

Country Journal

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HUNTINGTON

River Race registration goes live Feb. 1

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

Harry Rock, Race Director of the Westfield River Wildwater Races, announced registration for this year's races will open on Sunday, Feb. 1.

People should log onto Westfieldriver.org/races to register. Rock added that racer start times will go in the same order that they registered. "If you are the tenth person to register, you are the tenth person to start," Rock said. "The earlier you register, the earlier you will start."

Likewise, any who wish to race near other boats with family and friends should coordinate the day and time that they will all register. "It is very difficult for race officials to change recorded start times after people are registered so please plan ahead," Rock said. "Doing so will give racers a high likelihood of having close start times to each other."

RACE, page 2



Submitted photo

Harry Rock, race director for the 71st Westfield River Wildwater Races, stands at the bottom of Boulder Patch Rapids on the East Branch of the Westfield River in Huntington. This is part of the Expert Race course, which starts at Knightville Dam.

HUNTINGTON

Select board tackles remaining agenda items

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

Due to a high number of important appointments scheduled for their Wednesday, Jan. 14 meeting, the Huntington Select Board scheduled an additional special meeting the following week to tackle leftover agenda items.

Chairman Roger Booth, members Bill Hathaway and John McVeigh, and Town Administrator Jennifer Pelouin were all present. The sole appointment of the evening was at the meeting's opening. Police Chief Brian Kowal gave an update on a citizen complaint about four unregistered vehicles on the property of Frank Pero at 32 Russell Road, which is in violation of a town bylaw. Kowal gave Pero a 30-day permit to store the old cars and trailers, which has since expired. Under

the bylaw, Pero may keep one unregistered motor vehicle on his property but the other three must be removed. Kowal reported that Pero is unable to sell them to a junkyard because he cannot prove ownership. Pero has not communicated with Kowal on this matter since Dec. 10. After discussion, the board asked Kowal to stop by and ensure that Pero is okay and ask him to attend an upcoming meeting where the board can see if they can do anything to help in this matter.

Resignation

Kowal also announced the resignation of Huntington Police Officer Michael Foyle, effective Jan. 11. Foyle has been appointed to the full time position of Police Chief at Westfield State University, which does not allow for continued part-time

AGENDA, page 2

BLANDFORD

EFSB to hold public hearing Feb. 3

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

"Whether you are an advocate or proponent of this expansion, I would strongly suggest you join this public hearing to listen to others or voice your opinion to the state Energy Facilities Siting Board," said Jackie Coury, Energy Projects Siting and Engagement Committee Chair.

The EFSB announced a Notice of Adjudication and public comment hearing regarding the Eversource substation on North Blandford Road. Coury added, "The purpose of any public hearing is to listen to the residents, who are impacted by the project."

Eversource or NSTAR Electric Company, has asked EFSB to grant individual and comprehensive zoning exemptions from Blandford's Zoning Bylaws in order to increase their substation on North Blandford Road. The plan is to expand the footprint of the substation area from 0.65 acres to 1.13 acres and to remove 4,000 square feet of tree growth.

There will be a public



Jackie Coury

comment hearing, in-person and via remote access on Tuesday, Feb. 3 at 6:30 p.m. at the Town Hall with a snow date Feb. 11 at the same time and place. Remote access information is available

by visiting the town's website at townofblandford.gov.

Complete directions for giving oral comments during the public comment hearing both in person or on Zoom, are also on the town website on the home page. That deadline is Monday, Feb. 2 at noon or in the event of inclement weather, Tuesday, Feb. 10. Those who have pre-registered will speak first.

Written comments are also possible if submitted Thursday, Feb. 18 by 5 p.m. or snow date Thursday, Feb. 26.

Coury again encouraged residents to participate in the public hearing. "Please take this opportunity to 'have your voice heard' as the EFSB will be the decision makers relative to whether Eversource will be exempt from Blandford Zoning Bylaws as this project progresses."

BLANDFORD

Robert Twyman presented with proclamation

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

The Select Board has written a proclamation honoring 53-year resident Robert Joseph "Bob" Twyman for his commitment to the town with his years of "public service, volunteerism and civic engagement."

The proclamation, presented to him last week on Thursday, when he was at Town Hall helping set up for the Council on Aging luncheon, describes his service.

Blandford is strengthened by dedication, service and generosity of Bob Twyman's spirit. He has served the town in several official capacities including as a member of the Blandford Planning Board, the Council on Aging, the Registrar of Voters, and as a member of the Selection Committee for the Blandford-Chester Police Department Chief of Police, offering thoughtful insight, fairness and a steady hand in each role.

He has also donated his time and skills to community projects including recent restoration work at the Volunteer Fire Department Training Center and Post Office building on Main Street.

The Board cited Twyman for his work as a professional truck driver,

delivering for Pioneer Dairy and Hood, "a profession that demands skill, reliability, patience and care-qualities that Bob exemplifies daily ensuring that essential goods reached their destinations safely and dependably,

often before most others had begun their day."

He has been a constant at Select Board Meetings, interview processes and community gatherings, offering perspective, support and good humor.

Once earning the affectionate nickname "Mayor of Blandford," from Joshua Garcia; a reflection of the respect and fondness held for him.

TWYMAN, page 5



Turley Publications photo by Mary Kronholm

Joann Martin, Executive Assistant to Select Board and Town Administrator, presents the proclamation to Robert "Bob" Twyman on the Blandford Select Board's behalf.



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HUNTINGTON

Library launches coworking coffee hour

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

HUNTINGTON – Director Amanda Loiselle announced a new offering at the Huntington Public Library next month. Starting in February, the library will host a Coworking Coffee Hour on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month starting at 11 a.m. People can bring any work they need to complete to the library, which has high speed Internet access and enjoy the camaraderie and accountability of a group setting. Coffee and tea will be provided. “The Coworking Coffee Hour was actually proposed by one of our regulars and I absolutely loved the idea,” Loiselle said.

Other programs are tied to the month of February. Patrons who stop in during February can take part in the library’s third annual “Blind Date with a Book”

program. Staff will choose library books and wrap them in butcher paper, so that the patron has no idea what they will read. Patrons randomly choose and read a wrapped book. When they return the book with a review card, they will be entered into a raffle at the end of the month for a books read tracker.

Crafters will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 12 at 4 p.m. People may create their own Valentine’s Day cards in time for the holiday. Craft materials will be provided. This activity is perfect for all ages.

February is also “Friendship Month” and the library is holding a Do It Yourself friendship bracelets activity. Participants will craft their own bracelet and even have a friend join them. All ages are welcome on Wednesday, Feb. 18 at 11 a.m. This event takes place during the school vacation week.

Also during the winter

break, the library’s monthly Game Night will be held on Thursday, Feb. 19 at 4 p.m. People may bring in their own game to play or use one of the library’s. This is a great way for people to shake off cabin fever.

The Cookbook Club will meet on Thursday, Feb. 26 at 5 p.m. This month’s theme is comfort foods. Patrons choose a cookbook or find an online source, try out recipes and bring their dishes to the meeting for a potluck style gathering.

Other recurring monthly events include weekly story hours on Mondays and Saturdays at 10:30 a.m. and the Book Swap Club on Tuesday, Feb. 10 at 4 p.m. According to Loiselle, the Book Swap Club was designed for people who didn’t want to be locked in to reading the same book as everyone else. “Essentially, an attendee can come in and talk about something they

read/are currently reading that they enjoy,” she said, adding that they would keep their own book and leave with a list of recommended reads from other attendees.

Finally, the library’s monthly Book Club will meet on Thursday, Feb. 5 at 4 p.m. to discuss January’s book, “The Giver of Stars” by JoJo Moves. This historical fiction novel was inspired by the real-life packhorse librarians, who delivered books via horseback during the Great Depression. The February read is “Homegoing” by Yaa Gyasi. This book follows the lives and descendants of two half-sisters in Ghana in the 1700s. One is married to a slave trader and lives an opulent lifestyle; her half-sister is abducted, sent to America and sold into slavery. Copies of the book are at the library while available, may be ordered through interlibrary loan or digital versions borrowed through Libby.

Town Clerk lists STM and town election information

HUNTINGTON – The Town clerk announces a Special Town Meeting will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 11 at 7 p.m. at Stanton Hall, 26 Russell Road.

The STM will discuss covering the costs for the Basket Street Water Main Extension project. A copy of the warrant is posted at the five legal posting places and at www.huntingtonma.us. A public informational session will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 4 at 6 p.m. at Stanton Hall for residents to voice their questions and concerns.

The Town Clerk will have nomination papers available Wednesday,

Feb. 11, 2026 through Thursday, March 5 for the Annual Town Election Saturday, May 9. The open positions include Board of Selectmen, Board of Health, Board of Assessors, Water and Sewer Commission, Regional School Committee, Tree Warden, Moderator, Trustee: Alphonso Pettis Fund, Constable 3 year and one year vacancy, Trustee: Huntington Library, Trustee and Whiting Street Fund three year and two year vacancy.

For more information, people may call the Town Clerk at 413-512-5209 or visit the town website at www.huntingtonma.us.

AGENDA

from page 1

employment elsewhere. Foyle has returned all of his town-owned equipment and stated in his resignation that working in the Huntington Police Department was a “meaningful and performative experience.”

Special Town Meeting

A Special Town Meeting to determine the means of paying the upfront costs of remediation to homeowner wells on Basket Street due to the presence of Peri- and Poly-Fluoroalkyl Substances is planned for Wednesday, Feb. 11 at 7 p.m. At issue is how to secure \$600,000 to pay the upfront costs for this work, to be returned over time through a cost-reimbursement grant that the town secured.

Options are to either borrow the money with a 4% interest rate, take the money from the town’s stabilization account or propose a mix of those sources. Initially, Booth and McVeigh favored taking the loan; Hathaway preferred using the stabilization account. “It costs to take a loan,” Hathaway said. “It’s all on the taxpayers.”

Ultimately, the board took several votes including a) setting a Special Town Meeting for Feb. 11; b) recommending that the \$600,000 come from a

loan, not stabilization and c) having the Town Treasurer prepare the loan paperwork for submission immediately after the STM. All three motions were unanimously approved.

Fire Department radios

Another bigger agenda item was led by selectman John McVeigh, who is also the Deputy Fire Chief for the town. McVeigh recently spoke with Jon Gould, District Director for state Senator Paul Mark, who was following up on issues raised in a meeting with the Senator on Nov. 8. Issues raised at that meeting included an urgent need to replace analog emergency radio systems, which would become ineffective two years ahead of the schedule originally announced and a need for a shared cistern with Westhampton, among other issues. According to McVeigh, a telecommunications symposium is happening this week that may help with the radio issue.

Public safety complex

Gould asked if the town was looking for a public safety complex and if they could have a preliminary proposal by March. According to McVeigh, there may be the potential state funds for the entire build.



Turley Publications photo by Wendy Long

Selectmen John McVeigh, from left, Roger Booth (Chairman) and Bill Hathaway at their extra meeting on Jan. 21, to reduce carryover agenda items.

McVeigh proposed a committee to work on a preliminary proposal. He suggested that the following people be appointed to work on this preliminary phase: Fire Chief Josh Ellinger, John McVeigh, Ryan Foley, Steven Marcoux, Nick Perry, and Alana Whitney from the fire department; Police Chief Brian Kowal and former chief Robert Garriepy; Emergency Management Director John Garriepy; and architect Jeff Penn who have all agreed to volunteer on this project. The phase

I committee was approved by the select board with the caveat that nothing goes outside of the town without select board approval. In addition, meetings need to be posted and meet open meeting laws; agendas and minutes must go to the Town Clerk, and committee members need to be sworn in.

Other business

Among other business, the board approved a one-day liquor license for a Gateway Little League event on Feb. 7. Pelouquin reported that town departments

must have their items for the town’s Annual Report by March 6. A request from a community member to return a bench to the town hall for the public to sit was denied because the bench impeded wheelchair access, and materials and was at times a disruption for public meetings with people sitting in the hallway and conversing. Public meetings must keep doorways open, unless in Executive Session. The board and administrator presented

a draft employment contract for the Town Accountant, as a condition for a raise approved previously. The four also discussed the mechanisms for a records destruction policy.

Several agenda items were tabled, including an overtime policy for the Highway Department, a decision on whether or not to participate in the Smith Vocational Regionalization study, an account numbering policy review and approval.

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

RACE

from page 1

There will be classes for solo canoes, tandem canoes, kayaks and stand up paddle boards with special registration instructions for two-person (tandem) canoes. “Tandem canoes need to designate a team captain who will register the team with their team name. The captain will pay for both themselves and their team partner,” Rock explained. “The team partner then needs to register by searching for the team name and filling out their informa-

tion on the team registration. They do not have to pay as their team captain will have done that already.” Rock cautioned that if the team member is asked to pay, they have most likely created a second registration, which needs to be deleted and they then need to search for their team captain’s registration to attach themselves to.

This year marks the 71st year for the races, which were established in 1954. Races will happen on

Saturday, April 18, with the Expert Race kicking off at 9:30 a.m. from Knightville Dam and ending at the Route 20 pull off across from the Hilltown Community Health Center. The Classic Race will begin at 11 a.m. from the Route 112 MassDOT maintenance yard in the center of Huntington and end in Woronoco center.

As in the past, instructional clinics will be held on Saturdays April 4 and April 11 for paddlers to learn more

about proper clothing, paddling equipment, paddling techniques, self-rescue after capsizing and how to correctly run the river and cross two portages.

In addition to prizes for the best race times in each class, prizes will be awarded for best costumes and best team names. Awards will be given at Strathmore Park after the races conclude. People may email questions to races@westfieldriver.org.

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BECKET

Cultural Council announces 2026 grants

BECKET – Leigh Davis, State Representative of the 3rd Berkshire District, and Cathy Terwedow, Chair of the Becket Cultural Council, announce the awarding of 16 grants totaling \$10,500 for Fiscal Year 2026.

The grants, provided by both the town of Becket and the State's Massachusetts Cultural Council, will support a wide range of arts, humanities and science programming for people of all ages in Becket.

"I'm proud to support the Becket Cultural Council and its dedicated volunteers who work tirelessly to enrich our community through the arts, culture, and local initiatives," stated Leigh Davis. "Their thoughtful stewardship ensures that every grant strengthens the fabric of

Becket, benefiting residents and inspiring creativity for all."

The Becket Cultural Council is one of 329 Local Cultural Councils serving every town in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. As the largest grassroots cultural funding network in the nation, the LCC program supports thousands of community-based projects in the arts, sciences, and humanities every year. The state legislature provides an annual appropriation to the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency, which then allocates funds to each community. The town of Becket provides additional funding through its annual budget.

Decisions about which activities to support are guided by community surveys

and are made at the community level by a board of municipally appointed volunteers. The members of the Becket Cultural Council are Cathy Terwedow, chairman; Andi Cawein, treasurer; Lisa Rosier, secretary; Shelley Chanler, Jane Markham, Delsie Dunn, Lee Watroba, and Corey Lambo.

This year's grant recipients include: Becket Arts Center for general programming; Berkshire Arts Center (IS183, Inc.), for the ARTcentric after-school program at the Becket Washington School; Becket Athenaeum for community programs and museum passes; Becket Beat for student and local journalism; Becket Washington School for BTG PLAYS, their 2025 Science in Motion Traveling Program

Jacob's Pillow Curriculum in Motion, and Interactive Science Exploration; Becket Washington School PTO for STEAM Activities and Events and their 2026 picnic; Berkshire Music School, Inc. for Music for Young Minds; The Woodwind Quintet; Community Recreation Association, Inc. for After School Programming and Laura Lenski for First Steps Dance Discovery.

To apply for a 2027 grant, people may visit <https://www.townofbecket.org/becket-cultural-council>. Applications are accepted in early July for town grants and in early September for state grants. People may email becketculturalcouncil@townofbecket.org for more information about the Becket Cultural Council.

MassDOT reveal I-90 bridge repairs

BECKET – The Massachusetts Department of Transportation announces bridge repairs on I-90 eastbound and westbound at mile marker 20 in Becket.

The work is scheduled for now through Friday, Jan. 30 from 7 a.m.-3 p.m. each day and will require lane closures. Appropriate signage, law enforcement details, and advanced message boards will be in place to guide drivers through the work area. Drivers traveling through the affected areas should expect delays, reduce speed, and use caution.

All scheduled work is weather dependent and

subject to change without notice.

For more information on traffic conditions, travelers are encouraged to: Download the Mass511 mobile app or visit www.mass511.com to view live cameras, travel times, real time traffic conditions and project information before setting out on the road. Users can subscribe to receive text and email alerts for traffic conditions. Dial 511 and select a route to hear real time conditions. Follow @MassDOT on X, formerly known as Twitter, to receive regular updates on road and traffic conditions.

GOSHEN

Revolutionary Williams-Boltwood House project starts the New Year

By Barbara Pelissier
Guest Columnist

GOSHEN – Two thousand twenty five was an exciting year for Goshen's massive Revolutionary era structure known as the Williams-Boltwood House.

The site has been gaining attention and is now considered one of the state's ten most endangered historic resources. Williams-Boltwood welcomed some distinguished visitors in 2025 including the Heartwood School of Timber Framing from Alstead, New Hampshire and the Northeast chapter of the Vernacular Architecture Forum.

The site holds an unimaginable degree of historical significance for the region and may be the last building of its kind still in existence. Though much smaller when first framed by John Williams in 1779, the building grew as the town grew over the course of time. At various times, it served as a tavern, inn, stage stop, post-office, store and church. Goshen's first school, first town meetings and first elections were held here.

But it was always a home. All the while, the direct descendants of John Williams retained ownership and still called it home until 2001. During those two centuries, the family's influence

stretched beyond the hilltowns and into several prosperous Connecticut River Valley towns.

The rehabilitation of the Williams-Boltwood house now rests in the hands of The Williams-Boltwood Trust, Inc, a 501(c)(3) non-profit whose mission is to preserve and restore the property and its thousands of artifacts. Not surprisingly, many decades of damage due to neglect and New England weather has resulted in a long to-do list of necessary repairs. One by one, these are being assessed and addressed with careful attention to historical features.

Highly significant historical projects such as this require detailed documentation of every structural component repaired and every "treasure" unearthed. The eventual goal for the large 'house' and outbuildings will be to once again serve the region as a public gathering space for meetings, retail and co-working offices as well as a venue for cultural events.

The building recently received a new metal roof thanks to \$10,000 from the 1772 Foundation, a project that had to be postponed until the departure of a resident bat colony residing in the attic. The Daughters of the American Revolution granted another \$10,000 for the



Archeologists Jessica Burchett and Raechal Williams shift pottery shards under the floorboards of the Williams-Boltwood House in Goshen.

replacement of rotting basement beams.

As so often happens with old structures, more and more damage was revealed as work progressed. Unexpected damage from the Powder Post beetle as well as water infiltration was extensive. Although significantly over budget, the new basement beams are finally in place and the original floorboards will be replaced this spring using nails from the project's Buy-a-Nail fundraiser.

To learn more about the Williams-Boltwood House project or to follow restoration efforts and learn what

volunteer/support opportunities are available, people may visit their website at <https://www.williamsboltwood.com>



Bob Labrie shows Heartwood School of Timber Framing students unique findings in attic floor of the Williams-Boltwood House.

or email the project board at: wbhoustrust@gmail.com

Photos by Kam Osborne

Donations to meet the current deficit for the beam repair project are greatly appreciated.

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Before

After

OPINION

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Reader opposes change in CORI regulations for hiring and employment

I am writing to share information and express opposition to proposed changes to Criminal Offender Record Information regulations, related to hiring and employment in health and human services in the commonwealth.

Specifically, regarding the proposed expansion and application of the mandatory exclusion list under 101 CMR 15.00: Criminal Offender Record Checks. Currently, there is a review process for someone hoping to work in health and human services who has a criminal record. The proposed change would add a list of mandatory

exclusions, meaning anyone with certain criminal charges, including in the distant past, would not be able to work in health and human services.

While I recognize the importance of protecting vulnerable populations, I am concerned that the implementation of a strict mandatory exclusion list, as outlined in Section 15.08 and related tables, removes the essential discretion needed to evaluate each candidate's circumstances on a case-by-case basis. Maintaining the current CORI regulations, which allow for discretionary review, ensures that qualified individuals who have served

their sentences and demonstrated rehabilitation are not automatically disqualified from employment.

This approach upholds principles of equity and fairness, offering individuals a genuine second chance to reintegrate into the workforce and contribute positively to the human services field. Many individuals with prior offenses have become productive members of society and are eager to give back by serving others. The value of the work of individuals with lived and living experience cannot be overstated and the criminal legal system does not treat individuals

equitably. Most importantly, everyone has the capacity for change and meaningful work is essential to improving one's life and our shared communities.

I respectfully urge that the current regulations remain in effect, preserving the ability for hiring authorities to exercise thoughtful, individualized judgment rather than imposing broad, mandatory exclusions. This practice not only protects those served but also aligns with a commitment to restorative justice and the value of redemption.

For those interested in sharing written comment

or testimony, letters can be emailed to ehs-regulations@mass.gov as an attached Word or PDF document or as text within the body of the email with the name of the regulation in the subject line: Regulation Name 101 CMR 15.00 Criminal Offender Record Checks.. Letters can also be mailed to: MassHealth Publications, 100 Hancock Street, 6th Floor, Quincy, MA 02171. The deadline for submissions is Friday Jan. 31, 2026 at 5 p.m.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Aidan Novo,
 MPH, MSW, LCSW
 Worthington

GUEST COLUMN



Claiming Social Security early and investing it

Dear Rusty:

I am a 63-year-old single lady and I have questions regarding Social Security "early retirement," though I will still be working full time.

I know there is a maximum allowable income limit and, if I exceed that, I will need to return probably 2/3 of my received Social Security benefit. I'm thinking about taking those early SS benefits about \$1,400 per month and putting them in my high yield savings or CD where I can gain the interest on it and have it stay "liquid" so I can return what I need to.

My current interest rate is 3.65% on the savings and over 4.25% on CD, with options for 3,6,9 mos. or longer- but I want to be able to access the money to pay Social Security back at the end of the year. Can you advise me on this?

Signed: Still Working but Wondering

Dear Still Working:

I commend you, for investigating your options before claiming early Social Security benefits while still working. FYI, the 2026 annual earnings limit for those collecting early SS benefits is \$24,480 (changes annually). If your 2026 work earnings exceed the annual limit, Social Security will take away \$1 in benefits for every \$2 you are over the limit. The annual earnings limit lasts until you reach your Full Retirement Age and the limit is about 2.5 times higher during the year you attain FRA.

FYI, when you apply for benefits, Social Security will ask if you are working and, if so, how much you make. Using that information, they will evaluate whether you can take benefits now and, if so, how many months they can actually pay your benefits.

For example, if your projected 2026 earnings are, say, \$100,000, you would be about \$75,000 over the annual limit which means that half of that \$37,500 would need to be paid back to SS. Since your monthly SS benefit at your current age would be about \$1,400 per month, Social Security will say that you are temporarily ineligible to collect early benefits because you cannot pay back within one year what you would owe for exceeding the limit. In other words, they won't pay your SS benefits just yet because your earnings are too high and they do not

want to overpay benefits, which you will only need to return.

For additional perspective, if your expected 2026 earnings are less say about \$50,000 that means you would be about \$25,000 over the limit about half of that (about \$12,500) would need to be paid back to SS. In that event, SSA would tell you they will withhold nine months of your SS payments in advance and pay your benefits for only 3 months. This because the overpayment, with your current benefit of about \$1,400, could be recovered by withholding your SS payments for nine months. They do not want to intentionally overpay your SS benefits.

So, despite your best repayment intentions, Social Security will not favor intentionally overpaying your benefits. Historically, overpayment of benefits due to exceeding the annual earnings limit has been a notoriously difficult issue for the Social Security Administration. So, to get your early SS benefits while you are working full time, you would likely need to lie about your anticipated 2026 earnings on your application for SS benefits, which we strongly discourage.

Keep in mind that this all changes when you reach your FRA (67), because the earning limit goes away entirely when you reach FRA and the limit goes up by about 2.5 times in the year you attain full retirement age. So, depending on your earnings level, you may wish to either wait until your full retirement age, or until you stop working full time, to claim SS.

Now, as for the general idea of taking early benefits and investing them, many have said they wish to do that and we understand that logic. Our caution is that it requires religious discipline to put the SS money into a higher yield investment vehicle to accomplish the goal of beating the SS increase realized when you wait to claim. Many who try it succumb to the temptation to use the invested funds for emergency needs and sometimes non-emergency needs. I offer this only as something to be aware of, as some have shared that they failed in their investment objectives with their Social Security money.

The Association Mature Citizens Foundation and its

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GUEST COLUMN

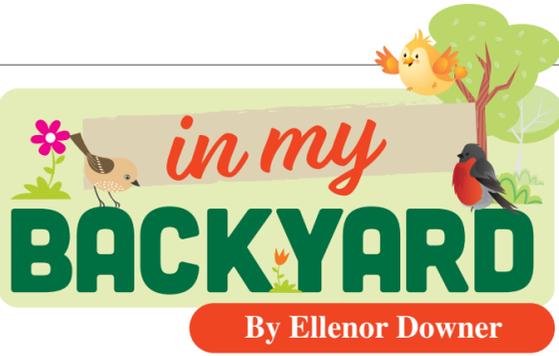


Snowy owl

In late December of last year and early January of this year, a snowy owl has been seen at Northampton Airport and in a cornfield.

The snowy owl is an irruptive species from the tundra. Usually, it is the young snowy owls that head this way. There have been reports of snowy owls at Plum Island this month. Logan Airport is another common location for them.

The snowy owl is large and white. The mature males have a lot of white. Females



and juveniles have dark brown and black barring. Living in the Arctic, it is well adapted to cold with dense feathers including feathers on their feet. They hunt rodents like lemmings in open tundra. They have exceptional sight and hearing.

Their flight is silent allowing them to catch unsuspecting prey. They hunt during the day, a rarity for most owls. They expand south during winter food scarcity in the tundra. It is one of North America's heaviest owls with a wing span of 4.5 to 5.5 feet.

They are generally solitary, but form pairs. They build nests in the ground in shallow scrapes. The female

lays three to 11 eggs, the number of eggs depending on food availability. Males bring food and the females incubate and feed the chicks.

Helping owls

Here are some tips if you see a snowy owl. Keep a safe distance to observe quietly. Do not play bird calls from your phone or other device. Don't feed the owls. Avoid flashes when taking photos. Keep noises to a minimum. If you find an injured owl: contact your state wildlife agency or local rehabilitator. If you find a dead owl: contact your state wildlife agency.

Also people should avoid using rodenticides;

BIRDS, page 6

Don't throw away your shot at staying healthy



your health



By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN
Guest Column

In the Broadway blockbuster "Hamilton," Alexander Hamilton sings, "I'm not throwin' away my shot." Neither should we.

Americans' trust in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has been tested in the past. In 2020, early guidance on COVID-19 was all over the place and test kits were faulty. People perceived that the CDC was subject to political,

rather than medical, influence.

Trust is easy to lose and hard to regain. While some applaud the current CDC leadership for cutting back on vaccine recommendations and gutting its panel of vaccine experts in 2025, the medical community is expressing alarm that we may see a resurgence of diseases thought defeated, like measles.

So, this is the atmosphere

as we head into fall vaccine season. Understandably, confusion reigns. Should I get that vaccine? Will I have to pay for it if the CDC doesn't require it? Should I get it from a doctor or a pharmacy?

All good questions!

I remain firmly in the camp that vaccines not only save lives, but also protect us from serious illnesses, from everyday flu to shingles to cancer. Studies have found that vaccines increase life expectancy by reducing deaths from infectious diseases and improving overall health.

Let's look at our fall vaccines

COVID-19

While COVID-19 has dropped out of the top 10 deadliest diseases, it was still a contributing factor in about 47,000 deaths in the U.S. in 2024. The CDC says older

HEALTH, page 5

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BLANDFORD

Fletchers celebrate 40th wedding anniversary

BLANDFORD – Shawn and Kate Fletcher of Blandford, celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary on Jan. 19, 2026. The couple share a marriage built on love, trust, respect and laughter.

Family and friends joined in a grand get-together that celebrated memories and toasted new adventures to come.



LUNCH GOERS PARTAKE OF BAKED POTATO WITH LOTS OF TOPPINGS



Photos by Pamela Rideout

Wanda Deitner, from left, Pam Dirschka and Paul Dirschka attended the Blandford Council on Aging lunch on Friday Jan. 23.



Photo by Susan Bloomrose

The Kidder Family enjoyed baked potatoes and all the trimmings at Friday, Jan. 23 COA luncheon. Shown from left are Joyce, Milton, Daniel and David Kidder.

SNOW STORMS KEEP COMING



Turley Publications photo by Mary Kronholm

Getting ready for the weekend snowfall, Jeff Allen Bicentennial Park neighbor, clears the snow from the marquee to make way for any new accumulation.

HEALTH

from page 4

people and those with underlying conditions need the vaccine. Medical experts say it's important for more people to be vaccinated in order to not spread disease to others.

While CDC dropped its recommendation that pregnant women get vaccinated, doctors say vaccination protects both mothers and babies, who cannot be vaccinated.

What you should do: A majority of Americans falls into one of the permitted categories (age, chronic health conditions, etc.). But go by what your doctor tells you, and don't delay. Supplies may be limited.

Where can you go? Currently in Massachusetts, everyone 6 months and older is eligible for the updated 2025-2026 COVID-19 vaccine. Nearly all Massachusetts residents can still get a COVID-19 vaccine for no or little cost.

Massachusetts residents may get their COVID-19 vaccine at their doctors' office, health center or pharmacy or through their local health department. Pediatricians' offices and community health centers are the best option for accessing COVID-19 vaccines for children, especially those between 6 months and 5 years of age.

Will you have to pay? Not if you have Medicare or

a Medicare Advantage plan. Additionally, Gov. Maura Healey signed an executive order requiring insurance companies that operate in the state to cover the cost of vaccines. Medicaid is also covering vaccines.

Influenza

Unlike the COVID-19 vaccine, guidelines for the flu vaccine haven't changed. The CDC recommends that everyone 6 months and older should get vaccinated against the flu — even if they are healthy — with rare exceptions. That's because influenza is a highly contagious disease and can lead to serious complications, including pneumonia and hospitalization, even in otherwise healthy people.

What you should do: Get the shot from your doctor, a pharmacy or a public health department. The best timing is September or October, to let the antibodies time to develop.

Will you have to pay? Unlikely. Medicare, Medicaid and private insurance programs cover the cost. Again, check with your insurer to make sure there isn't a copay.

RSV

RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) is dangerous for older adults (75 and up), ages 50-74 with underlying conditions and for babies. It's a big reason babies are hospitalized

each fall.

The nice thing about this vaccine is that it's a one-and-done.

What you should do: If you haven't had it already, get it at your doctor's office or a pharmacy.

Will you have to pay? Probably not. The vaccines are covered by Medicare, Medicaid and most commercial insurers.

One of the things I find with vaccines is that people forget what they had, or when they had them. This is where the electronic patient portal your health care provider uses comes in handy because it will keep track of your immunizations and tell you when it's time to ask whether it's time to get (yet) another one.

Whatever you do, don't throw away your shot!

Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, is a registered nurse and board-certified patient advocate and founder of www.NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com, which trains medical professionals to become successful private patient advocates. Teri offers a free phone consultation to Turley Newspaper readers as well as to nurses interested in becoming advocates. Reach her at Teri@NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com.

TWYMAN

from page 1

Having lost his wife, Sandra Lee Twyman in 2015, he continued to greet others with "warmth, kindness, and a genuine interest in their lives, serving as a quiet example of resilience, compassion, and community spirit."

Bob Twyman's lifelong willingness to give of himself, through service, conversation and care for others, has made him a true inspiration to the town of Blandford, characteristics

that the Select Board "formally recognize and honor Robert Joseph Twyman for his dedication, commitment, and countless contributions to the Town and its residents."

Humbled with the proclamation, Twyman said he volunteers "because I like the town. We're moving in the right direction with Cristina and Ray (Town Administrator Cristina Ferrera and Highway Superintendent Ray Hultay)."

He said in his 53 years he has seen the town weather tough times and good times, and "now, we've got the right people."

He recalled being recruited for the Planning Board, he had attended every meeting and when a former member resigned, it was known that he had been to all the meetings and the Planning Board "would not have to start from square one" with a brand-new member.

First Congregational Church of Blandford

Pastor Ciprian Droma
91 Main St., Blandford, MA 01008
413-848-2052
Sunday service 10 a.m.

First Congregational Church of Chester

334 Skyline Trail, Chester, MA 01011
Pastor Susan Borsella
Service with Live Music: 10 a.m. - Sunday
Coffee and Sweets Social:
10:45 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.

First Congregational Church of Williamsburg

Rev. Jack Kraaz
4 North Main St., Williamsburg, MA 01096
413-268-7557
burgychurch@gmail.com • burgychurch.org
Facebook:
First Congregational Church of Williamsburg
YouTube Channel: www.youtube.com/channel/UCdyH1EA-fduamqHYeekxw5w
Office Hours: Tues. - Fri. 9 a.m. - 12 noon
Days and Hours of Services: Sun. at 10 a.m.

Hilltown Community Church

Rev. Dr. Robert Perreault
55 Main St., Russell, MA 01071
413-275-3232
Office: 413-862-3341
hilltownchurch3341@gmail.com
Sunday Mornings 10 a.m.

Holy Family Parish

Rev. Ronald F. Sadlowski, known as Fr. Ron
5 Main St., Russell, MA 01071
413-862-4418
Office Hours: No set times.
Please call, leave a voice message or email: holyfamilyrussell.org
parish@holyfamilyrussell.org
Saturday Vigil: 5 p.m.
Sunday Masses: 8:15 a.m. & 11 a.m.

CHURCH DIRECTORY



Your Community Church

New Boston Congregational Church

4 Sandisfield Rd., PO Box 81
Sandisfield, MA 01255
Services held twice monthly, check website:
www.newbostoncongregationalchurch.org

Pioneer Valley Assembly of God

Pastor Javier Melendez
63 Old Chester Rd., Huntington MA 01050
413-667-3196
pvaglfe@gmail.com
www.pioneervalleyag.org
Facebook: Pioneer Valley Assembly of God
Sunday service: 10:30 a.m.

Pioneer Valley Mennonite Fellowship

Deacon Jerald Reinford
400 Huntington Rd., Russell, MA 01071
(413) 297-6037
Sunday worship at 10 a.m.
Visitors appreciated.

SECURITY

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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 sub-

mit a question, visit amac-foundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory or email us at ssadvisor@amac-foundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

EASTHAMPTON

WinterFest takes place on Feb. 14

EASTHAMPTON – WinterFest is a 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. Additional ongoing projects include monitoring and treating invasive species and barley straw deployment to deter cyanobacteria. They continue to fundraise for future maintenance and rebuilding the stabilization wall. Construction is planned to begin in the spring.

The festivities begin Friday, Jan. 2 with online events: Nashawannuck Pond photo contest, snowflake making contest, pond trivia and Mt. Tom ice cream flavor contest. There are approximately 30 activities/events scheduled between

Jan. 2 and Saturday, Feb. 14. Most activities are free to attend due to generous business sponsorships and all are family friendly. Donations are always gladly accepted.

On Saturday, Feb. 14 outdoor activities will include: a historical ice harvest on Nashawannuck Pond featuring historian Dennis Picard, weather permitting. 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 ride and a community fire by the pond. Easthampton Fire Department will be hosting the third annual Polar Plunge.

Also on Saturday, Feb. 14 indoor activities at CitySpace 43 Main St., will include: Art in Motion dance demonstration, Ed Popielarczyk magician,



Submitted photo

A polar plunge during WinterFest helped raise funds to support Nashawannuck Pond. This year the event will be held on Saturday, Feb. 14.

Tom Knight puppeteer, Meet and Greet Gino with EPD Andrew Beaulieu Lieutenant/ K-9 Handler and author Ellen Feld. At the Easthampton Library Annex 53 Main Street will be Family Jungle Entertainment. Easthampton Library will be having a note making event and snowflake making station for the contest, Valley Art Supplies, Council on Aging, New City Brewery, Printed Mass will

be having events as well.

Abandoned Building Brewery will be hosting The 1 Man Party trivia / DJ on Saturday, Feb. 7, a night of Bingo Thursday, Feb. 12, chili tasting Friday, Feb. 13 and WinterFest After Dark with live music on Saturday, Feb. 14.

People are invited to bring the children, grandparents and friends from near and far to enjoy a full and fun day in Easthampton.

They are very thankful to Platinum: Venue Sponsor: Abandoned Building Brewery, River Valley Co-op and Greenfield Savings Bank; Gold sponsors: media sponsor: Hilltown Families, Lantern Tattoo, Advanced Window Systems, Blessed Sacrament Parish School, WinterFest Photographer and Gunn Photography.

Full list of sponsors is available by visiting <https://www.nashawannuckpond.org/sponsors.html>. For a full list of activities, people may visit <https://www.nashawannuckpond.org/winterfest.html>.

This event happens with the help of many volunteers. To volunteer, people may sign up by visiting <https://www.nashawannuckpond.org/volunteer.html>. All outdoor events are weather permitting and may be canceled without notice.

MONTGOMERY

Music in Montgomery announces lineup

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

MONTGOMERY – Organizer Dale Rogers announces the February music lineup for Music in Montgomery.

It’s a calendar of perpetual favorites this month including Jerry and Kara Noble, Barry Searle’s band “We Three,” Ed Bentley and Friends and Larry Southard. Co-hosted by the Montgomery Public Library and the Gray Catbird Pottery Studio, the weekly program takes place at Montgomery Town Hall, 161 Main Road, every Thursday, starting at 3 p.m.

Jerry and Kara Noble open the month on Feb. 5. Jerry is known in the region as a guitarist and composer; wife Kara plays the bass. After 14 years, Noble retired from Smith College, where he accompanied student, faculty and ensemble performances. He is also a nationally-known composer and his pieces have been performed by both choirs and instrumentalists. In addition to composing and performing, he teaches voice, piano, composition and arranging at Profound Sound in Florence. Jerry and Kara also created and manages ArtistTec, Inc., a music publishing business.



Courtesy photo by Dale Rogers

Larry Southard performs at an earlier Music in Montgomery session.

Barry Searle also has a long history of making music in Western Massachusetts, performing over the years with the Barry Searle Band, Crooked Ledge Band, Bruce Pratt and the Iron Horse Band and Ravenwood, among others. He also released his first album of original songs in February 2025. One of his

musical iterations is “We Three” with Searle on guitar and vocals, Sarah Miller on percussion and vocals and Pete Rzasas on vocals, pedal steel and harmonica. The group performs a variety of music styles.

Also known as “men of a certain age,” Ed Bentley and Friends will cover coun-

try, rock and folk hits on Feb. 19. At times, Bentley performs with Jane Martin Pelletier and Ron Campagna and can also be joined by surprise guests. Bentley can be seen performing throughout the region, including at open mics at Bright Ideas Brewing in Westfield, Shortstop Bar & Grill, and Southwick Inn among others.

Rounding out the month will be singer and guitarist Larry Southard on Feb. 26. Southard is part of a popular local rock-country-folk band called Papa and Friends, who have performed at Papa Bob’s in Becket, the Knox Trail Inn in Otis, and Chester Common Table. Hailing from Otis, he performs at a range of local venues including the Otis Farmer’s Market and Food Truck Tuesdays.

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.

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

BIRDS

from page 4

they are poisonous to birds and other animals even a pet.. If an owl or other birds of prey eat a rodent that ingested the poison, it will kill them.

Evening grosbeaks

A Worthington resident reported a friend saw two evening grosbeaks on Tuesday, Jan. 6. He said in his email he remembered when they used to be in giant flocks. He asked if they were rare out my way. I have not seen evening grosbeaks in sometime. Other people in Central Massachusetts have seen them recently. The Massachusetts Audubon Society reported six evening grosbeaks in North Brookfield.

Mass. Audubon sightings

Recent Mass Audubon sightings include western grebes, eared grebes, tufted ducks and sandhill cranes as well as an unusual visitor, a scissor-tailed flycatcher, a rare state record and a rosy-billed pochard. Other sightings include goldeneye, mergansers,

horned larks, and wintering raptors like Northern harriers in Massachusetts in early January.

On Jan. 6 and again on Jan. 13 a male King Eider was seen among thousands of common Eiders in North Chatham. A Pacific loon and over 400 razor-bills were at Race Point in Provincetown.

Christmas bird count

A Brimfield resident sent an email on Jan. 6 that he received a preliminary total for the Springfield Christmas Bird Count, which was 66 species, a few below the average. He also said, “We occasionally see them in the yard and sometimes hear the barred owls calling.”

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.



RUSSELL

Russell Public Library list upcoming programs and events

RUSSELL – The Russell Public Library, 162 Main St., is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 3-7 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m.-1 p.m..

The library will be closed on Monday, Feb. 16 due to President’s Day holiday.

On Monday, Feb. 2 from 5:30-7 p.m. Miss Kate will train adults to set up and use their own CW MARS library website account to search for books and order books online. She will also teach folks to set up Libby to order audio books on their personal devices. They should register by email at rpldirector162@gmail.com, visit <https://www.russellmapubliclibrary.com>, call 413-862-6221 and leave a message or come in and sign up at the

library by Feb. 2..

An adult monthly book club will meet on Tuesday, Feb. 3 from 6-8 p.m. The book is “Raven Black” by Ann Cleeves. Books are available at the library. People may register by email rpldirector162@gmail.com, visit <https://www.russellmapubliclibrary.com>, call 413-862-6221 and leave a message or come in and sign up at the library by Feb. 2.

The adult monthly book club will also meet on Tuesday, March 3 from 6-8 p.m. the book is “The God of the Woods” by Liz Moore. Books will be available by mid-February.

On Tuesday, Feb. 10 from 6-8 p.m. Susan Kallerges will offer an Unconventional Still Life Watercolor Painting

Workshop for adults. They will learn an unconventional approach to painting a watercolor still life using photos taken with their cell phone. They should bring their phone: all other materials will be provided. Register by email rpldirector@townofrussell.us, call 413-862-6221 and leave a message or come in and sign up at the library by Saturday, Feb. 7. This workshop is limited to the first 12 registrants.

Miss Dawne will hold a “Lego Super Build” for children on Wednesday, Feb. 25 from 5-6 p.m. They will use the library’s large LEGO collection and Super Idea Books to build amazing structures. There is no fee. They should email rpldirector@townofrussell.us, visit <https://www.russellmapubliclibrary.com>, call

413-862-6221 and leave a message, or come in and sign up at the library by Monday, Feb. 23 to register.

Parents are invited to bring their children ages 0-4 years for a weekly story time with Maggie Lufkin on Thursdays from 10-11 a.m. starting Thursday, Feb. 26.

On Saturday, Feb. 28 from 2-4 p.m. for “Commemorating Henry Knox and the Noble Train of Artillery in the Automobile Age” for adults, to mark the 250th anniversary of the beginning of Henry Knox’s expedition to bring captured artillery from Fort Ticonderoga to Cambridge.

The approximately two-month, 300-mile endeavor by 25-year-old Knox is now a fairly well-known story, but was obscure until the early

20th century. In April 1925, the Massachusetts Legislature established a three-person commission to find and mark the route. The 1920s marker project generated the interest in Knox’s expedition that remains to this day. What remains unknown to many is that the markers are not necessarily along the route Knox took, nor were they intended to be.

Guest speaker Ben Haley will share this story through the rich correspondence surviving in the collection of the Knox Commission at the Massachusetts State Library. This collection was largely ignored even while interest in finding the “real” Knox Trail has accelerated since the 1960s as a result of the 1920s marker project.

The library program will

continue with local “living history” expert and former Storowton Museum director Dennis Picard, who will bring to life the men on the mission to bring the canons from Ticonderoga. Picard participated in the reenactment of the Knox Expedition 50 years ago for the Bicentennial. People may register by email rpldirector@townofrussellmapubliclibrary.us, visiting <http://www.russellmapubliclibrary.com>, call 413-862-6221 and leave a message, or come in and sign up at the library by Thursday, Feb. 26.

The Russell Public Library’s “Library of Things” is now available for folks to borrow. People may come to the library see the variety of tools, appliances and leisure items the library has available for check out.

WESTHAMPTON

Jessie Krug receives Boston Post Cane

WESTHAMPTON – On Saturday, Jan. 10 Jessie Krug, age 99, of Westhampton received the Boston Post Cane.

Bestowing of this special gold headed cane to the oldest resident of a town is a New England tradition dating back to 1909. The ceremony was held in the Westhampton Public Library community room and attended by over 80 people.

Several of Krug's family members, who live out of state were in attendance via Zoom. Her son, Donald Krug, and other family members were in attendance at the library. Westhampton Select Board Chairman Susan Bronstein presented Krug with the cane as well as a certificate signed by all three members of the Westhampton Select Board. Bronstein also showed Jessie a plaque which displays all town recipients of the cane which was recently updated to include Krug. State Representative Lindsay Sabadosa was there to present Jessie with a special certificate from the Massachusetts House of Representatives signed by herself and the speaker of the house.

Krug's warmth, grace, humor and wisdom shone through as she graciously received this public acknowledgement of her longevity and for her many contributions to the community of Westhampton. In an interview with COA Coordinator Christine Blakesley, who emceed the event, said Krug shared these words of wisdom "Everything does not have to be perfect. Compromise,



Submitted photos
Susan Bronstein, Westhampton Select Board Chairman, presents the Boston Post Cane to Jessie Krug on Jan. 10 at the Westhampton Public Library.

help each other out, smile and enjoy life." At the close of the ceremony, after many friends and relatives shared praise about Jessie Krug, the guest of honor joked "I hope that I can take care of this (the cane) real good for a few more days."

In 1909, the publisher of the Boston Post newspaper, Edwin Grozier, issued a special cane to the Board of Selectmen in over 700 New England towns. The canes were all made by J. F. Fradley and Co., a New York manufacturer. They were crafted from ebony shipped from the Congo in Africa, which was cut to length, seasoned for six months, turned on lathes to the right thickness, coated

and polished. The canes had a 14-carat gold head and a ferruled tip.

The Westhampton Boston Post Cane was entrusted to the Board of Selectmen, who were to keep it always in the hands of the oldest citizen. That person would hold the honor as long as they lived; upon their passing, the cane would be returned to the town, to be awarded to the next oldest citizen.

As is the case with many of the original canes, Westhampton's original Boston Post Cane has been lost to time. The cane that is given with this award is a replacement for the original and has been in use since 1978.

WORTHINGTON

Library offers new programs

WORTHINGTON – The Worthington Library, 1 Huntington Road, holds Books and Brews, the new offsite quarterly book club.

This is a social event bringing together fellow book lovers to discuss what they are reading or listening to and buy themselves a good brew. Books and Brews will be hosted at local venues on a rotating basis. The first of these events will be hosted on Thursday, Jan. 29 from 6 p.m. to close at Liston's, 324 Old North Road, Worthington.

Beginning Wednesday, Feb. 11 from 6-7 p.m., the Worthington Library will host a 12-week study of the book "Experiencing God: Knowing & Doing the Will of God" by Henry Blackaby.

Dr Robert Perreault of Hilltown Community Church will host and facilitate the meetings. People should bring a copy of the book with them. For further information, people may call Clarence Witter at 413-238-5303 or 774-217-4760.

The Worthington Library Book Club, a monthly reading group, which meets on the last Saturday of each month at 4 p.m., will be introducing a new quarterly "speculative" discussion concept for fiction readers. They can wonder aloud among friends "What will happen next?" before the end of the story. The first speculative session will be on Wednesday, Feb. 18 and they will read, most but not all of, "The Sparrow" by Mary

Doria Russell.

The library also hosts Spinners, a group for yarn lovers and fabric artists (spinners, knitters and crocheters, quilters, embroidery stitchers, etc.) every other Tuesday at 7 p.m.; a Family Playgroup for in collaboration with the Hilltown Family Center on Mondays at 8:30 a.m. for infants and 9:45 a.m. for toddlers; an ongoing teen Dungeons and Dragons program on Tuesdays from 4-7 p.m. and a monthly genealogy program on first Saturdays from 10 a.m.-noon.

People may call Library Director Jo Averill-Snell at 413-238-5565 for additional information about any of these programs.

PITTSFIELD

Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. hosts 'A Taste of Downtown'

PITTSFIELD – Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. will present "A Taste of Downtown," a month-long Downtown Restaurant Celebration in partnership with Mill Town Foundation.

Seventeen restaurants and bars in downtown Pittsfield will be participating. "A Taste of Downtown" will feature marketing efforts to highlight downtown Pittsfield's local restaurants and restaurant owners and the Taste of Downtown Giveaway which will be an incentive for people to dine in local restaurants over the course of the month.

The prize for the Taste of Downtown Giveaway will be 17 gift cards, one from each of the participating restaurants, a \$400 value. Every purchase at a participating restaurant will count as one entry to win the prize package. When dining at a participating restaurant, peo-

ple should ask their server for the QR code to enter the contest at the time of purchase. There is no limit to the number of entries per location.

A winner of the Taste of Downtown Giveaway will be drawn at random at the beginning of March.

Participating restaurants in "A Taste of Downtown" include: 101 Restaurant & Bar, 1 West St.; BB's Hot Spot at The Lantern, 455 North St.; Brazzucas Market, 75 North St.; Dottie's Coffee Lounge, 444 North St.; Espetinho Carioca, 48B North St.; Hot Harry's, 37 North St.; Hot Plate Brewing Co., 1 School St.; Marie's North Street Eatery and Gallery, 146 North St.; Marketplace Café, 53 North St.; Methuselah Bar & Lounge, 391 North St.; Otto's Kitchen & Comfort, 95 East St.;

Patrick's Pub, 26

Bank Row; RARE 297 Steakhouse, 297 North St.; RJ's Restaurant, 109 First St.;

South Street Pizza House, 148 South St.; Tito's Mexican Bar & Grill, 34 Depot St. and WANDER Berkshires, 34 Depot St., Suite 101.

"A Taste of Downtown" is sponsored by Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. and is presented in partnership with the Mill Town Foundation. People may follow @downtownpittsfield on Facebook and Instagram for "A Taste of Downtown" restaurant spotlights. For more information, people may visit downtownpittsfield.com or contact Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. at 413-443-6501. The mission of Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. is to strengthen and promote Downtown Pittsfield, Inc.'s membership through advocacy, collaboration, and celebration.

MIDDLEFIELD

Pancake breakfast fundraiser on Feb. 7

MIDDLEFIELD – A pancake breakfast fundraiser for the Middlefield Agricultural Fair will be held on Saturday, Feb. 7 from 8-11 a.m. at the

Middlefield Town Hall on Skyline Trail.

The all you can eat breakfast is \$10 for adults, \$8 seniors and free for children under 12.



CHESTERFIELD

Hilltown Pub Sing happens Feb. 5

CHESTERFIELD – The Hilltown Pub Sing will take place on Thursday, Feb. 5 with singing from 7-9 p.m. at the Chesterfield General Store, 432 Main Road.

People will sing old and new folksongs, shanties, spirituals and more. Anyone can lead a song, which has a chorus or refrain. People may come early for food, which ends

at 7 p.m. They should call in advance to order pizza at 413-296-4354. Beer and other beverages will be available. People are welcome to bring their own snacks.

GREAT BARRINGTON

Dr. John-Paul Bettencourt named new Chief Medical Officer

GREAT BARRINGTON – Community Health Programs, 444 Stockbridge Road, announces the appointment of Chief Medical Officer, John-Paul Bettencourt, D.O., M.P.H., M.B.A., AAHIVS, CPE.

Most recently, Dr. Bettencourt was based in Fort Myers, Florida, where he served as Chief Medical Officer at McGregor Clinic. His time as a lead physician and academic instructor in the New England region will be an asset and pro-

vide insight into the medical needs of the Berkshires. With more than 13 years of clinical practice and 12 years of experience in medical and disaster management, Dr. Bettencourt's expertise will guide CHP into the future of healthcare.

CHP is a federally qualified health center offering medical, dental, behavioral



Dr. John-Paul Bettencourt

health, nutrition and family services throughout Berkshire County. Grounded in equity, compassion and excellence, CHP ensures access to high-quality care for all, regardless of income or insurance status.

For more information, people may visit chpberkshires.org.

HOUSTATONIC

Berkshire Pulse announces spring class schedule available

HOUSTATONIC – Berkshire Pulse located at 420 Park St. on third floor, South County's dynamic dance and creative arts center, announces its spring 2026 schedule of dance, music, and creative arts classes for area youth, teens and adults.

This session features a blend of beloved classics and exciting new offerings from foundational classes in ballet or modern to something fresh like Capoeira or Latin Partnerwork. Berkshire Pulse provides opportunities for dancers of all ages to learn,

grow and be inspired.

For a complete class schedule, people may visit their website at <https://berkshirerpulse.org/courselist/>.

Some of our Youth Spring 2026 class include: Youth Hip Hop with Dashawn Davis ages 10-13/beginner and intermediate (Saturdays 4-5 p.m. from Feb. 7 to April 11 no class Feb. 14); Acro Basics with Erin Naylor ages 9+ beginner new (Wednesdays, 4:45-5:45 p.m. from Jan. 28 to May 27 no class Feb. 18 and April 22) and Capoeira with Tarcisio

Ramos Dos Santos ages 8+ beginner (Wednesdays 5:15-6:15 p.m. from Jan. 28 to May 27 no class Feb. 18 and April 22)

Adult and teen class includes: Community Tap with Teak Welch for adults and teens ages, 13+ beginner (Tuesdays 6-6:45 p.m. from now to May 26); Latin Partnerwork Series with Prashad Abeansinghe and Luana Dias David ages 18+ advanced beginner (Fridays, 7-8:30 p.m. on Jan. 30 and Feb 6. no partner needed) and Hip Hop for absolute

beginners with Jody Green for adults and teens ages 14+ (Thursdays 7:15-8:15 p.m. now to May 28).

The Spring Session is happening now. New and returning students can register in person, by calling 413-274-6624 or visiting their website at berkshirerpulse.org.

Pulse is committed to making our programs affordable and accessible to all. Tuition Assistance, partial or full tuition waivers are available to any student with demonstrated financial need, 100% automatic waivers for

EBT/WIC recipients. They may visit their website to learn more and apply.

Pulse maintains an inventory of clean, dress-code appropriate dance wear for youth students to borrow, whenever needed. Pulse maintains an inventory of gently-used tap, character, jazz, and Flamenco shoes in youth and adult sizes for borrowing, whenever needed.

Enrollment and tuition assistance applications are available both in English and Spanish. Dedicated, in-person Spanish translation support is

provided during registration periods.

There are several ADA parking spaces available at the front and side of the building, plus an elevator to the studios on the third floor for anyone with mobility issues.

Berkshire Pulse is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1995 by Artistic Director Bettina Montano dedicated to building and strengthening community life through diverse and accessible programming in performing, movement, and creative arts.

WESTFIELD

Westfield Bank donates to food bank of Western Mass

WESTFIELD – The Westfield Bank announces a \$10,000 donation to the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts in support of the organization's mission to build food security for families across the region.

The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts addresses hunger by distributing nutritious food, coordinating with local agencies and advancing longterm solutions to combat food insecurity. Westfield Bank's contribution will help provide meals, mobilize resources, and expand community outreach efforts throughout the region.

"The Food Bank is so grateful to Westfield Bank for its generous investment in our mission to build lasting food security by providing nutritious food and partnering with communities

to end hunger in western Massachusetts," said Andrew Morehouse, Executive Director of the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts.

James C. Hagan, President & CEO of Westfield Bank, added, "We are honored to support the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts as it works to ensure that our neighbors have access to the nutritious food they need. Strengthening the wellbeing of the communities we serve is a cornerstone of our mission, and we are proud to partner with organizations that make a meaningful impact."

Westfield Bank's donation aligns with its ongoing commitment to civic engagement and community health. Through financial contributions, employee volunteerism and longstanding

partnerships with regional nonprofits and service organizations, the Bank seeks to help build more robust, resilient communities. For more information about the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts and ways to support its work, people may visit www.foodbankwma.org.

Westfield Bank, headquartered in Westfield, Massachusetts, is a federally chartered savings bank organized in 1853 and is the largest publicly traded bank headquartered in Western Massachusetts. Currently, the Bank has twenty-five branch offices, forty-nine ATMs, and an additional thirty seasonal ATMs and serves Hampden and Hampshire counties in Western Massachusetts and Hartford County in Northern Connecticut.



Submitted photo

Daniel Marini, Westfield Bank Senior Vice President, Marketing & Sales Administration; Cheyenne Burnham, Public Engagement Manager for the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts; Andrew Morehouse, Executive Director for the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts; Kelly Pignatara, Westfield Bank First Vice President, Retail Banking, Business & Government Deposit Services.

1	2	3		4	5	6	7
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11						12	
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16					17		
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		27			28		29
		34					35
36							37
38							39
40							41
42							43

CLUES ACROSS

1. Racket sport pros
4. Make tea
8. City South of Moscow
10. Spanish bullfighting term
11. Egg-shaped
12. Could not remember
13. French modernist painter
15. Persons
16. Painful intestinal obstruction
17. Professions
18. Is up to the task
21. Wood or metal bolt
22. Tax collector
23. A way to save for the future
24. Georgia rockers
25. Midway between

- north and northeast
26. High schoolers' test
27. Does not accept responsibility
34. One who prepares
35. Gout-indicative deposits
36. Place to play games
37. Book of Genesis character
38. Cleans oneself
39. Unloaded for money
40. Genus of flowering plants
41. Take a puff
42. Congressmen
43. God of battle in Scandinavian mythology

CLUES DOWN

1. Type of bomb
2. South Pacific islands
3. Celestial body
4. Negotiates
5. Consider in a specified way
6. Type of group in organic chemistry
7. Buddhist monasteries
9. Inhabitant of Bering Sea island
10. Body part
12. Milestone birthday
14. Thyroid-stimulating hormone
15. More (Spanish)
17. Chicago ballplayer
19. Leaves a place
20. Cannot be found
23. One's internal body parts
24. Tell on
25. North American peoples of southwest
26. Soviet Socialist Republic
27. Extract used for jams and jellies
28. Greek goddess of the dawn
29. Old English letter
30. A way to exaggerate
31. Get up and leave
32. "Boardwalk Empire" character
33. More generous
34. Hanging cloth used as a blind
36. Ancient Greek sophist

THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPES

- ARIES**
Mar 21/Apr 20
You are unstoppable. Your famous pioneering spirit is magnified, giving you the green light for major breakthroughs. Take the lead in situations that excite you.
- CANCER**
Jun 22/Jul 22
Right now you are hitting a major professional high point, Cancer. All eyes are on you, and your efforts may lead to some well-deserved recognition and rewards.
- LIBRA**
Sept 23/Oct 23
Libra, your relationships are very strong this week. You'll find mutual respect and exciting shared goals through these alliances. If you're single, expect an unforgettable encounter.
- CAPRICORN**
Dec 22/Jan 20
Home is the launchpad for success this week. Focus on developing your domestic environment. A refresh or redecoration can work wonders, especially to banish cabin fever.
- TAURUS**
Apr 21/May 21
Prepare for a week of unexpected results, Taurus. A significant financial opportunity may appear out of the blue, or you might find yourself feeling extra secure at work.
- LEO**
Jul 23/Aug 23
Prepare for adventure this week, Leo. The cosmos is urging you to expand your horizons and seek new inspiration. Your optimism is contagious as you make your plans.
- SCORPIO**
Oct 24/Nov 22
This week is perfect for optimizing your work-life flow and implementing small changes that will yield huge, positive results. You may need help mapping out goals.
- AQUARIUS**
Jan 21/Feb 18
Prepare for several days of remarkable connections. Your ideas and innovative concepts are sharp, which will compel others to aspire to be in your orbit.
- GEMINI**
May 22/Jun 21
Gemini, your social life is booming right now. You are a magnet for excellent ideas and exciting connections this week. Expect conversations that lead to professional opportunities.
- VIRGO**
Aug 24/Sept 22
This week brings a powerful sense of personal transformation and empowerment to you, Virgo. You have the energy to tackle complex matters and emerge feeling stronger and wiser.
- SAGITTARIUS**
Nov 23/Dec 21
Sagittarius, your sector of creativity, fun and romance are illuminated this week. Plan a date, unleash your artistic side or simply dedicate time to pure play. Delightful experiences await.
- PISCES**
Feb 19/Mar 20
Your personal finances are set for an upward trajectory, Pisces. A new income stream may surface, or you might discover a hidden talent that you can monetize.

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

SUDOKU

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!

answers

H	A	T		S	N	E	S	
E	K	O		S	O	I	D	V
L	O	S		S	H	E	A	B
N	A	B	A	H	S	C	R	C
I	H	P	O	T	R	O	S	I
C	U	C	K		A	D	E	D
			H	T	S	S	V	E
			A	T	S	N	N	
			M	H	R	V	I	
			S	R	I	B	I	G
			D	S	U	M	H	T
			S	U	M	H	T	U
			S	R	S	E	R	E
			T	O	G	R	O	F
			N	A	V	E		
			W	R	E			

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

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PUBLIC NOTICES



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS ENERGY FACILITIES SITING BOARD NOTICE OF ADJUDICATION AND PUBLIC COMMENT HEARING



<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/blandford-substation-project>

EFSB 25-09 NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy (Blandford Substation Expansion)

NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy (“Eversource” or “Company”) has asked the Energy Facilities Siting Board (“Siting Board” or “EFSB”) to grant individual and comprehensive zoning exemptions from the Town of Blandford’s Zoning Bylaws for the expansion of the Company’s existing Blandford Substation located at 79 North Blandford Road in Blandford, Massachusetts (the “Project”). To accommodate this expansion, the Company proposes to increase the Substation yard from 0.65 acres to 1.13 acres and will remove 4,000 square feet of trees. A Project description of the Project site is provided below.

The Siting Board will conduct a public comment hearing with both in-person and remote participation options on:

Tuesday, February 3, 2026 at 6:30 P.M.

Snow Date: Wednesday, February 11, 2026, at 6:30 P.M.

In-person hearing location:

**Blandford Town Hall
1 Russell Stage Rd. Blandford, MA 01008**

Remote attendees: join by clicking (or entering) this link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82900586470> from a computer, tablet, or smart device. For audio-only participation, attendees can dial-in at (646) 558-8656 (not a toll-free number) and then enter the **Webinar ID: 829-0058-6470**.

To provide oral comments during the public comment hearing (in person or on Zoom), please send an email to Yonathan.Mengasha@mass.gov with the subject line “EFSB 25-09 SPEAKER SIGN UP”, and your name, email address, and mailing address in the body of your email by **noon, February 2, 2026 (or for Snow date by February 10, 2026)**. To sign up by telephone, please leave a voicemail message referencing “EFSB 25-09” at (617) 305-3544 with your name, telephone number, and mailing address by noon, February 2, 2026 (or for Snow date by February 10, 2026). Pre-registered commenters will speak first, and other commenters afterward.

The Siting Board also invites written comments on the Project. Written comments will be most useful to the Siting Board if submitted by **5:00 p.m., Wednesday, February 18, 2026 (or for Snow date by 5:00 p.m., February 26, 2026)**. Persons or groups who wish to be involved in the Siting Board proceeding (beyond providing comments at the public comment hearing or in writing) may seek to intervene as a party or to participate as a limited participant. Any petition to intervene or participate must likewise be filed no later than **5:00 p.m., February 18, 2026 (or for Snow date by 5:00 p.m., February 26, 2026)** and must follow the instructions below.

Severe Weather Notification and Snow Date

In the event of severe weather, the Siting Board may postpone the public comment hearing. Any postponement will be announced on the Siting Board’s Project website (accessible via the URL link or QR code at the top of this notice’s first page). If the hearing is postponed, it will be rescheduled for the snow date of Wednesday, February 11, 2026, at the original location. The deadlines for submitting public comments and filing for intervention or limited participant status will be extended until Thursday, February 26, 2026.

Important Dates:

**Public Comment Hearing
Planned: February 3, 2026
Snow Date: February 11, 2026**

**Deadline to file written comments
Planned: February 18, 2026
Alternate: February 26, 2026**

**Deadline to file for intervention/limited participant status
Planned: February 18, 2026
Alternative: February 26, 2026**

Public Comment Hearing

At the public comment hearing, the Company will present an overview of the Project. Public officials and members of the public will have an opportunity to ask questions and comment on the Project. The public comment hearing will be transcribed by a court reporter. A recording of the public comment hearing will be available on the **Siting Board’s YouTube channel** after the hearing, at https://www.youtube.com/@MaDPU_hearing.

Public Review of the Company’s Petition

A description of the Project, links to the Company’s petitions, attachments, and analysis, and periodic updates are available via the Siting Board’s webpage: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/blandford-substation-project>. The Company maintains a webpage for the Project at: <https://www.eversource.com/residential/about/transmission-distribution/projects/massachusetts-projects/der-projects/plainfield-blandford/blandford-substation-upgrade>.

Hard copies of the Company’s petitions, including all attachments, are available for public inspection at the following locations:

Boston
Energy Facilities Siting Board
One South Station, 3rd Floor
Boston, MA 02110

Blandford
Town Clerk’s Office
1 Russell Stage Road
Blandford, MA 01008

Porter Memorial Library
87 Main Street
Blandford, MA 01008

Zoning Petition

The Company requests a comprehensive zoning exemption for the Project; the Company also requests the following individual zoning exemptions from the Town of Blandford Bylaw provisions: (1) substa-

tion use in an agricultural zoning district; (2) signs; (3) construction trailers; and (4) site plan review. The Siting Board will review the Zoning Petition to determine whether the zoning exemptions should be granted, and whether the proposed use of the Substation parcel, which includes the Substation and the surrounding yard, is reasonably necessary for the convenience or welfare of the public, pursuant to G.L. c. 40A, § 3.

Intervention and Participation

Persons or groups who wish to be involved in the Siting Board proceeding, beyond providing comments at the public comment hearing or submitting written comments, may seek either to intervene as a party or to participate as a limited participant.

“Intervenor” of “Party” Status: An intervenor can participate fully in the evidentiary phase of the proceeding, including the right to participate in evidentiary hearings, file a brief, and appeal the final order.

“Limited participant” status: A limited participant receives documents during the proceeding and may file a brief.

A petition to intervene must demonstrate that the petitioner may be substantially and specifically affected by this proceeding. See below for filing instructions. For additional information on the Siting Board’s procedural rules, please see the following link: <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/file-a-petition-to-intervene-in-an-efsb-or-dpu-siting-case>.

Filing Instructions

Written comments on the Zoning Petition, or a petition to intervene or participate as a limited participant in this proceeding, must be filed in the following places:

First, the petition to intervene or participate, and comments, must be filed with the Siting Board in electronic format, by email or email attachment to dpu.efiling@mass.gov; AND to connor.c.tarr@mass.gov no later than 5:00 p.m., **February 18, 2026 (or for Snow date 5:00 p.m. February 26, 2026)**. The text of the email must specify: (1) the docket number of the proceeding (EFSB 25-09); (2) the name of the person or entity submitting the filing; and (3) a brief description of the document. The email should also include the name, title, and telephone number of a person to contact in the event of questions about the filing.

Second, the petition or comments must be sent electronically to counsel for the Company, Catherine J. Keuthen, Esq., and Cheryl A. Blaine, Esq., Keegan Werlin LLP, 1 Cranberry Hill, Suite 304, Lexington, MA 02421, ckeuthen@keeganwerlin.com and cblaine@keeganwerlin.com.

Accommodation Requests

Reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities (e.g., Braille, large print, electronic files, audio format) are available upon request. To submit a request for an accommodation, please email Melixza Esenyie - Non-Discrimination Coordinator and Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs at, eeadiversity@mass.gov, or call 617-626-1282. In your communication, please include a description of the request in as much detail as possible and a way we can contact you if we need more information. Please allow at least one week (7 days) advance notice. Last-minute requests will be accepted but we may be unable to fulfill the request.

Language interpretation services are available upon request. Include in your request the language required and a way to contact you if we need more information. Requests may be made at least one week in advance. It may not be possible to accommodate last-minute requests. Contact the Presiding Officer for more information (contact information below).

Non-discrimination Notice

The Siting Board does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age, sex, income, ethnicity, class, disability, religious creed or belief, gender identity, sexual orientation, genetic information, English language proficiency, or ancestry in administration of its programs or activities. See the Siting Board’s Non-Discrimination Notice at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/efsb-non-discrimination-notice-and-grievance-procedure>.

If you believe that you have been discriminated against with respect to a Siting Board program or activity, you may contact Melixza Esenyie (identified above) to learn how and where to file a complaint of discrimination.

Contact

For further information about the proceeding, please contact the Presiding Officer at the address or telephone number below:

Connor Tarr, Presiding Officer
Energy Facilities Siting Board
One South Station
Boston, MA 02110
Connor.C.Tarr@mass.gov
(617)305-3596

Project Description

The Company proposes to expand its existing Blandford Substation located on approximately 2.8 acres of Company owned land at 79 North Blandford Road in Blandford. To accommodate the new and upgraded substation equipment, the fenced yard would be expanded from approximately 0.65 acres to 1.13 acres. Additionally, the Company would remove 4,000 square feet of trees.

The proposed expansion at Blandford Substation includes replacing a 30 megavolt-ampere (“MVA”) transformer and a 25 MVA transformer with two 62.5 MVA transformers; installing new foundations, trenching and conduits, a new 23 kilovolt (“kV”) switchgear enclosure, two new 115 kV circuit breakers in series, and a new galvanized chain link mesh fence of similar height to the existing fence; and constructing a new access driveway off of North Blandford Road. The Company states that the expansion would be conducted in phases to allow the Blandford Substation to remain in service during construction, and it anticipates that construction would last about 18 months.

According to the Company, the Project, at an estimated cost of \$64.5 million, is needed for the timely and cost-effective development and interconnection of distributed generation, and to maintain a reliable electric power system. The Project is a component of the Company’s Capital Investment Project proposal, which the Department of Public Utilities approved, with certain modifications. See **NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy**, D.P.U. 22-52 (2024).
01/22, 01/29/2026

**LEGAL NOTICE
TOWN OF HUNTINGTON
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
PUBLIC HEARING**

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) of the Town of Huntington will hold a public hearing on **February 9, 2026 beginning at 6:00 pm** in Stanton Hall.

In the event of inclement weather, the snow date is February 10, 2026, same time, same place.

The Public Hearing is scheduled for 6:00 pm for the Special Permit Application of Paul and Sandra (Tischler) Saner of 462 Chestnut Hill Avenue, Brookline, MA to demolish and replace a 4 bedroom L-shaped single story cottage with a new rectangular 2 story home with a fully accessible first floor at property they own at 125 Norwich Lake (AKA 125 Searle Road), Huntington, Parcel# L-4-16-0. They also will be replacing the septic system with a new one located farther from the lake on Parcel # L-4-17-0, which they also own, with a shared system servicing both 125 Norwich Lake and 126 Norwich Lake (Parcel # L-4-17-0), Huntington.

The Special Permit Application will be available to view **by appointment** in the office of the Selectboard during regular business hours, as well as at the Public Hearing.

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
TOWN OF HUNTINGTON
01/22, 01/29/2026

**Town of Huntington RFQ
Blandford Hill Road
Improvement Project
Engineering Design**

The Town of Huntington has been awarded funds from the FY 2025 Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, Community Development Block Grant Program. The Town wishes to receive responses for professional engineering design services for water main replacement, sewer system replacement, road reconstruction, storm drainage, and sidewalk reconstruction needed for the infrastructure improvement project on Blandford Hill Road. The project area includes Blandford Hill Road, from the intersection with Russell Road State Route 20 to #26 Blandford Hill Road, approximately 1,100 feet in length. This is a two-phase project. The Phase 1 engineering services sought through this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) will include right of way and utility research, site survey and base plan development,

identification of all required easements, preparation of preliminary design plans, final design plans and specifications, preparation of bid documents, and preparation of an opinion of construction costs. Phase 2 is contingent upon funding and will include bidding services, construction administration services, resident engineering services, and construction close-out services.

The fee for services sought for phase 1 will be negotiated and shall not exceed \$102,000. In the event project construction funding is procured in the future, the engineer shall provide Phase 2 services to be negotiated according to Chapter 7C of the Massachusetts General Laws. A more detailed RFQ is available at the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 60 Congress Street, Springfield, MA 01104, (413) 781-6045, between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM. To request an electronic copy of the RFQ, please contact Sue Ortiz at sortiz@pvpc.org. The RFQ will be available from January 21, 2026, until the due date specified below. The Town of Huntington reserves the right to reject any and all responses if it is deemed in the best interests of the Town to do so. The Huntington Selectboard will be the awarding and contracting authority.

Completed proposals are to be submitted no later than 2:00 PM, Wednesday, February 11, 2026, at the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 60 Congress Street, 1st Floor, Springfield, MA 01104.
01/22, 01/29/2026

**Town of Chester
Conservation Commission
Notice of Public Hearing
Thursday, January 29th,
4:30 PM – 6:00 PM,
Town Hall**

Pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 131, Section 40, the Wetlands Protection Act, the Chester Conservation Commission will review the following:

• RDA submitted by Matt Puntin, 11 and 15 Main Street, Septic Work/Repair
• DEP NOI # 131-0063, partial.

• RDA submitted by Matt Putnim, 12 Riverfront Road, Septic Work/Repair.

• RDA submitted by James Adams, 97 Old State Highway, Septic Work/Repair
• DEP Transaction ID # 1961311.

• RDA submitted by David Tompkins, 139 Kinne Brook Road, Septic Work/Repair.

• RDA submitted for 187 Route 20, Septic Work/Repair.
01/29/2026

NOTICE

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\$20-\$22 per hour based on experience. 15 hours per week. Application and complete job description are available online at www.huntingtonma.us or by emailing admin@huntingtonma.us. Position is open until filled. Town of Huntington is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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OBITUARY

Sue Henning



Feb. 21, 1942 -
Dec. 29, 2025

Sue Henning of Worthington, 83, died unexpectedly at her home on Dec. 29, 2025. Recently, Sue had been valiantly engaging with recurring health issues, which intensified in the past month. She was the widow of Peter Foley, who passed away in May of 2024.

Sue and Peter relocated from Nantucket to Worthington in 2005. Peter, a loyal alumnus of the University of Massachusetts (Amherst), fondly recalled the Berkshires from his college days. The area became their new home after Little Compton R.I. was eliminated in a "run-off" competition Peter created to determine the location of their of their new home.

After Peter passed away, Sue would often say that their shared love of Hampshire County, its rural character and bucolic nature, made the selection of Glendale Falls in Middlefield, the final and logical resting place for Peter's remains in 2024. His send-off was capably administered by Sue who, while on her own one Summer day, leaned over the perilous waterfalls and released him, as they agreed. She would warmly recall this among close friends.

Sue was born Feb. 21, 1942 in Selma, Alabama

and was the daughter of Joseph and Eleanor Henning. Her father, a proud son of Kentucky, finished his tour of duty in the U.S. Army Air Corps and the family re-located to Cleveland, Ohio where his employment prospects were greater. The Hennings settled on the west side of the city where Sue attended public schools.

After high school, Sue enrolled at Ohio University, (Athens) where she received her Bachelor's degree in 1963 and then continued her education at The University of California (Berkeley), after which Sue and a close friend and classmate, headed for Nantucket in their recently purchased used VW Beetle.

Starting on the low rungs of the Nantucket employment ladder as a nineteen year old, Sue worked at the Harbor House Hotel as a chambermaid. Her energy, Southern roots and her comfort level with anyone from the "Bluegrass State," promptly resulted in job offers for both girls from "Willy" House and his wife, the Kentucky-born African-American proprietors of what has now become a Nantucket institution known as "The Chicken Box." Once a fishing shack, it served moderately-priced honey-fried chicken to the numerous servants and chauffeurs, who were given Thursdays and "half-Sundays" off by the "cottagers,"

who brought their staff to the island each summer. From the sixties on, the popularity of the Chicken Box grew exponentially; largely as a result of its down-home ambience; good food and its friendly staff, including Sue.

She would often humorously recall that The Chicken Box was the starting gate for her life on the island. A few years later, it took another island resident to point out to her that if she really wanted to pursue a full-time career in teaching either on or "off-island," working in a local juke joint where the parents of her pupils might gather, was not going to be viewed as career-enhancing.

Sue went to work as an educator at The Papago (now Tohono O'odham) Indian Reservation in Sells, Arizona, a remote part of the state. Sue's gifts as an artist and educator were recognized and her close bonds with the children and her infectious activism resulted in the exposure and subsequent dismissal of a number of administrators, who had been tolerating and shielding abusers of the Native American population there.

After returning to Nantucket she became a highly regarded elementa-

ry school teacher where her artistic ability and her easy and warm rapport with her pupils were recognized. In addition to teaching full-time, Sue was elected as President of the Nantucket Teacher's Association from 1985-1986 where she represented her fellow teachers in contract negotiations; salary and benefit matters and staffing and working condition requirements.

A fellow teacher of biology at Nantucket High School named Peter Foley, the gentleman that had informally been her career advisor, requested her hand in marriage, to which she assented. That marriage, in November 1978, marked the beginning of a joyous union for both blessed with humor, love and mutual respect.

As a couple they visited several continents and countries including Australia, Czechoslovakia, South America, Tibet and Russia. Together, they avidly pursued, understood and appreciated the cultures of each of these nations. One trip to Ireland, recalled with true joy, involved Sue and Peter hosting two women, both members of the Sisters of Mercy (one of whom was Peter's sister) for the 125th anniversary of the religious

order founded there in 1831.

Sue had numerous friends locally and on Nantucket. She cherished all of them, but none of them were held with the same high regard she had for their pets or their children. As the owner of a few King Charles Cavalier Spaniels and her beloved cats, she showered animals of all kinds with love, kibble, bones, bird seed, toys and affection. Sue believed that the children of her numerous friends and relatives deserved higher regard than they did and she demonstrated her generosity with gifts that transformed young children. Her homemade Valentine's Day cards, reflecting her artistic abilities were sent every year to numerous recipients along with books, calendars and miscellaneous gifts from her inveterate weekly harvest of local thrift shops.

Sue was always a true humanist. She engaged with others with warmth and authenticity. She suspended judgment and offered acceptance; she declined indifference and extended friendship; she deferred the average and chose to elevate those she encountered.

If so inclined, please make donations in her memory to your local animal shelter or The American Indian College Fund, 8333 Greenwood Boulevard, Denver, Colorado 80221.

DEATH NOTICE

HENNING, SUE
Died Dec. 29, 2025

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 (with a word limit of up to 500 words) 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.

SCHOOLS & YOUTH

Hampshire Regional High School and CAC partner to offer online safety

WESTHAMPTON—The Children's Advocacy Center of Hampshire County announces a new partnership with Hampshire Regional High School to launch SMART Mentors for Online Safety, a peer-led program designed to help middle school students navigate online risks.

Through the program, HRHS students in grades 10-12 are trained as mentors to deliver an online safety lesson to seventh graders, empowering younger students with practical tools to recognize and respond to online harm. The curriculum, developed by ChildHelp, a nationally recognized organi-

zation, is evidence-based and age-appropriate.

SMART stands for Safe, Meet, Accept, Reliably and Tell. Mentors guide younger students through strategies for protecting personal information, using caution when interacting with people met online, avoiding suspicious links or requests, and knowing when (and how) to tell a trusted adult if something feels wrong.

Beginning in early January, members of the CAC prevention team led four training sessions at HRHS to prepare student mentors in both content and group facilitation skills. On Jan. 28, mentor teams of two

or three students visited seventh grade classrooms, supported by school counselors and CAC staff, to deliver the 75-minute lesson.

Online sextortion and harassment continue to rise among young people. Current data show that one in five teens will experience some form of sextortion and nearly half will encounter online harassment. "Teens are far more likely to listen to their peers than to adults especially when it comes to online behavior," said April Igneri, Director of Prevention and Outreach at the CAC. "This program puts students in leadership roles, equipping them to share real-life skills

and help their peers respond safely if they encounter trouble online."

HRHS quickly embraced the idea, building on its existing relationship with the CAC through prior trainings on healthy relationships and consent. "Over the years, we've allowed them access to strangers all over the world. It also allows them the ability to make Children's Advocacy Center is to help our student population be more cautious about what they're sharing, become educated on red flags to look out for, and importantly, how to ask for help when they're faced with something that feels tricky online," said school counselor

Julia Low-Chappell.

Students serving as mentors have shown strong engagement and commitment. HRHS junior Astrid Jensen shared, "I think younger students are often afraid of getting in trouble if they're involved in unsafe online situations. I hope this program helps break that stigma and makes kids feel more comfortable asking for help, both at school and online."

The SMART Mentors will reconvene on Feb. 3 for a final debrief session to reflect on their experience and provide feedback to CAC staff. As this is the first implementation of the program, the CAC plans to incorporate

mentor feedback with the goal of expanding SMART Mentors to additional high schools across Hampshire County.

The Children's Advocacy Center of Hampshire County provides a coordinated, culturally competent, multidisciplinary team response to allegations of child abuse in a dedicated, child-friendly setting. At the CAC child survivors of abuse can access free, trauma-informed services to help them heal and thrive. People may visit cachampshire.org to learn more about the Children's Advocacy Center of Hampshire County and its prevention programming.

Colleges and universities announce President's, Dean's list

The following local students received honors for higher education.

PRESIDENT'S LIST Elon University Elon, North Carolina

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

University of Hartford West Hartford, Connecticut

Marina Slivca of Westfield
Nick Brisson of Williamsburg

Vermont State University Randolph Center, Vermont

Megan Culp of Easthampton

DEAN'S LIST

Quinnipiac University Hamden, Connecticut

Chloe Govani of Blandford
Abigail Kane of Easthampton
Jake Redmond of Easthampton
Benjamin Shannon of Otis

Springfield College Springfield

Jocelyn Dean of Easthampton, health science major
Chloe Derby of Easthampton, health science/pre-OT major
Anna Fusco of Becket, social work major
Chaeli Mackey, history major
Ryder Pieczarka of Westfield,

health science/pre-PT

Ryan Prystowski of Westfield, health science/pre-OT major

Meghan Sullivan of Easthampton, health science/pre-PA

Jacob Wagner of Westfield, criminal justice major

University of Hartford West Hartford, Connecticut

Avery Brooks of Westhampton
Anna Dunlap of Westhampton
Sydney Kleppinger of Easthampton
Marina Slivca of Westfield
Gia Forry of Westfield
Angelina Krikunova of Westfield
Nick Brisson of Williamsburg

Matthew Amenta graduates from Vermont State University

RANDOLPH CENTER, VT – Vermont State University announces Matthew Amenta of Sandisfield is a member of

the graduating class for December 2025.

Amenta majored in outdoor education at Vermont State University.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO
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CHESTER

STORY AND FUN GROUP LEARNS ABOUT FALCONRY

Submitted photo Tammy Merenda, a falconer, brought in Enoch, her juvenile red-tailed hawk to Thursday Story and Fun at the Hamilton Memorial Library on Thursday, Jan. 22. They learned about the sport of falconry and birds of prey. Braelyn is shown with Tammy Merenda and Enoch, a red-tailed hawk.



CHA plans Snow Day on Feb. 1

CHESTER – The Chester Hill Association will hold a Snow Day on Sunday, Feb. 1 from noon-3:30 p.m. at the Holzman property at 14 Ingell Road.

People are invited to bring a sled and cross country skis to enjoy an afternoon of outdoor fun and activity.

Light refreshments

will be set up in the carriage house at the Holzma/s Lack of sufficient snow will move the event to the following Sunday, Feb. 8.

Library hosts geology, local history talk

CHESTER – The Hamilton Memorial Library, 15 Middlefield Road, will hold a special museum event, "Free Geology and Local History Talk" with James Higby. On Saturday, Feb. 7 at 10 a.m. in the library's unique mineral and crystal museum.

The Hamilton Memorial Mineral Collection contains not only many rare and beautiful gemstones, but also an original hand-drawn preliminary mineral survey by United States Geological Survey geologist Steven A. Norton; this is a unique and historic geologic document. Higby enjoys explor-

ing, mapping and sharing the known history of the Chester Emery Mines. He will bring familiarity with the displayed minerals as well as historic documents available from the United States Geological Survey including a Bedrock Geologic Quadrangle Map and an Aeromagnetic Map.

Hilltown trolley has interesting history

By Liz Massa
Guest Columnist

The Lee-Huntington Trolley Line was a branch of the Berkshire Street Railway.

This trolley line had either a long or a very short history depending on how people want to look at it. It was originally surveyed as a steam railroad from the Connecticut River to the Hudson. For over twenty years previous to its completion; politics and big corporate fought in courts until it was somewhat agreed upon how to construct and complete it.

The Western Massachusetts Contracting Company secured the contract to build the trolley line from Lee to Huntington. Construction began on May 1, 1911 on the Lee end and was completed in Huntington around Dec. 1, 1913. The first cars ran on the line from Lee to Otis on June 14, 1916 and from Lee to Huntington on Aug. 16, 1917. During the years of construction, huge amounts of men, money and equipment were used to build the line because of the difficulty of the terrain through these hills.

It was the first form of modern transportation in Western Massachusetts. During construction almost a thousand men per day, mostly Italian and Polish immigrants were employed at the construction sites. They received \$1.90 a day for nine hours.

Construction methods were still fairly primitive in the early years of the 20th century. Horses, mules and oxen were need to remove the stumps and rocks to clear the road. Teams of horses drew ties, lumber and poles from local mills to stations along the line.

The poles were the largest ever seen cut eight feet long from local chestnut. Dynamite was used to blast the enormous rocks and in places where it was so wild and rough, steam shovels were used to clear the path. Every foot of rail was one cubic yard of gravel. The steam shovels weighing seventy tons were one of the modern machines used. People would come to watch them in operation because the Hilltowners had never seen steam shovels like these. Railroad cars would carry the dirt, rock and gravel with a specially built locomotive. A temporary railroad track was built for this purpose in 1913 across Russell Street in Huntington to connect to the Boston and Albany track.

The stretch of line from Blandford to Huntington was about four miles and drops one thousand feet in elevation. This was difficult work which involved building of bridges, culverts and retaining walls. They even filled ponds to keep the line as straight and level grade as possible.

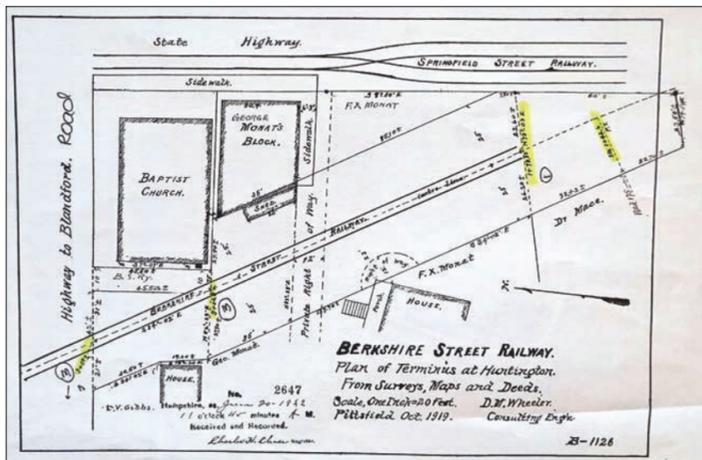
When the line was complete, there was not another trolley road in the state like it, mostly because of the kind of country through which it passed. Mountains and hills were leveled to make a straight, low grade. The line followed mountain streams,



Submitted photos
These workers are building catch track three. The catch tracks brought the trolleys to a complete stop to slow their speed when descending the steep grade.



This 1913 photo of trolley tracks looks toward Blandford Hill Road.



This plan shows the terminus of the Huckleberry Line into Huntington.

plunged through lakes, climbed to elevations with magnificent views.

Of course, all of this required a huge amount of money. The Lee-Huntington section cost about three million dollars. The cost crippled the New Haven Railroad Company financially and led to the nixing of the proposed extension from Huntington to Worthington and Cummington.

The entire Lee-Huntington line opened on Aug. 16, 1917. The round trip took three hours and cost \$1.60 to ride it. There were four round trips daily between Lee and Huntington. After all this time, blood sweat and most likes some tears, the line operated only until late 1918, a total of ten months.

Harry Andrew Wright wrote the "Story of Western Massachusetts" in which he called the Western Mass Trolley project "the most costly venture of its kind in the history of the Commonwealth," which it was.

In 1915 the total investment was almost twenty-four million dollars for 563 miles of track and over 800 cars. The Huckleberry spur was just 23.86 miles long with no equipment at a cost of three million, which ran for a pitiful two seasons.

ful two seasons.

The Huckleberry Line was sometimes called a condemnation of Leonard F. Hardy. The line was originally supposed to go to Woronoco keeping on the flatland, avoiding Huntington center but Hardy, who was a legislator from Huntington had a lot of property he wanted to get rid of and thought the trolley line would pick up business, so he used his political pressure to get the route changed to Huntington, which killed it. The biggest expense and most difficulty was building the line down Cook Mountain at a seven percent grade into the village.

Quoting Wright "the Huckleberry line can be seen as a pawn in the great national contests of the day; the governmental regulation of corporate and financial giants, the decline of rural areas and the rise of the cities, and the striking revolution brought by the automobile and tourism." The corporate giant was the New Haven Railroad, the government was the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the rural area was a forty-nine square mile area of the Hilltowns. At the same time, the Jacobs Ladder Highway revolutions was at hand, the first of its



This lidar and google map overlays help in researching where the old roads and trolley line ran.



Combine 162 was the first trolley car to run on the Huckleberry Line.



This was the first trolley car into Huntington. Photo courtesy of George Ford

kind in the nation.

The Special Tax Commissioner's Report of 1898: "to sum up the highway situation, it may be said that changes in industrial conditions have compelled the construction of new lines of communication, both railways and highways, for which the farmer in large part paid the bills and did not benefit much." It left his farm stranded on the hill-tops, forced its abandonment, brought immigrants in a steady flow and competitors, who monopolized the markets he formerly controlled. The owners of these farms were taxed to build the road that ruined them, leaving their land that they could not sell to the mercy of the tax collectors and assessors. The state has provided for all others but has denied the faith of its farmers.

Back in Huntington, a large timber loading ramp had been constructed over the track just up the line from where the railroad tracks crossed the street behind the Kyle Block. The four horse loads of gravel were drawn up overhead and dumped through the trap to the cars. The gravel to build the trolley came from the Fiske Farm across the Westfield River.

A portable substation was set at the top of Cook Mountain at Camp 10 to supplement power from Otis and the cars went up the mountain with no trouble. Coming down the mountain at a seven percent grade caused many problems. The first car

over the line had been condemned by the state inspector, who required that an extra compressor and tank be installed for extra braking and safety.

Four catch tracks were built; when the trolley cars came down the mountain they had to stop at each catch, which were always left open for the cars to come to a complete stop to slow down the speed of the mountain ride. This added to the expense and difficulty of construction and required two specially equipped cars to be used on this line.

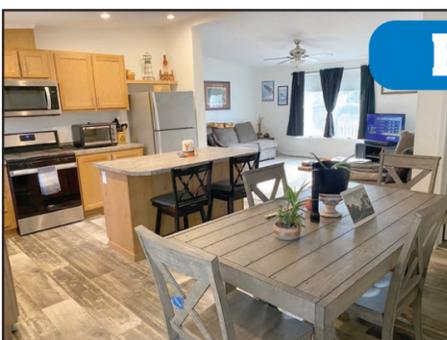
When the line was operating, passenger business was pitifully light. On good days, the line might have a dozen fares and, on a Sunday, maybe 20 or 25. It was considered a fine Sunday outing to ride the trolley to Lee and then take the steam train around Pittsfield, returning to Huntington at 8 p.m. that night. Besides that, the business was mostly fishermen and hunters. Heading East, there was no connection with Westfield at Huntington. The Springfield Street Railway from Westfield to Huntington was separated from the Lee-Huntington Railway at Huntington with a ten-foot gap.

In fall of 1917 the entire trolley service was suspended for the season. The first world war had massively affected the railroads. It started up again in April of 1918 and ran until October when the raging influenza epidemic hit and hurt the labor conditions. There was

no service come spring of 1919, the company decided that the towns would have to contribute \$8,000, claiming it lost that in proceeds the previous year. As much as the Hilltown people wanted the line to operate they could not afford the cost.

By October of 1920 the New Haven Railroad Company started taking up the rails as far west as the Newall Granite Quarry in Otis. On Oct. 22 the Huckleberry from Huntington to Blandford did not exist. The Huntington Terminal was closed. The New Haven continued freight service on the line to the Newall Quarry until its contract expired in 1923. Then it stopped and no one had a plan that would make the line go or get it to go to Westfield. The rest of the track was taken up and the overhead cable was taken down. Much of it was stolen before that point.

Today where the Huckleberry once ran, people will find some parts have been obliterated by the Mass Pike and other places bulldozed by the Western Mass Electric Company, who owns the right of way. However, they can still follow the line for miles on foot over ridges and through gullies, which was its fills and cuts passing by the abandoned North Blandford village, abandoned roads and farms which it was meant to save. People may even find a Huckleberry bush here and there as a reminder of the Hilltown Trolley dreams.



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