school year and they are initiating a search for a new High School Principal.

### Census

Administrative Assistant Stacy Stewart is currently pulling together enrollment information with names and addresses of students for each town to review and confirm prior to the March 1 Census, on which the FY'25 budget including each town's share will be based.

At the Oct. 1 Census, Huntington's enrollment was down 4.5% from last year, with a total of 227 students. Gateway's enrollment overall, was down 3.4% last October.

### Gateway roof

Smidy reported that the final payback to the Massachusetts School Building Authority was made in November; the building program in full will be completely paid off in 2025. However, Gateway will need the roof at the middle/high school complex repaired as they are grappling with several areas that are leaking. Smidy has been attending MSBA trainings on grant funding for roof replacements, which is very competitive. One criteria is that the roof must be 25 years old to be eligible for this funding; Gateway's roof will hit that mark in 2027. The pre-Covid estimate for this work was \$3 million. Smidy said the towns might want to keep the building program funding level in their town budgets to be earmarked for the roof, but that decision will be up to the towns. Nonetheless, "The roof is going to be urgent by the time it is eligible for funding," Smidy said.

### Barr Foundation

Also, Gateway's grant from the Barr Foundation is sending several teams of ten to visit other schools in California, Arizona, Colorado and Vermont between now and April. Teams will include paras, teachers and administrators. Fifty teachers will go in total; they currently only have a couple of parent volunteers and will be reaching out for more. Each team will be visiting high schools that have already transformed through work with the Barr Foundation. There will also be two local day trips to Monument Mountain and Mohawk Regional High School that will include students on the visiting teams.

Finally, Smidy thanked Select Board member Roger Booth for serving as the town representative for negotiations on the upcoming teacher's contract. Smidy is hopeful that they will reach an agreement by the end of this school year, even though that's not the trend statewide at this time.

### Town Clerk

The other weighty agenda item at the meeting was the ongoing effort to move the Town Clerk from an elected position to a town employee position, to be appointed by the Select Board. Current Town Clerk Linda Hamlin has announced her retirement for March 28. Town Administrator Jennifer Peloquin advised hiring an interim Clerk to work with Hamlin and the Assistant Clerk for part of March through the end of the fiscal year on June 30. Several items were tackled during this discussion.

Peloquin had compiled a very comprehensive list of duties from job descriptions from other towns; Booth suggested it be used as a guide for completing various responsibilities, and that a more streamlined job description be developed from it. Together, they settled on a number of terms for the new position, including posting date, hours, deadline, including rate of pay, anticipated interview date and potential start date. Ideally, the Interim Clerk should be hired before the Super Tuesday election on March 5, so they can work with Hamlin at the primary.

There will be several changes once the position becomes appointed, including a more set schedule that includes hours that town hall is open. As a town employee, the Clerk position will now be eligible for benefits and Cost Of Living Allowance increases, impacting the budget. This was offset for the elect-

ed position by the Town Clerk's ability to keep the fees she collected. This occurs with several positions in town, including fire chief, building inspector, collector and chief of police. The laws vary on this for different positions and departments. Those allowed to keep their fees as part of their payment have lower salaries to reflect this. Others turn the fees into accounts that support their positions or departments. To change this system, you'd have to look at whether or not to change multiple contracts. Changes would involve raising salaries and the resultant impact on COLA raises. Select Board Chair Edward Renaud summarized the issue: "It's all underpaid, part-time people who work for small municipalities, although we tried to fix that this year." Renaud was referring to the town's ability to give larger than usual COLA for FY'24, and up the town's share of health insurance.

All present agreed upon a plan to post an interim Clerk for the remainder of this Fiscal Year and repost for a permanent position effective July 1 with a slight increase in hours and eligibility for health insurance at that time.

### Highway Department

Town Administrator Peloquin shared the highway superintendent's summary of work for the past two weeks. A new staff member started this week. A part-time, temporary staff member may be asked to stay on for the fall and winter to cover extra road projects in the fall and winter plowing while enabling him to run his farm in the spring and summer months. Hathaway, who serves as the Board's liaison to the highway department, confirmed that he's been a good fit for the department.

### Other Business

In other business, the Select Board voted to continue with the Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust; Also, Highway Superintendent Brad Curry will be meeting with Tighe & Bond to review the Bromley Road Culvert Project proposal and ensure that it meets the Division of Ecological Restoration grant parameters. The Select Board will sign the proposal following this review. Approval was granted for the Gateway Education Foundation to reserve Stanton Hall on March 23 from 5-9 p.m. for their annual Trivia Night Fundraiser; the Town Administrator is expecting paperwork for an alcohol permit for that evening.

The Town Administrator also informed the board that Huntington resident Gary Winsor has volunteered to clear brush and expose a stone wall down by the highway department garage. Due to its proximity to the river, Booth thought it might need approval by the Conservation Commission. The Select Board agreed to support the project as long as the Conservation Commission approves.

Finally, the Water and Sewer department requested time on the Select Board's Jan. 17 meeting agenda to determine, who is on the hook for paying for the sewer line breakage on the Crescent Street Project. Ultimately, it was felt that this would be determined by the engineering firm, Tighe and Bond. Pioneer Valley Planning Commission wants to review all of the related invoices and Town Administrator Peloquin will ask their representative to the project to attend on Wednesday, Jan. 17.

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## HUNTINGTON

## Hilltown Family Center offers tinker play group

HUNTINGTON – The Hilltown Family Center, 9 Russell Road, is registering families for its six-week Tinker Play Group developed by the Boston Children's Museum, beginning Friday, Jan. 19 at the Hilltown Family Center.

This program is limited to ten families with children aged 3 to 5. Registration is required by emailing Susan LeBarron at slebarron@hchcweb.org. Registered families will utilize a kit from the Boston Children's Museum and weekly activities program with caregivers engaging in the process and will be coordinated by Susan LeBarron, Family Center Coordinator. Families will take home their kit at the end of the six-week program.

Tinkering is exploring and using materials and tools and often starts with simple questions such as "What can I do with this?" or "How does this work?"

Exploring materials and investigating how to use tools is a foundational step of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math learning.

When children tinker, they are learning about the properties of materials and the capabilities of tools. They are also developing their fine motor skills. Sometimes, tinkering is just exploring and sometimes it leads to making something to do a job or just for fun.

It is absolutely the foundation to more complex engineering (using materials to make something that solves a problem). Skills children may develop include fine motor coordination, using tools, problem solving, collaborating, experimenting, thinking creatively, observing, comparing, relating to prior and/or current experience, communicating, and persevering. Tinkering also

develops social and emotional skills around self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, self-management and responsible decision making.

The Hilltown Family Center offers an extensive list of resources for parents, caregivers, and families. The Family Center programs are built around the belief in nurturing strong families, by helping them to strengthen their flexibility and resilience. Programs help families establish strong social connections and give concrete support in times of need, recognizing family's strengths and understanding that being a parent is part natural and part learned. The Family Center also helps children connect and relate to their world.

The Hilltown Family Center's many free programs include weekly play to learn groups, the ASQ developmental screening program, Hilltown Holiday

Help, Parent Powered learning messages, ParentChild+ home visit literacy program, Rise and Read Book bag program, StoryWalk program, parent education, as well as services and referrals through Hilltown Community Health Center. This program is made possible through the Hilltown Family Center and the Hilltown Community Health Center through a Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Grant through the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care in collaboration with the Boston Children's Museum.

For more about this program or the Hilltown Family Center, people may visit their Facebook page at Hilltown Family Center or Parent & Family Supports - Hilltown Community Health Center at hchcweb.org. They also may email Susan LeBarron at slebarron@hchcweb.org or call 413-667-2203.

## Huntington Public Library offers January programs

By Wendy Long  
Correspondent

HUNTINGTON – No need to suffer from cabin fever this month: come in out of the cold for fun activities at the Huntington Public Library, 7 East Main St.

Story Hours for children resume this month and will be offered every Saturday at 10:30 a.m. Featured books will be "Winter's Gift" on Saturday, Jan. 13, "Penguin" on Saturday Jan. 20, and "Llama Destroys the World" on Saturday, Jan. 27.

People may stop by any or every Wednesday at 5 p.m. to relax with Drop In Painting. They may use the library's acrylic and watercolor paint sets or paint pens to create a picture or decorate some coasters.

The Huntington Public Library Book Club's pick for January is "Ellen Foster" by Kate Gibbons. Copies may be picked up at the library while available, ordered through interlibrary loan or digital copies borrowed through Libby. The group will gather to discuss the book on Thursday, Feb. 1 at 4 p.m.

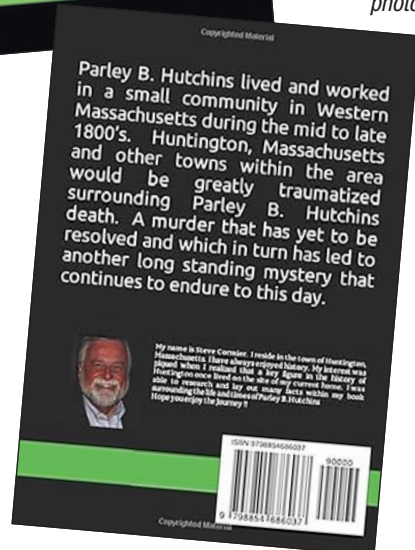
An author talk will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 16 at 6 p.m. Local author Steven Cormier will discuss his fact-filled revelations concerning a murder from the 1800s that made Huntington famous. His book, "Life and Times of Parley B. Hutchins," examines the unsolved mystery and local who-done-it. The book will be available for sale and signing at \$9.99 per copy.

An introductory meeting of a new Cookbook Club is scheduled for Thursday, Jan. 25 at 4:30 p.m. Culinary enthusiasts should come with a favorite cookbook and discuss a favorite recipe with the group. Logistics such as frequency, days/times



The front and back covers of the book, "Life and Times of Parley B. Hutchins" will be the subject of January's author talk at the Huntington Public Library on Tuesday, Jan. 16 at 6 p.m.

Submitted photos



and format for upcoming meetings will be ironed out at this first group meeting.

Closing out January programs will be brothers, Tim and Eric Vogel from Bigfoot Field Researchers Organization on Tuesday, Jan. 30 at 6 pm. Participants will hear their stories about Bigfoot sightings in Western Massachusetts and they may share their own. All events are free and open to the public.

## COA lists educational programs

HUNTINGTON – The Council on Aging is offering two free educational programs in January.

People are invited to the Huntington Evangelical Church Chapel at 22 Russell Road on Wednesday, Jan. 17 from 1-2 p.m. to learn more about the advantages of having and using a municipal library. Amanda Loisell, Director of the Huntington Public Library, will be the presenter.

Narcan Training will be held at

Stanton Hall, 26 Russell Road on Wednesday, Jan. 24, also from 1-2 p.m. Narcan is an over-the-counter treatment that may be used to revive a person, who has an opioid overdose, caused by anything from prescription pain medications to heroin. Learn more about this life saving treatment.

Save-the-date for the first program in February. Local historian John Garvey will be at Stanton Hall on Wednesday, Feb. 7 from 1-2 p.m. for a talk on "Losing Murrayfield."

## Town Clerk offers dog licensing late fee amnesty

HUNTINGTON – As part of the ongoing effort to get all dog licensing in town current from 2020 to present, the Town Clerk's office is offering a two week dog licensing late fee amnesty from Monday, Jan. 15 until Wednesday, Jan. 31.

This one time program is designed to motivate everyone, who neglected to register their dog(s) anytime between July 1, 2019 and the present to correct the omission without paying the regular \$20 per dog late fee(s) for each year during that time. All forms are available on the town website by visiting <https://www.huntingtonma.us/> under Town Clerk under Forms and Documents. They may also stop in and request them Monday, Jan. 15 between 6:30-7:30 p.m. or Wednesday, Jan. 17 between 6:30-7:30 p.m.

People should check their dog's Huntington dog tags. MGL Chapter 140, Section 137 requires all dogs to be licensed in the municipality; the rabies tags received from their veterinarian do not meet the requirements. If they don't have 2020, 2021, 2022 & 2023 tags, they need to get their dog(s) up to date.

If they can't find their tags and need to know whether their dog is registered up to date, people may email townclerk@huntingtonma.us to inquire.

They must provide their latest rabies certificate and they can return it on request with their tag(s) if they provide a self-addressed stamped envelope with two stamps. Veterinarians are supposed to send a copy of all rabies certificates to the Town Clerk, but that sometimes does not happen.

Any license forms received after Wednesday, Jan. 31, no exceptions, will again be subject to the regular \$20 per dog late fees, so please drop off the forms and checks in an envelope at Town Hall prior to that date, either by dropping them through the mail slot in the Town Clerk's door or in the big black drop box at the back of the building.

The Town Clerk will get the forms processed and mail their tags back to you, as soon as possible. People should be aware that MGL late licensing fees range from \$50-\$100 per dog with the requirement for the Dog Officer to be notified about unlicensed dogs.

## CHESTER

## STUDENTS

from page 1

years ago, before money existed, people traded or bartered for things that they needed.

Principal Vanna Maffuccio joined classroom staff in helping students complete the first activity in their workbook: identifying an item that a sibling or friend owned and what they might be willing to trade for that item. Staff helped students explore if the items were worth about the same value or if one person was "overpaying."

Leaders explained that in addition to bartering, people sometimes offer services in exchange for an item. When asked what service students might want someone to do for them, the most frequent answer was homework. But some started thinking about swapping household chores with a sibling or covering their chore in exchange for an item.

The workbook also explained the history of currency in human societies and looked at samples of money from around the world. Students then got to make up a pretend country and design what its currency might look like.

As the visitors walked around looking at the student designs, one was heard to say, "A tiger! There you go! Is that a million dollars?"

Maffuccio first heard of the program through Gateway's Assistant Superintendent Stephanie Fisk, after Fisk had seen a presentation at the Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials Annual Institute last summer. "In educating our youth, we need to do a better job at providing students with relevant, worthy learning experiences that connect and prepare them for success in the real world," said Maffuccio. "If students know the value of money and understand the difference between spending money to purchase things we need vs. things we want, they will begin to develop healthy and smart spending habits that'll last a lifetime."

The program ran for an hour and Schreiber and Baker gifted teachers, Elizabeth Hamaoui (third grade) and Mikayla Menin (fourth grade) a teacher's guide that will help them continue to build financial literacy skills with their students.

Maffuccio was pleased with the results. "This is a learning opportunity I'd like to pursue again in the future," she said. Equitable Advisors is a wealth management company and this program is one of the organization's community service projects.

# OPINION

## GUEST COLUMN



### Will my friend's fiancée be entitled to a survivor benefit?

Dear Rusty

I have a very good friend who has cancer and will begin chemotherapy this week. He is 71 years old and is currently receiving Social Security benefits. He has been living with his fiancée for a little more than 2 years, but they have been a couple for about 15 years and will be married in the next few weeks. She is 60 years old.

I am naturally concerned about his and her future so my questions are:

What, if anything, should he and his wife do to ensure that she gets his Social Security benefits?

What benefits will she be entitled to and how soon will she be able to begin receiving them after his death?

Signed: A Friend with Questions

Dear Friend

You are kind to be concerned about your friend and his fiancée. Here's what you need to know:

Social Security goes by state rules when it comes to what is often referred to as "common law marriage." That means that whether your friend's fiancée will receive any benefits as a surviving spouse in a "common law" relationship depends on whether they live in a state, which recognizes common law marriage.

Most states do not, but state laws have changed over the years and many states which once recognized such unions as "marriage" no longer do. Although they may have "been a couple" for 15 years, if your friend and his fiancée have been living together for only two it is likely only the last two years will count for Social Security benefit purposes. So, whether your friend's fiancée will get anything when your friend dies depends on where they live, unless they get married, in which case the rules are different.

In order for a married widow(er) to receive surviving spouse benefits, the couple must have been married for at least nine months. If they marry and your friend lives longer than nine months thereafter, then his wife will be entitled to a surviving spouse benefit from her husband. The amount of his wife's benefit will be based upon the amount your friend is receiving at his death, adjusted for her age when she claims her surviving spouse benefit.

A surviving spouse can claim benefits from the deceased as early as age 60, but those benefits will be reduced for claiming before full retirement age (FRA). Taken at age 60, the wife's benefit would be 71.5% of your friend's SS benefit at his death. The wife need not claim the survivor benefit immediately; she could opt to delay claiming in order to get a higher percentage of the husband's amount. Survivor benefits reach maximum, 100% of the deceased's benefit amount, at the recipient's FRA.

So, if your friend and his fiancée

SECURITY, page 5

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



## GUEST COLUMN



I received an email from a Brimfield resident, who along with his wife, participated in the Allen Bird Club's Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, Dec. 16.

One unexpected species they saw were three female buffleheads at the Springfield Reservoir.

The bufflehead is a small duck about 14 inches long. It has a distinct, large rounded head.

The male has a white wedge behind its black head. The male also has white flanks and breast. The female is gray brown with a small patch of white behind the eye.

They are diving ducks and feed on mollusks, fish, snails and crustaceans. They summer on wooded lakes, rivers and winter on



Female Bufflehead

lakes and coastal waters.

The female lays eight to ten ivory to buff eggs in a tree cavity or nest box. There courtship begins in January and these ducks show a high level of aggression during that time.

Buffleheads are generally silent. However, the female makes guttural sounds during courtship.

BACKYARD, page 5

## New questions for the New Year!



Jim, who gardens in Bridgewater, sent this question in to the Garden Lady. "I liked your article on experimenting with holly seeds. I do some of my own propagating with trees and perennials, so the holly seeds thing was good. My question concerns being dioecious and at what point can one determine male or female? Is there some way to determine sex at an early stage or must I grow a dozen plants for years before I can wean out the males and keep the females? I have read that a single male will successfully pollinate all the females within a half mile radius so finding the females is my goal at the earliest possible stage of growth."

Sadly, the only way to figure out whether you have a male or female holly is by examining the flowers, so yes, that will require growing them on for some time; my research indicates about four to seven years.

The male flowers will have four petals and four stamens where you will see the pollen at the end. Female flowers look very similar except there is a green "bump" in the center of the petals – the ovary, where the berries will form from.

Garden centers usually propagate vegetatively from either male or female plants, so they are not playing the waiting game. Starting hollies from seed is still a fun

experiment, time consuming nonetheless.

Dawn was worried that her amaryllis plant was dead. "My amaryllis was originally a Christmas gift. I've enjoyed it for a few years now, but its leaves yellowed, then they withered and died. I'm worried that I killed it!"

As soon as I heard from Dawn, my thoughts went to my own amaryllis, still in my bedroom window despite the fact that its leaves are brown and have fallen around the outside of its pot. I haven't watered it since it started to "decline."

It has sat there in this sorry state for a few weeks now. Never fear, it's likely our bulbs have gone dormant.

This timing is a little off if you think about all of those boxed sets of amaryllis bulbs sitting on store shelves just in time for Christmas giving and planting. Bulb companies can "time" growth stages a little more reliably that we can.

After a month or two of dormancy watering can resume and with good fortune, blooms should reappear in 6-8 weeks. Some experts recommend putting the dormant bulbs in a cool, dark room to rest.

I often move dormant pots of bulbs to my mudroom where temperatures are in the 50s this time of year and when I see green tips on the bulb I bring it back into the living area of my house. Usually regrowth comes, but a flower sometimes doesn't.

In this case, the bulb is likely depleted of nutrients and without enough reserves left for re-bloom. I would recommend watering with an all-purpose plant fertilizer during active growth.

Seed production also diminishes the

GARDEN, page 5

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## BECKET

## Becket Athenaeum announces upcoming events

BECKET – The Becket Athenaeum, 3367 Main St., which serves Becket and Washington, kicked off 2024 with a reading challenge.

People may stop by the library to pick up a 2024 Reading Challenge Book Bingo card and start filling in their Bingo squares to enter a raffle. There will be prizes at the end of the challenge, but everyone wins when they spend a year reading.

The Athenaeum will be closing on Wednesday, Jan. 24 at 6 p.m.

All ages are welcome to participate in the reading challenges. They enter the drawing by reading books within the categories on Book Bingo card available at the library and online. Each book counts for a single square. When they finish a book that fits that theme, cross it off or color it in. Five in a row, horizontally, vertically or diagonally, earns participants one chance in the drawing for gift

certificates to local businesses.

People should drop off their completed card at the library by Dec. 31 of this year. They may enter as many times as they want by completing more cards; they have all year to read and play.

Massachusetts Center for the Book 2024 Reading Challenge gives people the chance to win a free book each month.

Library Story time is held Saturdays at 10:30 a.m. People should RSVP at bit.ly/BA-storytime. Game night will be held Wednesday, Jan. 15 from 5-7 p.m. at the library. More information is available by visiting bit.ly/BA-Jan17-game.

Movie night for adults was rescheduled to Saturday, Jan. 20 from 6:30-9:30 p.m. at the library. More information is available by visiting bit.ly/BA-Jan6-movie. Movie night for adults will be held Saturday, Feb. 3 from 6:30-9:30 p.m. at the library. More information,

people may visit bit.ly/BA-Feb3-movie.

Book Club: Still Life by Sarah Winman. Tuesday, Feb. 6 at 1:30 p.m. inside the library or on Zoom. People may visit BecketAthenaeum.org/events/book-club-february6 for more information.

Monday, Feb. 12 at 6 p.m. the Cookbook Club meets. The cookbook is “Felidia” by Lidia Bastianich. People may visit BecketAthenaeum.org/events/cookbook-club-february12 for more information.

Other events include Saturday, Feb. 10 at 10:30 a.m. Creative Movement and Story Time and game night on Wednesday, Feb. 21 from 5-7 p.m.

Funding for programs is provided by grants from the Becket Cultural Council, Washington Cultural Council, Berkshire Bank, Fairfield County’s Community Foundation, The Feigenbaum Foundation, and Mass Humanities,

a state-based affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, which receives support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Funding is also provided by the following grants from Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation: ARTS Build Community: Innovation Initiative, ARTS Incubation Grant and the Central Berkshire Fund.

A free school-readiness program is a home visiting program for families with a child ages 1.5 to 4 before pre kindergarten. They come to the child’s home twice a week, 30 minutes per visit. The first visit of the week, the child is given a free book or toy and they talk about how they can use it with the child. The second visit is to talk about how the use of the item went.

For more information, people may call Wendy Provencher 413-655-0146, extension 2 or email wprovencher@cbrsd.org.

## SCHOOLS &amp; YOUTH

## SNHU announces fall Dean’s list

MANCHESTER, N.H. – Southern New Hampshire University announces the students named to the fall 2023 Dean’s list.

Local students making the Dean’s list are: Idona Dulude of Chester, Alyssa Clement of Westfield and Sean Flynn of Worthington.

Full-time undergraduate students who have earned a minimum grade-point average of 3.500 to 3.699 for the reporting term are named to the Dean’s list. Full-time status is achieved by earning 12 credits over each 16-week term or paired eight-week terms grouped in fall, winter/spring and summer.

## SNHU announces President’s list

MANCHESTER, N.H. – Southern New Hampshire University congratulates the following students on being named to the Fall 2023 President’s List.

They are: Lisandra RiveraLucena of Easthampton, Taylor Amado of Easthampton, Dominick Nomakeo of Easthampton, Benjamin Arcangeli of Russell, Michelle Rodriguez of Westfield, Dante Lee of Westfield, Dana Shambo of Westfield, Mikaela

Spence of Worthington, Jessica Giarolo of Becket, Grace Van Buren of Becket, Amanda Gadaire of Otis and Madeline Kresiak of Otis.

Full-time undergraduate students, who have earned a minimum grade-point average of 3.700 and above for the reporting term are named to the President’s list. Full-time status is achieved by earning 12 credits over each 16-week term or paired 8-week terms grouped in fall, winter/spring and summer.

## Hadleigh Leclair makes Hofstra University Dean’s list

HEMPSTEAD, N.Y. – Hadleigh Leclair of Westfield makes the fall 2023 semester Dean’s list at Hofstra University.

Leclair is a psychology major and achieved a GPA of at least 3.5 to earn a spot on the Dean’s list.

## Lindsey Ledoux makes fall 2023 Dean’s list at Husson

BANGOR, MAINE – Husson University announces the Dean’s list for the fall 2023 semester of the 2023-2024 academic year.

Lindsey Ledoux of Chesterfield makes the Dean’s list.

Full-time students who earn Dean’s List must be enrolled as an undergrad-

uate student, carry a full-time load of 12 credit hours, complete all attempted courses in the time allotted for the semester and achieve a designated semester grade-point average. Credits from pass/fail classes do not qualify toward meeting the minimum credit hour requirement.

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## OPINION

## GARDEN

from page 4

plant’s reserves, so be sure to dead-head the individual flowers as they go by, leaving the stem intact until it yellows. Hopefully these tips will give your amaryllis a few more good years of flowering.

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](mailto:pouimette@turley.com) with “Gardening Question” in the subject line.

## SECURITY

from page 4

now live in a state which currently recognizes common law marriage (Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Montana, New Hampshire, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Rhode Island or in the District of Columbia), then your friend’s partner will be considered his “wife” and entitled to survivor benefits as normal (the fiancée would need to prove they cohabitate in a marriage-like relationship to claim benefits).

If they do not live in one of those states, but they get married and the marriage lasts for at least 9 months, then the wife will be entitled to normal benefits as a surviving spouse as described above.

But if the couple do not live in one of the above states which recognize “common law” relationships or if their soon-to-occur marriage

doesn’t last at least 9 months or if they do not get married, I’m afraid your friend’s partner will not be entitled to any survivor benefits from your friend.

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](http://amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at [ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org). Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

## BACKYARD

from page 4

## Bird count

In his email, the Brimfield resident said he did his first Allen Bird Club count in the late 1970s. He said, “We have been covering the town of Ludlow, excluding the Westover Conservation Area covered by others, since 1989. The club’s count circle center is in Springfield and includes adjacent towns.

He also said, “We had an excellent day weather wise, but the songbirds were hard to come by. With all the water ice free, we had high number of Canada geese (93), common mergansers (170, mostly males) and mallard (115). The common mergansers and many of the mallards were at the Springfield Reservoir.”

He reported 20 ring-necked ducks at a pond near the Ludlow Country Club was another unexpected species in the count. In all, they had 32 species on their list, slightly more than the average of 29 species. Following the time in the field, the participants held a zoom meeting to discuss the results. No one mentioned seeing any winter finches i.e. redpoll, siskin or evening grosbeak.

## Large flock of Canada geese

Recently, I saw a large flock of Canada geese in a cornfield in Spencer. There must have been at least 100. I did not stop to take an accurate count, but it

was the largest flock I’ve seen.

## Christmas card count

Years ago, Thelma Crawford, told me she kept a Christmas card bird count every year. While she was alive, we would share our card counts. Often the bird fell into the unspecified species category. I wven received a Christmas card one year with a loon with an evergreen wreath around its neck. This was the first year I did not receive any Christmas cards with birds even one perched off in a distant tree in the background.

## Suet feeder

I now have my suet feeder out all the time as I have not seen any sign of wandering black bears in awhile. I also feed a combination of mixed bird seed, black oil sunflowers and shelled peanuts, which I mix together to put out daily. I have the usual juncos, chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, blue jays, mourning doves and of course, squirrels. I have not seen the cardinal pair yet, but then I don’t have a lot of time to spend watching my feeders.

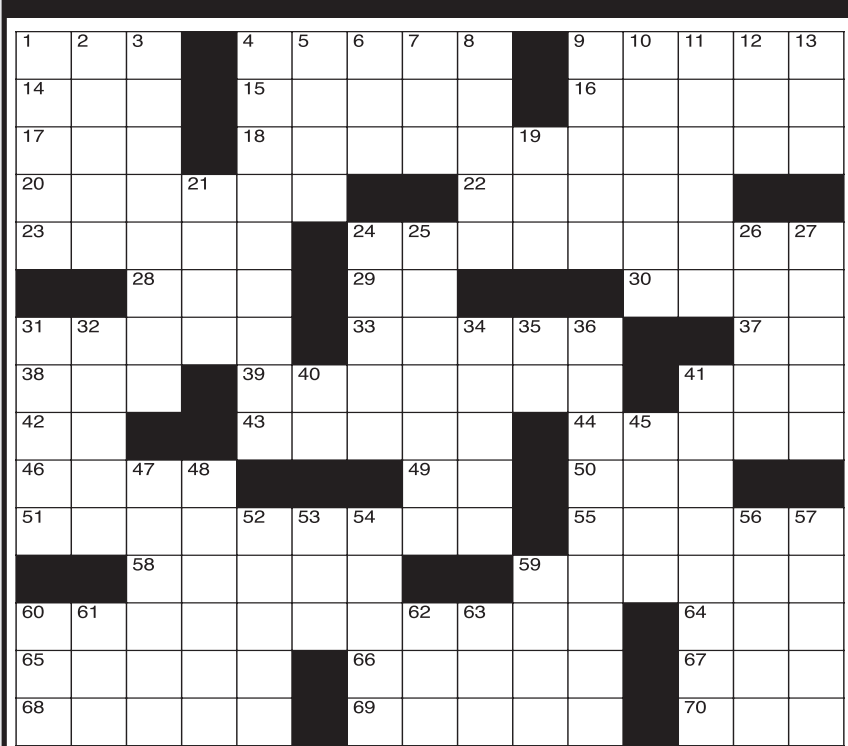
People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by calling me at 413-967-3505, leaving a message at extension 100, emailing [mybackyard88@aol.com](mailto:mybackyard88@aol.com) or [edowner@turley.com](mailto:edowner@turley.com) or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.



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**CLUES ACROSS**

- Defensive nuclear weapon
- Moved back and forth
- One-time coach of the Cowboys
- Last letter
- Cause to become less intense
- Genus of tree bugs
- Body art
- Romance novelist
- Be filled with love for
- City
- Make vivid
- Horses
- Mauna \_\_, Hawaiian volcano
- Atomic #18
- Shortly
- A type of prejudice
- Whirls
- Six
- Old world, new
- \_\_ Hess, oil company

- Talk
- Not off
- Begets
- Cars need them
- Computing architecture (abbr.)
- Of I
- Journalist, activist Wells
- Takes apart
- Lists
- Positively charged electrode
- Hard, colorless compound
- Inflammation of the peritoneum
- Trent Reznor's band
- Simply dry fruit
- "Ivanhoe" author
- Google certification
- French commune
- Medieval circuit courts
- Soviet Socialist Republic

**CLUES DOWN**

- Indigenous people of Mexico
- Dietary supplement
- Having a particular sheen or luster
- Views
- Academic Bill of Rights
- Automobile
- When you anticipate arriving
- Beef or chicken intestine
- Conspiracy
- Blood disorder
- Long-time NBAer Shawn
- Time zone
- US, Latin America, Canada belong to
- Upton Sinclair novel
- What a cow does
- Cavalry-sword
- Ancient Greek war galley
- Stars
- Rebukes
- Billion year periods
- Some are in a bottle
- Tears down
- Lethal dose
- Humorists
- Midwestern US state (abbr.)
- Frameworks
- Rocker Billy
- More thin
- Dog
- Habitual repetitions
- State of fuss
- Uneasy
- Chemical compounds
- More cognizant of reality
- A place to build
- Exclamation that denotes disgust
- Supplement with difficulty
- Very slick
- Hill or rocky peak

# THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPES

**ARIES**

**Mar 21/Apr 20**  
 Aries, watch out because you are hot stuff this week. Coming off the excitement of the holidays, you're still in the mood to socialize. The invitations to various social events will still flow.

**CANCER**

**Jun 22/Jul 22**  
 Cancer, right now you may be feeling like hibernating, especially if the weather is changing. Don't burrow under the covers just yet. Find a way to stay busy and socialize.

**LIBRA**

**Sept 23/Oct 23**  
 After a season of partying and letting other tasks fall by the wayside, it is time to get back to focus. You must take out your financial account records and track spending now.

**CAPRICORN**

**Dec 22/Jan 20**  
 It's often business as usual for you to burn the midnight oil, Capricorn. But scale back on those late-night interludes. That's a recipe for burnout that can derail your bigger plans.

**TAURUS**

**Apr 21/May 21**  
 Hopefully you've made progress on the various organizational projects that you have had in mind, Taurus. Now is the time to get those resolutions moving.

**LEO**

**Jul 23/Aug 23**  
 Leo, even if it seems the way to be the most productive, burning the candle at both ends is only going to make you tired and less efficient. Ask for help if you need it.

**SCORPIO**

**Oct 24/Nov 22**  
 Take an inventory of the things you want to change about yourself. There is always room for improvement, especially if you feel you have not been your best self lately.

**AQUARIUS**

**Jan 21/Feb 18**  
 You are a team player, so you may have to give the troops a pep talk to get everyone working together this week. Smooth down any ruffled feathers as needed.

**GEMINI**

**May 22/Jun 21**  
 Gemini, how is your to-do list coming along? If you haven't yet gotten moving, a coming slowdown could make the perfect time to get cracking.

**VIRGO**

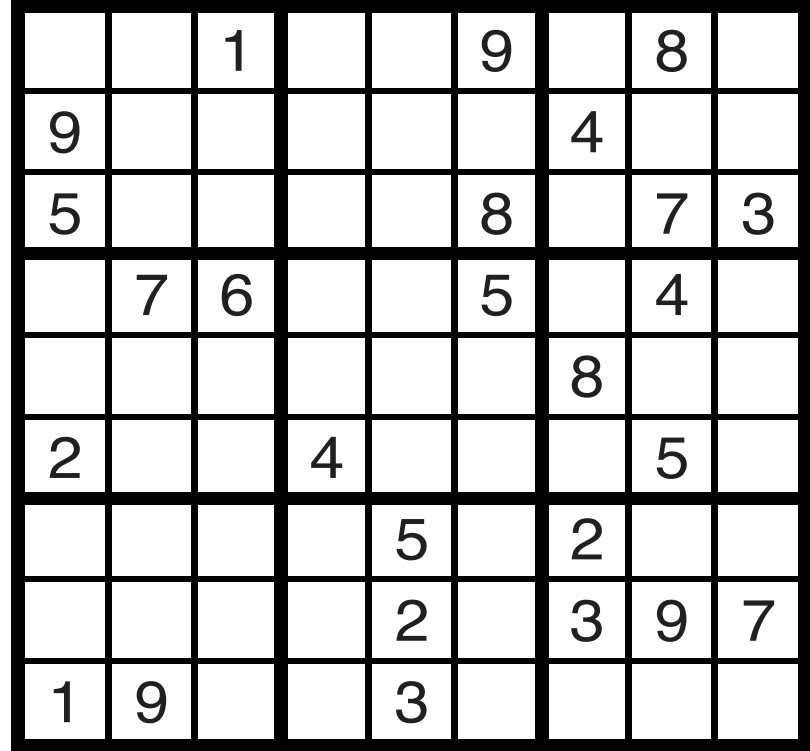
**Aug 24/Sept 22**  
 Virgo, your innate humility means you're often content with being behind the scenes and not in the limelight. However, this week you may want a little extra fanfare.

**SAGITTARIUS**

**Nov 23/Dec 21**  
 Hopefully you have met your quota of parties and social events because now is the time to take a break. The invitations will cease, but that can be a good thing for you.

**PISCES**

**Feb 19/Mar 20**  
 If you have any unfinished business that needs to get wrapped up, the clock is ticking. Make a strong attempt to finish by Wednesday or Thursday.



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**answers**

4	9	9	7	8	8	2	6	1
7	6	8	4	2	1	8	5	9
8	1	2	9	5	6	8	4	7
6	5	7	1	8	4	6	3	2
9	8	2	7	6	5	1	4	7
2	4	1	5	9	3	6	7	8
3	6	9	8	1	2	4	6	5
1	4	2	3	9	6	7	8	5
5	8	6	9	4	7	1	2	3

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## MONTGOMERY

# Music in Montgomery

MONTGOMERY – The series continues every Thursday this month from 3-4:30 p.m. at Montgomery Town Hall, 161 Main Road.

People do not need to be a Montgomery resident to attend. On the calendar are Barry Searle, Sarah Miller and Pete Rzasas on Thursday, Jan. 11; Ed Bentley and Friends on Thursday, Jan. 18 and Larry Southard on Thursday, Jan. 25.

Searle, Miller and Rzasas are no strangers to Music in Montgomery. They perform regularly and offer a variety

of styles. The tagline for performer Ed Bentley and Friends is “men of a certain age.” This band covers a range of music including country, rock and folk.

Larry Southard is a singer and guitarist, who is no stranger to “Music in Montgomery” and can also be seen performing at area farmers markets during the growing season. Southard is a singer and guitarist and is known for playing “all the good old songs.”

These events are free of charge and open to the public. Light refreshments are served.

## CUMMINGTON

# Friday Night Cafe returns

CUMMINGTON – The 2024 Friday Night Cafe season begins on Friday, Jan. 12 with the cellist Stephen Katz from 7-9 a.m. at the Village Church, 32 Main St.

Katz calls his technique “Flying Pizzicato.” His music is at turns intensely rhythmic, funky, intricate and percussive or sweetly soaring and melodic. Really, it is fantastic and utterly unique. People may visit his website at <https://www.stephenkatzmusic.com/>.

The shows are free and snacks are provided. People may bring their own

drinks and donations are appreciated. Masks are welcome and encouraged. Unlike last winter, 2024 shows will be in the intimate Vestry space.

On Friday, Jan. 26, “Spoken Words” with Steve Philbrick and music with One Part Luck will perform. Friday Night Cafe is supported in part by the cultural councils of Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Hinsdale/Peru, Plainfield, Williamsburg, Windsor and Worthington, local agencies supported by the Mass. Cultural Council a state agency.

## WORTHINGTON

# Friends of the Worthington Library plan craft sessions

WORTHINGTON – The Friends of the Worthington Library will host two make-and-take craft sessions to raise money for the library.

The cost for each class is \$35 per person. Both classes will be held at The Worthington Town Hall, 160 Huntington Road. Each class is limited to 12 participants. All fees go to materials and to support children’s programs, museum passes and wishlist books at the library.

There will be an Embroidery Class led by Dave Dimock on Saturday, Jan. 27 from 2-4 p.m. at the Worthington

Town Hall. The snow date for this event is Saturday, Feb. 3. Materials including needle, hoop, and thread will be provided. This session is intended for persons aged 13 and older.

Dimock will teach six basic stitches, share the history of embroidery, provide a few hints to help people create and show examples from his work. Participants can take their kit home to finish.

A soap making Class led by Nancy Babcock will be held on Saturday, March 2 from 1-4 p.m. at the

Worthington Town Hall. The snow date for this event is Sunday, March 3 from 1-4 pm. All materials will be provided, but participants are encouraged to bring their preferred safety goggles. This session is intended for adults due to chemical use. Participants aged 17 are permitted with an adult. Babcock will discuss safety procedures for soap making and handling lye. Participants will work in pairs to make their soap while learning tips and a bit about the chemistry of soap making.

All participants will take home

a handmade bar of soap, which will need to be cured and a soap bar made by Babcock to use immediately. Participants will also get an instructional flier for soap-making at home.

People may register at The Worthington Library during library hours Tuesday and Thursday from 3-7 p.m.; Thursday from 10 a.m.-noon and Saturday from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. People may email the Friends of the Worthington Library at [worthingtonfowl@gmail.com](mailto:worthingtonfowl@gmail.com) or call the Worthington Library at 413-238-5565.

## GOSHEN

# Town Clerk lists street listing, dog license and election information

GOSHEN – The 2024 Annual Street Listings have been mailed to each household in Goshen and residents should be receiving theirs soon.

Residents who have not received one may find printable blank copies on the Town Clerk webpage at [www.goshen-ma.us/annual-street-listing/](http://www.goshen-ma.us/annual-street-listing/) or email the Town Clerk at [clerk@goshen-ma.us](mailto:clerk@goshen-ma.us) to receive another one.

People should fill out information for everyone who lives in their house, sign it and return it to 40 Main St. Goshen, MA 01032. It is important to keep an accurate count of residents as it determines state and federal funding for the town. Responding to the street listing will also keep people on the active voting list if they are registered to vote.

Additionally, the 2024 dog licenses are in. A dog licensing form was mailed with the street listing. Neutered/ spayed dogs cost \$5 each to register; intact dogs are \$10. To register their dog, people can stop by during Town Clerk office hours Monday 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. and 6-8 p.m. and bring cash or check, valid rabies certificate and spaying/neutering certificate.

They may mail the dog license

form, fee(s) and certificate(s) along with a stamped self-addressed envelope for the return of the license(s) and tag(s) to: Goshen Town Clerk, 40 Main Street, Goshen, MA 01032. They may also drop the paperwork off in the town clerk drop box, located to the left of the door to the town offices. Last year’s licenses expire on March 31. Additional dog licensing forms can be found by visiting [www.goshen-ma.us/dog-licenses/](http://www.goshen-ma.us/dog-licenses/).

This is a big election year. Tuesday, March 5 is the Presidential Primary. Saturday, June 1 is the Annual Town Election. Tuesday, Sept. 3 is the State Primary and Tuesday, Nov. 5 is the Presidential/State Election.

Every registered voter in Massachusetts will be receiving a post card in the mail soon from the State asking if they would like to vote by mail for any or all of the above elections. If they do, they should return the post card. If not, no action needed.

People may visit <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/OVR/> if they are not sure they are registered to vote. People may email Town Clerk Kristen Estelle at [clerk@goshen-ma.us](mailto:clerk@goshen-ma.us) or call 413-268-8236, extension 107 with any questions.

## PUBLIC NOTICES

### TOWN OF CHESTER REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICE PROGRAMS

The Town of Chester, as lead community for the FY 2024 Southern Hilltowns Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application, is seeking proposals from qualified social service organizations and agencies to include in the application. Activities eligible for funding include a range of social services that meet the needs of low and moderate-income residents in the Towns of Chester, Huntington, Middlefield, and Russell. Agencies providing the following services are encouraged to submit proposals: adult education/GED preparation, literacy programs, job training, domestic violence prevention, services for seniors, emergency food, family/youth activities and other social service programs.

grams.

The Town of Chester may choose to fund all, any or none of the proposals submitted. Agencies or organizations identified for inclusion in the Town’s grant proposal will be required to submit additional information as part of the full CDBG application to be submitted to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC). Programs funded by EOHLC will begin in the summer of 2024. The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) is assisting the Town in the coordination and administration of its community development programs. Please contact Joseph Hagopian to receive a request form or with any questions regarding this program at (413) 781-6045 or [jhagopian@pvpc.org](mailto:jhagopian@pvpc.org).

All proposals must be

submitted by mail, fax or e-mail to the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 60 Congress Street – 1st Floor, Springfield, MA 01104, fax 413-732-2593, or [jhagopian@pvpc.org](mailto:jhagopian@pvpc.org) by 2:00 p.m. Monday, February 5th, 2024. 01/11/2024

### Town of Worthington Conservation Commission Notice of Public Hearing

In accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 131, Section 40, the Worthington Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing in response to a Request for Determination of Applicability regarding the superstructure replacement for Bridge no. W-45-008 (Pleasant Street Bridge) over Whitmarsh Brook.

The Hearing will be held **Thursday, January 25, 2024 at 7 PM** in the Selectboard meeting at Town Hall.

01/11/2024

### 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.

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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](mailto:obits@turley.com).

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# BLANDFORD



Chester Finance Committee Andy Myers, from left, Chester Water Commissioner Bob Daley, Blandford Water Superintendent Gordon Avery and Chair Water Commission Michael Keier met with Blandford Select Board Monday night to discuss and plan the use of the Community Compact Shared Services grant. *Turley photo by Mary Kronholm*

## SELECT BOARD

from page 1

The budget submitted as part of the grant application did not include the purchase of a truck, according to Interim Town Administrator Ira Brezinsky, who participated in the grant application process while he was with Pioneer Valley Planning Associates. It is possible that the Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services could “ultimately” approve the purchase.

“The bigger issue,” according to Brezinsky, is the lack of movement towards the shared Water Operator Services, the primary purpose for the grant.

Steve Grondin is Blandford’s Water Operator in Training II. Chester’s Water Operator in Training has just started and is a graduate of Gateway Regional High Schools water intern program. Blandford’s OIT has more experience while Daley said the Chester OIT does water “distribution.”

Keier said that Blandford’s Water Commissioners were not in favor of participating in a Shared Services program and wrote the Select Board in May about that, but apparently the Memorandum of Understanding had already been signed by Chester.

Daley said that Chester would “do what needs to be done” to make the program work. Myers said that Chester was fine to share Steve Grondin and added,

“lets comply with the spirit of the grant.”

Letendre said she did not want to “give up the grant” since it would open up a “Pandora’s Box” possibly creating problems with future grants and cited a “lack of communication.”

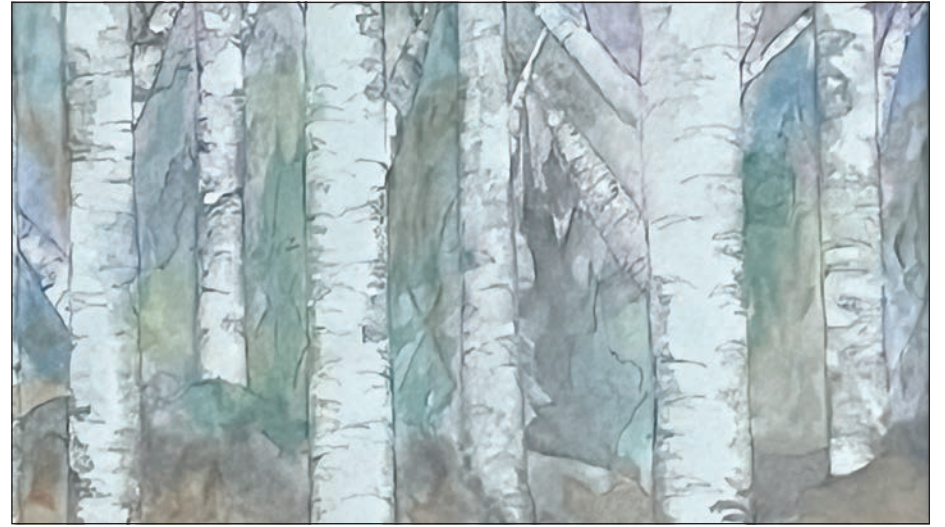
At this point, Keier said that the grant budget had been put together by Brezinsky and it had never been seen by Blandford’s Water Commissioners and that there were things that “would have been questioned.”

Letendre said that going forward “we need to communicate with each other before purchases made from the funds.” Brezinsky said that both towns need to decide on how the grant funding is going to work, citing shared personnel services.

Myers said that there is flexibility in the grant, but “the spirit is in sharing an operator. There are best practices we can share,” he said.

Brezinsky reminded everyone that the grant cycle ends June 30, 2024 and the funds need to be spent and the sooner the boards reach agreement, the better. He also cited the need for transparency.

He suggested that the two boards get together and work about a plan prior to the Blandford Water Commissioners meeting on Thursday, Feb. 1, which the Chester Water Commissioners will attend.



This watercolor of birch trees is one done by local artist Susan Racine. She will be an instructor for the Blandford Cultural Council learning to paint with water colors program on Wednesday, Jan. 24 at 10 a.m. in the Blandford Council on Aging room in the town office. This is an example of what the class will create. *Turley photo by Mary Kronholm*

## COA to hold watercolor workshop

BLANDFORD – Winter is here and it’s indoor time.

How would you like to learn to paint with watercolors? If this piques people’s interest, they may sign up for a class with award winning local artist, Susan Racine and learn a simple yet creative technique to paint birch trees.

“The picture is all done very easily,” said Racine. The finished artwork will be on canvas watercolor paper and the painting itself will measure 9 by 12 inches and with matting the completed project

will be 11 by 14 inches.

She will bring all the brushes, paint and all necessary equipment. The program is set for Wednesday, Jan. 24 at 10 a.m. in the Blandford Council on Aging room at the Town Office.

A snow date is Wednesday, Jan. 31, same time and place.

This program is free and open to the first 12 people. People may register by emailing [susanracine1@gmail.com](mailto:susanracine1@gmail.com). They should bring an old shirt to wear to protect clothing.

## JLBA to meet on Thursday, Jan. 11

BLANDFORD – The Jacob’s Ladder Business Association will meet Thursday, Jan. 11 at 6 p.m. at the Blandford Animal Hospital, 46 Woronoco Road. This will be the first JLBA networking and meeting of 2024.

Parking is behind the animal hospital and actually below in the apartment. The focus of this networking will be general goal setting as related to the Hilltown communities and relevant political issues affecting Hilltown businesses.

## HIRES

from page 1

### Highway Department

Letendre did indicate that the Highway Department went to check on the road, only to find that it had been plowed. Iglesias said that her husband had plowed the road for residents.

Waldron reported that his department had been working for 19 hours to make sure the roads were traversable. Board member Jeff Allen commented on the loss of “at least five parking places” in the Post Office parking lot because of the way the snow was plowed. It was difficult to navigate the area because the Fire Department’s pickup truck is located close to the building and blocks access to the empty lot where snow is usually pushed.

The estimated cost for the repairs to the bridge on Beech Hill Road is about \$30,000 more than the grant funds available, according to Waldron. He is looking to Springfield Water and Sewer Commission for financial assistance.

He told the board he has now received 20 applications to review for the open positions in the Highway Department.

The mini excavator, which Waldron had hoped would survive another few weeks, has dug its last hole. He is looking for quotes to replace what he called “an important piece of equipment.” A new one is on the town’s list of purchases for capital expenditures. He is also investigating short term rental options, including a lease to buy.

The Select Board approved Waldron as the contract signatory for fiscal year 2025 construction service bids through the Franklin Regional Council of Governments procurement office. The town pays \$3,350 to participate in the collective bidding process.

The initial bids for the town cover the following materials: aggregates and loam, cold patch, geotextiles, calcium chloride product, culvert and guard rail products, hot mix asphalt (picked up). Winter sand, salt and treated winter salt and winter liquid pretreatment and myriad services including road line painting, crack sealing, applied calcium chloride and stone seal and rubberized chip seal; hot mix asphalt applied to roads and parking lots, asphalt reclamation and more.

The Highway Department is picking up the \$7,569.

bill for LB Corporation, General Contractors work on Russell Stage Road to discover, identify and repair a ground water problem. It was learned that the water emanating from under the road in fact was the result of a clogged drain pipe that kept water from a basement.

The drain carrying the water to the street had blocked, causing water to find the path of least resistance. Waldron had told the Water Department that the Highway Department would pick up the tab if the source of the water turned out not to be a Water Department problem.

Waldron informed the board of a major project by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation on Route 23. The board had received a letter of notification regarding an approved culvert replacement on Route 23 “Pond Brook, just east of Virgil Lloyd Road. The project will probably be several years from start to finish, according to Waldron.

Road projects coming up include paving Beech Hill Road from the Granville town line to Julius Hall road, and then a lighter material from there to Route 23; Russell Stage Road from the fire hydrant at Sperry Road to the Russell town line, and all of Gore Road.

### Other Business

The board approved double time pay for Steve Grondin who worked Sunday plowing for the Highway Department along side the other employees.

Interim Town Administrator Brezinsky reminded the board about budget preparation deadlines. The Mass Interlocal Insurance Association building assessment seems to be in order and the board approved a contract extension for the Pioneer Valley Planning Association.

### Funds Received

The state’s Department of Conservation and Recreation notified the town that the “revenue of the forest products from the management activities” are distributed “to the city or town in which the timber sale was conducted.” In this instance, the town has received a check for \$1,303.56 as a “result of forest management in the Chester/Blandford State Forest.”

The state’s Department of Transportation notified Blandford that the town’s “Fair Share apportionment for Fiscal Year 2024 is \$171,060. The funds are the result of the 4 per cent surtax on “taxable income over \$1 million” and that the money is spent on “education and transportation.” The funds are in the town’s Ch. 90 program allotment and are ready for use.

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USDA INSP. FRESH PORK SIRLOIN CUTLETS..... <b>\$2.17</b> lb	USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS BEEF EYE ROUND <b>\$4.44</b> lb	USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS & SKINLESS CHICKEN BREAST 10 LB BAG ..... <b>\$1.69</b> lb
USDA INSP. FROZEN BONE-IN PORK LOIN CENTER CUT CHOPS..... <b>\$2.49</b> lb	USDA INSP. FRESH CHICKEN THIGH 10 LB BAG..... <b>99¢</b> lb	USDA INSP. IQF FROZEN RAW SHRIMP 31/40 CT 2 LB BAG <b>\$8.88</b> ea
SLICED IN OUR DELI ROAST BEEF ..... <b>\$7.99</b> lb	USDA INSP. FROZEN SEA MAZZ 12 OZ BAG ORANGE ROUGHY FILLET FISH. <b>\$2.99</b> ea	
<b>TAILGATE SPECIALS</b>	USDA INSP. STORE MADE ITALIAN MARINATED BONELESS CHICKEN BREAST <b>\$2.99</b> lb	
USDA INSP. STORE MADE BBQ MARINATED BEEF BLADE STEAKS ..... <b>\$6.99</b> lb	USDA INSP. GROUND FRESH DAILY 80% LEAN GROUND BEEF <b>\$3.66</b> 7 LB BAG	
USDA INSP. FROZEN AMERICAN LAMB RIB CHOPS <b>\$9.99</b> lb		

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## FLORENCE

### Ashley Swett named Manager of Customer Service Center

FLORENCE – Florence Bank recently announced Ashley Swett of Ware has been named manager of the bank's Customer Service Center at the main office in Florence.

In her new role, she will oversee the staff responsible for assisting Florence Bank customers who contact the bank via telephone or email.

Swett has 16 years of industry experience and is a graduate of the New England School of Financial Studies. She holds a certificate in supervision from the Center for Financial Training.

"We are pleased to have someone with Ashley's skills in this important role, as customer service is a top priority



Ashley Swett

at Florence Bank," said Matt Garrity, Florence Bank's president and CEO. "She has a great deal of experience in customer service, and we look forward to her valuable insight as a member of our retail banking team."

Active in the community, Swett is currently a member of the Holiday Flair in Ware, where she enjoys the annual festival and parade.

Florence Bank is a mutual savings bank chartered in 1873. Currently, the bank serves the Pioneer Valley through 12 full-service branch locations in Florence, Northampton, Easthampton, Williamsburg, Amherst, Hadley, Belchertown, Granby, Chicopee, West Springfield, and Springfield.

## HAYDENVILLE

### Interfaith Song Circle takes place Jan. 13, all welcome

HAYDENVILLE – An Interfaith Song Circle to mourn the continuing loss of life and ongoing devastation of Gaza will take place Saturday, Jan. 13 at 4 p.m. at Haydenville Congregational Church, 141 Main St., Route 9.

Music Director Mare Berger will lead the program. She will be joined by other singers in easy-to-learn songs so those gathered can grieve through music the 22,000 and rising Palestinians killed by the Israeli Military and the 1,200 Israelis killed by Hamas attacks.

Berger, who is Jewish, said, "I believe there is room in our hearts to

grieve everyone." "We will sing songs to grieve, songs to remember our collective power, songs for a ceasefire and songs for light and justice," said Berger.

The gathering will also be a fundraiser for the Middle East Children's Alliance, which is addressing the humanitarian emergency in Gaza. It will be a free-will donation and no one will be turned away.

The church is handicapped accessible and parking is in the rear of the church. Masks are encouraged.

For more information, people may email Berger at mariel.berger@gmail.com

## MIDDLEFIELD

### Middlefield joins FRTA to provide transportation for seniors and veterans

MIDDLEFIELD – Middlefield is joining the Franklin Regional Transit Authority demand response ride program.

Middlefield Town Administrator Sean F. Curran said, "Admission to the FRTA is great news for seniors and veterans. It's a tremendous service. It is going to connect Middlefield seniors to neighbors, friends and families. This is such a positive during these winter months. Everyone is excited about it."

FRTA demand response is a transportation service for persons over the age of 60, consumers currently living in a nursing home facility or veterans. The primary goal of this service is to provide transportation in a rural area with few other public transportation options.

Riders must pay for their trip in cash. Exact fare is required, as drivers do

not make change. One way trips in the same town are \$1.25. Trips to an adjacent town are \$1.75 and trips beyond the service area are \$2.25.

Other member towns of the consortium include Blandford, Chester, Huntington, Montgomery and Russell. Prior to being transported, an application for service needs to be completed and approved by the FRTA office.

An application can be obtained by calling 413-774-2262 or downloading it by visiting [www.fрта.org](http://www.fрта.org). Applications can also be obtained at Middlefield Town Hall.

"I hope folks take advantage of this service, the rates are very affordable, and FRTA does a tremendous job in serving rural areas. To have them out here, really is a win for Middlefield and Western Massachusetts," said Curran.

### Council on Aging lists menu

MIDDLEFIELD – The Middlefield Senior Center, 169 Skyline Trail on Wednesday, Jan. 17 will serve lunch at noon.

The menu is eat in or take out. The

choice is breaded chicken bites or turkey pot pie. People should call 413-623-9990 to reserve a meal the previous Friday, Jan. 12. Suggested donation is \$3. Bingo will be played after lunch.

## OTIS

### Town Clerk announces election information

OTIS – The Otis Town Clerk announces a voter registration session for the Presidential Primary on Saturday, Feb. 24 from 9-11 a.m. and 3-5 p.m. in the Otis Town Hall, 1 North Main Road.

This is the last day register to vote for those not already registered and the

last day to change party enrollment for the March 5 Presidential Primary. In-person early voting hours for the Presidential Primary are Saturday, Feb. 24 from 9-11 a.m. and 3-5 p.m.; Tuesday, Feb. 27 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. and Thursday, Feb. 29 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. in the Otis Town Hall gymnasium.

### Dog licenses due March 1

OTIS – The Otis Town Clerk reminds residents dog licenses at due Friday, March 1

Drop in office hours are Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Dog Licenses can also be purchased

online by visiting [townofotisma.com](http://townofotisma.com) and go to Town Clerk under Departments. They will be mailed to the resident. Dog license applications and payments can also be mailed in or left in the drop box outside of Town Hall.

## EASTHAMPTON

### bankESB announces Gomes and Vincelette promotions

EASTHAMPTON – bankESB recently promoted Erica Gomes to Assistant Vice President Customer Care and Stephanie Vincelette to Assistant Vice President, Human Resources Operations.

Gomes, of Chicopee, has 24 years of banking experience. She joined the Hometown Financial Group family of banks at bankHometown in 2013 as branch manager of the Killingly office, after spending more than 14 years in retail banking with Citizens Bank.

Gomes was promoted to customer care officer at Hometown Financial's bankESB in 2016. In her new role, she will manage the customer care call center.

Gomes completed coursework in accounting at the Community College of Rhode Island. She has been a volunteer for Meals on Wheels, Junior Achievement, the Western Massachusetts Food Bank, and local homeless shelters, and previously served as treasurer of the Killingly Business Association.

Vincelette, of Granby, has 11 years of banking experience. She was previously human resources opera-

tions officer, and before that, payroll manager, and began her career in banking as payroll specialist. Before joining bankESB in 2012, she had five years of previous payroll and human resources experience. With this promotion, she will continue to oversee payroll operations; will now oversee benefits operations; and will expand her responsibilities in salary administration, compensation planning, and policy management.

Vincelette has a bachelor's degree in business administration from Western New England University. She holds a Senior Professional Human Resources certification.

Founded in 1869 as Easthampton Savings Bank, bankESB is headquartered in

Easthampton and operates 11 branches throughout Western Massachusetts. Through its sponsorship and charitable giving program, The Giving Tree, bankESB and the Easthampton Savings Bank Charitable Foundation support non-profit organizations and causes throughout Hampden and Hampshire counties. In 2022, The Giving Tree donated nearly \$500,000 and over the past decade has donated more than \$3.2 million. For more information, visit [bankESB.com](http://bankESB.com).



Erica Gomes



Stephanie Vincelette

## LENOX

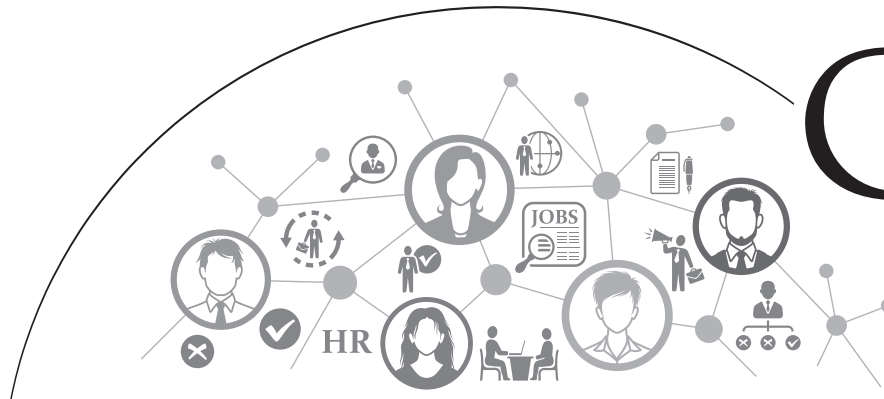
### Tamarack Hollow Nature and Cultural Center to hold hike

LENOX – On Monday, Jan. 15 from noon-3 p.m. Tamarack Hollow Nature and Cultural Center will hold a hike on Yokun Ridge South/Burbank Trail in Lenox.

Naturalist Aimee Gelinias, M.Ed and Director of the Tamarack Hollow Nature and Cultural Center will lead a winter ecology tracking and tree identification program on a roundtrip three-mile hike. Participants will learn about winter ecology, identifying evergreen and deciduous trees and plants in winter and signs of wildlife.

This will be a moderate hike or snowshoe, depending on trail conditions. The hike is free, but donations are encouraged. Thanks to support from Berkshire Natural Resources Council and in part by a grant from the Lenox Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

Registration is required by emailing [aimee@gaiaroots.com](mailto:aimee@gaiaroots.com). People may visit [www.tamarackhollow.org](http://www.tamarackhollow.org) for more information.



# CAREER

## Education

## HCC announces healthy cooking series for new year

If you've made a New Year's resolution to eat healthier in 2024, Holyoke Community College might have just what you need.

The college is running a series of noncredit cooking classes this spring focused on diabetes but geared toward anyone interested in learning how to prepare healthier, more nutritious meals.

Classes in the "Nutrition for Diabetes" series run either on Tuesday or Wednesday nights beginning Feb. 7. All classes are held at the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute, 164 Race St., and taught by Marissa Chiapperino, a registered dietician and instructor in HCC's Culinary Arts program.

"Certain foods can lower your risk of heart disease and diabetes or help to manage it," Chiapperino said. "Making healthy adjustments to your daily meal plan does not have to be hard or boring. Oftentimes, adding in sources of healthy fats, whole grains, and high fiber fruits and vegetables can boost flavor and decrease the risk of chronic disease."

Each three-hour, stand-alone class will focus on a different theme. The first

hour will be an education session with Chiapperino, followed by a two-hour hands-on cooking activity after which participants can take home leftovers and recipes that align with the nutritional topic of the evening.

Wed., Feb. 7, 6-9 p.m.: "What is a carbohydrate?" (white bean egg shakshuka, breakfast casserole, overnight oats, vanilla bean pancakes, salmon toast)

Tues., March 5, 6-9 p.m.: "What is a protein?" (grilled skirt steak with chickpea salad, fideo, raspberry chicken, tahini-baked cod)

Wed., March 20, 6-9 p.m.: "What is a fat?" (smoothie bar, zucchini fritters, roasted chickpeas, cheesy egg souffles, Vietnamese spring rolls with peanut sauce)

Wed., April 17, 6-9 pm.: "How to read a food label" (grilled swordfish and pepper salad; chicken, lemon and olive bake; sweet potato berry muffins; easy breakfast salad; cheddar and herb savory overnight oats)

Tues., April 30, 6-9 p.m.: "What is a carbohydrate?" (desserts for diabetes:

chocolate date spread, oatmeal cookies, orange chamomile blondies, homemade popcorn four ways, caramelized spiced pears)

In addition, on Tues., April 2, from 6-9 p.m., Chiapperino will lead a similarly structured class on meal planning, "Building a balanced meal," featuring chilled avocado and cucumber mint soup, eggplant and lentil meatballs, chili-stuffed spaghetti squash, kale and fava bean salad, and grain-free granola.

"Making dietary changes can feel overwhelming," she said. "In this class, we will talk about how meal planning can make or break your ability to lead a more nourishing life with food. The concepts discussed will be suitable for those with many different health concerns and also those who just want to get more comfortable in the kitchen."

Chiapperino holds a bachelor of science degree in dietetics from the State University of New York at Oneonta and a masters of public health from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She specialized in medical nutrition therapy for critical care and oncology at West-



chester Medical Center in New York and was the first bariatric dietician at Holyoke Medical Center, where she helped build their nutrition program.

She is a past president of the Western Massachusetts Dietetic Association and currently serves as executive secretary.

Each session is \$84. For more information, or to register for classes, please go to [hcc.edu/healthy-cooking](http://hcc.edu/healthy-cooking)

# Learn from the best.

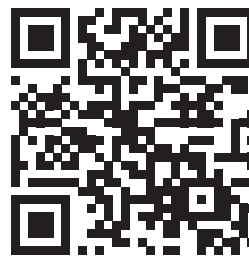
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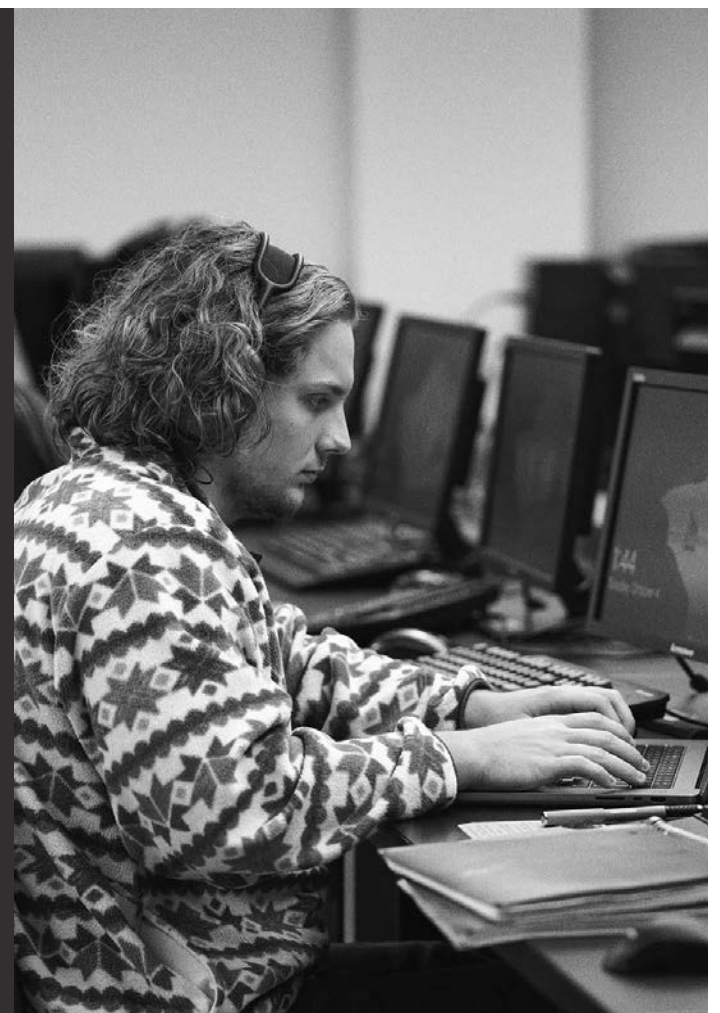
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# CAREER Education

## St. Michael's Academy to hold Open House

Are you looking for a school that educates each of its students as an individual? Are you looking for dedicated teachers who want their students to succeed? Are you looking for a school that combines faith with education in order to teach strong moral values, respect and kindness? Are you looking for a school with a structured environment that promotes learning?

Then we have a school for you!

St. Michael's Academy, located at 153 Eddywood Street in the East Forest Park section of Springfield, invites you to an Open House and Curriculum Fair on Sunday, Jan. 28, 2024. There will be a special presentation for prospective students and their families that will begin at noon. The event will include an information session, followed by a panel of students, teachers



and parents for questions and finish with a full school tour. The full school will be open to visitors with teachers in each of the classrooms to accommodate questions.

Attend the Open House and learn what St. Michael's Academy can offer your child. St. Michael's Academy is not just books and papers. The educational process strives to form the entire child academically, spiritually, physically and emotionally. The dedicated teaching faculty truly care about their students and want them to learn, grow and succeed. The final result is a graduate who is well prepared for high school, college and beyond. Each student takes with them a solid foundation for continued growth and achievement, having learned the value of respect, kindness and community service.

Unable to attend the Open House on January 28th? Simply call the Admissions Office at (413) 782-5246, ext. 1208 and schedule an informational session and tour.

St. Michael's Academy is located off of Plumtree Road in Springfield, directly behind Holy Cross Church. The Academy educates students from preschool 3 years old, through grade 8. It is the largest Catholic elementary school in Western Mass and the only Catholic elementary school in Springfield.

## Apex Homecare of Western MA expands programs and staffing to meet growing needs in the elder care arena

Direct Support Professionals at Apex Homecare of Springfield provides home care aides to increase independence for the people with disabilities and seniors, every day.

Caregivers and students pursuing a degree in the healthcare field are encouraged to contact the agency to take advantage of Apex's Direct Support Professional (DSP's) training program. To attract top quality Aides, the agency provides attractive benefits and a career path.

The direct care worker shortage is a global issue, stretching well beyond Massachusetts. In the U.S., 3 out of every 4 agency providers has a wait list for caregiving services. According to the Global Coalition on Aging Report, 70% of Americans who reach age 65 will need long-term services and support. If nothing changes, the report predicts there will be a national shortage of 151,000 care workers by 2030, and a 355,000-caregiver shortfall by 2040.

Pew Research states that one in four Americans live with a disability that interferes with activities of daily living and a recent national survey reports 90% of Americans age 50 and over want to 'age in place'.

To compound the situation, demand in the family caregiving market is increasing as well. Currently, 53 million Americans serve as family caregivers and the number is growing.

An Executive Order from the White House signed in April 2023 offers new



Direct care workers and students pursuing a degree in healthcare are encouraged to contact Apex.

resources to remedy the caregiver shortage crisis to meet increased need. It is the most sweeping set of executive actions to improve care in the nation's history and takes immediate action to enhance job quality for the direct care workforce. Like many of Apex's services, the Executive Order also provides resources for family caregivers that foster emotional well-being and stems the financial and health strain that caregiving has on a family.

### About Apex Homecare

Apex provides a safe, compassionate and friendly atmosphere to enable the client to enjoy and maximize the excellence of life in the comfort of his or her home. If you or a loved one needs services, contact Cheryl Rumley RN at Apexhealth01@verizon.net. If you are seeking a career in the caregiving, disability or healthcare field, visit the Apex career page.



## St. Michael's Academy

### Attention Elementary School Teachers!

Looking for a rewarding teaching experience?

St. Michael's Academy will be hiring teachers for the 2024-2025 academic year.

Interested? Send your resume to [a.dougal@smaspringfield.org](mailto:a.dougal@smaspringfield.org).



Looking for a new school for your child?

Join us on Sunday, January 28th

at noon for an

### Open House

Learn what St. Michael's Academy can offer YOUR child!

St. Michael's Academy, 153 Eddywood St., Springfield, MA  
Check us out at [smaspringfield.org](http://smaspringfield.org)



## Apex Homecare

Turning your family's challenges into solutions

Deliver Excellent Care in a Safe & Supportive Environment

### Apex Homecare has immediate Openings

- |                 |                  |
|-----------------|------------------|
| Agawam          | Monson           |
| Amherst         | North Brookfield |
| Belchertown     | Northampton      |
| Bernardston     | Palmer           |
| Brookfield      | Russell          |
| Chicopee        | South Hadley     |
| East Longmeadow | Southwick        |
| Easthampton     | Springfield      |
| Grafton         | Ware             |
| Granby          | Warren           |
| Granville       | West Brookfield  |
| Hadley          | West Springfield |
| Holyoke         | Westfield        |
| Longmeadow      | Wilbraham        |
| Ludlow          |                  |

Hiring experienced CNA's, HHA's and training new staff looking for a career in Home Care.

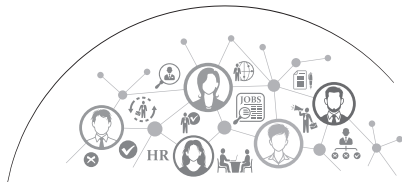
Also, online training in your own home at your own pace.  
<https://mahomecaretraining.org>

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Work Close to Home! Mother's Hours Available!  
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Call 413-746-4663  
or scan the QR code





# CAREER Education

## Come and see what great things are happening at St. Stanislaus

St. Stanislaus School in Chicopee is under the new leadership of Principal Katherine Rorrio, who fully appreciates the Franciscan values and long-standing traditions of the school. Mrs. Rorrio is a graduate of the school, was a teacher at the school for 20 years, and is now Principal.

This year the school's theme is "For it is in giving that we receive," an inspirational quote from St. Francis about the value of giving back. Students are focusing on a different Corporal Work of Mercy each month. Some of the Corporal Works of

Mercy that have been covered are – Feeding the Hungry and Working for Peace. The most recent Work of Mercy was Shelter the Homeless. Students and families collected 100 blankets, 50 hats, coats, and many undergarments that were donated to a local homeless shelter to help those in the community. Service projects are done throughout the year to help teach students the value of giving back.

The school will be holding an Open House on Sunday, Jan. 21 from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. (no appointment needed).

If you would like to schedule a private tour for another time, please call the school to schedule an appointment at (413) 592-5135.

St. Stanislaus School is a Roman Catholic, Franciscan, co-educational Pre-K through 8th grade school. Students are assisted in developing their potential spiritually, physically, and socially within a safe and diverse community. A foundation of academic excellence is created to prepare students to become contributing members of a global society. The school

has a welcoming Franciscan environment, modern air-conditioned facility, strong core curriculum, enrichment classes, certified faculty, full-day preschool (PreK3 and 4) and Kindergarten, free breakfast and hot lunch, before & after school program, and one to one use and integration of iPads and Chromebooks into curriculum. Financial Aid is available. Interested students are invited to "spend a day with us". To learn more please visit [www.saintstansschool.org](http://www.saintstansschool.org).  
We can't wait to meet you!

### ST. STANISLAUS SCHOOL

SERVANT LEADERS FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

**OPEN HOUSE**  
SUNDAY, JAN. 21, 2024  
11AM-1PM

- Welcoming Franciscan environment
- Strong core curriculum
- Enrichment classes
- Certified faculty
- Full day Preschool & Kindergarten
- Free breakfast and hot lunch
- Before & After school program
- One to one use and integration of iPads & Chromebooks into curriculum

PREK - 8TH GRADE SCHOOL

PHYSICAL, SPIRITUAL, AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

To learn more →

Call us for more information and to schedule a tour. We welcome the opportunity for you to experience St. Stanislaus School! Interested students are invited to "spend a day with us."

**Reader RAVES 2023**  
Best Private School

[www.saintstansschool.org](http://www.saintstansschool.org)  
534 Front Street, Chicopee, MA 01013  
413-592-5135

## Explore Your Passions. Be a Leader. Choose MacDuffie.

### OPEN HOUSES

Saturday, February 3, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.  
Saturday, April 6, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

The MacDuffie School is a special place, and it all begins with our mission:  
*To foster in all students the intellectual habits of mind, high ethical standards, and respect for diversity required for becoming effective individuals in their personal and work lives, and moral and responsible participants in the world beyond.*

*There's no better way to get a feel for The MacDuffie School than spending time with us!*

Please register for our Open House at [www.macduffie.org](http://www.macduffie.org) or contact the Admissions Office at (413) 255-0000 to reserve your spot.

**Come Be A Part Of Our Community!**

66 School Street  
Granby, Massachusetts

[www.MacDuffie.org](http://www.MacDuffie.org)

For Students  
in Grades 6 through 12

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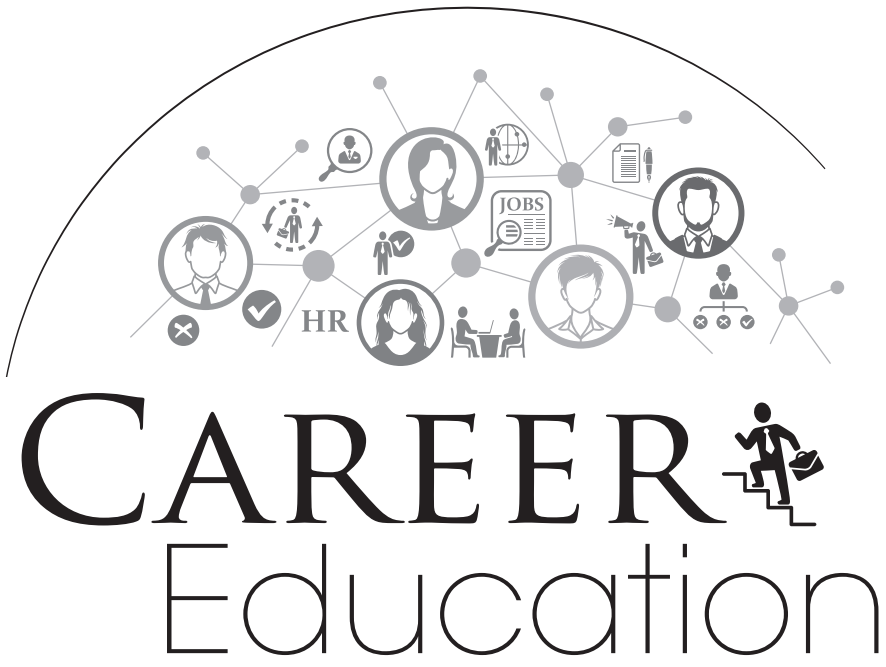
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**KIRSY SEGARRA -**  
[KSEGARRA@GANDARACENTER.ORG](mailto:KSEGARRA@GANDARACENTER.ORG)

↓ ↓ ↓

**LUIS COLON -**  
[LCOLON@GANDARACENTER.ORG](mailto:LCOLON@GANDARACENTER.ORG)



# CAREER Education

## Explore the difference at St. Joan of Arc School

Explore the difference at St. Joan of Arc School in Chicopee! Lively Letters and OSMO Tangible Play programs have been added to our PreK and Kindergarten programs. Lexia, a phonics instruction that gives students independent practice in basic reading skills, is now offered to Kindergarten through Grade 8 students. And a Robotics Curriculum is coming soon for our 8th graders.

The school will be holding an Open House on Saturday, Jan. 27 from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. (no appointment needed). Appointment only tours for families will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 30 and Thursday, Feb. 1 from 3 p.m. – 7 p.m. Please call Chris or Janine in the Business Office at 536-6038 for registration information or to make

an appointment.

St. Joan of Arc is a welcoming, safe and secure school community providing social, physical, spiritual & intellectual wellness for students in Pre-K 3 to Grade 8. SJA has innovative offerings that include affordable tuition and extended care, free breakfast and lunch, extracurricular programs to include Chess, Book and Lego Clubs, as well as a Performing Arts Club. Computer fundamentals with intro to computer science, music, library, and Duolingo language classes are also offered. Located at 587 Grattan St., Chicopee offers easy access to I391 & I90. Financial aid and tuition assistance is available. To learn more visit [www.sjachicopee.org](http://www.sjachicopee.org).

We look forward to meeting you!

**St. Joan of Arc School ~ Pre-K to Grade 8**  
 587 Grattan Street, Chicopee ~ 533-1475 ~ [sjachicopee.org](http://sjachicopee.org)  
*Learning Rooted in Christian Values*

### OPEN HOUSE

**Saturday, January 27th 9am-12 noon**  
*No Appointment Needed*

**January 30th & February 1st 3pm-7pm**  
*By Appointment Only*



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# CAREER Education

## Hampden Charter School of Science marks 14 years of educational excellence

Hampden Charter School of Science (HCSS) is a top-ranking free college-preparatory public school founded in 2009 and serving families with students in grades 6th-12th at two campuses in Western Massachusetts: HCSS-East (Chicopee Campus) and HCSS-West (West Springfield Campus).

HCSS proudly provides seven years of unparalleled college preparatory education for grades 6-12 students, paving the way for college admissions and a wealth of scholarship opportunities. College and Career Readiness at HCSS is a tailored process forging the best possible alignment between each distinctively talented student and the most suitable college or university for them. Students collaborate closely with their counselors to delve into their manifold talents and interests, set aspirations based on these insights, and identify colleges that align with their ambitions.

• College Board AP Capstone Diploma Program: A prestigious program that enhances research, analysis, and presentation skills.

• Focused Attention in Small Classes: With an average class size of fewer than 20 students, each individual receives the attention they deserve.

• University Partnerships and Dual Enrollment: Engage in university outreach programs that offer dual enrollment opportunities, bridging the gap between high school and college.



• Enhanced College-Prep Curriculum: HCSS's amplified curriculum prepares students comprehensively for higher education.

• Early SAT and PSAT Preparation: To build a strong foundation, Rigorous SAT and PSAT training starting in 8th grade.

• Comprehensive College and Career Guidance: A thorough guidance program that starts as early as 6th grade, equipping students for future academic and career choices.

• Experiential College Campus Visits: Hands-on learning through college campus tours and informative sessions, providing real-world college experience.

• Community-Driven Guest Speakers and Career Workshops: Gain insights from guest speakers and partake in career workshops led by community professionals.

• Consistently High College Acceptance Rates: An impressive average college acceptance rate of 95% since 2014.

• Substantial Scholarship Achievements: More than \$51M in scholarships raised since 2014.

**HCSS Curriculum Highlights:**  
• Project-Based Instruction and Con-

textual Learning: Engage in real-world problems and hands-on projects that bring learning to life.

• Developmentally Appropriate and Data-Driven Instruction: Personalized teaching strategies delivered by dedicated and highly qualified educators.

• High-Level Academic Discussions: Opportunities to improve critical listening, thinking, and analysis skills across all subjects.

• Advanced Placement (AP) Opportunities: Access 14 AP courses starting in 9th grade to challenge and elevate academic capabilities.

• Early Honors Courses: Availability of honors courses beginning in 7th grade for an academically accelerated path.

• Inquiry-Driven Curriculum: A focus on fostering inquiry, discovery, innovation, and collaboration in learning.

• Comprehensive Support Services: SPED and ELL services ensure that 100% of at-risk students meet high school MCAS graduation requirements.

• Extensive Tutoring Programs: Free in-school, after-school, and Saturday Academy tutoring, in addition to 24/7 online support in all subjects.

• Project Lead The Way (PLTW): A new addition fostering STEM skills through hands-on projects and real-world challenges, preparing students for future innovation and leadership.

Apply by March 3, 2024, for grades 6th-10th at [www.hampdencharter.org](http://www.hampdencharter.org).

## HAMPDEN CHARTER SCHOOL OF SCIENCE

**ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR GRADE 6-10**

### Why Hampden Charter School of Science?

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- FREE TRANSPORTATION
- COLLEGE-PREP EDUCATION
- TECHNOLOGY IN CLASSROOM
- EXCELLENCE IN ACADEMICS
- ATHLETICS
- ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES and CLUBS
- 100% COLLEGE ACCEPTANCE

### WELCOME SATURDAYS

**11:00 AM - 1:00PM**

January 20th  
February 3rd  
February 10th  
March 2nd

**VISIT: [WWW.HAMPDENCHARTER.ORG](http://WWW.HAMPDENCHARTER.ORG)**

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### TOWN OF WILBRAHAM

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Looking for a reliable P/T Administrative Clerk for our Assessor's Office. For application and more information please visit [www.wilbraham-ma.gov](http://www.wilbraham-ma.gov). Open until filled. EOE

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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](http://www.townofpalmer.com/jobs). Qualified and interested applicants should submit their cover letter and resume to Robert Reed [rreed@townofpalmer.com](mailto:rreed@townofpalmer.com).

### TOWN OF WILBRAHAM

#### POLICE OFFICER

For application and more information please visit [www.wilbraham-ma.gov](http://www.wilbraham-ma.gov). Review of applications begins immediately. Open until filled. EOE

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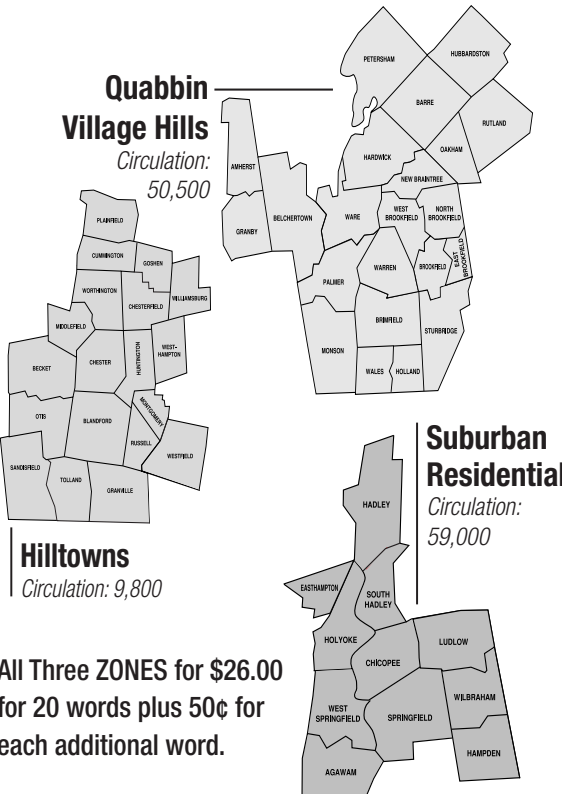
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# HILLTOWN HIKING ADVENTURES



Participants in the New Year's Day hike in Chester Blandford State Forest take photos of the waterfall on Sanderson Brook Falls Trail.



Shown are the Hilltown Hikers Directors at the falls. They are Liz Massa, Karen McTaggart, Adam Dion, Russ LaPierre, Stephanie Brown, Greg Deily and their canine companions.



Cybil got all dressed up for the New Year's Day hike.

## First Day Hike of New Year

CHESTER – First Day Hike at Chester Blandford State Forest in Chester was held on Monday, Jan. 1 to celebrate a long standing tradition of starting the new year with outdoor recreation.

Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers co-sponsored this event with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation bringing together folks from all of the surrounding states to Western Massachusetts for a morning enjoying the beautiful Sanderson Brook Falls trail and the 60 foot waterfall. Interpretive Coordinator, Alec Gillman and DCR Ranger Tom Skala, joined the group. This 2024 hike was a record breaking 33rd annual First Day Hike in Massachusetts with more than 3,600 people welcoming in 2024 by hiking 6,200 miles in 13 of the state parks.

DCR Commissioner Brian Arrigo said, "Former Blue Hills Park Supervisor Patrick Flynn created the program in 1992 with the hope of bringing more people in to our beautiful state parks during the winter season. Pat worked as a seasonal interpreter in the Ohio state parks in the 1970s and he fondly remembered the park system's February guided hikes and thought that free guided hikes and soup could lure families into the Blue Hills in the colder weather." "And he was right, 400 people

gathered in the Blue Hills on Jan. 1, 1992, to kick off the new year in the fresh air. The hikes went statewide in 2008, and nationwide in 2012 with the help of America's State Parks," said Arrigo.

For those, who missed this year's hike, there is always 2025.

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DCR Ranger Tom Skala takes time out from photographing the falls to get in the picture. Submitted photos

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