

"They who can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety." – Ben Franklin

Country Journal

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HUNTINGTON

Select Board focuses on unresolved Crescent Street

Unfinished punch list items leftover from the Crescent Street construction process were tackled by the Huntington Select Board, Town Administrator and several agencies and town departments at their Jan. 17 meeting, held at Stanton Hall.

Present were Select Board members Roger Booth and William Hathaway, Town Administrator Jennifer Peloquin, principal planner John O'Leary from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, project engineer Zachariah Chornyak from Tighe & Bond, Water and Sewer Commissioners Sue Fopiano, Karon Hathaway and Dan Oliveira; the Commission's Administrative Assistant Kathy Engwer and Sewer Plant Operator John Berry.

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Shown from left are Water Commissioner Dan Oliveira, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission representative John O'Leary and Water and Sewer Commission Administrative Assistant Kathy Engwer at the Jan. 17 Select Board meeting.

Turley photo by Wendy Long

HUNTINGTON

Library celebrates Black History, Library Lovers

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

Amanda Loiselle, Library Director at the Huntington Public Library announces upcoming events for the month of February.

Many are themed around February being both Black History Month and Library Lovers Month. These include an author talk, story hours, a teen game night and book club meeting. In addition, several activities will focus on Valentine's Day including a paint your own wine glass, Do It Yourself Valentine's Day Cards and "Blind Date With a Book."

February kicks off with the rescheduled author talk with Steven

LIBRARY, page 3

BLANDFORD

Select Board meets with BOH

The Select Board first met with Board of Health member Jennifer Girard at Monday night's board meeting.

She told the board Marianne Demings is the new part-time shared service nurse that comes to Blandford "through the Department of Public Health public health excellence grant," known as the State Action for Public Health Excellence which fosters 52 such programs state-wide.

There is also money in this grant to provide "Stop the Bleed" kits and funding a program for food service/housing inspections. Stop the Bleed is a grassroots national awareness campaign and call-to-action. Stop the Bleed encourages bystanders to become trained, equipped and empowered to help in a bleeding emergency before professional help arrives according to the website.

Highway Superintendent

Highway Superintendent David Waldron told the board he'd had "the worst week," which culminated in a vehicle striking the town plow causing damage to the plow frame. The incident is in the hands of the Massachusetts State Police. Apparently, the driver initially left the scene of the accident on Route 23, according to Waldron.

Culverts

Waldron continued culvert inspection and reviewed culverts on Hayden Road with Conservation Agent Nicholas Pietroniro with consideration for replacements.

He also discussed the culvert at 24 North Blandford Road that needs work, but the owner of the home is deceased and Waldron needs to find out who is responsible for the house. Board member Jeff Allen said he could find out.

Repair to the culvert would require cost to the town that would have to be reimbursed.

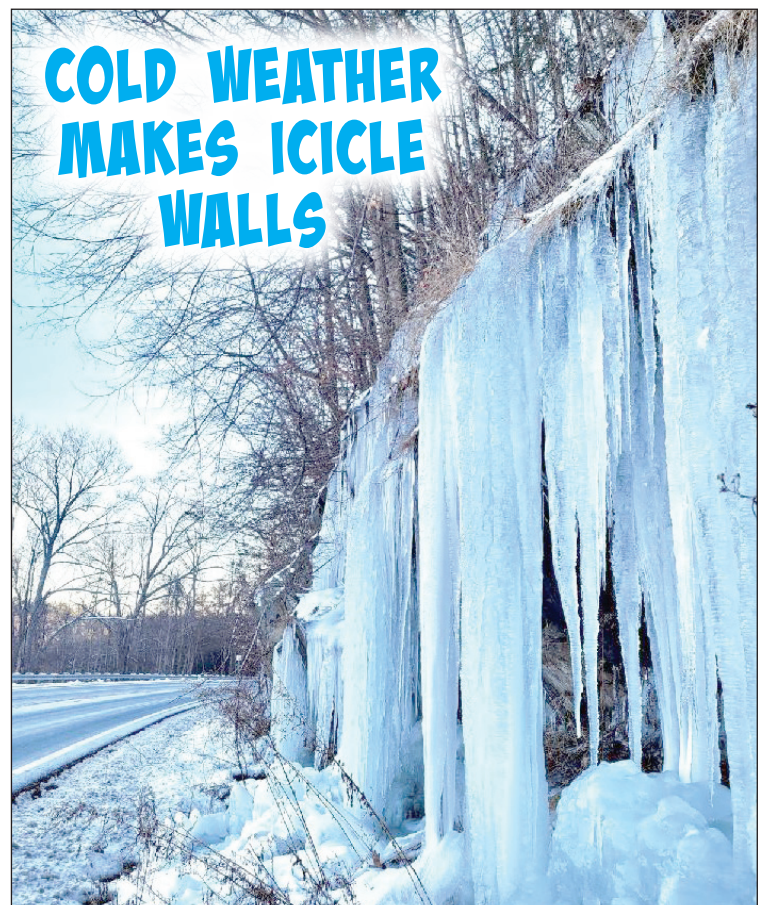
Culvert work on Hayden Road providing runoff would not have any detrimental effect on any property according to Waldron.

He also told the board that Hayden Road had been plowed, and concerns were on social media. He reiterated that residents with road problems should call to let him know about any issues. He asked that people use the number on the town website, 413-848-4279, extension 301, which goes to his cell phone, rather than posting issues on social media so something can be done.

Town Clerk

The board then met with Town Clerk Doris Jemiolo. She informed the board that in-person early voting for the

BOARD OF HEALTH, page 7



These icicles are seen hanging from rocks along the side of the road.

Turley photo by Kathryn Koegel



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HILLTOWNS

Girl Scouts kicks off 2024 cookie season

Girl Scouts of Central and Western Massachusetts kicks off the 2024 Girl Scout Cookie season this weekend, the annual event in which Girl Scouts unbox their futures as young female entrepreneurs through the world's largest entrepreneurial program for girls.

During this highly-anticipated time of the year, girls flex their entrepreneurial muscles and acquire important life skills like money management, team building, public speaking and decision making. All proceeds from cookie sales stay with the local council and troops to power Girl Scouts' amazing experiences year-round.

This year's theme, Unbox the Future, aims to remove social barriers that often keep girls boxed in. When bold, goal-getting Girl Scouts sell a package of cookies, they're doing much more than what's seen at face value. Girl Scouts do more than sell delicious treats—they're entrepreneurial powerhouses creating a more equitable future for themselves and the world. Every box of cookies sold provides invaluable experiences for Girl Scouts such as service projects, troop travel



and summer camp.

This season, cookie lovers can enjoy the full assortment of Girl Scout Cookies, including fan favorites such as Thin Mints, Samoas, Tagalongs and Do-si-dos as well as Trefoils, Lemon Ups, Adventurefuls, S'mores and the gluten-free Toffee-tastic.

Nearly four-thousand girls in central and western Massachusetts participate in the Girl Scout Cookie Program, which provides vital girl-led entrepreneurial skills that build courage, confidence and character. As

a result, girls obtain limitless barrier-breaking futures outside the box with transferable life skills. Girl Scouts can earn a variety of badges and awards to develop valuable business skills including Cookie Business badges, Financial Literacy badges, Cookie Entrepreneur Family pins and Entrepreneur badges.

If people know a registered Girl Scout, reach out to her to find out how she's selling cookies. If they don't know a Girl Scout, check out the local council's Girl Scout Cookie Finderto

find a booth and purchase cookies.

Beginning Feb. 16, customers who do not already know a Girl Scout will also be able to purchase cookies to be shipped directly to their homes by entering their zip code into the Girl Scout Cookie Finder. This link can also be used to find a local booth, purchase cookies and/or to donate cookies for local community causes.

They can also text COOKIES to 59618 to stay informed about how to purchase Girl Scout Cookies and other exciting Girl Scout news.

For more than 100 years, Girl Scouts and their enthusiastic supporters have helped ensure the success of the iconic annual cookie program—and they've had fun, developed valuable life skills and made their communities a better place every step of the way. Girl Scout Cookie season in central and western Mass runs mid-January to mid-March.

Girl Scouts in grades K-12 can start their journey to fun, friendship and new experiences by joining the world's largest entrepreneurial organization for girls at any point in the year. Girls can join and adults can become a volunteer at www.girlscouts.org/join.

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OBITUARY

John A. Bisbee, 76

CHESTERFIELD – John A. Bisbee, 76, of Chesterfield passed away Saturday, Jan. 20, 2024.

He was the son of Charles A. and Vesta (Thompson) Bisbee. John attended local schools and graduated from Williamsburg High School.

He had many jobs in the lumber industry, logger, truck driver and sawyer. John enlisted in the United States Army in 1966. He spent 1968-1969 in Vietnam. He was extremely proud of his service.

John worked a number of years as a driller for Henshaw Well Drilling in Chesterfield. Before his retirement, he worked as a delivery driver at George Propane in Goshen.

John was an avid hunter and fisherman. He and his wife spent many hours

shooting 3-D archery.

John is survived by his wife of 52 years, Mary Lou; his son, Scott and his partner, Jen of Goshen; his daughter, Lisa Bisbee of Otis, his sisters, Carolyn Bisbee of Maine, and Kathleen Brisbois and her partner James of Chesterfield and his grandson, Alden of Goshen. He also leaves behind numerous nieces and nephews. John was predeceased by his parents and his grandson, Thomas (T).

There are no calling hours. A burial service will be held at a later date. Donations may be made in John's memory to Highland Ambulance, 12 Williams Drive, Goshen MA 01032 or Chesterfield Rescue Squad, P.O. Box 28, Chesterfield MA 01012. Ahearn Funeral Home is entrusted with arrangements.

DEATH NOTICE

BISBEE, JOHN A.

Died Jan. 20, 2024
 Burial service at later date

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Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

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

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

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

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HUNTINGTON

Council on Aging offers weekly 'Memory Cafe'

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

HUNTINGTON – The Huntington Council on Aging hosts a weekly “Hilltown Memory Cafe” every Wednesday, from 2-3 p.m., offering art, music, nutritional and educational activities.

This program is open to residents from any community with or without memory issues. Art instruction is provided by Therapeutic Artist, Lori Bocon. As soon as the new ramp is opened, the

Memory Cafe will return to Stanton Hall. Until then, activities will be held at the Huntington Evangelical Church Chapel, 22 Russell Road.

A caregiver support group is held every week during this time. Live music is provided once a month. Upcoming performers include the Pioneer Valley Fiddlers on Wednesday, Feb. 28; Wild Thyme on Wednesday, March 27 and Jack and His Guitar on Wednesday, April 24.

Anyone needing transportation may call Franklin Regional Transit Authority Van Driver Richard Holman at 860-836-

1844 to schedule a ride by 6 p.m. on the day before. Appointments should be made as far in advance as possible to ensure availability. An application needs to be completed prior to riding the van. People should call 413-512-5205 to have one mailed or emailed to them. The fare for the van ride to the Memory Cafe or COA office is \$1.50 round trip.

These programs are made possible in part by a grant from Highland Valley Elder Services through funding under the Federal Older Americans Act and by a grant from the Huntington Cultural

Council, a local agency that is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

The Huntington COA also offers outreach services that support elders, and their caregivers, with information and resources, including identifying eligible benefits and making home visits. People may call Caregiver Support Coordinator/Facilitator and Outreach Coordinator Crystal Wright-Partyka at 413-685-5283 or email caregiveroutreach@huntington-ma.us for more information or to sign up for either program.

SELECT BOARD

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Following the meeting, Chornyak said, “The Crescent Street project is in its closeout phase and the Town of Huntington is actively addressing several construction-related issues outstanding with the contractor. A sewer backup occurred and the subsequent repair by town forces resulted in a trench patch in the road, several misaligned manhole covers, and miscellaneous workmanship items (considered punch list items) were discussed.”

The ultimate decision before the town was whether or not the town should release the final payout for the work done on Crescent Street by the JL Construction Corporation of West Springfield, which was funded through a Community Development Block Grant through the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.

According to Selectman Bill Hathaway, some of these items have a longer term impact. For example, scarred trees hit by construction equipment, will lead to insect infestations and in time require tree removal. Another section appeared to have inadequate coverage, which will create a pothole in a brand new road that the highway department will have to repair repeatedly.

Booth said the cost of tree removal could run \$5,000 per tree.

In the meantime, the contractor is awaiting payment on two final invoices: a \$16,919 progress payment and \$39,007.58 final payment. Hathaway was not happy about the project outcome. “So we’re supposed to pay extra for sub-par work?” he asked. “We have a scab on a brand new road. It’s always going to be there.”

Discussion on the town’s options, including the possibility of pursuing legal action against the contractor, continued for nearly an hour, until next steps were agreed to and will be handled by Chornyak.

While Chornyak was present, the Select Board also moved forward on

the first stage of the upcoming Bromley Road Culvert Project. A proposal from Tighe & Bond was submitted for engineering, data collection and preliminary design at a cost of \$42,000. Funding for this project will come from the Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Project from the Division of Ecological Restoration with the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game.

Drug/Alcohol Free Workplace Policy

In other business, Peloquin presented a Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace Policy for consideration. “I think this is important for us to have in place, in order to receive monies from the Federal Government,” Peloquin explained. The original policy was drafted by the town’s attorney in 2019; KP Law has since rechecked and verified that there are no additional changes. The policy applies to all town employees and covers the use of alcohol, controlled substances and marijuana—even though marijuana is legalized in the state-while working.

Prohibited are “on-the-job consumption of controlled substances, marijuana (with or without a prescription) or alcohol, whether on Town Property or at any other worksite where employees may be assigned, or elsewhere during work hours.” It further details the actions that must be taken if an employee is convicted of violations to the policy: they must inform their Supervisor within I’ve days, who in turn must inform the Chair of the Select Board. Said employees may be required to complete a substance abuse program as a condition of further employment. The policy was approved unanimously.

A second policy-Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace Policy for Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) Holders—was also on the agenda but Peloquin suggested that it be tabled until the next meeting, as the town decides what the first and second violation of the policy would entail.

Tax Collector hours

Sue Foppiano also met briefly with the Board, who requested that she arrange some of her hours as Tax Collector for Wednesday evenings when she can be available to the public. Foppiano said she currently works at Town Hall on Monday evenings and that switching to Wednesdays would require changing the time of the bi-weekly Water Commissioners meetings, which she will look into. The rest of her work is completed at home, which is allowed for town employees with Select Board approval.

Sidewalk Machine Operator

Sidewalk Machine Operator Jim Arnold has requested a pay increase to \$20/hour. His current pay rate is \$16/hour. Concerns included the job had been posted at the current rate, but he was the only applicant and it is a difficult position to fill. Following discussion, the board approved a pay increase to \$18 per hour for the rest of this season.

Budgets

Peloquin informed the Board that she intends to give each department an excel spreadsheet to work their FY’25 budgets out, instead of the paper worksheets that had been used in the past. She expects to have these out by the end of this week and will ask that they be returned by Feb. 20. Chairman Ed Renaud suggested that Peloquin meet with each department and coordinate with the Finance Committee, to review the budgets. Cost of living increases will not be determined until a later date, Renaud said.

Other business

Finally, the new ramp for Town Hall/Stanton Hall is nearing completion. Concrete has been poured and temporary railings are in place. Once the final railings are received, they will take a couple of days to install. Overall, the

project has run over a little but is still close to on schedule. The contractor gave Peloquin information on how to maintain the ramp: it will be damaged if treated with salt or calcium chloride. If icy, plain sand can be utilized.

Peloquin also reported that the property tax work off program applications for senior citizens and Veterans are out and due back Feb. 12. The Select Board will select the participants for 2025 at their following meeting.

A memo has gone out to all departments informing them that content for the Annual Town Report is due in March.

Alzheimer virtual support group meets Jan. 31

Alzheimer’s Association Virtual Support Group sponsored by Armbrook Village will be held Wednesday, Jan. 31 at 6 p.m.

Caregivers and family members are invited to share their personal experiences and strategies for communicating with their loved ones.

This month’s group is virtual. People should email their name and phone number to reception@armbrookvillage.com to be added to the Zoom list or call 413-568-0000.

Groups are held the last Wednesday of the month. The support group is offered by Armbrook Village Senior Living and Memory Support Community, 551 North Road, Westfield.

LIBRARY

from page 1

Cormier, which was postponed in January due to weather. The author of “Life and Times of Parley B. Hutchins” will be Saturday, Feb. 3 at 11 a.m. in the library. His book deals with the sensational murder of a Huntington resident that drew national attention back in the 1800s.

Story hours continue on Saturday mornings at 10:30 a.m. with “There Was a Party for Langston” on Feb. 3, “I Am Rosa Parks” on Feb. 10, “Dear Reader” on Feb. 17 and “Rosie Revere Engineer” on Feb. 24. Children of all ages are welcome.

Teen Game Night will be held on Saturday, Feb. 3 from 4-6 p.m. This event is for people aged 14 - 16 years old. Pizza and soda will be served and the library will have a variety of games available. Attendees should also feel free to bring their own.

Valentine’s Day is on Wednesday, Feb. 14 and there are several activities tied to that. A card making station will

be set up from Feb. 1-14 for patrons to stop in and make their own Valentines Day Cards. Also on Feb. 14 will be a Do It Yourself painted wine glass project at 6 p.m. Participants must be 21 or over. All materials will be included.

How about having some blind dates with books this month? Stop in and pick out a wrapped book to read. Complete and return the enclosed rating slip to enter into the HPL “Book Lovers” raffle. A drawing on Saturday, Feb. 24 will take place to determine the winner of a gift basket that includes a zippered tote bag, mug, notebook and pen and a scented candle.

Finally, the Book Club has announced that the pick for February is “All Adults Here” by Emma Straub. Copies may be picked up at the library (while available), ordered through interlibrary loan, or borrowed through Libby. The Book Club will meet to discuss this book on Thursday, March 7 at 4 p.m.

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OPINION

GUEST COLUMN

in the Garden

by Roberta McQuaid



Crazy for carrots

I used the last of my home grown carrots in soup today. Growing enough carrots to last into the winter months is a huge accomplishment for me. You see, I've never been the best carrot grower.

In the past, either the seeds didn't germinate well, or if they did, bugs ate the seedlings when they were just an inch tall. One year I got past that only to have the roots taste so bitter at harvest that I ended up throwing them all out.

All that work for nothing!

After a good carrot growing experience last year, however, things are looking up, and I'm planning for an even better harvest this summer. I've been slow to inventory my seeds this year, but in preparation, I did some research on carrot varieties and culture.

My great-flavored carrots were due in part to the variety.

I don't remember the exact name, but I know for certain they were a Nantes type. The sausage shape and blunt end is a give-away. They were crisp and sweet and about six-seven inches long.

If you aim to grow the kind of standard carrots that are typically sold in the grocery store, Imperator types are what you should look for. Because they can grow very long, be sure you have loose, deep soil.

Some experts say that although they can top off at nine-10 inches long, they are not always flavorful.

Chantenay types are a good choice for shallow soils.

These carrots have wide shoulders but are extremely tapered, growing only five-six inches long. They are typically crisp and sweet, and like most carrots, taste even sweeter after a few frosts.

Another good choice for shallow or dense soils are the Danvers types. Originating in Danvers, Massachusetts, this heirloom six-eight inch carrot tapers to a point.

Typically, they store well and are good for cooking.

In addition to these types, there are hybrids of the above types and specialties beyond that. Once thing they all have in common is their culture.

Growing carrots is not hard if you follow a few hard and fast rules.

Ideally soil should be deep, loose and free of stones. Carrots grow well in raised beds for this reason.

Regular garden beds should have the soil loosened to about a foot deep. Be wary of using fresh manure or other sources of fertilizer that are super high in nitrogen.

While it's true that carrots like some nitrogen, having ultra rich soil will make for fibrous, hairy roots. Last year, I sowed my carrot seeds immediately after harvesting my garlic in July.

I did not amend the soil at all in preparation of the planting. Experts say that if you are going to amend it should be done the fall prior.

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

SIGNS THAT YOU MAY HAVE FROZEN PLUMBING ...



GUEST COLUMN

How can I get details about my Social Security payment?



Dear Rusty

How do I find the actual breakdown of the Medicare insurance that I have auto deducted and my actual Social Security payment?

I was just looking at a video which explained the 3% Cost of Living Adjustment we will be receiving this year and it compared the current payout to the new payout. There seems to be a big difference in what I am getting and what they said in the video. Currently my Social Security payments are \$1,431. My Medicare insurance is supposed to be \$165, which means my total Social Security is about \$1,596. On the video it said all retired workers are getting \$1,848 with the new increase to take it to \$1,938. There are a couple hundred dollars there that I seem to be missing out on. Can you help me understand that difference?

Signed: Confused Senior

Dear Confused Senior

What you're asking for is an itemized breakout of your gross Social Security ben-

efit, any deductions being taken therefrom (e.g., your Medicare Part B premium), the amount of your COLA increase and your net Social Security payment for 2024. If that is the case, the best way to get this detail is in your personal "my Social Security" online account, which provides all the information mentioned.

You can access your online account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount, and if you don't already have that online account set up, you'll need to first establish your online access credentials. Instructions for how to do that will be at that website.

I'm not sure which video you watched, but "all retired workers" do not get \$1,848 or \$1,938. Everyone's Social Security benefit is different, based on their lifetime earnings record and the age at which they claimed benefits. The numbers you heard in the video were likely average Social Security payments, not the actual amount you should personally be receiving. Here's how it works:

Your personal benefit is based on your Primary Insurance Amount, which is the amount you get if you claim for your benefits to start at your Full Retirement Age, which is somewhere between 66 and 67 depending on the year you were born. Claim before your FRA your benefit is permanent-

SECURITY, page 5



I received an email from a West Brookfield resident, who included two photos of bluebirds at her feeder.

She took the photos on New Year's Day and had six or seven of them. She said last year she had bluebirds visit regularly in late winter arriving on Valentine's Day.

She said in the email, "We built a meal-worm feeder (thanks to Mark Blazis instructions) and the outcome was a pair nesting in one of our nesting boxes and bringing their pair of fledglings to the feeder.

Bluebirds are migratory, but some stay around all winter just like some of the Canada geese and robins do. Bluebirds, along with other small birds, will use nesting boxes for shelter during storms or at night. The boxes provide a dry place and protection from the wind and cold.

The bluebird is about 6 1/2 inches long. The male has a brilliant blue head, back, wings and tail with a brick red throat and breast. The female is has a rich, buffy throat and breast. She has a grayish blue head and back with light blue wings and tail and a white eye ring.

Bluebirds may come to feeders for peanut butter mixes, berries, meal worms and



Bluebirds

raisins. The female lays three to six pale blue eggs in a nest in a tree cavity, abandoned woodpecker hole or birdhouse. The nest consists of grasses, plant stems, bine needles and is lined with hair, feathers and fine grasses.

They inhabit farmlands, open woodlands and rural yards.

Brimfield birds

A Brimfield resident said in an email, "Yesterday (Jan. 6) there were about a dozen robins in the yard feasting on the crab apples and they were joined by a few cedar wax-wings."

He said, "Today we awoke to about 8 inches of snow and all of the trees were covered with snow that was stuck to the branches. The crab apple trees were full of

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OPINION

Hamilton on Foreign Policy: Bashing China is easy but not always helpful



Comments on
CONGRESS

By Lee Hamilton

Here's one thing we can count on in the upcoming election year: American politicians will find ways to criticize China, even if they're running for jobs that have little to do with U.S. foreign policy.

China-bashing is a tried-and-true way to appeal for votes.

It's politically safe: China has few defenders anywhere in the United States. Politicians can take shots at China without worrying that they will offend anyone or lose support and, certainly, China often deserves criticism.

But there is a downside to reflexive anti-China rhetoric. With the world's second-largest population and its second-largest economy, China is a force in world affairs.

We need to push back when it threatens our interests, but we also need to engage with China when appropriate.

It's understandable that China would be a target for attacks. We live in a bipolar world, with the U.S. and China competing for global influence.

Under President Xi Jinping, China has positioned itself as our chief rival and China's actions often call for pushback. It engages in unfair trade practices, disregards intellectual property rules and tramples on human rights.

It has been accused of genocide



Rep. Lee H. Hamilton and others are shown with Vice-Premier Deng Xiaoping in June 1979 during the first official visit to the U.S. by top Communist Chinese leadership. Among the others are Paul Findley in the far left back and Michael Barnes to Hamilton's left.

Courtesy of the Wells Library Lee Hamilton Photo Collection

against the Uyghur population in its Xinjiang province. It threatens Taiwan and antagonizes its neighbors over the South China Sea.

To many Americans, China can seem foreign and far away. Its people look different and speak different languages. Its autocratic system of government is very different from our democratic system.

A recent Pew Research Center survey found half of Americans consider China to be the biggest threat we face; that's three times as many as view Russia as our biggest threat. In another survey, more than 80% of Americans had negative views of China.

Some of China's actions do call for strong responses. We should expect candidates for relevant government offices to adopt clear positions toward China.

But China-bashing can go too far.

In Indiana, where I live, one candidate for governor has made "combating China" a centerpiece of his campaign. He and his rivals say they will confront China over fentanyl imports, online theft of personal information, and other matters.

The next governor of Indiana will have a lot of important issues to address, but getting tough with China won't be high on the list.

Demonizing China also has a long

and sometimes ugly history in the United States. Chinese immigrants in the 1800s did hard and dangerous jobs, working in mines and building railroads, but faced discrimination in housing, employment and education.

Anti-Chinese bias led Congress to pass the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, barring further Chinese immigration. Sensationalistic newspapers fanned fears of a "Yellow Peril" that threatened native-born Americans.

A 1924 law further restricted Asian immigration.

Some of those old prejudices can resurface today. One recent poll found that voters linked politicians' anti-Chinese rhetoric to a spike in violence against Asian Americans.

With election campaigns getting underway, some experts predict a rise in hate incidents.

At the end of the day, U.S. officials will have to lay aside the rhetoric and engage with China. That means standing firm when China threatens our interests and those of our allies, but it also means finding ways to work together.

We can, and should, cooperate on addressing climate change, combating terrorism, deterring drug smuggling, promoting free and fair trade, and other issues.

Lee Hamilton is a Senior Advisor for the Indiana University Center on Representative Government; a Distinguished Scholar at the IU Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies; and a Professor of Practice at the IU O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

from page 4

GARDEN

It can take a long time for carrot seeds to sprout. Gardeners have tried all sorts of extraneous measures to get them to germinate more quickly and with greater consistency.

Here are some things I have read about and some I have tried.

The old radish trick – try sowing radish seed interspersed among your carrot seed. The radishes will sprout first, marking the row and providing some shade for the developing carrot seedlings.

Some people pre-sprout. Place seed in a moist paper towel and set it in a warm spot in the house and it will sprout. Immediately after sprouting it is sown in place in the garden.

The rows are kept moist and ideally the seedlings take hold. Sadly, I have read that sometimes this causes roots that end up misshapen.

Sometimes gardeners use wood,

shade cloth or burlap to keep the seedbed moist. If you miss when the seeds sprout, they could be smothered under these coverings or worse yet, get tangled up in the fabric.

Check daily and remove coverings on the first notice of germination. Continue to keep the bed watered or seedlings will perish.

My success this past summer was due in part to when I sowed. In mid-July, soil temperatures were optimum (around 75 degrees) and seedlings germinated in a week.

I kept the plot watered until they were up and growing. Although carrot seed can germinate in early spring – even when soil temperatures are below 50 degrees, it will definitely require some patience, and work, on our part, to keep the seedbed from drying out.

Another concern gardeners have, has to do with sowing the tiny seeds

and/or thinning the seedlings. Carrots mature to the right size when given at least two inches between plants.

I usually try to sow my seed a half-inch apart and then thin to two inches. Thinning is a pain to do, especially in bigger plantings, but it can be done.

In order not to damage nearby seedlings, I often use a tiny pair of scissors to cut away the crowding seedlings. A thumb and index finger can also be used to pinch away the excess plants right at the soil line.

Sometimes gardeners mix carrot seed with sand or dry coffee grounds to make sowing the small seed easier; using seed tape or pelletized seed are other, albeit expensive options to insure more equidistant seedlings. Regular carrot seeds are viable for two-three years whereas pelletized seed is viable for a year.

Plan accordingly by not ordering

more than you need. Tape and coated seed do still need to be kept as moist as regular sowings – maybe even more so, due to the additional layers.

I am excited to grow carrots again this year. Hopefully a bigger harvest will enable soup-making well into spring.

Tackling what types of carrots to grow and ensuring good germination and a healthy stand of seedlings will mean I am well on my way to achieving that goal!

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

SECURITY

from page 4

ly reduced; claim after your FRA it is higher.

Your personal maximum benefit is achieved if you claim at age 70. The Medicare Part B premium (for outpatient healthcare services) is automatically deducted from your Social Security payment. Although the standard 2023 Part B premium was \$164.90, the standard 2024 Part B premium is \$174.70.

You may also have other things, e.g. income tax, withheld from your monthly Social Security payment.

The annual Cost of Living Adjustment for 2024 is 3.2%. That means your gross Social Security benefit goes up by that percentage starting in 2024.

But there was also a \$9.80 increase in your Medicare Part B premium starting in 2024, which means that you won't see all of the COLA increase in your Social Security payment. Since your Medicare premium is deducted from your Social Security, that Medicare increase will also be taken from your SS payment, so you won't see the full 3.2%

COLA increase in your 2024 Social Security payment.

To see all of this detail for you personally, I suggest you access your online "my Social Security" account as described above. As an alternative, you can also call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 and request a Benefit Verification Letter which will include all the information you seek about your Social Security payment.

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.

BACKYARD

from page 4

robins. One tree near the front of the house had over a dozen robins in the tree eating apples along with a waxwing or two."

The robins and wax wings also finished off the last of the fruit from the mountain ash and gleaned a bush with red berries. He said there were about three dozen robins and a half dozen cedar wax-wings in his yard as well as the "regulars" and two white-throated sparrows.

Grackles

I received an email from a woman, who had grackles at her feeder on Jan. 12. She also reported seeing some robins and a flock of about 30 to 40 juncos. She said she usually doesn't see grackles until spring.

Christmas bird count

Results for some Christmas Bird Counts that took place in our area are now available by visiting the website at <http://www.warerrivernatureclub.org/announcements.html>. Many new

records were set, and many old ones broken, with high numbers of species and individuals recorded. An open, ice/snow-free landscape, unfrozen waterways, and an abundant wild food crop were combined factors that encouraged many species to linger longer than usual.

Feeder activity

Birds at my feeder before the Jan. 7 storm consisted mainly of a few juncos, a white-throated sparrow or two and a few chickadees and downy woodpeckers. That all changed on Sunday, Jan. 7. I saw my cardinal pair, bluejays, lots of chickadees and tufted titmice. I also had mourning doves, white-breasted nuthatches, a downy woodpecker and a few goldfinches.

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.

OTIS

OTIS COA HOSTS PAINT AND SING



On Saturday, Jan. 20, 17 people participated in an Otis Council on Aging paint and sing. They enjoyed fun painting and live acoustic music. The painting was led by Kellyn Trapp while her husband, Bobbie sang soft tunes. *Photo by Eila Bell*

Town Clerk lists early and absentee ballot deadlines

OTIS – The deadline to apply for a mailed Early Ballot or Absentee Ballot is Tuesday, Feb. 27 at 5 p.m. The deadline to apply for an Absentee Ballot if voting in the Town Clerk’s office is Monday, March 4, at noon. These deadlines are for the Presidential Primary on March 5. People may call Lyn at 413-269-0100 extension 112 for assistance.

OTIS SENIORS ENJOY PIZZA PARTY



Thirty-seven seniors swayed to the music of Larry Southard while enjoying pizza donated by a secret friend. *Photo by Elia Bell*

Submissions are always welcome.

Send us your engagement, wedding, baby, anniversary and graduation news and photos.

Country Journal

24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069

email: countryjournal@turley.com

CUMMINGTON

Friday Cafe features Steve Philbrick and One Part Luck

CUMMINGTON – The next Friday Night Cafe will take place on Friday, Jan. 26 from 7-9 p.m. at the Village Church, 32 Main St.

This show will open with a spoken words set, both funny, touching, generous, and hopeful. People will sit around the metaphorical kitchen table as Steve Philbrick shares stories and poems from his 40 years of heart here in Cummington as farmer, minister, creamery worker, husband and dad.

The second hour will be with One Part Luck. Peg and John are planning a set of “Past to Present” including the first song they ever played for other people, the first song John wrote and the most recent pieces, with favorite songs and stories along the way. Guitar, bass, banjo and ukelele, all wrapped in sweet harmony.

Cafe shows are at the Village Church in beautiful downtown Cummington in the heart of the Cummington Cultural District. The shows are free, snacks are provided and bring your own drinks. Donations are appreciated. Masks are welcome and encouraged. Unlike last winter, 2024 shows will be in the intimate Vestry space.

Friday Night Cafe is supported in part by the cultural councils of Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Hinsdale/Peru, Plainfield, Williamsburg, Windsor and Worthington, local agencies supported by the Mass. Cultural Council a state agency.

Once again the cafes are held by the friendly folks at the Village Church, who believe music can be a powerful force for building community.

Contra dance to be held Feb. 24

CUMMINGTON – A Contra dance at the Cummington Community House, 33 Main St., will be held Saturday, Feb. 24 from 7-9 p.m.

This is a beginner and family friendly event and all dances are taught. This is a smoke and alcohol free environment. Donations will be accepted at the door.

Music will be provided

ed by Annika Amstutz on fiddle, George Wilson on fiddle, Becky Hollingsworth on piano, Joe Blumenthal on bass and the Back Row Band. Caller is Steve Howland.

Event sponsors are Cummington Cultural District and Dancing Fiddle Farm. People may email Sadie Stull at sarahstull@gmail.com or call 413-634-5013 with any questions.



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		USDA INSP. FRESH AMERICAN LAMB RIB CHOPS	\$9.99 lb		

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BLANDFORD

BOARD OF HEALTH

from page 1

Presidential Primary will be Saturday, Feb. 24 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. and Monday, Feb. 26 from 5-7 p.m. in her office.

The board approved the use of the Fire Department's Training Center on Main Street as a second alternate emergency voting location, only in the event that the regular voting area at the Town Offices cannot be used. This second alternate location is required by the state.

The board also authorized Jemiolo to make arrangements for police coverage for all 2024 elections.

Interim Town Administrator

Interim Town Administrator Ira Brezinsky reported on his attendance at the Mass Municipal Association annual meeting in Boston. He cited the additional funding for rural roads in the Governor's budget, as well as meal tax. Letendre asked about a potential "fast food tax" and the town already participates in food tax. She would like to know if there is a separate food tax only on fast food.

There is the possibility of increasing the bid requirement threshold from \$50,000 to \$100,000 under MGL Ch 30B.

He said one of the "major themes the conference was the whole push for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, DEI", and the featured speaker, Dr. Eddie Glaude, from Princeton, he said was remarkable. The quote from Dr. Glaude that he came away with was, "Diversity can be seen as a problem to be managed or a virtue to be cherished."

The IRS mileage rate is now \$.67 a mile, up from \$.655 last year. This will be on next week's agenda.

He informed the board of a "pretty good" leak in the roof where the roofline meets the gym. There was water on the floor from the lobby to the restrooms and into the gym. John Hoppe took pictures, and there is "significant sheetrock damage". Hoppe shoveled on the roof to divert water. The roof seems to be in good shape according to Hoppe. Allen suggested the problem might be with

the flashing. Brezinsky will reach out to the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association regarding insurance coverage.

Ambulance

He has been working with the Hilltown Community Ambulance Association for funding. His personal opinion is that "They do a fine job," and to cover 200 square miles with 8,000 people, is a lot and expensive. He suggested the HCAA hold information meetings throughout the area,

He also told the board it has been a pleasure being in Blandford for the last few months. The board said they appreciated his work as well.

The alarms for the sprinkler system have been going off at night and the town just had the system inspected and repaired. Letendre said that the firm had been paid for inspection and repair, and the company needs to come back to fix the system.

She also asked about progress with the Plumbing Inspector, Aaron Poteat, in working with the Permittees permitting software and responding to town inquiries. Right now, Administrative Assistant Joann Martin takes the permit application and provides it to the inspector.

The board accepted the increase in the insurance evaluation of the Post Office building. Brezinsky explained that the increase was for "replacement cost."

The board reviewed the HCAA quarterly report which noted 20 calls, 18 of which were responded to in town and 17 required care at the paramedic level.

Finance

The finance team is working on grant funding for a new municipal accounting software. The goal is to have it all in place by July.

Budget requests have been coming in to Brezinsky, the budget process is in the works.

Next Monday will be the new Town Administrator Michael Szlosek's first day.



Town Clerk Doris Jemiolo reminds residents to register to vote.

Turley Photo by Mary Kronholm

Town Clerk lists voter registration information

BLANDFORD – "It's impossible not to be aware that 2024 is an election year," said Town Clerk Doris Jemiolo.

There are four elections: the March Presidential Primary, the local annual election in June, the September state primary and the November general election.

Residents should be sure they are registered to vote by visiting the Town Clerk's page on the town website at townofblandford.com, and click on the voter registration button.

This will take people to the state's Voter Registration Online where it will be possible to register to vote online, check their registration status and update any information such as address and party affiliation.

"We know how busy everyone is, and this will help streamline the process of voter registration for everyone. We want to make voter registration as easy and convenient as we can for everyone," said Jemiolo.

Any questions can be directed to her office by calling 413-848-4279.

CHESTER

Boy Scout Troop 120 to hold pancake breakfast

CHESTER – Troop 120 from Chester will be putting on a pancake breakfast on Saturday, Feb. 3 at the Chester Firehouse on Route 20.

Seating begins at 8 a.m. and will run until noon. The Scouts will be serving pancakes and bacon, along with an assortment of breakfast beverages. Cost

of the meal will be \$10 and includes unlimited pancakes.

The Scouts will use the money raised from the breakfast to support them on upcoming camping trips. Canned goods will also be collected on behalf of the Huntington Food Pantry.

GREAT BARRINGTON

Sen. Mark announces staff hours for Berkshire County

BOSTON – State Senator Paul W. Mark announces his staff will host office hours at five locations in Berkshire County in January.

Location is Great Barrington, Monday, Jan. 29 from 9 a.m.-noon in Town Hall, 334 Main St.. Residents of any of the 57 municipalities in

the Senator's Berkshire, Hampden, Franklin and Hampshire District are encouraged to share ideas on current or potential state legislation, or to ask for assistance with issues involving any state agency.

Appointments are not required.

BECKET

Becket Art Center list events

BECKET – The Becket Art Center, 7 Brooker Hill Road, lists upcoming events. Nia with Diane Firtell meets Fridays from noon-1 p.m. Cost is \$10 for Becket Art Center members and \$15 drop-in for non-members. Class is cancelled if Chester Becket Regional School District is closed.

On Friday, Jan. 26 starting at 7

p.m. there will be a Pop up Dance party. People will dance to favorite The PROBLEM with the Border...tunes.

Yoga with Rima Sala will meet Thursday, Feb. 1 from 9:30-10:30 a.m. Cost is \$5 per BAC members. There is no class on Thursday, Jan. 25. Class is cancelled if Chester Becket Regional School District is closed.

WILLIAMSBURG

Grange to host potluck dinner and 4-H presentation Feb. 3

WILLIAMSBURG – The Williamsburg Grange invites the public on Saturday, Feb 3 to a potluck dinner at 6 p.m. and a presentations by 4-H students at 7 p.m., followed by Valentine drafts. All are welcome, to

this free event.

It will be held in Grange Hall, 10 Main St. People should use the side door entrance. People may call

413-896-3230 for more information.

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

NORTHAMPTON

Cooley Dickinson has less parking during expansion

NORTHAMPTON – Construction crews began to stage the equipment needed for the Cooley Dickinson Hospital's Emergency Department expansion and renovation project.

The first step in this 20 plus month project will be to set up fencing in the parking lot across from the Emergency Department entrance, parking lot A. "We anticipate some impact to patient parking," said VP of Operations Tony Scibelli, "depending on when people visit, there will be fewer parking spaces than usual."

Patients and visitors are encour-

aged to park in lots A and B. The electronic gates in parking lot B will be turned off during this time to accommodate the loss of parking spaces in lot A. People seeking care or visiting loved ones in the North Building should park in lot H.

At this point in the project, patients needing emergency care should continue to enter the Emergency Department through their dedicated Emergency entrance. With the addition of the staging area in the hospital parking lot, there is no impact to the traffic pattern in front of the Emergency Department

for cars or ambulances.

Cooley Dickinson is expected to serve approximately 40,000 emergency department patients this year. That care will be provided in a 1970s era building that was designed for 17,000 patients annually and is currently 40% under-sized. A shortage of space means that some patients are treated in hallways.

The Emergency Department also needs to expand its services to care for an aging population, three times the population from 10 years ago. In addition, the expansion will provide additional beds for people experiencing

mental health emergencies.

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

Forbes Memorial Library announces upcoming events

NORTHAMPTON – Forbes Memorial Library, 20 West St., will host local author, John Sheirer on Saturday, Jan. 27 from 2-3 p.m.

Sheirer answers that question in his new book, "For Now: One Hundred 100-Word Stories." These stories combine humor, depth, meaning, love, loss and connection, all in exactly 100 words each.

Any local authors, who would like to share their work with the community, should email to spaces@forbeslibrary.org to sign up for a future author showcase.

A virtual program entitled "The Challenges and Rewards of Being a Debut Author" will be held on

Monday, Jan. 29 from 7-8 p.m. They may register to attend by calling the

library at 413-587-1011 or visiting their website at <https://forbeslibrary.org>.

Speaking at the session are authors Lauren J. A. Bear, Rita Chang-Eppig, and Nishita Parekh about getting into publishing, the pitfalls, challenges and roadblocks as well as the excitement, fulfillment, and reader enthusiasm that makes it all worthwhile. A question and answer period will follow. This program is presented in partnership with Ashland Public Library.

The Silent Book Club will meet Tuesday, Jan. 30 from 6:30-8 p.m. People should with bring their own book or borrow one from the library collection and read alongside neighbors and friends. Following the quiet reading hour people may share and socialize if they wish. This Silent Book Club chapter

meets on the last Tuesday of each month in the Reading Room. All are welcome to come read in community with us, no library card is needed.

Drop-in tech help is available Mondays and Thursdays from 4-5:30 p.m. and Tuesdays from 2-3:30 p.m.

This service provides help using a computer or tech device. People should bring their device or they may use one of the library's computers. For more scheduling options, people may make a one-on-one appointment with a library staff member by calling 413-587-1011.

On Thursday, Jan. 25 rom 3:45-4:45 p.m. in the Community Room for ages 10 plus and up will meet to learn how to play the tabletop card game Magic: The Gathering. Youths may bring their own cards or use the library's. They may

email jvrysen@forbeslibrary.org for more information.

Kids' Gaming Club meets Friday, Jan. 26 from 4-5 p.m. in the Community Room for ages 7 to 12 to play the library's Nintendo switch.

The gaming lounge is open on Tuesdays for teens ages 12 and up.

Preschool story time is on Thursday, Jan. 25 from 10:30-11:30 a.m. Children ages 3 to 5 will enjoy books, songs, and puppets and participate in an open-ended art activity designed to encourage creativity.

In the Hosmer Gallery, the first ever Forbes library staff are show is taking place. This exhibit showcases the creative endeavors of our talented staff ranging from digital to sculpture, textile to watercolor and so much more.

SCHOOLS & YOUTH

Colleges and universities announce fall President's and Dean's List

Presidential Scholar

Clarkson University
Potsdam, N.Y.

Lindsay Walsh of Westfield, a senior engineering and management major

Dean's List

Bucknell University
Lewisburg, Penn.

Kieran Coscia of Pittsfield, Class of 2026

Dean's List

Siena College
Loudon, N.Y.

Annie Boisseau of Westfield, Charlotte Lussier of Westfield and Emma Mazeika of Westfield

Dean's List

Eastern Connecticut State University
Willimantic, Conn.

Margaret Barr of Easthampton, an exploratory education major; Maggie Rubbeck of Easthampton, a health science major and Morgan Anjos of Westfield, an accounting major

Dean's List

East Stroudsburg University of
Pennsylvania

East Stroudsburg, Penn
Waverly KaneLong of Easthampton, early childhood education preK-4 major

President's List

Elon University
Elon, N.C.

Nancy Elizabeth Mueller of Russell and daughter of Mary Hull and Mark Mueller

Dean's list high distinction

Grove City College
Grove City, Penn.

Sarah Miller of Westfield, a Christian Ministries major and daughter of Vern and Dr. Charlotte Miller

Dean's List

Nazareth University
Rochester, N.Y.

William O'Neill of Cummington

Dean's List

Lasell University
Newton

Jocelyn Mettey of Easthampton, Landon Reyes of Westfield, Chloe Schumacher of Westfield, Kieran Oliver of Westfield, Julia LaPlante of Westhampton and Lyssa Tirrell of Westhampton

Dean's List

Roger Williams University
Bristol, R.I.

Ava Cieplinski of Westfield, Hannah Coffey of Montgomery, Megan Fitzgibbons of Westfield, Alan Martin of Easthampton and Dominic Monti of Westfield.

Dean's List

Springfield College
Springfield

Kyana Alvarado of Westfield, psychology major; Malaina Baker of Westfield, art therapy major; Liam Barrett of Westfield, recreation industry and therapy recreation major; Noel Bollenbach of Westfield, digital/web/multimedia major; Gabriel Colenback of Easthampton, exercise science/applied exercise science major; Jake Constantine

of Easthampton, physical education health major; Joshua Dameworth of Easthampton, a computer and information services major; Amy Guachione of Becket, a criminal justice/human services major; Isabel Navarro of Westfield, a psychology major; Ryder Pieczarka of Westfield, a health science/pre-physical therapy major; Ryan Roskey from Westfield, a health science/pre-occupational therapy major; Jillian Scott of Westhampton, a health sciene/pre-occupational therapy major; Meghan Sullivan of Easthampton, health science/pre-physician assistant and Jacob Wagner of Westfield, criminal justice major

Dean's List

Stonehill College
Easton

Lauren Campbell of Westfield, Madeline Jenkins of Westhampton, Emily Kostek of Easthampton and Ella Lund of Westfield

Dean's List

University of New Haven
New Haven, CT

Jake Thayer of Blandford, Class of 2024 and engineering major

PLEASE RECYCLE THIS NEWSPAPER

Hampden County students eligible for Horace Smith Fun scholarship

WESTFIELD – The Horace Smith Fund has scholarship and fellowship money available for graduates of Hampden County public and private high schools.

Graduating high school seniors and students already in college may apply for Scholarships of \$12,000. Those in their final year of college and previous college graduates pursuing advanced degrees may apply for Fellowships of \$15,000. Applicants must maintain at least a B average in college and be

enrolled as full-time students.

Awards are made based on both academic achievement and financial need. Of great importance is a personal written account of why the student feels deserving of financial assistance and their goals in pursuing higher education.

Last year, \$316,000 was awarded to 30 individuals. Scholarships were given to 22 graduating seniors from nine Hampden County high schools. Three scholarships were also award-

ed to current college students to assist them in completing their undergraduate degrees. Five fellowships were given to college graduates pursuing advanced degrees, who had graduated from Hampden County high schools.

The Horace Smith Fund was established in 1899 by the successful and generous philanthropist named Horace Smith, co-founder of Smith & Wesson, established in Springfield. The scholarships and fellowships are named for Walter S. Barr, a West Springfield busi-

nessman, whose widow left the bulk of the family estate to The Horace Smith Fund in 1950.

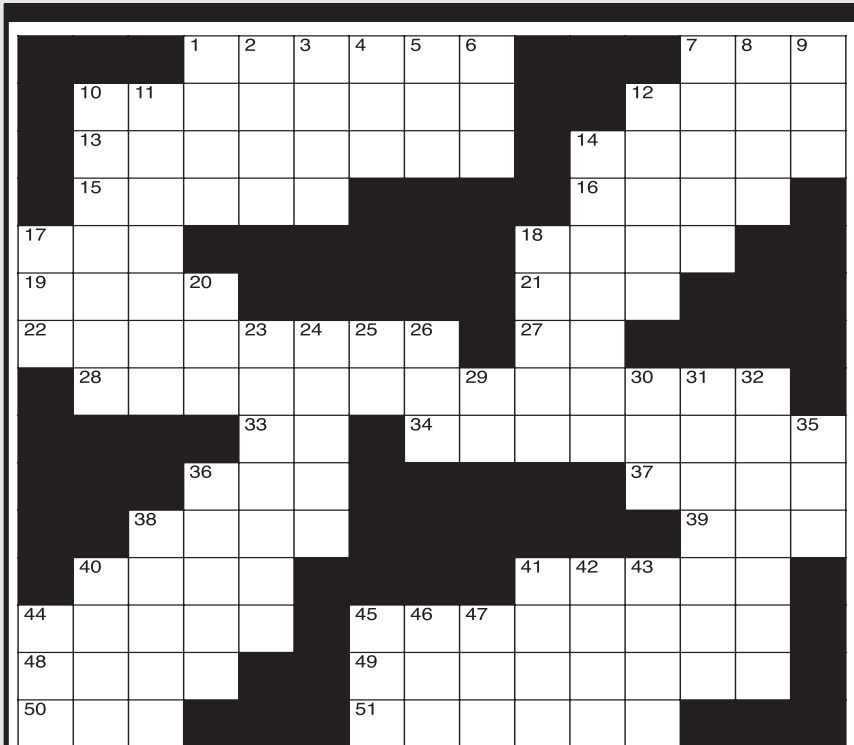
Completed applications must be received either electronically or by mail to The Horace Smith Fund at 16 Union Avenue, Suite 2K, Westfield, MA 01085 no later than Friday, March 15. Applications are available at local high school guidance offices, college financial aid offices, online by visiting www.HoraceSmithFund.org or by calling 413-739-4222.



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CLUES ACROSS

1. Winged nut
7. ___ Humbug!
10. One who sets apart
12. Circle above a saint's head
13. Unpleasantly loud and harsh
14. Expressed pleasure
15. Feminine given name
16. Company of badgers
17. Popular Dodge pickup truck
18. Witty sayings
19. Leader
21. Autonomic nervous system
22. Premolar
27. Atomic #28
28. Holiday decorative item
33. Exclamation of surprise
34. Rusk or

36. Returned material authorization (abbr.)
37. Scottish or Irish Gaelic language
38. Eat
39. Marxist economics theory (abbr.)
40. Ceases to exist
41. Male Arabic name
44. Series of ridges on an organ wall
45. Places where bees are kept
48. One-time Yankees sensation Kevin
49. Church office
50. Single lens reflex
51. Pieces of fibrous tissue

CLUES DOWN

1. Classify
2. Dismounted
3. Produced
4. Consumed
5. Director Howard
6. The products of human creativity
7. Thai monetary units
8. Away from wind
9. Builder's trough
10. Relating to Islam
11. It can sometimes ache
12. Small quantities (Scot.)
14. Poisonous plant
17. Laugh at
18. Vogul
20. C. European river
23. Type of cat
24. Exclamation of disgust

25. Stephen King novel
26. Without armies
29. Expression of sympathy
30. Relative biological effectiveness (abbr.)
31. Previously
32. Illegal drug
35. Kiloelectronvolt
36. Large, flightless birds
38. For smoking
40. Binary
41. Competition
42. Mark resembling an arrow
43. Containers
44. Root mean square (abbr.)
45. Commercials
46. I.M., architect
47. 007's creator

THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPES

ARIES

Mar 21/Apr 20
Aries, you may have an artistic talent that you haven't explored yet. Events this week may spur you on to try something new because inspiration is high for you right now.

CANCER

Jun 22/Jul 22
You might be asked for assistance by a close friend having financial troubles. Be careful about lending out money at this juncture because you don't want to cause issues for yourself.

LIBRA

Sept 23/Oct 23
Libra, when you discover a mutual interest with someone you consider a friend, your bond may grow even deeper. Have fun spending time together.

CAPRICORN

Dec 22/Jan 20
Capricorn, a romantic encounter you have been counting on may not pan out this week, or it may be less exciting than you imagined. Wait a few days before reevaluating things.

TAURUS

Apr 21/May 21
Taurus, your household may not agree on which remodeling changes to make. Unless you come up with a compromise, nothing will get done at all.

LEO

Jul 23/Aug 23
You may have a hard time integrating yourself into a group, Leo. Make a concerted effort to be supportive of others. This can be an effective way to get back into the group's good graces.

SCORPIO

Oct 24/Nov 22
Scorpio, something important to you doesn't seem to be moving along at the pace you had hoped it would. You might have to be a little more patient in this situation.

AQUARIUS

Jan 21/Feb 18
Don't put all of your trust in new information this week, Aquarius. It is likely unreliable, so take everything that is said with a grain of salt.

GEMINI

May 22/June 21
A miscommunication with a loved one could have you trying to make amends soon enough, Gemini. Don't worry, you will easily resolve your differences in time.

VIRGO

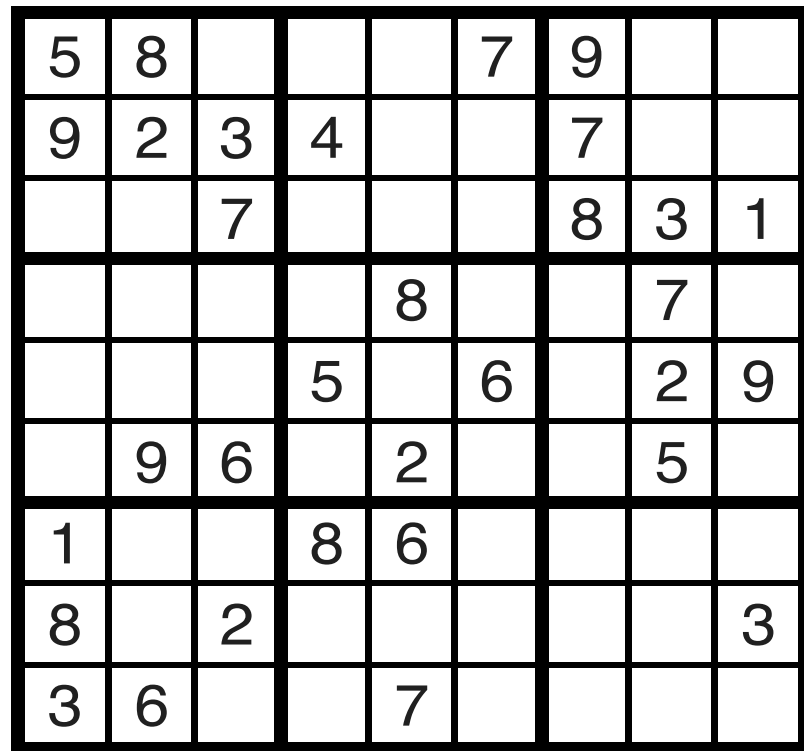
Aug 24/Sept 22
Speaking with friends this week could help to address a number of things you're wrestling with, Virgo. Don't hesitate to lean on this support network.

SAGITTARIUS

Nov 23/Dec 21
General malaise may have you wondering if you are sick. It's likely nothing more than stress and fatigue. Keep an eye on symptoms moving forward.

PISCES

Feb 19/Mar 20
Your imagination is riding high this week, Pisces. Don't hinder it in any way so you can explore all of the creativity that is flowing out of you right now.



SUDOKU

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MONTGOMERY



Eva Capelli is shown with Doug Pi. Eva Capelli and Friends will perform Thursday, Feb. 1 at 3 p.m. *Submitted photo*

Music in Montgomery happens on Thursdays

MONTGOMERY – There are five Thursdays in February this year thanks to Leap Year and each one marks a special music offering at Montgomery Town Hall, 161 Main Road.

The “Music in Montgomery” series takes place every Thursday afternoon starting at 3 p.m. This series is co-hosted by the Montgomery Public Library and by Gray Catbird Pottery Studio. Attendees are invited to bring baked goods to share. Donations are accepted for the refreshments, with money split between the Montgomery Volunteer Firemen’s

Association and the Town Library. Donations are also accepted to tip and thank the fabulous musicians, who perform each week.

Featured musicians in February are Eva Capelli and Friends on Thursday, Feb. 1; Ravenwood on Thursday, Feb. 8; Ed Bentley and Friends on Thursday, Feb. 15; Larry Southard on Thursday, Feb. 22 and the Hilltown Hillbillies on Thursday, Feb. 29.

These events are open to all who are interested. For more information, people may call Dale Rogers at 413-875-5205.

LENOX

SculptureNow to relaunch sculpture at The Mount

LENOX – The Mount, Edith Wharton’s Home announces the annual outdoor sculpture exhibition produced in the Berkshires by SculptureNow for the past twenty-five years and at The Mount for nine years has been brought in-house as a formal Mount program, beginning with the 2024 exhibit.

With the retirement of SculptureNow’s founder and executive director, Ann Jon, the timing was right for a transition that promises a dynamic future for the further convergence of art and nature in the Berkshires.

Founded by Jon in 1998, Sculpture Now established itself as a premier platform for contemporary sculpture in Western Massachusetts and beyond, showcasing the work of both emerging and established artists. As the annual sculpture exhibit transitions to The Mount’s stewardship, the show will continue to feature a diverse range of sculptures in many sizes and media thoughtfully sited throughout the estate.

Susan Wissler, executive director of The Mount, shares, “By formally integrating SculptureNow into our programming, there is great synergy between Wharton’s literary legacy and the compelling narratives expressed through con-

temporary sculpture. We are grateful to Ann Jon and her decades of hard work to provide artists and visitors alike with a space to explore the intersection of literature, sculpture, and nature. She blazed a trail for sculpture in our region.”

Ann Jon, professional artist, curator, and art educator, shares that “25 years ago, sculpture was sometimes not considered fine art. I am gratified that so many people have interacted and connected with this art form of large-scale sculptures presented on the beautiful grounds of The Mount. I look forward to seeing the exhibitions continue under The Mount’s leadership.”

In 2023, SculptureNow at The Mount welcomed 55,000 visitors. The call for artist submissions is now open by visiting <https://sculptureatthemount.art-call.org>. A jury will select the sculptures for the 2024 exhibit, which will open on May 24 and remain onsite until Oct. 20. Artist-led talks will again be made available to visitors and students of all abilities.

The Mount is a proud partner of the Lenox Cultural District, one of five designated districts in Berkshire County. For more information, visit EdithWharton.org.



GOSHEN

Goshen Council on Aging lists upcoming events

GOSHEN – The Valentine lunch sponsored by the Council of Aging will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 13 at noon in the Goshen Town Hall.

The meal will feature a choice of chicken cacciatore or stuffed shells with tossed salad and rolls catered by Jerry Bird of Spruce Corner Restaurant. They will also have a special dessert. People should call Kerry Normandin at 413-268-9354 by Tuesday, Feb. 6 with their meal choice. A suggested five dollar donation is appreciated.

Friday, Feb. 2 the Community Connections Group from 10-11 a.m. in the dining room on the second floor of the Town Hall. This month they will have Jen O’Connell speaking about Sound Healing.

On Wednesday, Feb. 7 the crafts

group will meet in the upstairs dining room at the Goshen Town Hall from 1-3 p.m. Occasionally, they meet in the library so check in there too. The materials are ready for a craft to work on together. People may also bring whatever craft or needlework project they are working on.

Tuesdays, Feb 6, 13 and 20 Tai Chi class will continue at 9 a.m. in the Town Hall with instructor Richard Larson. The slow, repetitive movements of the Eight Ways are good for the body and the mind. People should wear comfortable clothing and supportive shoes. All abilities are welcome and they can modify the approaches as needed so that everyone can benefit. This is a very popular class- come give it a try.

Joan Griswold teaches an exercise

class in person on Wednesdays at 10:15 a.m. in the Goshen Town Hall. She also has classes on Zoom and in person other days of the week that people can join. Griswold has a brief health questionnaire she will have participants fill out. People may email Joan with questions and/or for the zoom links at joan@bybhealth.com.

On Tuesdays, Feb 20 and 27 the Highland Valley Elder Services HVES lunch is on the third and fourth Tuesdays of the month with pick up from the Goshen Town Hall from noon-12:30 p.m. The meal choices on Feb 20 are chicken Tikka Masala or macaroni and cheese and on Tuesday, Feb. 27, the meal choices are pulled pork or lentil bolognese. The meals also include milk, vegetables and a dessert. If people have not signed up and would like to for March, they

may call Kerry Normandin at 413-268-9354 to fill out a brief intake form. There is a suggested \$3 donation that is given to Highland Valley Elder Services to offset the cost of the meal.

Wednesday, Feb. 21 the Games Group will be from 1-3 p.m. and continue on the third Wednesday of each month. They meet in the dining room on the second floor of Town Hall, and occasionally in the library.

The COA has had some recent donations of durable medical equipment. They now have shower benches, walkers, a walker tray, two rollator walkers with seats, canes, commodes and medication boxes. People should call Henrietta Munroe at 413-268-7465 if they need any of these items and they will get them at no cost.

WESTHAMPTON

Westhampton Public Library announces upcoming events

WESTHAMPTON – Hours for the Westhampton Public Library are Monday and Thursday from 2-8 p.m., Tuesday and Wednesday from 9 a.m.-noon and 1-5 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

The library will be closed Monday, Feb. 19 in observance of Presidents’ Day. Community movie night will be held Friday, Feb. 9 from 6:30-8:15 p.m. On Thursday, Feb. 8 at 6:30 p.m. author Steven Cormier will be at the library. This is an opportunity to meet local Huntington-based author Steven Cormier and learn about the history and mystery surrounding the life and death of Parley B. Hutchins.

Parley B. Hutchins lived and worked in Huntington, in the mid to late 1800s on property that Cormier currently resides at. Hutchins’s untimely death led to a murder investigation that was never resolved. The book “Life and Times of Parley B. Hutchins” not only focuses on Parley Hutchins but also on the history and growth of the area and the eventual creation of Huntington, Massachusetts in 1855.

Opening reception for Pierre Archambault in Thursday, Feb. 15 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Archambault is a visual artist, a musician and a sound-designer for film. Mediums of choice for paint-

ing are oils and gouache paint. Musical instruments of choice are violin and guitar.

Family movie night is Saturday, Feb. 24 from 1-3 p.m.

Ongoing programs include: COA computer class with Bob Miller the second and fourth Mondays from 10 a.m.-noon, knitting group Mondays at 6 p.m., Scrabble group Tuesdays at 2 p.m., CFCE playgroup Tuesdays at 3:30 p.m., book group the fourth Tuesday at 7 p.m., Walk-in Wellness Clinics with Westhampton’s Public Health Nurse first and third Wednesdays from 10-11:30 a.m. and coffee and chat Wednesdays from 10

a.m.-noon.

Ongoing programs for children and teens include: homework help Mondays at 3:15 p.m., playgroup Tuesdays at 3:30 p.m., Story Time Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m., after school fun Thursdays at 3:30 p.m. (Lego club first Thursday, craft club second Thursday, Nintendo Switch happy hour third Thursday and comics club fourth Thursday) and teen craft night third Thursday at 6 p.m. This month’s craft is a donut cork board. Materials are limited to 8 participants and registration is required. Please register by emailing Emily at ewayne@cwmars.org.

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HILLTOWN HIKING ADVENTURES

Discovering an unusual man made structure



A Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hiker stands on the rim of what appears to be a cistern on Round Top Hill.



Even one of the Hilltown Hikers canine hiking companions checks out the inside of what appears to be a cistern.



Hilltown Hikers explore in and around this structure.

CHESTER – While hiking on the old Chester and Becket Railroad in Chester, which runs parallel to Route 20, the Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers took a look at their lidar imagery for this area.

They noticed a small rise in the ground close to the base of Round Top Hill. Hiking uphill towards the rise proved to be worthwhile. A cistern was found on this rise, whether it was once near or connected to a building is not known, checking the historic maps no structures were located here, just grazing

land for the farms on the old Huntington Road.

The structure was built entirely underground, lined with bricks and some mortar. No pegs, pipes or any kind of piping was found in or near the structure.

It is approximately 22 feet across and 7 feet deep. Cisterns are used to collect rain water usually from the roof of a structure. Historically, they were used to collect water where a well was impossible. With the abundance of springs in Chester, this seems highly unlikely. The hikes are always an adventure.



Two of the Hilltown Hikers explore the inside of what appears to be a cistern.

Submitted photos

PUBLIC NOTICES

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION – HIGHWAY DIVISION NOTICE OF A PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING

Project File No. 607231

A Live Virtual Public Informational Meeting will be hosted on the MassDOT website below to present the design for the proposed Reconstruction of Mountain Street project in Williamsburg, MA.

WHEN: 6:00 PM, Thursday, February 8, 2024

PURPOSE: The purpose of this meeting is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed Reconstruction of Mountain Street project. All views and comments submitted in response to the meeting will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible.

PROPOSAL: The project is located along Mountain Street from the Kingsley Avenue intersection, northerly to the Whately Town Line, for a total project length of approximately 15,000 linear feet. This project includes the reconstruction of Mountain Street by reclaiming the existing pavement. The project proposes to provide a constant 24 foot wide roadway to match the existing roadway that has a current average paved width of 24 feet. Travel lanes will be striped promoting traffic calming for driver self-regulation of travel speed awareness.

This meeting is accessible to people with disabilities. MassDOT provides reasonable accommodations and/or language assistance free of charge upon request (e.g interpreters in American Sign Language and languages other than English, live captioning, videos, assistive listening devices and alternate material

formats), as available. For accommodation or language assistance, please contact MassDOT's Chief Diversity and Civil Rights Officer by phone (857-368-8580), TTD/TTY at (857) 266-0603, fax (857) 368-0602 or by email (MassDOT.CivilRights@dot.state.ma.us). Requests should be made as soon as possible and prior to the meeting, and for more difficult to arrange services including sign-language, CART or language translation or interpretation, requests should be made at least ten business days before the meeting.

This meeting will be hosted, or a cancellation announcement posted, on the internet at <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/highway-division/events>.

JONATHAN GULLIVER
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR

CARRIE E. LAVALLEE,
P.E.
CHIEF ENGINEER
01/25, 02/01/2024

Town of Williamsburg

The Town of Williamsburg, acting through the Board of Selectmen is seeking price quotes to scrape and paint the exterior of the Old Town Hall building at 8 Main Street, Williamsburg, MA. Solicitations are being conducted pursuant to M.G.L ch.30, §39M. This is considered a M.G.L ch.149 project.

Specifications for the project will be available on 29 January 2024. Please email townadmin@burgy.org with #01292024-OTH in the subject line to request documents.

Price quotes will be due back by 02/16/2024 with an expected notice of award on 02/23/2024. 01/25/2024

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Also known as:
Shirley Winer
Date of Death: 05/12/2023
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL APPOINTMENT OF SUCCESSOR PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE

To all interested persons:

A Petition has been filed by: Mandeliene Smith of Lexington, MA requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order that Mandeliene Smith of Lexington MA be appointed as Successor Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve Without Surety on the bond and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before 10:00 a.m. on 02/07/2024.

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline

by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an Affidavit of Objections within thirty (30) days of the return date, action may be taken without further notice to you.

The estate is being administered under formal 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 recipients 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.

WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M. Hyland, First Justice of this Court. Date: January 10, 2024
Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register of Probate
01/25/2024

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