# 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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**HILLTOWNS** 



Gorge taken on Jan. 11.



The "ice beards" are along Route 112 in Knightville.

Turley photos by Kathryn Koegel

#### By Kathryn Koegel Correspondent

With temperatures hovering in the 20s in the day and positively unspeakable at night, it was time to examine ice in the Hilltowns on a snowy January Saturday.

This correspondent checked out Littleville Lake. It was still not solid enough to skate or ice fish on, but the ice was moaning and cracking, leaving sheets of clear glass on the shore.

Along Rte 112 north of Huntington in Knightville, the Wild & Scenic Westfield River has streams that cascade off the hills to join up with the East Branch. It was cold enough that "ice beards" and stalactites and stalagmites had formed.

In Chesterfield it was snowing softly with the snow settling on ice flows that meandered down the

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#### **CHESTER**

# Voters pass all articles at **Special Town** Meeting

By Wendy Long Correspondent

A Special Town Meeting held Monday, Jan. 6, saw voters unanimously pass all eight warrant articles, spend over \$180,000 and complete all business within an efficient fifteen minute meeting.

With 22 attending, the town easily met its required quorum of ten voters. Select Board Chairman John Baldasaro, Vice Chair Andy Sutton and Clerk Craig Gauthier were present, as were Town Clerk Terry Donovan and Town Administrator Don Humason.

With the town moderator unavailable, Finance Committee Chair Brian Forgue stepped in and opened the meeting with the pledge of allegiance.

Article 1 called for the first year's payment of \$71,730.60 on a lease-toown new police cruiser to come from the Police Cruiser Revolving Expenses Account. Baldassaro reminded voters that they had not seen a warrant article for a new cruiser for a dozen years or so, because a revolving account had

**MEETING**, page 6

# **RUSSELL**

# Russel residents look ahead to bridge repair and mill sites

edition.

By Kathryn Koegel Correspondent

The biggest challenge to demolish the burnt wreckage may be the size of the project and the issue of the bridges.

All collapsed concrete, steel beams and the wreckage would have to be transported out via small trucks across the temporary one-lane bridge.

Donald Voudren, Jr, owner of collapsed Mill #1, who now has a demoli-

appeared in the Jan. 16 lem in a select board meeting and determine what cleanup held in Russell on Thursday, Dec 12. "In order for me to redevelop Mill #1, you have to upgrade the water and sewer," he said. "The lines are old and come across the [closed] bridge."

Oksana Keeney notes that in the absence of a viable bridge for removal, she hopes that they would be able to transport some of the rubble via the freight train line that runs just behind mill #2. "We are hoping to use any means we can," says Keeney regarding demolition fund-

Note: This is part two tion permit from Mass DEP, ing. "The next step is to get of a two part series. Part acknowledged the same probable an LSP certificate by the state will entail." While they hope grants may be available to help with the cost, "we do not really know much about grants."

The Keeneys have spent over \$37,000 for fencing around the site, but still have challenges with trespassers. The site is simply too big and complex to entirely block off.

They installed security cameras and regularly have to call the police to either warn or arrest trespassers. "There

REPAIR, page 8



The Ellinger family live on Valley View Avenue with the wreckage of Mill #2 at the end of their street. Turley photo by Kathryn Koegel



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# HILLTOWNS



The race started as a bar bet at the Whippernon Country Club in Russell which has since been demolished.

Submitted photos



Dick Langill, who was in one of these boats at this, the first race in 1954, has been "found" and will be at the Legends of the Westfield River Race event Thursday, April 3.



The legendary racing partnership of Jurgen Igel and Jeff DeFeo started in 1978.

# Westfield River racer from first race in 1954 'found'

As part of the 70th running of the country's oldest whitewater race, the Westfield River Wildwater Races has launched an initiative to capture and preserve the memories of the racers.

Spearheaded by Country Journal correspondent and race managing director, Kathryn Koegel, the race committee is seeking to interview people who raced, volunteered or spectated over the past 70

"When we kicked off the race organizing for the year, my wish was to find and interview people who were there in 1954," says Kathryn Koegel. "This race started as a bar bet at the Whippernon Golf Course (now gone) and we have photos of the nine boats and 18 people who braved that first race. Who were they? What were they thinking getting into that icy, fast water?"

"I quickly did the math and worried that too many of these people had passed," she continues. "Using Facebook and emailing all the racers I have in a database from the last three years, we struck gold. Within one week I had set up an interview with Richard Langill, who now lives in Maryland. He raced in 1954 when he was 21. He is gathering images and thoughts and will sit down with me for a recorded interview."

Langill is also planning to attend an event the races are calling "Legends of the Westfield River Races" which will be held on Thursday, April 3 in Stanton Hall in Huntington. Koegel will present images from the race archives before interviewing past and present racers live about their experiences.

Jeff DeFeo, who will be running his 49th race and also organized the race for 30 years, will be one of those interviewed. Bill McVeigh, who attended the first race as a five year old and subsequently raced himself for years, will also be there.

Koegel is asking anyone who raced, spectated or volunteered to answer a brief survey to email wrwraces@gmail.com to receive a copy. "The survey helps everyone get their dates straight and gives me

wonderful stories to put in a feature on social media we are calling 'Racer of the Day.' For the people with big stories I call them and set up an oral history interview that is recorded for posterity."

"It's really important that people understand that we want contemporary stories as well and not just those of racers," says Koegel. "We are also telling the histories of the many people like Nancy Smith, Sue Maxwell, Susan DeFeo and Deb Igel who spent untold hours creating the t shirts, dealing with registration forms and soliciting the sponsorships that kept this race alive for 70 years. You do not have to have gotten in a boat to be a legend in our book," says Koegel.

# Job Connection

# HELPING YOU FIND HELP

# JOB POSTING – OPERATOR/LABORER **Town of Montgomery**

The Montgomery Highway Department is currently hiring for an Operator/ Laborer Position. The position works under the supervision of the Highway Superintendent, an operator/ laborer will perform a broad range of manual work and operate motorized equipment in support of construction, maintenance, and repair operations for the Department. Candidate must have or obtain all required licenses within (1) one year of start date (see the full job description for required skills/experience/training). Existing CDL and hoisting licenses preferred. Must pass a MADOT physical. Must also provide a current copy of your driving record from the Registry of Motor Vehicles to be considered for this position. The pay rate is \$22.00 to \$26.50 per hour. Paid health and dental insurance, vacation time, a retirement plan and 11 paid holidays. Please email townhall@ montgomeryma.gov to receive a current job description and employment application. This position will remain open until filled. The town of Montgomery is an equal opportunity employer.

These are some of the ice tongs in the Bisbee Mill Museum in Williamsburg.

Turley photo by Kathryn Koegel

Bisbee's ancestor came Massachusetts in 1634. He shows off the pond where ice was cut for centuries and proudly lives above the pond.

WINTER

from page 1

river. At the Chesterfield Gorge, the river looked peaceful and white, which belied the raging water beneath.

Next stop was the Bisbee Mill Museum in what was once a place with its own post office, rightly named "Bisbee." Dan Bisbee talked about commercial ice making. A direct descendent of the first American Bisbee who arrived from England in 1634, he was eager to talk about the collection of machinery that makes up the museum.

A portion of the building dates to the 1820s and it is a marvel of early industrial history. We often speak of the Industrial Revolution and the factories and mills that lined the Westfield River from Russell to Chester, but up north in Chesterfield an earlier form of industry is on display. The building started as a gristmill and the one on display here is fully functional with a grain hopper and shoot from the top floor descending to the main floor with its massive stone wheel. The cogs that turn the device are hand made from laminated wood. It was here that in 1919 a Westfield buggy whip manufacturer had placed an order for 50,000 whip butts, the handles for the braided leather, only to have the order cancelled due to the introduction of the Model T.

Trying not to get distracted by the wealth of interesting stuff, the town hearse in use from 1850 along with a patented portable embalming table from 1886, the cold, unheated building shortened the visit.

Bisbee showed us the ice saw used

to cut ice from the nearby shallow pond built primarily for this purpose. "The ice house used to be behind my family house up where the roads meet," he says. Ice was cut by hand, piled onto a sledge and transported by horse just up the road where it was stored in an intothe-ground bunker where it would last into the summer.

The village was electrified in 1929 which was not the end of the ice cutting. Up through the 1930s, over 200 blocks of ice were cut to keep milk cool at the dairy on the farm across from the mill.

According to the museum's official history: "A large horse drawn ice saw was used to cut a grid in the ice about 100 feet square. The grid was laid out in 12×20 inch blocks. The horse drawn ice saw was used to cut through the top 10 inches of the ice so that the horses could still walk in the ice." A hand saw was then used to complete the cut and pikes were used to move the blocks up a ramp. All of this would take place on a January day when the ice was at least a foot thick.

With our fingers about to succumb to the cold, we dashed off to the ice pond across from the mill. It was frozen completely solid. Had it not been for the temperature, we would have headed back to get the ice saw off the wall of the Bisbee Mill Museum and given it a go.

The Bisbee Mill Museum of the early industrial history of the Hilltowns will be open on select days this summer. Watch their Facebook page for open days and hours.

# Conservation Agent

# TOWN OF BLANDFORD

The Town of Blandford is seeking candidates for a part-time Conservation Agent. Candidates must have at least one year of experience in a similar role. The compensation for this 5-10 hour-a-week position is \$23.00-25.00 an hour.

A full job description with application guidelines can be found at

www.townofblandford.com/job-openings/

Closing date for all applications is Friday, January 31, 2025 by 12 noon. Open until filled. EEO/AAE

# **OTIS**

# Otis Transfer Station lists holiday hours

OTIS - The Transfer Station will be closed on Monday, Jan. 20 for the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.

The Transfer Station will be open on Tuesday, Jan. 21 from 7 a.m.-3 p.m.



# Sheryl Faye plays Eleanor Roosevelt on Zoom

OTIS - The Otis Historical ical societies, schools, senior Commission and Otis Preservation Trust will host the third Notice Otis cultural event of the 2024-25 year, featuring actress Sheryl Faye as Eleanor Roosevelt, performing via Zoom, on Thursday, Feb. 6 at 7 p.m.

A discussion about Eleanor Roosevelt's tie to Otis will follow the performance. Admission is free but pre-registration is required.

Since 2003, Sheryl Faye has masterfully brought to life important historical women, children and adults across the United States. In her one-woman shows, she immerses the audience in a multimedia learning experience that captivates viewers and sparks their interest to explore more.

Sheryl Faye's shows of historical-themed events bring history alive for children and adults alike. She has performed for theaters, libraries, historcenters and various other organizations. Her live historical performances are entertaining and educational, and they also help audiences truly understand the profound positive impact these women have made in history.

Faye's performance of Eleanor Roosevelt illustrates how the longest-serving First Lady became one of the top

ten most admired people of the 20th century. Roosevelt advocated for expanded roles for women in the workplace, the civil rights of African Americans and Asian Americans and the rights of World War II refugees. She became one of the first delegates to The United Nations.

Otis Preservation Trust works with the Otis Historical Commission to organize and preserve the history and heritage

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of Otis, MA for future generations by supporting efforts to preserve, restore, repurpose and educate about buildings, monuments, lands and memorabilia of Otis. OPT is a not-for-profit (501c3) organization operated for fundraising and educational purposes. This program is supported in part by a grant from the Otis Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported

by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, an agency of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

To register to attend this Zoom only event or for more information, people my visit ww.otispreservationtrust.com or www.townofotisma.com. There is no charge to attend this event but pre-registration is required. Donations are wel-

# **BECKET**

# MassDOT announces I-90 painting

BECKET – The Massachusetts Department of Transportation announces bridge painting operations on I-90 eastbound and westbound at mile marker 18.4.

The work will take place now through Friday, Jan. 17 from 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m. each day. Drivers traveling through these areas should expect delays, reduce speed, and use caution. Appropriate signage and messaging will be in place to guide drivers through the work areas. All scheduled work is weather dependent and subject to change without notice.

For more information on traffic conditions, travelers are encouraged to dial 511 and select a route to hear real-time conditions, visit www. mass511.com for real-time traffic and incident advisory information or follow @MassDOT on X, formerly known as Twitter, to receive regular updates on road and traffic conditions.

# **CUMMINGTON**

# Friday Night Cafe happens Jan. 24

HUNTINGTON

Council on Aging to host 'Sweet Time

HUNTINGTON - The Huntington cake and other treats will be served. This

community.

Valentine's Day Treats and Games'

CUMMINGTON – Martha Bourne is a multi-instrumentalist, film composer and singer-songwriter, who will be performing Friday, Jan. 24 from 7-9 p.m. at the Village Church, in downtown Cummington.

She teaches film scoring classes at Berklee once a week but don't hold that against her because her true love is songwriting. Rickie Lee Jones, Randy Newman, Joni Mitchell, Townes Van Zandt and Jeff Buckley are just a few of her songwriting heroes. She'll be playing one solo set and one with Dave Christopolis on bass and Jason Smith on drums.

The event is free; donations are appreciated. Snacks are provided and

Council on Aging will be hosting "Sweet

Time Valentine's Day Treats and Games"

on Tuesday, Feb. 11 at 1 p.m. at Stanton

Board games will be played and

The show will take place in the intimate Vestry space of the church located in the heart of the Cummington Cultural Distric. Masks are welcome

is sponsored by the friendly folks at the Village Church, who believe music can be a powerful force for building community.

Friday Night Cafe receives promotional support from the Cummington Cultural District and is supported in part by grants from the Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Hinsdale-Peru, Plainfield, Williamsburg, Windsor and Worthington Cultural Councils, local agencies, which are supported by the people should bring their own drinks. Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

event is free and open to residents of any

call Crystal Wright-Partyka at 413-685-

For more information, people may

# and encouraged. Once again, the Friday Night Cafe

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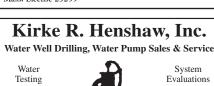
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# **OPINION**

# **GUEST COLUMN**



# Should Social Security money be invested in the Stock Market

#### **Dear Rusty**

For most folks collecting Social Security, you get back what you put in within 3-5 years, so for those that scream - "SS is not an entitlement, it is my money"- that is not entirely accurate beyond 3-5 years. For me personally 4.4 years is the number. But had I been able to invest that money over the 43 years I worked at a modest 6% interest, I expect the amount would have been a lot more. And of course, the stock market averaged 9.5% over that time. Perhaps Social Security should invest in the stock market instead of U.S. Government treasury bonds.

#### **SignedInterested Observer**

#### **Dear Observer**

You bring up a point we frequently hear that if, instead of paying into Social Security, I had invested the same money in the stock market I would have gotten more.

That, of course, might be the case if you had the unwavering discipline to religiously invest the equivalent amount in the market, avoiding the temptation to use that investment for any other reason. And life is full of good reasons, financial emergencies, for example or the simple temptation to buy something desperately needed, or just occasionally skipping a month to pay bills. Also, the stock market is notoriously volatile, which can create substantial angst for investors, who are faint of heart.

The fact is that Social Security provides guaranteed financial growth from the age of eligibility normally 62, up to age 70 when the maximum benefit is attained. Benefits claimed at one's full retirement age are about 24% - 32% more than if taken at age 62 depending on Full Retirement Age and benefits taken at age 70 are about 75% more than benefits taken at age 62. And that is guaranteed growth for those with the patience to wait longer to claim.

You may recall that the idea of investing Social Security reserves in the stock market has been floated a few times in previous years, but accompanying risks made Congress essentially unwilling to even entertain the idea. It has always been a political "hot potato" and those who suggest it are usually castigated for wanting to "give SS money to Wall Street," so I expect it is unlikely to happen.

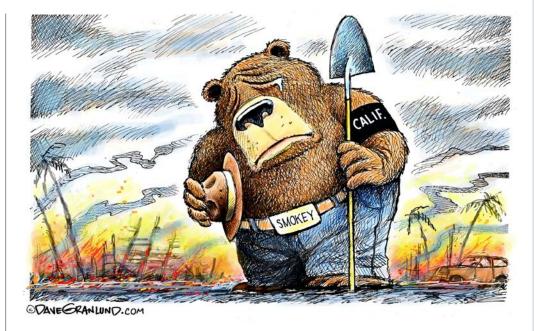
Guess we'll need to be satisfied with

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# Corrections policy

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

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



# LETTER TO THE EDITOR

# Social Security is important

Your regular columns on Social Security are very helpful to us seniors for whom SS is our principle income.

Still your paper never addresses the threats to this vital program. Started during the depression by Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Francis Perkins, the program has come under attack by what I would call, woke right wing thinking.

Led by the super rich, social programs are considered parasitic and bad for our work ethic. The unstated message is loud and clear, "I don't need government help, why do you?"

Even without the prejudice of the new federal administration, the future of SS is threatened. Sometime in the next decade SS will face insolvency. We old folks are drawing more than young workers are contributing. Sort of like a Ponzi, which has run its course.

Two solutions are obvious.

Cut our benefits. The average monthly benefit is around \$1,900, making for stressful budgets for those without pensions etc. Clearly there is no room for cuts to these funds.

The other solution would be to raise the cut off of high incomes beyond, which no contributions are required. The current cut off is around \$170,000. This is clearly an additional tax on our more wealthy population, but it puts into practice the social in Social Security.

Which of these two solutions would be best for your average Hilltown reader?

Richard Mansfield Worthington

# **GUEST COLUMN**

# Supplemental heat, light aid seed starting



ast week we looked at the supplies needed to start seeds indoors. This week we will dive deeper.

If you have never tried indoor seed starting, it is a worthwhile endeavor for sure. You can grow exactly what you want instead of being defendant on what lines the shelves of local nurseries each May.

Furthermore, there is great satisfaction in having a part of the "miracle." No matter how many times I have witnessed the germination process, it still amazed me that a tiny seed has what it takes within to grow into a plant. All that is needed is heat, moisture and light.

Almost all bedding plants, as well as some vegetables and herbs need warmth to germinate. We provide bottom heat through the use of heating cables or mats set at temperatures between 70-75 degrees.

This poses the question of whether or not seeds will germinate at regular household temperatures of close to seventy degrees. Probably, but not to their fullest potential since ideal temperature is measured not by air temps but by the temperature of the growing medium.

A room set at 70 degrees is likely to have temperatures within the germinating flat five to 10 degrees cooler, due to evaporation at its surface. Invest in a heat mat – if used for a few weeks each season it will likely last a decade or two.

There are many types available to suit your own specific growing needs, even mini mats that are about the size of a standard flat. Perfect if all you are growing indoors are a pack or two of peppers and tomatoes!

Supplemental lighting comes into play at the instant your seeds have sprouted. Bottom heat is not necessary henceforth (it is even discouraged!).

Seedlings are removed from heat and placed within 3-6 inches of the light source. For short-term use, a shop light affixed with two cool fluorescent bulbs has worked fine for me, although one cool and one warm

**GARDEN**, page 6

# Election letters to the editor welcome

The Country Journal welcomes readers to participate in this year's election campaigns by writing letters to the editor for publication on these pages. Letters of up to 250 words from local residents endorsing candidates on the ballot or discussing campaign issues should be sent to The Country Journal, care of Turley Publications, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, faxed to 413-289-1977 or emailed to country-journal@turley.com. Please include a daytime telephone number for verification purposes (it will not be printed). Letters must be received by noon Monday to be considered for that

Friday's newspaper. No attack letters will be printed. No letters written by candidates supporting their own candidacy will be printed. If the volume of letters received is larger than the space available in the newspaper, or if the letters become repetitive, the newspaper reserves the right to print a representative sample. No endorsement letters will be printed in the last edition before the election. For more information, call 413-283-8393.

## Campaign news

As part of its election coverage, the news-

paper plans to print stories about contested races for Congress, state Senate, state House, district attorney and Governor's Council during the weeks leading up to the election, as well as a question-and-answer voters guide. In order to ensure fairness to all candidates, no political press releases will be printed, nor will reporters cover political rallies or fundraisers

Candidates who wish to further publicize their candidacy, beliefs and events may contact advertising, 413-283-8393 about paid advertising in The Country Journal.

# EDITORIAL POLICY

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

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



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# **OPINION**

# **GUEST COLUMN**

# HILLTOWN HISTORY

# Hilltown history woodpiles: Stacking wood the right way is an art

By Deborah Daniels
Correspondents

Boy have we ever needed a full woodpile for the fireplace or wood stove this winter with the wind is finding and exploring every nook and cranny with frosted fingers.

Woe to any skin exposed to its whipping biting bitterness. The weathermen are all about alerting us to the wind chill factor outside. Wind chill is the rate of heat loss from exposed skin caused by wind and cold. As the wind increases it draws heat from the body lowering the skin temperature and eventually lowering the internal body temperature. The wind makes it feel much colder than the thermometer measurement and frostbite is a very real threat the longer you stay outside.

To be clear the air temperature has to be below freezing (32 F) for frostbite to develop. The National Weather Service publishes a wind chill chart that tells the time it takes to develop frostbite in cold and windy conditions. People should put that chart in their hiking gear because it is necessary viewing.

Since none of us are interested in freezing this winter, we turn to our woodpile to fuel the fireplace. Chopping wood and stacking it is one sure fire way to warm up. But you can forget about burning any wood you chop up now.

Wood for the fire needs to be dry or seasoned. Burning wet wood produces more smoke, less heat and causes creosote, a sticky tar deposit to build up in chimneys. This can become a fire hazard. Leave the wet wood outside and take a drive to view the creative ways wood can be stacked.

Consider woodpile viewing a roadside attraction. Norwegians have a saying that wood will dry best if there is space for a mouse to race through the wood pile. That is key to drying your wood for use in the wood stove or fireplace, having it stacked where there is good exposure to air flow. The do's and don'ts of woodpile building also require that you never cover the sides of the woodpile with a



Fresh cut wood is in a pile, seasoned (gray) wood is in a pile and a stacked wood pile in Westhampton.

tarp because it traps moisture causing mold and rot in the wood.

Raise the woodpile off the ground to stop moisture from being absorbed from the ground. It is a good idea to use a clean wooden pallet to stack the wood on because it allows ventilation beneath the stack. Stack uniform pieces of cut wood, no gnarly or twisted logs allowed. Expose the chopped sides of the wood to air and face the bark side into the center of the wood pile.

It can be a challenge to locate the woodpile where it will get plenty of wind and sunlight and not so close to your home bringing the rodents and insects, who will inhabit the woodpile, into your home. Distance to the home is important so it it not too far of the brave dash to the woodpile in subzero weather to fill the wood carrier and get back to the house before your eyebrows are dangling with icides.

Oh yes, a lot of thought must go into the creation of a woodpile. A brief word about your wood selection is in order. One can not put too much emphasis on using dry seasoned wood. It takes six months to a year of drying the wood outside to achieve this. Dry wood should



Cameron Hollowell chops an ash tree into firewood in Huntington.

Turley photos by Deborah Daniels

sound hollow when knocked together, not dull as wet or green wood will sound.

Hardwoods such as oak, ash, hickory, maple, birch and cherry are best for burning. There is less resin in these hardwoods, so less creosote is created to muck up your chimney. Softwood trees such as pines, firs and cypress trees burn fast and make a lot of smoke that can coat your chimney with soot. Soot is lamp black or carbon black a powdery byproduct of burning wood. Creosote is tar, a waxy material produced by burning wood. Cellulose is the main component of creosote. Both will clog up your chimney and stove pipe, coating them with a black residue that is flammable.

Chimney fires are worrisome because they can spread to the walls behind your chimney. Chimney sweeps quote an 1/8th of an inch of black coating inside your wood stove pipe or chimney poses a serious risk of fire. Yearly inspection and cleaning is recommended. Oh and those bundles of wood sold at gas stations as firewood should state they are kiln dried and ready to burn.

Alaska has an annual woodpile contest that judges woodpiles on stacking creativity, quantity of wood stacked, stor-



A round woodpile in Westhampton with the bark side of the cut wood facing outside is a roadside attraction.



This wood pile by Gary Galbraith in Kenai Peninsula, Alaska won first place in woodpile contest. Submitted photo

age and accessibility, awarding points in each category. That would be a definite roadside attraction. Stay inside and keep the home fires burning and get a fire extinguisher.



Brimfield resident sent me a list of birds on Jan. 2 he saw in his yard. On the list was a Carolina wren. He said in the email, "[The Carolina wren was] foraging in the leaves under shrubs and has been seen at the feeders more frequently recently."

The Carolina wren is six inches long and has brown feathers above with buff below. It has a distinct white eyebrow and white barring in the tail area. It often holds its tail in an upward position.

The female lays four to eight creamy or pink white eggs with brown marks in a nest of mosses, twigs, rootlets, bark and sometimes snakeskins lined with finer materials. They nest in tree holes and many other locations; they will use birdhouses.

The Carolina wren expanded its range into the northeast especially with the milder winters. There song is a loud, repeated "tea kettle, tea kettle, tea kettle." They inhabit forest understory, vines and woodlands in rural or suburban areas.

### Other Brimfield birds

Other birds seen by the Brimfield resident beside the Carolina wren were



Carolina wren

four mourning doves, 20 American robins, 12 dark eyed juncos, one white-throated sparrow and two Northern cardinals. He said of the robins, "I first noticed one bird on the ground in the yard and 3 in a crab apple tree eating fruit. More flew into the tree then four on the ground foraging. More perched in a nearby tree." He also said, "We have ten crab apple trees in the yard and several of them have small fruit that is held on the tree into the winter."

### Flocks of robins

In my travels last week, I saw flocks of robins on three occasions, twice in Barre and once in Oakham. The Oakham flock flew across the road and landed on the ground and in trees on the opposite side. The Brimfield resident reported his wife saw a flock of robins in the center of Brimfield eating crab apples near the post office twice in recent days.

# **Christmas Bird Count**

The Brimfield couple participated



Robin

in the annual Christmas Bird Count in Ludlow. He said, "We had 31 species in Ludlow, lots fewer birds at the reservoir because there was about 90% ice coverage [Saturday] compared to 10% Friday."

### Suet cakes

I put out my suet feeder last month. I waited long enough because I did not have a bear either break or run off with the feeder. The birds are busy eating suet especially during this cold weather.

#### New Hampshire Loon Preservation Committee

The New Hampshire Loon Preservation Committee reported in 2024 they surveyed 498 occupied or potential loon territories on 327 lakes to assess presence/absence and breeding success of loons and the success of LPC's management to help them. They documented



Loon

the presence of 359 loon pairs and 126 unpaired adult loons. They also floated a record 156 nest rafts to help loon pairs displaced from their traditional nest sites by shoreline development, recreational lake use and water level fluctuations. They also installed signs and rope lines at 135 nesting loon pair locations.

They banded 57 loons and rescued 38 loons in distress and a result of illness or injury. The Loon Preservation Committee continued to expand their lead tackle buyback program. Ingestion of lost lead tackle by fisherman remained the cause of lead poisoning in the loon population. There were six documented deaths due to lead poisoning, two loon deaths from trauma due to boat strikes and two loon deaths due to entanglement in fishing gear in 2024.

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 or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.

# **OPINION**

# **GUEST COLUMN**

# Opinion piece leads to discussion of reopening access along Route 20

By Kathryn Koegel Guest Columnist

In the New Year's edition of the Country Journal, I wrote about my love for the Wild & Scenic River and my belief that reopening access to it along the Rte 20 corridor could be the lynchpin of the economic revival that the Hilltowns need.

In response to that piece, Jeff DeFeo of Montgomery said: "As a 49 year-participant in the Westfield River Wildwater Races (and a 30 year organizer) I took it for granted that parking a vehicle along the river for a practice run or to participate in the race itself. Unfortunately, this is no longer the case."

"In 1993 the Westfield River was designated Wild & Scenic, the first river in Massachusetts to earn this designation," he continued. "What we now have is a Wild & Scenic river along a Scenic Byway with little or no access that is littered with dozens of no parking signs along the river side of the road. We can and need to do better."

People who fish are also concerned about river access, says Mark O'Malley.

"I grew up in the Wyben area of Westfield and ventured over to the river regularly as a young kid and teenager," he says. "Now in my late 30s, I remember growing up seeing access to the river become more restrictive."

"The access/parking along the Westfield is a huge issue," he continued. "And I am sure many of us that love and respect the river would really like to see parking access restored. Restricting parking is causing crowds to venture to and blow up other lesser-known spots. It's a tough issue that needs to be balanced."

The river access issue will prevent the river from being stocked with fish in the future. "We typically stock the river three or four times in the spring with rainbow trout, but last year stopped due to the lack of access created by the parking issue," said Leanda Fontaine, Aquatic Biologist, Western District, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife. "We do not own or control any property along the river. We need to see parking signs changed so that the areas are open for public access in order for us to stock again."

Bob Nasdor, Northeast Stewardship

and Legal Director of the American Whitewater organization said: "This is a public education opportunity. We have the ability to provide trash receptacles. I absolutely do not minimize that trash is a problem. But the solution is not to close public access. It's education and facilities."

Nasdor also said that after studying tax maps it was clear to him that the town of Huntington did not have the legal right to change parking along Rte 20. "It is either Mass DOT or Mass Fish & Wildlife. To me the town has overstepped here. They have allowed the closure. It has harmed the town economically and recreationally. It's created the perception that people are excluded based on race and language."

When asked for comment, John Goggins, a spokesperson for Mass DOT said: "The increased use of these rest areas for purposes other than what they are intended for has led to congestion, littering and misuse. MassDOT worked with both municipalities, local law enforcement, and the Massachusetts State Police to install signage that clearly marks parking rules and regulations."

On Jan. 7, the select board of the town of Huntington sent the following comment via email: "Chairman Booth stated that he is still willing to head up a committee to improve river access. He had discussed this with other people inquiring about river access at our June 28, 2024 meeting and left it up to them to coordinate a meeting with Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, DCR, MassDOT, US Fish & Wildlife, National Park Service, local legislators and anyone else who has an interest, but nothing has moved forward."

The Select Board asked me to personally coordinate the initiative and I accepted their invitation. On May 4 at noon in Stanton Hall there will be a public meeting discussing ways to reopen access to the river on Rte 20. One idea is to lessen the burden on municipalities and the police by coming up with public/private partnerships such as "adopt a pulloff" with a private trash hauling offering services in exchange for the promotional value. Volunteers would augment doing trash sweeps. All are welcome. Mark your calendars.

GARDEN

from page 4

bulb was recommended "back in the day" to better simulate the full spectrum of the sun's rays.

Now, LEDs are an energy conscious replacement; one I will make when my fluorescent bulbs give out. If you are using fluorescent bulbs, be sure to keep your seedlings away from the ends of the bulb where the lights wanes.

If you plan to use lights for longterm growth a "grow-light" may be a good, albeit more costly investment. Many duplicate the sun quite well, and some are tailored to meet the needs of specific plant types.

For example, some contain more orange and red hues to promote fruiting and budding. They are priced by life expectancy, output and light spectrum.

Installing the lights of your choice with reflectors or "mirrors" will maximize intensity, and suspending the whole system with chains from the ceiling will make for easy raising as

jrom page

your seedlings grow.

If you plan to grow just a few seedlings and don't want to invest in lights, try positioning them in front of an unshaded south window. Turn the seedling flats numerous times during the day to promote straight, stocky growth. Plants that are tall and spindly indicate light intensity is too low.

Please give heat mats and supplemental lights a try, especially if you haven't been successful with indoor seed sowing in the past. This could turn the page of a new chapter of growing for you!

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 33 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.

# SECURITY

from page 4

the interest on those Special Issue Government Bonds, which, by the way, returned about \$67 billion to the Social Security Trust Fund in 2023. FYI, average interest rate for new deposits to the Trust Fund in 2023 was 4.1%, and the overall effective rate of return on all Trust Fund assets was 2.4%.

Social Security has some issues and will face some financial difficulty in less than a decade unless Congress enacts program reform soon. But it is a program, which most seniors rely on for a major part of their retirement income and one which keeps over 22 million Americans out of poverty. Here at the AMAC Foundation, we strongly advocate for sensible Social Security reform and we're very optimistic about the program's future.

But Congress needs to act soon to avoid a cut to everyone's Social Security amount in about 2033.

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

### Email us at: countryjournal@turley.com

# **CHESTER**

# Chester library hosts cabin fever prevention event

CHESTER – Hamilton Memorial Library, 195 West Main St., is offering a talk on Cabin Fever Prevention on Tuesday, Jan. 21 at 2 p.m. For those who struggle with the dark days and weather isolation of winter, this presentation offers with lots of ideas to combat the winter doldrums and bring more inspiration and joy into these long, cold months.



Select Board Vice Chairman Andy Sutton, standing and Acting Moderator Brian Forgue, sitting, speak after the special town meeting, as a Chester resident looks on.

Turley photo by Wendy Long

# MEETING

been set up for this purpose. Fed by earnings from police details, Baldassaro said the town had purchased four cruisers to date using this system. Even with the funds not coming directly from the taxpayers, the state still requires approval at a town meeting to authorize the expenditure, despite it having no impact on the tax rate. According to Police Chief Jennifer Dubiel, they will take possession of the new cruiser this week.

Four of the six warrant articles were paid for from the town's Free Cash, which Finance Committee member Andy Myers said totaled \$287,030 before the meeting opened. The first of these was Article 2, which asked voters to replenish \$12,243.37 in funds to the highway fair share account, which had been spent for emergency drinking water during the town's "boil water" order from the Board of Health in 2024. A resident asked about the possibility of using spring water if ever needed in a future event. Baldassaro responded, "It's off topic, but there is an investigation going on right now with Department of Environmental Protection for suitable

Article 5 asked the voters to approve \$7,378 to modernize the town government phone system. As explained

by Baldassaro, the town hall phone system is twenty years old and there is no interconnectivity between different departments. Humason spoke with another town administrator who reported that upgrading their system with the company proposed in this warrant had saved their town money. "Our system is not efficient, not cost effective, and requires that you give out a phone number to a caller who needs to speak with someone in an office right next door in this building," Humason said. After the upfront cost, the savings is expected to pay for the new system within two years. The new system is voice over Internet protocol and wireless.

Article 6 passed for \$3,770 to purchase tax title software, which had been recommended by the town treasurer. The largest transfer of the night (Article 7) totaled \$85,500 so the town could make the first of five payments to pay off the loan for its new fire truck.

After approving these transfers, the town still has \$178,138.63 remaining in free cash.

Article 8 was to pay a bill from last year: \$1,091.48 was due to Tritech Software Systems using funds from the shared police expenses account. This bill was received by the town after the

fiscal year had closed.

Articles 3 and 4 concerned Hero Act Tax Exemptions for disabled veterans. The first authorized an annual increase in the amount of the exemption granted by state law, based on the Consumer Price Index for the previous year. This is a metric used by many entities to determine a Cost Of Living Adjustment to keep pace with inflation. The second allowed the town to increase the amount of the exemption to veterans by a full 100% increase. Current exemptions for veterans with disabilities are between \$400 and \$1000. According to Assessor Clerk Kendall Bennett, qualifying for the exemption and the benefit level is determined by the Veterans' Administration. She said the average property tax bill would be impacted by \$20 or less. The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

from page 1

"It's off topic, but there is an investigation going on right now with Department of Environmental Protection for suitable sites."

# **SCHOOLS & YOUTH**

# STCC announces residents on fall 2024 Dean's list

SPRINGFIELD - The Springfield of Great Barrington, Ryder Owen Technical Community College announces the fall 2024 Dean's list.

Local students making Dean's list are: Ellyse Marie Hepburn of Chester, Easthampton

Adriana T. Acosta of Easthampton, Owen Matthew Bourbeau of Easthampton, Giordano Luca Caldieri of Easthampton, Christopher Douglas Campbell of Easthampton, Nicholas Brian Cernak of Easthampton, Rebecca Mary Dupont of Easthampton, Laura Gangne of Easthampton, Catherine M. Hennessey of Easthampton, Weston Orren Hill of Easthampton, Ivanna Kabushka of Easthampton, Angela Marie Sikop of Easthampton, Edwin Q. Benson of Florence, Molly Pingxian Smith-Eilenberg of Florence, Nicholas Miller of Great Barrington, Olivia P. Netzer of Great Barrington, Christopher Thomas Ortwein of Great Barrington, Emily Buell of Great Barrington, Justin Phillips

Overstreet of Haydenville, Gwenyth Mineau of Montgomery, Kimberly Sakaske of Montgomery, Cynthia Nicole Alicea Vives of Northampton, Yvette Marie Bernecker of Northampton, Bobby Lopez of Northampton, Ryan Richard Russo of Pittsfield, Jacob Brian St Pierre of Southampton, Alison S. Acevedo Vega of Westfield, Aviella Taya Arbuzov of Westfield, Georgina Mae Badger of Westfield, Cameron David Beaudette of Westfield, Nikki Beltrandi of Westfield, Christina Claire Bishop of Westfield, Ella Nicole Judith Bishop of Westfield, Claire Blakely of Westfield, Kelsy MacKensy Bonilla of Westfield, Ottavia Assunta Bush of Westfield, Sarah A. Calavas of Westfield, Katherine Cervonayco of Westfield, Grace Lauren Cherry of Westfield, Jamie Beth Churchill of Westfield, Edward Joseph Colo of Westfield, Jeremy Cyr of Westield, Alina Danyuk of Westfield,

Illya Domin of Westfield, Phoenix James Ploof of Westfield, Melanie Durkee of Westfield, Allison C. Giguere of Westfield, Alexis Jade Haley of Westfield, Kiana Kemberlin Henriquez of Westfield, Brandon L. Hodgdon of Westfield, Joel Reese Isaacs of Westfield, Emilia N. Janik of Westfield, Ashley Cecile Kane of Westfield, Ildar Khuzhakhmetov of Westfield, Brian Russell Kimball of Westfield, Evelyn Kravchuk of Westfield, Megan Ashley Lavoice of Westfield, Emily Rose Leclair of Westfield, Angelyna M. Leven of Westfield, Decarlo Rodimus Lincoln of Westfield, Tina Liu of Westfield, Cassidy Jean Lockwood of Westfield, Timothy Lysenko of Westfield, Yelena Misiruk of Westfield, Dominic John Navarrete of Westield, Danny Nesen of Westfield. Chantel Marie Ouimette of Westfield, Owen Emile Pais of Westfield, Emily Elizabeth Paliy of Westfield, Angela Panasiuk of Westfield, Elina Panasyuk of Westfield, Evan

Pozhilenko of Westfield, Onnika Richter of Westfield, Emily Beatrice Rzasa of Westfield, Samantha M. Santos of Westfield, Alex Alexandrovich Seleznev of Westfield, Karina Shevchenko of Westfield, Afrasiab Shinwari of Westfield, Margaret A. Simard of Westfield, Roman Petru Slivca of Westfield, Michael Smith of Westfield, Derek D. Struwing of Westfield, Joshua Charles of Westfield, Eddy Towse of Westfield, Kelly A. Trudeau of Westfield, Philip Yurovskiyh of Westield, Cherry Melissa Zamora Torres of Westfield and Andrew Spencer Nichols of Westhampton.

To be considered, degree-seeking students must earn 12 or more college level credits in the current semester, or a total of 12 or more combined college-level credits earned during the fall and spring semesters, and achieve a 3.3 or above grade point average.

# William O'Neill makes Nazareth Univ. Dean's list

ROCHESTER, NY - Nazareth University announces William O'Neill of Cummington, made the Dean's list for the fall 2024 semester.

A student's grade point average must be at least 3.5 or above, and they must complete 12 credit hours of graded work that semester in order to be included on the Dean's list.

# Maisie Mattocks makes McKendree Univ. Dean's list

LEBANON, IL - Maisie Mattocks of Easthampton made the McKendree University fall 2024 semester Dean's list for earning a grade point average of 3.60 or higher.

# Jensen earns all academic honors

CANTON, NY - Annika Jensen from Westfield has earned Liberty League St. Lawrence University All-Academic honors in recognition of excellence in the classroom.

Jensen is a member of the Class of 2027 and is majoring in political science and global studies. Jensen is a member of the Saints Women's Soccer team and attended Williston Northampton School.

To be recognized as a member of the All-Academic team a student-athlete must be a sophomore or higher in class standing and enrolled full-time with a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.30.

# WNE University announces Dean's list

SPRINGFIELD - Western New England University announces the Dean's list for the fall 2024 semester.

The following local students are on the Dean's list: Jeffrie Surgen of Easthampton, Jordan Dunham of Easthampton, Matthew Armstrong of Easthampton, Sean O'Leary of Easthampton, Leah Wilson of Huntington, Alison Goodreau of Westfield, Andrew Florek of Westfield, Ariana Contreras-Munoz of Westfield, Darrin Schnopp of Westfield, Elizabeth Baker of Westfield, Emma Cassell of Westfield, Kailey Downs of Westfield, Max Kusnierz of Westfield, Rachel Brenzel of Westfield and Vasco Sardinha of Westfield. Students are named to the Dean's list for achieving a semester grade point average of 3.30

# HCC offers free line-cook training classes

HOLYOKE - The Holyoke Community College will be running both daytime and evening editions of its free, line-cook training program at the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute, beginning Jan. 21 and Jan. 27.

The five-week daytime program starts Tuesday, Jan. 21. Classes meet Mondays and Wednesdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., and Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. The 10-week, evening program runs Jan. 27 through April 9 on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays from 5-9 p.m.

The program is designed for those already in the restaurant industry who

want to upgrade their skills as well as unemployed or underemployed individuals interested in starting new careers.

"We usually have a mix of young people entering the job market for the first time and people who are re-entering the job market, looking for a second career," Paul Sheehan, assistant project coordinator for culinary arts program, said. "The course is perfect for anybody who's looking for a job and has a passion for food and the dining industry."

All classes meet in person at the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute at 164 Race St.

Participants will learn all the essential competencies they need to become successful line cooks: knife skills; how to prepare stocks, soups, sauces, desserts, poultry, fish and meat; culinary math and measurements; moist and dry heat cooking methods; as well as workplace soft skills, such as building a resume and searching for

Offered as part of HCC's Business & Workforce Development division, the line cook course is free to qualifying applicants. People should visit hcc. edu/line-cook for more information to to fill out an inquiry form.

# WPI students complete Intensive Research Projects

WORCESTER – A total of 356 undergraduate students at Worcester Polytechnic Institute completed research-driven, professional-level projects that apply science and technology to address an important societal need or issue.

Local students completing projects were: Marissa Whalley of Westfield, class of 2026 majoring in architec tural engineering; Ava Montovani of Westfield, class of 2026 majoring in aerospace engineering and Daniel Raymond of Goshen, class of 2026

majoring in electrical and computer engineering. Whalley completed a project titled Strengthening Women's English skills in Panama.

Montovani completed a project titled Understanding Hiker Mobility in Many Glacier Through Strava and Raymond completed a project titled Developing Signage for New Hampshire Abenaki

Qualifying Project, this project is a core part of the innovative undergraduate experience at WPI. Centered around project-based learning, this hands-on approach offers students opportunities to help develop thoughtful solutions to open-ended problems. These real-world problems affect the quality of life for people in the communities where students work, giving students a chance to make a difference in the world before they graduate.

About two-thirds of WPI students Known as the Interactive complete their IQPs at one of the university's 50+ off-campus project centers located in more than 30 countries around the world.

Read or Subscribe to the Country Journal online at www.countryjournal.turley.com

# Western New England University announces President's list

SPRINGFIELD - Western New England University announces the President's list for the Fall 2024 semester.

Local students making the President's list are: Abigail Dean of Easthampton, Jessica Cloutier of Easthampton, Seth McClaflin of Easthampton, Zakery Thibodeau of Easthampton, Christina Harris

of Montgomery, Bianca Acosta of Westfield, Brittny Cardoza-Rebollo of Westfield, Brooke Darling of Westfield, Kelsey Bouchard of Westfield, Matthew Bowen of Westfield, Ryan Charland of Westfield, Shawn Farnham of Westfield and Alivia Brisson of Williamsburg. Students are named to the President's List for achieving a semester grade point average of 3.80 or higher.

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

All such public service announcements and photos are subject to space limitations and deadlines, therefore publication cannot be guaranteed. Whenever copy for the week exceeds allotted space, news copy will take priority, and public service copy is the first area to be cut. We also reserve the right to edit for style and space, and are under no obligation to print lists of sponsorships, or articles that arrive after deadline, unless time and space allows. Deadline is Monday at NOON, on holidays it is Friday at 2 p.m.

# **EASTHAMPTON**

# WinterFest benefits the health of Nashawannuk Pond

major fundraiser to support the health of Nashawannuck Pond hosted by Friends of Nashawannuck Pond and Nashawannuck Pond Steering Committee.

The funds raised through WinterFest sponsorships, merchandise sales, donations, and other fundraisers have paid for annual herbicide treatment for invasive Eurasian Milfoil. Ongoing projects include monitoring and treating invasive species and barley straw deployment / cyanobacteria. They are currently reviewing a concept plan for one shoreline stabilization access wall that was put in place in 2001 to prevent erosion. The cost of this plan alone is

The festivities began Wednesday, Jan. 1 with online events: Nashawannuck Pond photo contest, snowflake making contest. pond trivia and Mt. Tom ice cream fla-

EASTHAMPTON – WinterFest is a vor contest. There are over 35 activities / events scheduled. Most activities are free to attend due to generous business sponsorships and are family friendly. Donations are gladly accepted.

> On Saturday, Feb. 8 outdoor activities will include: a Historical Ice Harvest on Nashawannuck Pond featuring historian Dennis Picard. Participants can try their hands at using a pond saw to "harvest" blocks of ice as they learn about Easthampton's important role in the area's ice industry. Other outdoor activities include a nature walk at Arcadia, Clay HIll Farm draft horse wagon rides, a community fire by the pond and Bumble will be there for photo ops. Easthampton Fire Department will be having a Polar Plunge for the second year.

> Also on Saturday, Feb. 8 indoor activities at Keystone Mill 122 Pleasant

St. will include a vendor/artisan/craft fair, Art in Motion dance demonstration, Ed Popielarczyk magician, Tom Knight puppeteer, Meet and greet Gino the Easthampton Police Dept K9 and Family Jungle Entertainment. Easthampton Library, Valley Art Supplies, Council on Aging, Arcadia and Easthampton Skate are having activities. Easthampton Feed is joining with a new event "Cuddle a Cow."

Abandoned Building Brewery will be hosting The 1 Man Party trivia / DJ on Saturday, Feb. 1; a night of Bingo Thursday, Feb. 6; a chili tasting Friday, Feb. 7 and WinterFest After Dark with live music Saturday, Feb. 8.

Greenfield Saving Bank will be providing transportation with the Boylston Room Trolley on Feb. 8 from 10 a.m.- 3 p.m.. The shuttle will run with stops at the Pond, Keystone Building and Arcadia.

Platinum Venue sponsors are Keystone Mill and Boylston Rooms and Abandoned Building Brewery. First time Platinum sponsor Greenfield Savings Bank is excited to be a part of WinterFest. Gold sponsors are River Valley Co-op, Overlook Industries, All Energy Solar and WinterFest Photographer - Gunn Photography.

People may visit the event calendar at https://www.nashawannuckpond.org/winterfest.html to view the full list of activities. People may sign up by visiting https:// signup.com/go/WuqQfqx to volunteer.

All outdoor events are weather permitting and may be canceled without notice.

More information about sponsorship and volunteering are available on the pond's website by visiting www.nashawannuckpond.org.

# RUSSELL

REPAIR from page 1

have been over 20 since last spring," she says. The volume of cars, who pass just to get a look, has increased since Mill #1 collapsed and was covered extensively on TV news and by media outlets.

The Keeney's had a verbal altercation with a man on Monday, Dec. 30 who said he was with the Department of Public Safety from Boston and wanted access to the mill. When they asked to see his ID, he refused to show it to them, shouted a profanity and then peeled off from the site at high speed. The incident has been reported to the Russell Police.

Megan Keith Ellinger and Joshua Ellinger, who live on Valley View near Mill #1 have been raising their family of five, ages 8 - 18, there. Megan's mother bought what was a supervisor's duplex in 1986 and she grew up in the modest house. Her sister lives next door. For them, the mill is a constant eyesore, worry and proof that state and local officials care little about Woronoco.

Strange things happen, but little is done. "The week before the big fire, [in 2022] there were about 100 people in combat fatigues storming the building as some kind of war game. The cars were parking everywhere. Our house shook from whatever they were setting off in there. I kept thinking of those big wheels of some black substance and the paper

The day the mill started burning, she yelled at a car that drove too fast on Valley View Avenue as her children were playing outside. "The guy slowed down and shouted, 'the mill is burning' before heading off."

That fire was investigated and the State Police called it suspicious at the time and asked for leads. No charges were pressed

Why do the Ellingers raise their children in such a tough place? "My family has a history here and it's affordable," she says. "Some of the houses are section 8. We have single parents who come and go. The newest neighbors are college students priced out of Westfield."

Megan Ellinger speaks fondly of a childhood spent in Woronoco. "When I was a kid this was still really cool. I would lean out of my bedroom window when I heard the school bus coming across the metal bridge and run down to get it at the last minute.'

She describes a Huck Finn life of the river as the magic and constant of days. "My friends and I had a secret place below one of the falls where we would go in summers. We called it the mermaid lagoon. I would read in an old pear tree. There was a whole community center across the street from Mill #2 during the height of Strathmore. The hill down there was perfect for sledding." Now, the area is thick with overgrowth and brambles, preventing any kind of passage. A few decades of dumping are apparent.

'When I was a kid the bridge was already closed but you could ride across on your bike and look down on the falls. I know this was an important Indigenous area because of that and I have even found artifacts along the river."

Ellinger highlights the other recreational possibilities. "The access to Mt. Tekoa and those hiking trails is just across the railroad tracks, but that is now cut off with jersey barriers."

"I want people to realize how beau-

Megan Ellinger has continued to find what she believes are Indigenous artifacts around the area below the historic bridge that is called Salmon Falls.

Turley photos by Kathryn Koegel

tiful it is here but we need something," says Megan Ellinger, standing with her husband on Valley View Avenue in front of the wreckage of Mill #2. Three of her children ride their bikes near the fenced-off rubble where cows now graze. Given that Massachusetts Department of Transportation has said the reconstruction of Woronoco Bridge will not begin until 2028, the project may not happen until those children are grown.

### **Update on the Bridges of Woronoco**

With so much riding, literally, on those two bridges, the Country Journal reached out to Mass DOT about their status.

'Construction on the Bridge Street Bridge replacement project is not scheduled until 2028 and the estimated cost is about \$23.5 million, "says John Goggin from Mass DOT communications. "The project will be funded through Pioneer Valley's Metropolitan Planning Organization's 2028 Transportation Improvement Program."

"MassDOT is responsible for maintenance of the metal plate bridge. MassDOT District One will replace numerous deck panels in the spring," said

"The bridge is currently weight restricted, posted for 20-25-36 tons. A load rating analysis was done and the current posting is acceptable. MassDOT works with local fire departments to gather information about their response vehicles that need to request weight limit waivers. MassDOT then reviews the requested waivers," said Goggin.

"Regarding equipment for the demolition of Mill #2, a contractor could request a waiver for various vehicles. A ontractor may also break down larger pieces of construction equipment to transport them," Goggin continued.

When contacted about the lengthy wait for bridge repair, a spokesperson for Senator John Velis replied: "When Senator Velis was sworn in in 2020, he was made aware of the issue. It was flagged from the Select Board. We are aware of the problems and have been in communication with MassDOT, especially concerning the fires and an emergency where families live.'

'We did receive a verbal commitment that the bridge is out for design and construction based on federal programs. With the more recent fires, we flagged it again. We will continue to push with recent infrastructure bills," said Velis' office.

"We are pushing to move up the date with MassDOT and new federal funding

With Senator Velis safety is the number one priority including ambulance and critical medical services. We're aware of what's going on over at the mills."



The Keeney Family of Chester now own Mill two and hope to turn it into a recreation site but first must demolish the burned portion.



The Woronoco Bridge over the Westfield River which is listed in the Library of Congress for its architectural significance has been closed since 1985.

# **MONTGOMERY**

# Grace Hall Memorial Library sponsors 'Stop the Bleed Class'

MONTGOMERY - Grace Hall Memorial Library, 161 Main Road, will hold a "Stop the Bleed Class" on Thursday, Jan. 23 from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. in the Montgomery Town Hall.

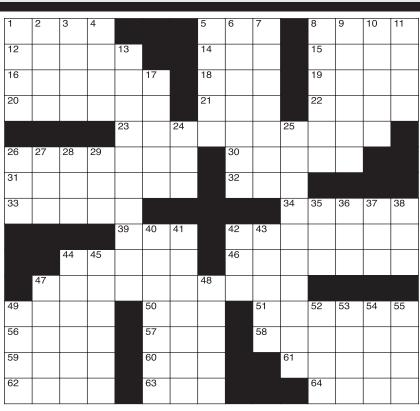
how to manage life threatening bleeds from a traumatic accident or active threat emergency.

The Hilltown Community

County Public Health District will conduct the class. People should sign up in the Montgomery Library, call the library at 413-862-3894 or email montgomeryli-

This class will teach participants Ambulance with Western Hampden brary@yahoo.com with their contact information.

> Library hours are Tuesdays from 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m., Thursdays from 4-8 p.m. and Saturdays from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.



#### **CLUES ACROSS**

- 1. This regulates cortisol production (abbr.)
- 5. People of northern Vietnam
- 8. Employee stock ownership plan 12. Regions
- 14. The center of a city 15. Hindu serpentine
- 16. Roared
- 19. "Sir" in Malaysian
- 20. Shrimp dish 21. Muckraker Tarbell
- 22. Apex
- 23. Harmonic effects 26. One of Babe Ruth's
- nicknames
- 30. Groups in organic chemistry 31. More pleasant-tas-
- ting 32. Spring forward

- 33. Noted writer
- 34. Building occupied by monks
- famous arena" 42. Colorless liquid
- hydrocarbon 44. Long or fast speech
- 46. Things you can eat 47. Substance in which
- magnetic moments are not aligned
- 18. Sun up in New York 49. Actor Idris 50. I (German)
  - 51. Taxes
  - 56. Indonesian island 57. Nuisance (slang)
  - 58. Shawl 59. Digits
  - 60. Moved on foot
  - quickly 61. "For goodness 62. Facial body part
  - 63. Russian river
  - 64. Urinates

## **CLUES DOWN**

- Partner to "oohs" 2. Scaly water dweller 39. "The world's most 3. Pueblo people of New Mexico
  - 4. Music producer Teo 5. Greek mythological
  - goddess 6. Got together to
  - discuss
  - 7. Acquires 8. Involve
  - 9. Some are tomato-based
  - 10. Old Irish alphabets 11. A sheet of glass in
  - a window or door 13. Blood poisoning
  - 17. A moon of Saturn
  - 24. Neither 25. Sums
  - 26. They follow "A" 27. Satisfaction
  - 28. People of southeastern Burma 29. Small amount

- 35. Guy (slang)
- 36. Sound unit 37. Midway between northeast and east
- 38. Affirmative
- 40. Almost at the top 41. Extremely slow
- 42. Pearl Jam's debut album
- 43. Influential mid-century
- playwright 44. Martens
- 45. Approval 47. Dallas-adjacent
- Texas city 48. African nation
- 49. Dark brown or
- black 52. A place to get
- caught 53. Large-headed,
- elongated fish 54. Type of sword
- 55. Scottish tax or levy

Mar 21/Apr 20 Aries, charm is one of your strongest attributes. This week your magnetism is magnified and can work to your advantage. You might attract people who can help with a situation.

#### **TAURUS** Apr 21/May 21

It is never easy to reevaluate finances and cut back. This is the week when you likely have to keep your credit card in your wallet; otherwise, the bills add up.

### **GEMINI**

May 22/Jun 21 Gemini, now is the time to turn great opportunities into big ideas. Make a plan of action and spell out the steps necessary to see an opportunity come to fruition. Ask for help, if needed.

#### CANCER Jun 22/Jul 22

Cancer, others are supportive of a new project you recently proposed. Maintain that support by staying focused on the tasks at hand. It's time to move things along.

#### LEO Jul 23/Aug 23

You are open to new activities and friendships, Leo. Luckily, you may not have to work too hard to make these things happen. Bring new members into existing friend groups.

## **VIRGO**

Aug 24/Sept 22 Do whatever it takes to

have some quality time to yourself, Virgo. This may include taking a trip or booking a relaxing day at a nearby spa.

# Sept 23/0ct 23

Libra, allow some time to pass by before offering an assessment. Responding too quickly might produce a kneeierk reaction that could prove regrettable down the road.

### **SCORPIO**

### Oct 24/Nov 22

Take extra care dealing with a sticky situation at work. You may need to be very careful about checking for mistakes in detail-oriented tasks without stepping on any

### **SAGITTARIUS**

Nov 23/Dec 21 You might need to bar-

gain to get something you want. Figure out what you are willing to give up and then identify a person you can work

#### **CAPRICORN** Dec 22/Jan 20

Clear communication is needed right now, Capricorn; otherwise, you may fall victim to hearsay or crossed signals. Get the facts before sharing your opinion.

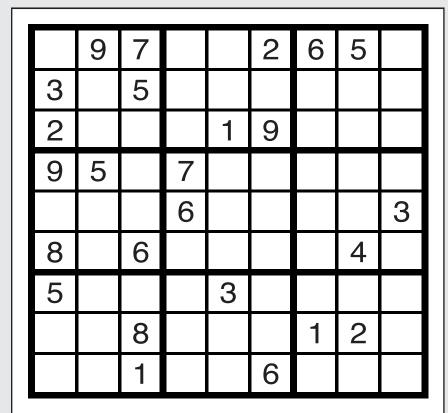
#### **AQUARIUS** Jan 21/Feb 18

Start contemplating big changes pertaining to your employment situation, Aquarius. An opportunity might come along that proves too good to

#### **PISCES**

Feb 19/Mar 20

The feelings you have for someone will help you overlook any imperfections you have noticed, Pisces. Keep your relationship strong by focusing on this person's good points.



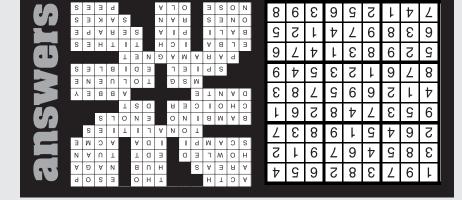


### Here's How It Works:

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

#### **Fun By The Numbers**

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





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# **BLANDFORD**

# Interim Highway Superintendent presents Board with priority list

By Mary Kronholm Correspondent

BLANDFORD – Interim Highway Superintendent Rene Senecal and Ray Hultay met with the Select Board at their Monday, Jan. 13 meeting.

Senecal presented a list of his priorities and needs for the department going forward. This included work that needs to be done on the salt shed building door, road work that includes Gore, Hayden, Russell Stage, School House, Gibbs and Julius Hall roads.

He would also like to see the town purchase a grader, an additional salt and sand truck and asked that serious consideration be given to obtaining an overthe-guardrail mower for the front end of a town vehicle. He will have more solid figures for next week but cited grant possibilities

#### **Intergovernmental agreement**

The board approved an intergovern-

mental agreement with Springfield Water and Sewer Commission for their use of South Street for repair operations. A second agreement for North Lane repair operations was not approved because the road is in Granville.

#### Church sign

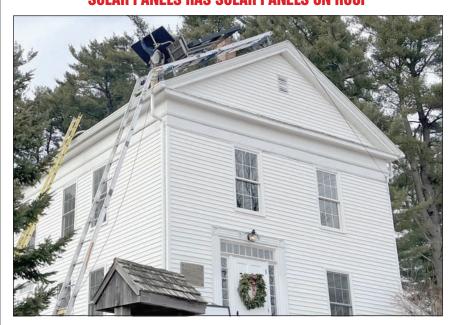
First Congregational Church Deacon Anne Savery told the board that another church has donated their sign, which is double sided, but it also has a light on it. The light will have a timer so as not to illuminate the sign during off-time hours, which, according to the town's zoning bylaws, is "between 9 p.m.-6 a.m. except signs illuminating police and fire stations."

#### Other business

The six-month review for Town Administrator Cristina Ferrara was tabled until next week.

The board first met in executive session from 6-6:35 p.m. and then opened.

# **SOLAR PANELS HAS SOLAR PANELS ON ROOF**



PV Squared Heat and Solar of Greenfield installed solar panels on the Blandford Historical Society building this week. The installer grapples with the panel to place it on the roof.

Turley photo by Mary Kronholm

# Firefighters battle Beech Hill Road structure fire

BLANDFORD – An early Tuesday morning, 12:30 a.m. structure fire at the Schwarzkopf home on Beech Hill Road brought out the town's Volunteer Fire Department.

According to Fire Chief Adam Dolby, it was a chimney fire that extended into the wall near the stove/chimney and up into the ceiling. He said, "We had to remove the sheetrock, mantle and in the attic had to cut a hole in the floor to access the fire."

He credited the team, which "did a fantastic job – it could have been much

worse." The firefighters were able to limit the amount of water used and kept damage contained to the fire area.

Dolby said the firefighters "moved furniture out of the way and protected what we could while working urgently to ensure the fire didn't progress." There was minimal smoke damage with the majority of smoke in the attic ventilated through an available window and the use of fire department fans. "It took us about two hours; we were home at about 3 a.m.," said Dolby.

# COA to hold breakfast Jan. 24

BLANDFORD – Hungry folks will not want to miss the Council on Aging breakfast Friday, Jan. 24 at 10 a.m. in the COA room at Town Hall.

Joann Martin will have apple pancakes with bacon and deviled eggs. People may call 413-848-4279, extension 400 to leave name and number of people attending. There is no charge for breakfast but COA Director Margit Mikuski asks that diners consider a \$5 donation to keep the program running.



**BLANDFORD LIBRARY HOSTS FARMER'S ALMANAC AUTHOR** 

The Old Farmer's Almanac author David Bartone spoke about how he chooses the topics he writes about for the publication. Many locals ventured out Saturday in spite of the all-day, sometimes heavy, snow flurries.

Turley photo by Mary Kronholm



Beef Stroganoff on noodles with salad was the main course for the Blandford Council on Aging luncheon on Friday, Jan. 10.



Dessert was a brownie topped with vanilla ice cream.

Turley photos by Mary Kronholm



Joann Martin packages food to go at the COA luncheon.

# Council on Aging luncheon chef shares Beef Stroganoff recipe

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

BLANDFORD – As only Joann Martin can, she orchestrated Beef Stroganoff for thirty for Friday's Council on Aging noon-time luncheon at the Town Hall.

She was kind enough to share the recipe and the details for preparation. For this meal, she used 15 pounds of Bottom Flat beef, two large jars of sliced pimentos, three tablespoons of chopped garlic, four pounds of mush-

room sliced thick, three-and-a-half cups of onions sliced thick, eight cups of beef stock or eight cups of beef drippings, two tablespoons of Worcestershire, a cup and a half of dry brandy, four cups of sour cream and four tablespoons of Dijon mustard and any extra seasoning to taste.

She tackled the meal by first simmering the beef before she cubed it, then froze it ahead of time. When the day came, she defrosted the meat and added sauteed mushrooms, garlic and sliced onions. Then add all the other ingredi-

ents and simmer for about 30 minutes.

Then, "Spice it up," she said and thicken if needed. Then serve on egg noodles, six pounds of egg noodles tossed with a half-cup of butter to prevent sticking.

Martin said she more or less takes the recipe "and flies." She knows what's in the larder and what will work easily. "I know the basic recipes and sometimes I wing it"

According to Martin, "That's why I said I can't easily tell you what I did until I sit down and think about it."

She did add a bit of gravy powder as "I didn't think it was thick enough. That will thicken and not just add calories as flour would but adds flavor as well." People, who want to replicate her Beef Stroganoff for a large group, now they know how.

Salad and beverages accompanied the meal and dessert of brownie topped with vanilla ice cream followed. Everyone left sated. Any leftovers Martin packed up to send home with those who asked and to be sent to those not able to get to the luncheon in person.

# **PLAINFIELD**



Members of the Plainfield Fire Department "push in" the new truck into the fire station bay. This is a long standing tradition with the department.



Plainfield Firefighters stand in front of the town's new 2024 E-One Spartan fire pumper.

Submitted Photos

# PFD welcomes new fire pumper

PLAINFIELD – The Plainfield Volunteer Fire Department and Fire Association welcomed the town's new fire apparatus, a 2024 E-One Spartan, custom built, fire pumper, to the town this past Saturday afternoon, Jan. 11.

Working with the town's Recreation Committee, the event included a bonfire, leftover from last Halloween due to drought conditions at that time. Hot cider and chocolate along with hot dogs were served to keep people warm.

The highlight of the afternoon

was a presentation of the new truck by Fire Chief Rob Shearer, followed by a "Push in" of the new truck into the town's Safety Complex, an old fire department tradition, by members of the department present at the event. Dozens of residents were on scene to celebrate the truck's arrival.

Firefighters will train on the new truck in the next week, then return the truck to the manufacturer. Greenwood Associates, for final work on the apparatus before being placed in service in



A bonfire was part of the activities at the Plainfield Fire Department. The bonfire was originally intended for Halloween night, but due to the drought in October was not held.

# **GREAT BARRINGTON**

# Berkshire Agricultural Ventures lists new Board of Director members

BARRINGTON Berkshire Agricultural Ventures, 321 Main St., Suite 202, a nonprofit supporting Berkshire-Taconic farmers and food businesses, announces the appointment of three new members to their Board of Directors.

Newly appointed members are Meg Bantle, Mimi Beaven and Glenn Bergman. Their addition to BAV's Board brings new experiences, skills, and geographic reach to the organization's leadership. Bantle is sixth generation farmer and co-founder of Full Well Farm in Adams, a no till vegetable and



Meg Bantle



Mini Beaven



Glenn Bergman

cut flower farm. Beaven is co-founder of the former

Little Ghent Farm/Made in Ghent. She is an active volunteer in non-profits and schools. Bergman is a food industry leader and former executive director of Philabundance, a non-profit food bank in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He previously served as interim director of BAV.

# **PITTSFIELD**

# WANDER celebrates grand opening

PITTSFIELD - WANDER Berkshires announces its official grand opening on Tuesday, Jan. 21 at 10 a.m. welcoming the community to its vibrant and inclusive space in downtown

Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. and Mayor Peter M. Marchetti will help officially introduce WANDER to the heart of the city. As a queer and transgender-founded community hub, WANDER's mission is to spark joy and alleviate loneliness through creativity, connection and collaboration.

The recovery-focused café features locally roasted coffee, a carefully curated selection of functional non-alcoholic beverages and teas, as well as freshly baked goods and grab-and-go options. In the near future, WANDER will also introduce the first community-accessible photography darkroom in the Berkshires, further expanding its offerings as a space for creative exploration

To celebrate the grand opening and the start of an exciting new year, WANDER invites the community to explore a dynamic lineup of January events. Highlights include sober dance parties, inspiring workshops, lively drag shows and opportunities to connect with fellow creatives and community members.

"We're honored to open our doors in downtown Pittsfield and provide a space where everyone feels welcome and valued," says Jay Santangelo, Founder of WANDER. WANDER is proud to be part of the revitalization of downtown Pittsfield, contributing to the area's growing vibrancy and cultural

For more information about WANDER Berkshires, its grand opening celebration or upcoming events, people may visit wanderberkshires.com or follow @wanderberkshires on social media.



or email adventuretours@att.net

or go to www.adventuretoursofwarren.com





# Hampden Charter School of Science: Empowering Students for a Brighter Future

Are you searching for a school where academic excellence meets a supportive community? Hampden Charter School of Science (HCSS) is a top-ranked, tuition-free public charter school serving grades 6-12 in Western Massachusetts. Since its founding in 2009, HCSS has been dedicated to preparing students for college, careers, and a lifetime of success.

#### Why Choose HCSS?

HCSS stands out as a premier choice for families because of its unique combination of academic rigor, personalized attention, and community spirit. Our two campuses—the Middle School in West Springfield (Grades 6-8) and the High School in Chicopee (Grades 9-12)—offer students a seamless transition from middle school to high school and beyond. Here's what makes HCSS truly exceptional:

Academic Excellence: Our rigorous curriculum is guided by College Board AP standards and Common Core. With honors courses beginning in 7th grade, 14 AP offerings in high school, and innovative programs like Project Lead The Way

(PLTW), students are challenged to reach their full potential.

Comprehensive College and Career Preparation: HCSS begins college and career readiness as early as 6th grade, including early SAT/PSAT prep, dual enrollment opportunities, and experiential college campus visits. With a 100% college acceptance rate and over \$51M in scholarships awarded since 2013, our graduates are set for success.

**State-of-the-Art Technology:** Students benefit from one-to-one Chromebook access, SMART Interactive Displays, and hands-on science labs, preparing them for a tech-driven world.

Award-Winning Extracurriculars: From robotics and science clubs to competitive athletics and social activities, students thrive outside the classroom as well.

#### Join Us for an Open House!

Explore what HCSS has to offer during our upcoming Welcome Saturday Open House events! Meet our dedicated staff, tour our campuses, and learn how HCSS can help your child achieve their dreams. Interested families can also join

a Virtual Information Session for an indepth look at our programs from the comfort of home.

# What Parents and Students Love About HCSS

Parents and students consistently praise HCSS for its nurturing environment, where every student feels valued and supported. The school's commitment to diversity and inclusion fosters a vibrant community that celebrates different perspectives and cultures. Families also appreciate the convenience of free transportation and extensive tutoring services, ensuring all students have the tools they need to succeed.

#### **Student Success Stories**

HCSS alumni have gone on to attend prestigious universities, including Ivy League institutions like Harvard, Columbia, and Dartmouth. Our students' achievements are a testament to the school's dedication to academic and personal growth. With a consistent college matriculation rate of over 95%, HCSS prepares students not just to attend col-

lege but to excel once they get there.

#### How to Apply

Applications for the 2025-2026 school year are now open! Rising 6th-10th graders should apply no later than March 2, 2025, to secure a spot in our admission lottery. Visit www.hampdencharter.org to apply and take the first step toward a brighter future.

At Hampden Charter School of Science, we believe every student deserves a world-class education. Join our community of learners, achievers, and leaders to-day—because your child's future begins here!

Agawam, Holyoke, Westfield, West Springfield Chicopee, Ludlow, Springfield

#### **HCSS High School**

20 Johnson Rd. Chicopee, MA 01022 | Tel. 413-593-9090, Fax. 413-294-2648

#### **HCSS Middle School**

511 Main Street West Springfield, MA 01089, Tel.413-278-5450









# **EARLY EDUCATION** & CARE

At Gateway you can join our Early Education and Care program (EEC) in 9th grade!

By the time you graduate, you will be ready, certified, and prepared to work with young learners!







Know how to plan engaging activities and lessons

Have GPR & Flist Aid certification **Experience** awesome

Internship

opportunities







# **GATEWAY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT INVITES YOU TO JOIN US!** WWW.GRSD.ORG



Nestled in the foothills of the Berkshires, Gateway Regional School District offers a caring and supportive small school environment. With support from the Barr Foundation, Gateway is engaging in transformative work to reinvent the school experience to make learning joyful for every student. Each GRSD school has a focus that aligns with the district's vision of emphasizing real-world learning, collaboration, and innovation.





# Littleville Elementary School

incorporates engaging, hands-on projects and events:

- Hartford Wolf Pack School Learning Day
- Springfield Symphony Orchestra string instrument workshop
- Holiday Craft fair
- Interactive "Author's Experience" with writer Daryl Cobb.

# **Gateway Regional School**'s

(grades 6-12) pilot program will equip student for success after high school through:

- Fun team-building activities
- College tours
- Career exploration with experts
- Life-skills workshops
  - Community projects







## **Chester Elementary School**

focuses on sustainability, creativity, and environmental awareness:

- Teaching with Trout (raising brook trout from eggs to adulthood)
- School-wide composting initiative
- Student Media Club
- School-wide production of Willy Wonka Jr.
  - Visit from the Whalemobile





# Gateway Raises the Bar(r) for Students

The Gateway Regional School District is making significant advancements in student engagement and staff development, thanks to funding from the Barr Foundation and enthusiastic commitment from students and staff. These funds are being used to support a variety of initiatives that align with the district's instructional vision, emphasizing real-world learning, collaboration, and innovation.

At Gateway Regional, a comprehensive plan has been developed for grades 6-12 to help students prepare for life beyond high school. This plan includes tailored learning experiences for each grade level, such as team-building activities for sixth graders, community exploration in seventh grade, and visits to community colleges for eighth graders. Ninth-grade students will engage in career exploration workshops led by industry experts, while tenth graders will visit four-year colleges. Eleventh-grade students will attend a local college fair and participate in life skills workshops, and seniors will celebrate their achievements with a banquet and lead activities for younger students. While some of these initiatives will be piloted this year, others will launch in the next school year, ensuring students are equipped with knowledge and skills for future success. The high school offers two Chapter 74 programs for students interested in welding and early childhood education. Graduates of these programs will complete a full comprehensive internship and be equipped to enter the workforce with the skills obtained.

Littleville Elementary is incorporating the Barr Foundation funds into engaging, hands-on projects and schoolwide events. For example, students in grades three through five recently attended the Hartford Wolf Pack School Learning Day, where they applied physical science concepts like force and motion to a live hockey game. Kindergarten students participated in a String Instrument Workshop led by members of the Springfield Orchestra, while all grade levels are eagerly anticipating an interactive "Author's Experience" with writer Daryl Cobb in March.

Plans are in the works to create a Schoolyard Habitat for Monarch butterflies and other pollinators. Littleville is also planning a mentoring program that will pair high school students with elementary students for long-term support. The school recently hosted a successful Holiday Craft Fair, showcasing student-made goods and fostering creativity.

At Chester Elementary, the focus is on sustainability, creativity, and environmental awareness. For the third year in a row, students are engaged with hydroponic agriculture, growing healthy food for their own school lunches and community. Students are participating in the Teaching with Trout program, where they raise brook trout from eggs to adulthood while learning about ecology and conservation. A composting initiative led by fifth graders is teaching students how to sort waste and reduce their environmental impact. The Student Media Club provides third graders with opportunities to develop and produce their own videos, promoting teamwork and innovation. Chester is also preparing for a school-wide production of Willy Wonka Jr., with fifth graders in lead roles and younger students in supporting roles. Additionally, an in-school field trip featured the Whalemobile, a life-sized inflatable whale that taught students about marine biology and conservation.

District-wide, the Barr Foundation funds are also being used to enhance staff development and collaboration. Teachers are participating in study tours to locations such as Kentucky, Maine, Providence, Boston, and New York City to explore innovative educational practices. An internal instructional vision board encourages staff members to share ideas for projects that utilize the funds to further educational transformation.

Through these initiatives, the Gateway Regional School District is fostering creativity, collaboration, and real-world learning for students while empowering educators with new ideas and strategies. These efforts are preparing students for success both in school and beyond while creating a culture of innovation and engagement throughout the district.

# A New Year a New Career

A new year is upon us and as we declare resolutions, a new job might be in order. The first 5 years of a child's life are so important and since 1965, HCS Head Start has helped thousands of children and families prepare for school and life. We know that it takes a big heart to help shape growing minds and if you want to work with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers in your community, Head Start might be the place for you.

The Head Start approach offers both families and their children, birth to five, an extraordinary school readiness experience. Educators who decide to teach in a comprehensive early learning setting have the opportunity to work collaboratively with other specialty areas like health, nutrition, mental health, and family and community engagement, that are designed to prepare vulnerable children for future educational success.

Data shows that when children are enrolled in a high-quality Head Start

program they are better prepared for kindergarten and beyond. Staff and parents work together, learning from one another, to create the best early educational experience both at home and at preschool. This is possible because when parents are involved and engaged in their child's education, children have better outcomes.

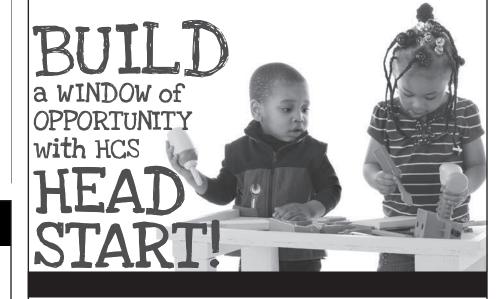
In addition to teaching, Head Start also has various career opportunities in the areas of health, nutrition, human services, administration, mental health, and special education. Professional development opportunities and career ladders are built within the Head Start model to promote growth and advancement.

Holyoke Chicopee Springfield Head Start, Inc. offers programs in several cities and towns in Western Massachusetts working with over 1,000 children each year. If you are interested in a rewarding Head Start career please visit www.hcsheadstart.org/employment/ or call 413-788-6522.

# new year is upon us and as we de- program they are better prepared for

# HCS Head Start is Hiring Help give a child a Head Start

in school and in life



Check out job postings at https://hcsheadstart.org/employment/





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

This year the school's theme is "Many Gifts, One Spirit", which is our belief that every student has gifts to share with others towards the goal of making our world a better place. Our school encourages our students to focus on a different Corporal Work of Mercy to help our greater community. Some of the outreach programs we have participated in this year were: collection of canned goods for Lorraine's Soup Kitchen, for which our students collected 3,800 canned goods; and recently we collected toiletries, diapers, and other personal items to support the wish lists of both The Gray House and Christina's House in Springfield. The Works of Mercy which have been covered are - Feeding the Hungry and Working for Peace.

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, Feb. 2 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-

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 & 4) and Kindergarten, free breakfast and hot lunch, before & after school program, and one to one use and integration of iPads & 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.

We can't wait to meet you!

# Join us at PVPA for an open house to see what we can offer your child

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School (PVPA) has a 25+ year history of providing an excellent, arts-focused, college-prep education to students in Grades 7 - 12.

PVPA students thrive in an creative, challenging learning environment that offers them a broad exposure to the performing arts. Our students consistently show that incorporating the arts into education creates, not just better artists, but better students who are equipped to be active participants in their future.

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Join PVPA for an Open House and see why we are consistently voted one of the Best Charter Schools in the



Now accepting applications for the 2025/2026 school year for Grades 7-12 at pvpa.org/admissions.







Visit us to learn more! To register for Open House, and TO APPLY: ww.pvpa.org/admissions or QR Code below



## OPEN HOUSE

Weds, Jan 15 4-6pm Sat, Jan 25 & Feb 1 10am-12pm Tues, Feb 18 10am-12pm Free, Arts-focused, College-prep Grades 7-12 Application Deadline Feb 23, 2025

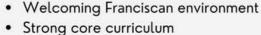
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- Before & After school program
- One to one use and integration of iPads & Chromebooks into curriculum
- · Modern facility full gym, full cafeteria, air conditioned, carpeted classrooms.

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."



PREK - 8TH GRADE SCHOOL PHYSICAL SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



www.saintstansschool.org 534 Front Street, Chicopee, MA 01013 413-592-5135





# HCC gearing up for spring semester

Registration is open for spring 2025 semester classes at Holyoke Community College.

The HCC spring 2025 semester begins Tuesday, Jan. 21, for full 15-week spring semester classes begin. HCC will also be running three accelerated spring flex start sessions: Flex Start I classes begin Jan. 21 and run for seven weeks. Flex Start II classes begin Monday, Feb. 3, and run for 12 weeks; Flex Start III classes begin Monday, March 24, and run for seven weeks.

Thanks to the state-funded MassEducate program, a community college education is now free for all Massachusetts residents who have yet to earn a bachelor's degree.

"MassEducate provides an exciting opportunity for eligible students to attend college without the concern or weight of how to pay for it," said Mark Hudgik, HCC dean of strategic recruitment initiatives, admissions, and financial aid. "There has never been a better time to enroll.

Eligible students who want to earn a certificate or degree need only to complete the standard HCC application, complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) for the 2024-2025 school year, and register for at least six credits (typically two classes).

"Our admissions counselors, academic advisers, and financial aid staff are available to make sure prospective students get all the assistance they need," said Hudgik.

Class schedules and information about MassEducate can be found on the HCC website: hcc.edu.

Enroll today hcc.edu/admissions.

# The MacDuffie School more than just a school, a community

At The MacDuffie School, we believe education is more than academics—it's the foundation for a lifetime of achievement. Our vibrant community fosters creativity, leadership, and excellence while instilling respect and integrity in everything we do.

At MacDuffie, you're not just a student—you're part of a community that celebrates your individuality and supports your growth. Our small class sizes and dedicated teachers ensure you're seen, heard, and challenged to reach your full potential. Here, students don't just prepare for college—they prepare for life.

Choosing the right school is a big decision. That's why we invite you to learn more about MacDuffie and how it can shape your future. Visit our website, schedule a tour, or attend our April 5th open house to see for yourself what makes us different.

Your journey starts here. Define your future at MacDuffie—apply today! admissions@macduffie.org

# Come and see what's new at St. Joan of Arc School

Physical Education Teacher Larry Moore and SJA students are enjoying a new basketball hoop funded by generous donations from our Annual Campaign.

A schoolyard basketball hoop is so important in creating not only a healthy environment, but helps with critical thinking, resilience, perseverance & teamwork.

The Dollar General Literacy Foundation recently awarded St. Joan of Arc School a \$500 grant to support its youth literacy program. A Book Club was formed for third and fourth grade students to encourage reading and literacy at a young age. This Book Club helps our students gain a deeper understanding of their reading, of other people through conversations, and provides an opportunity to safely fail and celebrate success. The club meets monthly to discuss the book, work on a fun activity, and share their findings.

The school will be holding you!

an Open House on Saturday, Jan. 25 from 9 a.m. to noon (no appointment needed). Appointment only tours for families will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 28 and Thursday, Jan. 30 from 3 to 7 p.m. Please call Chris or Janine in the Business Office at 413- 276-4608 for registration information or to make an appointment.

St. Joan of Arc School is welcoming, safe & 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, technology, music, library, and Duolingo language classes. Easy access to I391 & I90. Financial Aid and tuition assistance is available. To learn more visit www.sjachicopee.

We look forward to meeting you!

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







# **OPEN HOUSE**

Saturday, April 5, 2025 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 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

For Students in Grades 6 through 12

# St. Joan of Arc School ~ Pre-K to Grade 8

587 Grattan Street, Chicopee ~ 533-1475 ~ sjachicopee.org

\*\*Learning Rooted in Christian Values\*\*

# **OPEN HOUSE**

Saturday, Jan 25th 9am-12 noon ~ No Appointment Needed Jan 28th & Jan 30th 3pm-7pm ~ By Appointment Only



Affordable Tuition & Extended Care
Free Breakfast & Lunch
Extracurricular Programs~ Technology
Phys. E ~ Music ~ Library ~ Duolingo
Welcoming, Safe & Secure School Community
Social, Physical, Spiritual & Intellectual Wellness
Easy Access to I391 & I90 ~ Tuition Assistance Available

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#### FIREWOOD

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

## **JUNK REMOVAL**

# A Call We Haul FAST REMOVAL

Junk, Appliance, Cleanouts. We load it & take it.

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#### **SERVICES**



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

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

DRYWALL AND CEILINGS, plaster repair. Drywall hanging. Taping & complete finishing. All ceiling textures. Fully insured. Jason at Great Walls. (413)563-0487

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# NEED AN ELECTRICIAN?

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PJ's Electrical offers fast and reliable electrical services for your home or business.

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or call: 413-283-8393

#### **SERVICES**

#### HOME IMPROVEMENT

HANDYMAN RESIDENTIAL RE-PAIRS. Powerwashing, home repairs, interior/exterior painting, ceiling/wall repairs and chimney repairs. Fully licensed/insured. Lic. #105950CSL. Call 413-566-5596/413-433-5073.

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

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#### **SERVICES**

# PAINTING

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

#### **PLUMBING**

**GREG LAFOUNTAIN PLUMBING** & **HEATING** Lic #19196 Repairs & Replacement of fixtures, water heater installations, steam/HW boiler replacement. Kitchen & Bath remodeling. 30 years experience. Fully insured. \$10 Gift Card With Work Performed. Call Greg **(413)592-1505** 

#### ROOFING

JENKINS ROOFING specializing in residential roofs & repairs, chimney repairs. Hampden, MA - 413-566-5596/413-433-5073. Lic. #105950CSL. Fully insured.

#### RUBBISH REMOVAL

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

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**DEADLINES: MONDAY AT NOON** 

#### **SERVICES**

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

**H & H TREE SERVICE** All phases of tree care. Call Dave**413-668-6560** day/night.

#### STUMP GRINDING

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

# AUTO



### **HELP WANTED**

# TOWN OF BLANDFORD HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT

The Town of Blandford is seeking a qualified individual for the position of Highway Superintendent. Salary range starting at \$75,000-\$80,000+ negotiable based on experience/skills. Please visit our website TownOfBlandford.com or email Administrator@ TownofBlandford.com for more information.

#### **HELP WANTED**

#### **TOWN OF WILBRAHAM**

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT BUILDING & CONVERVATION P/T EMERGENCY DISPATCHER

The Town of Wilbraham is looking to fill multiple vacancies.

Application deadline 1/27/25.

For application and more information please visit www.wilbraham-ma.gov.

EOE

#### **TOWN OF WILBRAHAM**

#### POLICE OFFICER

For application and more information please visit **www.wilbraham-ma. gov**. Review of applications begins immediately. Open until filled. EOE

# wilbraham united church is hiring a sexton three evenings, 7-10 hours per week, \$16 per hour. Additional compensation for hours needed for weddings and funerals. Please send resume to admin@wilbraha-

munitedchurch.org
More information found at
www.wilbrahamunited
church.org/about-us-2/

#### **REAL ESTATE**

#### **FOR RENT**



EQUAL HOUSING

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

**GREEN STREET, PALMER** Newly renovated 1 bedroom apt. porch, off-street parking, coin-op laundry, \$1,500/ mo includes heat. No Pets. Call Tom 413-896-1555

### **FOR RENT**



All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status (number of children and or pregnancy), national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, or any intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination.

This newspaper will not knowingly accept

any advertising for real estate that is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertising in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain about discrimination call The Department of Housing and Urban Development "HUD" toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. For the N.E. area, call HUD at 617-565-5308. The toll free number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

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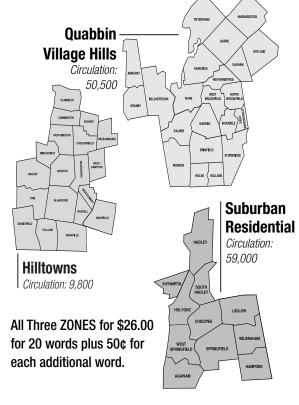
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# **OBITUARY**

# Rose Marie (Pellerin) Macutkiewicz, 90

Rose Marie (Pellerin) Macutkiewicz, 90, passed peacefully Saturday, Dec. 14, 2024.

Early that morning the clouds lifted and the gates to heaven opened as she was ushered home. Born on Nov. 27, 1934 in Wilton, New Hampshire she is the daughter of Emilien and Bernadette (Bergeron) Pellerin. Rose relocated to Westfield where she met her husband, Joseph.

After starting their life and family together they moved to the town of Russell where they owned the Mountain Laurel Mobile Home Park. Rose was a retired School Bus Driver; she drove in the Hilltown's for more than 30 years. Spending

in the Hilltown's for more than 30 years. Spending time with her family, enjoying holiday celebrations, summer picnics, baking, gardening and visiting her friends were some of her favorite pastimes. Her abiding faith and deep devotion to her church were very important to her. She also enjoyed singing, with the



Do-Re-Mi's. Volunteering her time and talents to many different organizations kept her busy as well.

Rose is predeceased by husband, Joseph M. Macutkiewicz; son, Robert; brothers, Leo Pellerin and Emilien (Zo) Pellerin and sister, Jeannine Fox. She is survived by son, Joseph A. Macutkiewicz, his wife Kristin, daughter, Michelle Storozuk and her husband, Joseph; eight grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren.

Family and friends are warmly invited to a memorial service being held on Saturday, Jan. 18, 2025 starting at 10 a.m. The celebration will be at The Westfield Evangelical Free Church, 568 Southwick Road, Westfield, Ma 01085. In lieu of flowers the family would like donations to be made to the Westfield Evangelical Free Church. www.firtionadams.com



# **DEATH NOTICE**

#### **MACUTKIEWICZ, ROSE MARIE (PELLERIN)**

Died Dec. 14, 2024 Memorial Service Jan. 18, 2025 at 10 a.m. Westfield Evangelical Church, 569 Southwick Road, Westfield

Country Journal

# OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

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

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

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

# WINDSOR

# Tamarack Hollow Nature Center announces upcoming winter events

WINDSOR – Boreal spruce-fir forest ecology and wildlife tracking on snowshoes will be held Sunday, Jan. 26 from 9:30 a.m.-noon and Saturday, Feb. 15 from 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at the Tamarack Hollow Nature and Cultural Center, Savory Hollow Road.

Director and Naturalist Aimée Gelinas M.Ed will lead a trek featuring their recently conserved land, a brand new trail and a cascading waterfall called Georgie's Falls along with winter Boreal/Northern forest tree ID, wildlife tracking and spruce-fir forest ecology. This has support from the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation Berkshire Environmental Endowment & Crane Fund

Registration is required by emailing full\_circle\_o@yahoo.com. Program fee is \$20 per person and \$5 snowshoe rental fee if trails require snowshoes. People may bring their own snowshoes. Program will be a hike if conditions do not require snowshoes.

Winter boreal spruce-fir forest ecology, wildlife tracking and tree ID snowshoe treks in the spruce-fir forest at Notchview Reservation with Aimée Gelinas of the Tamarack Hollow Nature and Cultural Center will take place Sunday, Jan. 26 from 1:30-3:30 p.m. and Monday, Feb. 17 (President's Day) from 10 a.m.-noon. This round trip, 2-mile trek on the Hume Brook Trail will be led by Tamarack Hollow Nature and Cultural

Center Director Aimée Gelinas M.Ed who is a seasoned boreal forest naturalist guide and certified Cybertracker Wildlife guide. Learn about spruce-fir boreal forest ecology and how to identify wildlife tracks, signs of wildlife, and trees along the way. Program is a snowshoe or hike depending on trail conditions. Registration required, email aimee@gaiaroots.com to register. Fee is \$25 per person, which includes snowshoe rentals if needed.

Full Moon winter boreal forest ecology, wildlife tracking and tree ID snowshoe treks in the spruce-fir forest at Notchview Reservation with Aimée Gelinas of the Tamarack Hollow Nature and Cultural Center will take place (full snow moon) Wednesday, Feb. 12 from 4:30-7 p.m. and (full sap moon) on Thursday, March 13 from 5:30-8 p.m. This round trip, 2-mile trek to Sawmill Field will be led by Tamarack Hollow Nature and Cultural Center Director Aimée Gelinas. Program is a snow-shoe or hike depending on trail conditions. Registration required by emailing aimee@gaiaroots.com to register. Fee is \$25 per person, which includes snowshoe rentals if needed.

Tamarack Hollow N&CC is a non-profit educating about and conserving 88 acres of boreal forest along the northern border of Notchview. For more information about Tamarack Hollow, people may visit www.tamarackhollow.org.

# **PUBLIC NOTICES**

#### Town of Blandford Conservation Commission Public Notice

At a Public Meeting scheduled for Monday, January 27, 2025, at 6:00 PM at the Blandford Town Hall, 1 Russell Stage Road, the Blandford Conservation Commission will consider a Request for Determination of Applicability (RDA) received from Tighe and Bond on behalf of Blandford Storage, LLC. The RDA is related to the proposed installation of test pits and the confirmation of delineated wetland resource area boundaries. The test pits and wetland delineation are proposed for Tax Parcel ID 409-0-43.11 located at 103 North Blandford Road in the Town of Blandford. The Commission will make its determination in accordance with the provisions of the Wetlands Protection Act. M.G.L. c 131, Sec. 40 (as amended).

Plans and additional information are on record in the Office of the Conservation Commission.

Richard Gates, Chair Town of Blandford Conservation Commission 01/16/2025

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758
Docket No. HD25C0012CA
In the matter of:
Yvonne Michelle Cordoba
CITATION ON PETITION
TO CHANGE NAME

A Petition to Change Name of Adult has been filed by Yvonne Michelle Cordoba of Russell, MA requesting that the court enter a Decree changing their name to:

#### Inez Braunschweig Cordoba IMPORTANT NOTICE

Any person may appear for purposes of objecting to the petition by filing an appearance at: Hampden Probate and Family Court before 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 02/07/2025.

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance if you object to this proceeding.

WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M Hyland, First Justice of this Court.

Date: January 10, 2025 **Rosemary A Saccomani** Register of Probate 01/16/2025

Commonwealth of
Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampshire Division
Docket No. HS24P0693EA
Estate of:

Catherine L. Granger
Also Known As:
Catherine Louise Granger
Date of Death:
February 27, 2024
INFORMAL PROBATE
PUBLICATION NOTICE

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner Melissa Porter of Greenfield, MA

a Will has been admitted to informal probate.

Melissa Porter of Greenfield, MA has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve without surety on the bond.

The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal

procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner. 01/16/2025

#### Town of Huntington PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Town of Huntington Selectboard will conduct a public hearing in accordance with Chapter 166, Section 22 of the Massachusetts General Laws, on a petition from NSTAR ELECTRIC COMPANY **EVERSOURCE ENERGY** and VERIZON NEW ENGLAND, INC. FOR JOINT OR IDENTICAL POLE LOCATIONS to grant petitioners joint or identical locations for and permission to construct and maintain a line of poles, wires and cables, together with such sustaining and protecting fixtures as they may find necessary, said poles to be erected substantially in accordance with the field plan marked 18841938-80021886 along and across the following public way:

<u>Location</u> – Install two (2) jointly owned poles along Blandford Hill Road

<u>Reason</u> – To facilitate a voltage conversion/reconductor project.

Also, for permission to lay and maintain underground laterals, cables and wires in the above or intersecting public ways for the purpose of making connections with such poles and buildings as each of said petitioners may desire for distributing purposes.

Petitioners agree to reserve space for one crossarm at a suitable point upon each of said poles for the fire and police telephone signal wires belonging to the municipality and used by it exclusively for municipal purposes.

The hearing will take place on Wednesday, January 29, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. in the Selectboard Office at Town Hall, 24 Russell Road, Huntington, MA. 01/16/2025

#### Town of Huntington PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Town of Huntington Selectboard will conduct a public hearing in accordance with Chapter 166, Section 22 of the Massachusetts General Laws, on a petition from NSTAR ELECTRIC COMPANY DBA EVERSOURCE ENERGY TO INSTALL AND MAINTAIN UNDERGROUND LINES FOR THE TRANSMISSION OF ELECTRICITY to grant petitioners permission to install and maintain below the surface of the ground in the public way hereinaf-

ter named, a line or lines for the transmission of electricity consisting of conduits together with the necessary wires, cables, transformers, switches, protective devices and other appurtenances, and likewise the manhole and vault construction connected with said lines as indicated by said plan marked #18841938-80021886. The public way beneath which the construction above referred to may be installed, the distance of such construction along each such way and the plan showing the proposed installation are as follows namely:

<u>Location</u> – Build underground from poles 5/13 to 5/14 on Blandford Hill Road.

<u>Reason</u> – To avoid overhead clearance issues related to a voltage conversion/reconductor project.

Also, for permission to lay and maintain underground laterals, cables and wires in the above or intersecting public ways for the purpose of making connections with such poles and buildings as said petitioner may desire for distributing purposes.

The hearing will take place on Wednesday, January 29, 2025 at 5:15 p.m. in the Selectboard Office at Town Hall, 24 Russell Road, Huntington, MA.

MA. 01/16/2025

# HILLTOWN HIKING ADVENTURES



Frank Kennedy of Hancock, from left, their canine pal, Cybill and Jim Moore of Pittsfield came to celebrate the 2025.

Submitted Photos

# Hilltown Hikers and DCR host First Day Hike

The Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers co-hosted the Western Massachusetts First Day Hike with Department of Conservation and Recreation Department of Conservation.

They held this National Event with a short hike to beautiful Sanderson Brook Falls in Chester. Alec Gillman, Tom Skala, Travis Clairmont and all the DCR Rangers helped with with traffic control, handing out free First Day Hats and pins to attendees. They celebrated with a grape juice toast and had pictures taken in a photo booth.

The year 2025 marks the 250th anniversary of the American

Revolution, which started right here in Massachusetts. The Hilltown Hikers started the new year by joining the First Day Hike Revolution.

Massachusetts is a state of "firsts," including First Day Hikes, which started over 30 years ago in Massachusetts at the Blue Hills Reservation and quickly spread across the state.

Today, First Day Hikes is a national initiative hosted by America's State Parks in all 50 states. People are invited to kick off each new year by getting outside and experiencing the beauty of their state parks. This year, Chester was the only community in Western Massachusetts hosting an official First Day Hike.



This is a view of Sanderson Falls in Chester on New Year's Day.



Stephanie Brown of Agawam holds festively dressed dogs, Cybill and Penny.



Cybill has her picture taken in her New Year's gown.



Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers Board of Directors pose at Sanderson Falls.



DCR staff and Hilltown Hikers pose at Sanderson Falls in Chester on Jan. 1.



Karen McTaggart, from left, presents Greg Hayslett with a gift in honor of his wife, Sandy, who passed this past year.