

"Dare to be honest and fear no labor," – Robert Burns

# Country Journal

Devoted to the Needs of the Hilltowns

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

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Stalactite like ice forms on Rte 112 in Worthington, a testament to the freeing cold gripping the Hilltowns. Turley photos by Deborah Daniels



This is another view on Rte. 112 icicles in Worthington.



Nebb's well, located off Route 66 in Huntington, had frozen water at the spigot. This well is pumped by locals for water.

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## BLANDFORD

### Select Board gives Ferrara glowing review

By Mary Kronholm  
Correspondent

The board concluded their meeting with a six-month review of Town Administrator Cristina Ferrara and found her work to exceed expectations in most areas.

They also credited her with outstanding service to the town regarding adherence to policy, her organizational skills and self-management. She conveys information to the board in a timely manner and conducts herself professionally. She will receive a \$5,000 increase effective Jan. 1, 2025.

#### Water Commissioners

The Water Commissioners and Select Board met Monday night and continued discussion on contracts and funding needs to pay bills which are accruing for the upgrades to the Water Plant at Long Pond.

#### Executive session

The board held a roll-call vote to go into executive session with the Water Commissioners shortly after 6:30 p.m. to return to public forum afterwards.

#### Electrical work

The meeting resumed in public and there was a discussion of multiple invoices for electrical work that has been done and other work that needs to be completed. There is a question about having the fire suppression electrical supply on its own separate source as opposed to having it on the same source from the new emergency generator.

SELECT BOARD, page 7

## HUNTINGTON

### Fourth continuance hearing held on Hull gravel pit

By Wendy Long  
Correspondent

At 6 p.m., Zoning Board Chair Karon Hathaway opened the fourth continuance hearing regarding an application for a gravel pit on Hull Forestlands property in Huntington.

Present were Zoning Board members Alicia Hackerson, Jill Rose, Deresa Helems and Victoria Minilla Sena, who attended remotely. Approximately 20 people attended. Representing the project were Bill Hull, attorney Michael Pill and Melvin Hess of Hilltown Sand and Gravel.

Hathaway reported that the board had received two proposals for the four final studies they are seeking. Bowman Consulting submitted a proposal for the traffic study, which will look at the point on Route 112 where trucks will enter on their way to Hilltown Sand and Gravel. The Board will also ask Bowman to add a Diesel Emissions Study to their proposal. Cross Spectrum Acoustics has submitted a proposal for a sound impact study for the project, particularly to the property abutters on Goss Hill.

HEARING, page 3



Planning Board Chair Linda Hamlin; Hull Forestlands Attorney Michael Pill; Bill Hull and Melvin Hess of Hilltown Sand and Gravel, all spoke at the public hearing on the Hull gravel pit application on Tuesday, Jan. 21. Turley photo by Wendy Long



PAGE 7

Blandford.....7	Classifieds..... 10, 11	Montgomery.....8	Pittsfield.....2	Schools & Youth.....6
Business Directory.....3	Hilltowns.....2	Obituaries..... 11	Public Notices.....8	
Chester.....8	Huntington.....3	Opinion..... 4, 5	Puzzle Page.....9	
Chesterfield.....8	Middlefield.....9	Otis.....6	Russell.....8	



# HILLTOWNS

## HILLTOWN HISTORY

### Mink fur was coat of choice for rich and famous

By Deborah Daniels  
Correspondent

Have you been out tracking paw prints? We have had wonderful weather for this, the snow preserving the footprint escapades of our furry friends or possibly you think of them as pesky varmints.

Go outside and see for yourself, squirrel, rabbit and house pet tracks are all over the yard. We're going to consider mink today, especially as a Hinsdale mink farmer lost some 300 minks in 2007 as a result of them being set free by animal rights activists. One can only speculate are these freed mink responsible for the mink population that live in the Hilltowns?

The mink farmer reported that these soon to be mink pelts would fetch \$55 per pelt at auction. Not too shabby a crop when you consider it takes 50-60 minks to make a fur jacket and 60-80 minks to make a full length coat. And a mink is ready to harvest in 8-9 months. Mink are born in late April, early May in a litter of up to 12 kits, weaned in six weeks and fully developed by November/December. A cash crop that has been farmed, make that bred since 1870.

Where would America and Canada be if it weren't for fur traders exploring the new continent for fur bearing animals. Mink were hunted for food as well as for their pelts. Then mink were trapped to make warm clothing for Civil War soldiers in Cassadaga Lakes, New York.

Seamstresses complained that the pelts were too hard to stitch together. Have you ever seen a photo of a Civil War soldier wearing mink? Did you know that mink have a dense undercoat of ground hair that keeps the mink warm. Then there is a longer guard hair mixed in the mink pelt that repels water. So mink fur is extremely insulating and water resistant.

You couldn't get a finer coat material. Mink coats became the winter coat of choice for the rich and famous. Bette Davis, Elizabeth Taylor, Lauren Bacall and Marilyn all wore mink coats and they resided in California. So mink farms boomed in the 1930s. Massachusetts was ranked number seven in mink farming in the 1940s.

The Hinsdale mink farmer men-

tioned above had some 500 caged minks in 2007. What gives with mink farming? Well the minks were selectively bred to control their color so that the once black tawny, wild mink mutated to have the colors of mahogany, pale buff, white, all black, pastel and sapphire pelts. No sapphire is not blue but a light brown hue much desired by the cognoscenti.

The process of making a mink coat involves de-fleshing the fur, cleaning and softening the fur before it can be sold at auction in New



A mink is well known for its fur, which is warm and water resistant.

York City; Montreal, Canada or in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Should you want to know the mink carcasses are used to make pet food, animal feed, organic compost, fertilizer, paint and even used in making tires.

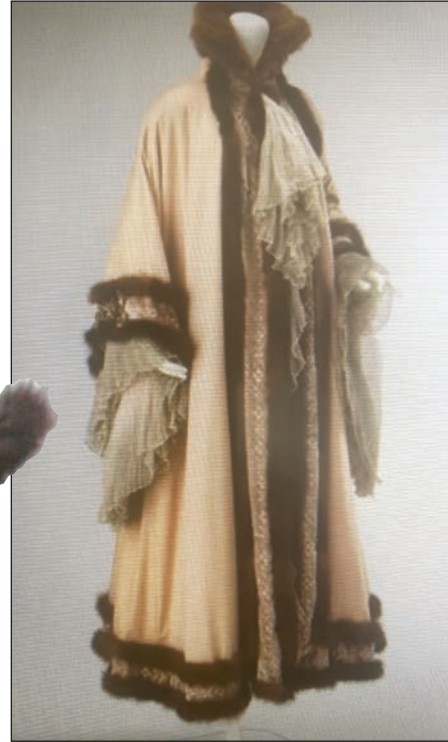
The next step in making a mink coat involves cutting and color matching the pelts which are stretched and nailed to a pattern board then sewn together on special fur-sewing machines. Much of the work is done by hand. Should you be looking for a fur coat, buyer beware there is faux fur. It was invented in 1910 to make look-alike fur coats. Faux fur is made of silk and synthetic fabric (fur made from a plastic derivative). It is a very convincing fur coat knock off.

True fur coats have tapered ends to the individual fur strand not bluntly cut ends nor pointed ends. The furriers also warn to read the label on a fur coat when checking for authenticity. It should state it is mink fur and the backing on it should be leather not fabric. Fur coat buying tip: you have to rip the liner to check to see if the backing is leather.

How about the natural life of those cute minks? Well they purr when happy and they communicate by chuckling, growling, barking and hissing. They mark their territory by leaving a strong musty odor, probably that invisible stuff your dog is always trying to roll in.

They usually live near water feeding on fish, crayfish, frogs, mice and squirrel. They are adept swimmers with partially webbed feet. They have long slender bodies with short legs, short round ears and a pointed nose and slightly bushy tail. They weigh two to four pounds.

They are characterized as aggressive, quick to bite and able to get through



This photo shows a 1920s era mink coat and trim.

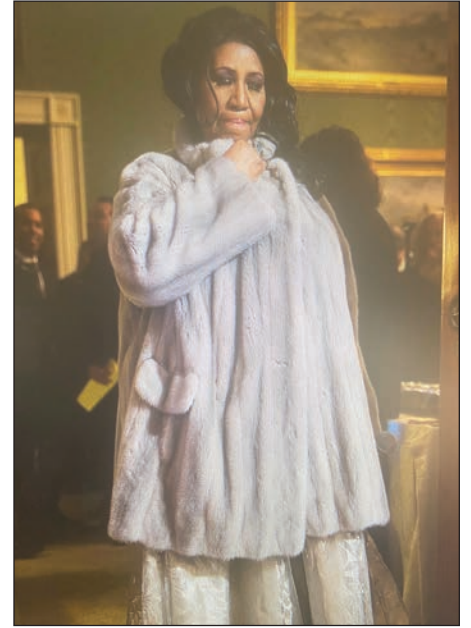


A French evening coat with mink trim designed by Jacques Doucet in 1902, now displayed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in NYC.

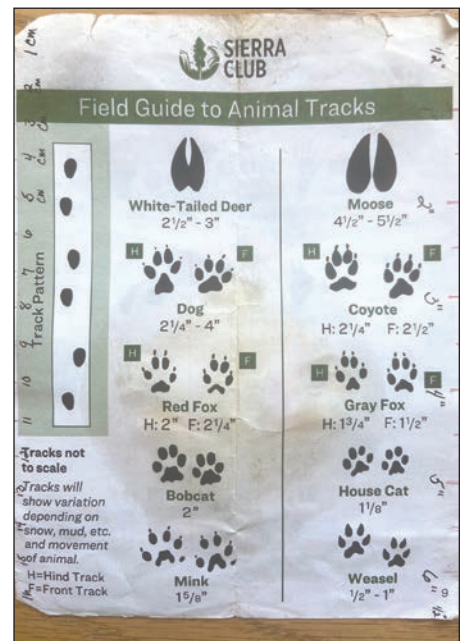
chicken wire with holes as small as one inch in diameter. They are only preyed upon when young by fox, coyote and birds of prey because as adults they are known to ferociously defend themselves. They have a lifespan of ten years but rarely live more than three years in the wild.

Despite all that, we have managed to capture and breed them for the purpose of making coats. Mink coats can sell for \$8,000 to \$50,000, an "all belly black Russian mink coat" sold for \$400,000. The U.S. retail sales of fur garments totaled \$574 million dollars in 2017. Fur coats must be stored in a cool, temperature controlled environment and don't consider storing it at home without an insurance rider to protect its value.

Fur coats have been politically incorrect for some time. There were



Aretha Franklin sports a mink coat in 2013. Submitted photos



This tracking guide shows mink prints.

2,836 mink farms in the early 1940s and as of 2021 there are 100 mink farms in the United States today. California has banned the sale of new furs since 2023. No new fur coats for sale. You can still buy a vintage fur coat on resale if you dare.

Because People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals people are pretty aggressive about eliminating your option of owning a fur coat. They have demonstrated at Hollywood events by standing outside naked to make their point.

I had a girlfriend in college whose grandmother owned a mink coat. We were appalled at this until she let us borrow it for a costume party. Oh, if you ever tried one on: there is nothing warmer.

# PITTSFIELD

## 1Berkshire announces Immigrant Entrepreneurial Support Pilot Program

PITTSFIELD – 1Berkshire, thanks to a one-time earmark from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, launches a two-year pilot program focused on growing its entrepreneurial immigrant community in the Berkshires.

The Berkshire Immigrant Entrepreneurial Support Program is a four-part platform that aims to provide enhanced support, access, and tailored technical assistance through collaborations, micro-grants and direct training and workshops.

This includes: collaborative partner resource allocations, Women and Minority Owned business Enterprise certification micro grants, translation and interpretive services and tailored technical assistance and training.

These pre-identified funding allocations will help launch, sustain, or complete programs, projects, or efforts that add new capacity. 1Berkshire's support to Berkshire Community College's ESOL program for Spring and Fall 2025 is one such investment being made through this program. Future allocations will be announced as they occur.

For immigrant entrepreneurs and immigrant-owned businesses that it makes sense for, this program is offering micro-grants to help cover the cost of the certification process.

By investing in ongoing translation and interpretation services, more materials, programs, training, and resources will be distributed in multiple languages to support entrepreneurs and their busi-

ness growth.

Based on past and ongoing feedback, this tailored training and technical assistance will focus on the specific needs identified by members of the immigrant entrepreneur community and the partners providing them support already. Workshops will be announced and posted on the 1Berkshire Immigrant Entrepreneurial Support Program website.

Dr. Ben Lamb, 1Berkshire VP of Economic Development, notes, "1Berkshire is excited that it can put these resources to good work and support our growing immigrant business community in ongoing and new ways over the next two years. Berkshire County has seen such an immense

amount of private investment by many such businesses in recent years; creating jobs, driving redevelopment, building community, and injecting life into our downtowns. These added resources will further that regional, local and individual economic impact for these entrepreneurs committed to building their businesses in the Berkshires."

For more information, people may visit the newly launched Berkshire Immigrant Entrepreneurial Support Program website at <https://1berkshire.com/1berkshire-programs/immigrant-entrepreneurial-support>. For additional inquiries, people may email the 1Berkshire Economic Development Team at [EconomicDev@1berkshire.com](mailto:EconomicDev@1berkshire.com).

# HUNTINGTON

## Public library hosts author talk and 'Blind Date With a Book'

By Wendy Long  
Correspondent

HUNTINGTON – Two special events highlight February offerings at the Huntington Public Library.

Patrons can stop in and take part in the month-long “Blind Date With a Book.”

They will select and read a wrapped book this month. Those who complete and return a review card will be entered into a raffle.

Local author, Steven Cormier, will do an author talk on Saturday, Feb. 22 at 11 a.m. His latest book, “The Sacrificial Land,” covers the Westfield River’s

impact on Western Massachusetts and details the process of building Knightville and Littleville Dams. Cormier is also the author of “The Life and Times of Parley B. Hutchins.”

Regular monthly offerings include the Book Swap Club, where people bring a favorite book to share information and titles with other attendees, on Tuesday, Feb. 11 at 4:30 p.m. This month’s Crafternoon for all ages will be held on Thursday, Feb. 13 at 4 p.m. Participants can bring their own project or make use of the library’s various craft supplies in a relaxed and fun environment.

Game Night will be held on

Thursday, Feb. 20 at 4 p.m. This event is for all ages; patrons can bring their own game to play with others or make use of the games available at the library. Registration is required to take part in free pizza and soda.

Cookbook Club will meet on Wednesday, Feb. 26 at 5 p.m. This month’s theme is “favorite recipes.” Choose a cookbook or find an online source, try out recipes and bring a culinary delight to the library for a potluck-style gathering.

The library’s monthly book club will meet on Thursday, Feb. 6 at 4 p.m. to discuss the “Salt Path” by Raynor Winn. The pick for the rest of

February is “The First Ladies” by Marie Benedict. This book tells the story of the unlikely friendship between Eleanor Roosevelt and Civil Rights activist Mary McLeod Bethune. The club will meet to discuss that book on March 6 at 4 p.m.

New members are always welcome to these activities. Events are free, but some like the monthly game night require registration at [huntingtonpubliclibrary.org](http://huntingtonpubliclibrary.org).

“We are always looking for input on new programs and ideas for the library,” said Library Director Amanda Loiselle. People may call her at 413-512-5206 or email [library@huntingtonma.us](mailto:library@huntingtonma.us).

## HEARING

from page 1

Hull noted that the Cross Spectrum Acoustics proposal had two price points: under their terms, it would cost more to have them come to a public hearing and report. Hull recommended going with the higher priced study because he feels it’s important for the public to hear their findings.

Hathaway said they are still waiting for proposals on studies that look at silica dust and hydrology. She requested a continuance to Tuesday, March 11, which was approved. She then opened it up to questions.

Opponent Mike Brisebois said that Hull has a right to apply, but by law the project has to be in harmony with the town. It’s discretionary and has no benefit to the town. Brisebois suggested that the ZBA vote the project down now and not give expenses to Hull for these studies. He noted that Hull had retained Attorney Michael Pill, who had successfully represented these same abutters against another gravel pit proposed on that same property.

Pill spoke up, saying, “I cannot have what I did 20 – 25 years ago, to be inaccurately presented. That was a very different situation. Please stop throwing in my face that I opposed a much larger project 25 years ago.” Pill went on to state that forestlands do not pay for themselves. Without the gravel pit, Hull would have to subdivide the land to make a profit, which would cost the town a lot of money. The benefit to the town is using this very small part of the land to extract money, making it possible to keep the rest of the land forested.

Planning Board Chair Linda Hamlin said that the town could not just deny the project without reason.

Many of those present spoke in favor of the gravel pit. Michelle Olivera spoke about the years that Gale Donovan ran the gravel business in town. “I just find it kind of hard that we’ve had a gravel pit in town for over 50 years and it’s been nothing but a blessing to this town.”

Another person spoke about Donovan’s business, which is now Hilltown Sand and Gravel, providing the material to fill in the ruts caused by the 1955 flood. Gary Windsor, retired from the construction industry, said it is a constant search for raw material. The closer the source is, the better. “I’m guessing 50% of the properties in Huntington have used material from these businesses. There’s no reason that these places can’t be restored so that you’d never know there’d been a gravel pit there.”

Ed Grabowski said he’d been in town for 55 years and had nothing but good things to say about Gale Donovan. “But he was in business before you needed a permit. It’s a way of life that we’re trying to preserve out here.”

Brisebois and Grabowski submitted a petition with 150 signatures in opposition to the gravel pit. Hathaway said she had been told that another resident had more signatures, but she has not

received those yet.

Grabowski also read from the 1999 report prepared by Pill. The 5.72 acres proposed then was similar in size to the Hull application. Pill had concluded that the “location of a gravel pit across from Gardner State Park is not in harmony with the town.”

Hull spoke up, saying that the biggest difference in the Voudron proposal from 1999 and Hull’s, is that the earlier pit was in wetlands and his egress route was along the river. Hull noted that their way out is nowhere near the river and that it’s inaccurate to say they moved the site to get it out of the wetlands. “To say this is going to ruin your life is just a bunch of hokey,” Hull said, adding that Noel Keeney, the Rapids restaurant and Gardner State Park representatives were not there complaining.

Cathy Brisebois countered, saying, “I take issue that we are making a big deal about nothing. We chose to live out here for the peace and quiet. The valley allows sound to travel. We hear the train, which is about five miles away. It will totally destroy the life that we have now.”

Hess said that Hilltown Sand and Gravel, which would operate the proposed gravel pit, endeavors to provide material to the town “You walked over sand that we delivered for free to Huntington,” he said, referencing the icy sidewalks. He noted that the closer they are to the raw materials, the better cost we can give to the town.

Answering a question from Hamlin, Hull said they planned to remove somewhere between 200-300 thousand yards.

Brisebois displayed aerial pictures of one of Hull’s gravel pits in Goshen, noting that it had left quite a scar on the land. But Hull countered saying that the photo showed a parcel that was still an operating pit. The rest of the land that he had mined was now a solar field.

Hess agreed and asked people to check out the pit they had run in Wielander’s field off of Route 20 in Chester. “Our goal is not to ruin the creation that God made,” Hess said, adding that they are still working to reclaim the Peckham pit.

Mike Brisebois said that the proposed road to and from the pit is 450 feet away from his house. “I don’t want to harm business. But I didn’t put my house next to a gravel pit.”

A continuance was scheduled for Tuesday, March 11 at 6 p.m. Hathaway said that it would be their goal to have this be the last meeting on selecting the studies, as long as they have the last two proposals in time. Hull added that they still do not know how long the studies will take to complete.

Hamlin noted that the Zoning Board cannot make a decision on this application until after all of the studies are done. She added that Planning and Zoning had been working extensively on this project.

The meeting adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

## Town Clerk announces mailing residents of annual town census

HUNTINGTON – The Town Clerk announces the annual town census is being mailed out to Huntington Residents, starting Jan. 21.

It is necessary to complete the census, sign and date it as it is a legal document required by Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 51, Section 6. Included in this mailing is a 2025 dog license application for the fiscal year

starting June 30. If people have a dog now that is not licensed, they should visit [www.huntingtonma.us](http://www.huntingtonma.us) for the 2024 license application or come in to license their dog(s) for this year. This is important because, by Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 140, Section 137a, all dogs should be licensed within 30 days of acquiring a dog or a dog turning six months old.

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# OPINION

## GUEST COLUMN



### Reader seeks clarification of Medicare IRMAA and MAGI

Dear Rusty:

I am confused by an article in my local newspaper which said that Modified Adjusted Gross Income, on which my Medicare Part B premium is based, is my Adjusted Gross Income, plus any non-taxable interest, plus 50% of the social security I received.

The part that is confusing is the 50% part. When I look at my tax return my Adjusted Gross Income includes the taxable portion of my Social Security benefit which, in my case, is 85% of my total benefits. Why must 50% of benefits be added to my AGI if it is already included in my total AGI?

Signed: Confused

Dear Confused:

The article you refer to was misleading for stating that the Modified Adjusted Gross Income used to determine your Medicare premiums includes your normal Adjusted Gross Income from your income tax return, plus any non-taxable interest you may have had, plus 50% of the SS benefits you received during the tax year. What the article should have said was that the MAGI, which determines your Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount to your Medicare premiums consists of your normal AGI from your tax return, which includes the taxable portion of your Social Security benefits, plus any non-taxable interest you may have had.

For additional clarity, the Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount is a supplemental amount added to the standard Medicare premium for those with higher incomes. The thresholds at which the IRMAA supplements apply depend on your IRS filing status, and your MAGI determines the amount of supplement which will be added to the standard Medicare premium.

Single filers with MAGI over \$103,000 or married filers with MAGI over \$206,000 will see an IRMAA supplement added to their Medicare premium. Those whose MAGI is under the first IRMAA threshold pay the standard Medicare premium, but those whose MAGI exceeds the first IRMAA threshold above will pay more.

How much more depends on how much their MAGI exceeds the first IRMAA threshold by. The IRMAA supplement (the additional premium amount) could be anywhere from \$69.90 to \$419.30 per month for Medicare Part B (coverage for outpatient services) or an additional \$12.90 to \$81.00 per month to the Medicare Part D (prescription drug plan) premium - again dependent on how much over the initial MAGI threshold the person is for their IRS filing status. You can see the MAGI levels and corresponding IRMAA supplements by visiting this Medicare website at [www.cms.gov/newsroom/fact-sheets/2024-medicare-parts-b-premiums-and-deductibles](http://www.cms.gov/newsroom/fact-sheets/2024-medicare-parts-b-premiums-and-deductibles).

IRMAA and MAGI can be confusing. If people have questions about their Medicare premiums, help is available by emailing [SSadvisor@amacfoundation.org](mailto:SSadvisor@amacfoundation.org) or calling 1-888-750-2622.

SECURITY, page 5

## Corrections policy

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

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



## GUEST COLUMN

### Task Force offers tips to teens

Young people today communicate with each other around the clock.

Navigating these conversations and building healthy relationships can be hard and requires practice. Teens and young adults need our help.

They need to define and communicate their boundaries and accept other people's boundaries. They need to ask for consent and accept when others set limits. And they need to do these things in person, by phone, and through social media. Being able to do these things does not guarantee safety, but it makes it more likely.

If we as adults understand what consent means and know how to set boundaries, we are in a good position to help - even if we are unfamiliar with the latest trends on social media. Consent means asking someone for permission in a way that allows them to say no safely and accept their answer. Boundaries are lines we draw to protect ourselves physically and emotionally.

We can have conversations that help young people identify their boundaries and understand consent. We can then ask them how these issues play out in-person and on whatever platforms they use.

It can help to ask specific questions, to listen respectfully, and to add what you believe with respect and a light touch. A few questions we suggest are:

If your friend or partner texts or messages you, how quickly do they expect a response? If you wanted to set a different limit, would it be possible? What would it be?

Do you think it is harder to communicate boundaries in person or on-line? How is

it different? What does it look like?

Do you think young people are pressured to do things sexually that they don't want to do - even from their peers? How do you think they should handle this?

Do you ever struggle to accept boundaries other people set?

Another strategy is to start a conversation when the issues come up naturally - in a song, movie or on an App. For example, "That person didn't seem to respond to boundaries at all. Did that seem normal to you?"

In honor of teen dating violence awareness month this February, we urge everyone who can - parents, teachers, coaches, faith leaders, family and friends - to start talking. Help teens define their boundaries, clarify what consent means to them, and work out how they want to communicate. They will still need plenty of practice, but knowing what they are working towards in this increasingly complex world is a critical first step.

As always, thank you for all you do to make our community safe.

Phil Barry  
Lindsey Maxwell  
Sheela Haque  
Mary Krol  
Desmond Whalen  
Jon Gould  
Tara Balboni  
Kim Savery  
Melissa Reid  
Monica Moran  
Donna Larocque

Members of Southern Hilltown Domestic Violence Task Force

## Thank You Miss Sue

If you're a parent in the Hilltowns, there is a good chance you and your little one have read, played, laughed or perhaps even sang the dump truck song with Miss Sue, our beloved teacher and coordinator at the Hilltown Family Center playgroups for infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

For the past ten years Miss Sue has been making magic for the youngest members of our community at playgroup. From movement and music classes, to reptiles and animals, summer trips to the water park, story walks at our local natural spots, museum excursions, library adventures, gardening, apple picking, seasonal celebrations or just some good old fashioned circle time; Miss Sue does it all.

Miss Sue's playgroups have been a lifeline for parents and kids alike. Sue has mastered the art of creating an environment where adults and children can bond, learn, socialize and even commiserate over the challenges of being a parent/kid. The field of education continuously spotlights the importance of playgroups like Miss Sue's during the early educational years for our children.

There are a number of playgroups in the

broader area if you look hard enough, but Miss Sue's stands out. Besides the music, stories, snacks, crafts and play, you can always find a helping hand at Sue's. Miss Sue and Miss Chris have always been there to help you through that toddler meltdown, or help a little one into their car seat or hold a small hand on the way out to the playground. Miss Sue and Miss Chris will always offer to hold your baby if you need a moment or take your tot to read a book if you need to give your other child some needed attention.

Both Miss Sue and Miss Chris have the keenest eye for how to turn a little frown upside down. These things are not a given in every playgroup setting. But they are so appreciated. The word on the street is that Miss Sue will be hanging up her hat at playgroup to move on to new adventures (hopefully those including some skiing). This is a letter of appreciation to Miss Sue to thank her for helping collectively raise a generation of Hilltown children. Miss Sue, we will miss you.

River Freeman  
Chesterfield

## EDITORIAL POLICY

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

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# OPINION

## GUEST COLUMN



I received an email from a Hampden resident on Dec. 6. She reported a bald eagle perched in tree in her backyard. She said, “The adult bald eagle sat in the tree for a while, then swooped over my house to the north. This was the first time I had a sighting of a bald eagle in my yard.”

I saw an adult bald eagle perched in a tree by a field along Route 67 in New Braintree on Jan. 17. It is always a thrill to see an eagle.

The bald eagle is a large 31 inch long dark bird with a white head and white tail. Immature eagles have dark feathers with white mottling on the wings and tail and variable amounts of white on the belly. They keep their immature plumage for four years.

Eagles eat mostly fish and birds. They also will eat carrion and some mammals like rabbits. The female lays one to three bluish white eggs in a massive platform nest of sticks and vegetation lined with moss and grasses. These nests are placed on cliff ledge or in the fork of a tree.

Eagles congregate at feeding areas in late winter and early spring. They inhabit coasts, lakes and large rivers. The eagle has a repeated piercing scream given between a pair and a rapid series of chirps given at the nest. Eagle populations are recovering from series declines due to the use of DDT, which caused thinning of their egg shells.



Bald eagle



Bluebirds

### Bluebirds

A North Brookfield resident had half a dozen bluebirds at his feeder on Jan. 9. Another Hampden resident reported the bluebirds were back in a Jan. 17 email. He said, “He puts out a container of warm water every morning and puts a scoop of critter food on the ground every morning.”



Great blue heron

### Great blue heron

The same Hampden resident with the bluebirds said in Dec. 5 email a great blue heron “has been visiting my fish pond early mornings and late afternoons for the past couple of weeks. It has consumed over 20 goldfish in the three foot deep pond.”

### Pine warbler

A reader some time ago had a bird with a lot of yellow. She identified it as a pine warbler. She said she never had a pine warbler come to her nugget feeder before and she has lived there for 40 years. She also included a photo of a mockingbird sipping sap from a maple tree after the yellow bellied sapsucker made multiple holes in the bark.

### Rescue of iced in loons

The Loon Preservation Committee reported, “On Dec. 14, [they] responded

to a report from Weare Reservoir (aka Horace Lake) in Weare, New Hampshire. As the reservoir froze, a juvenile loon became trapped in a small (15 foot diameter) hole of open water. Fortunately, the opening was not far from shore and LPC Senior Biologist, John Cooley, was able to make his way out across the newly-formed ice to capture it. LPC staff then evaluated the loon, taking blood and x-rays. No problems were detected, and the loon was released onto the ocean that afternoon.” The loon received two bands per leg in a unique color combination that will enable us to identify it if it returns to a New Hampshire lake in the future.

The LPC also reported, “That same night [Dec. 14], we received a call from volunteers on Franklin Pierce Lake. There, too, a juvenile loon was icing-in and with cold temperatures predicted overnight, its situation was not likely to improve. On Dec. 15, LPC staff headed to the lake. The loon was much further from shore than the loon on Weare Reservoir had been, but the ice was solid and we were able to capture the loon. The loon was given a physical examination on site and no obvious problems were detected. Because it was late in the day and we wanted to make sure the loon had plenty of daylight to explore and get acquainted with its new surroundings, we opted to have the loon stay overnight with wildlife rehabilitator Maria Colby of Wings Wildlife Rehabilitation Center. We banded it and released it onto the ocean at Odiorne Point the following morning.”

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.

## Creating a “wow” factor at home



This past week I’ve been hard at work trying to come up with new and exciting garden ideas for the entrance areas of Old Sturbridge Village.

It’s a job I’ve done for decades now, and maybe I take for granted how cool it is to work for a place that many people visit each year. I want to give visitors something to rave about with my color combinations and plant selections!

Read on, straight from the archives, to bring some of this “wow factor” attitude home to your own landscape.

How often have you visited an outdoor museum, amusement park or resort

and felt inspired by the gardens or container plantings used to adorn the property? Chances are you may have even used an especially delightful display as a backdrop for a family photo or two.

Tourist attractions such as these put “their best foot forward” each season of the year to awe their customers with spectacular combinations of unique plants, so that no matter when the visit is planned, the guest leaves with the feeling something special was done in their honor.

We can treat our home gardens in a similar fashion. Why not? Certainly we deserve to have exceptional plantings, for our own enjoyment and for the compliments they will elicit from our friends.

So instead of utilizing border plantings that provide only glimpses of color in the spring, summer and fall, devote entire beds to the showiest plants available for the time of year and change them with the seasons.

These types of gardens don’t have to be very large, but they do have to be sit-

uated for optimal effect. Think “location, location, location!”

If you have a long driveway, consider placing a “welcome garden” just as you turn down the path. Since it will be viewed from a distance, and from a single vantage point, make the bed more wide than narrow, and raise the height of the soil in the back of the bed a bit for a multidimensional appearance.

Utilize large, bold flowers, bright colors, and strong foliage forms- these will capture the eye en route.

Which door do you or guests normally use to enter and exit the house? Plant a small garden nearby, one that can be admired up close, each time you pass by it.

Here, the intricacies of color and form can be fully appreciated, whereas in the garden out front they would be lost. Experiment with a variety of flower and foliage shapes and color schemes.

Don’t be afraid to use delicate or small flowers, or those that are mottled or two-tone. Likewise, variegated and

cut-leaf foliage can make for interesting inspection if properly paired with surrounding plants.

Similar beds or container plantings can be planned for patio or pool-side, or for other areas within the landscape that might be suitable for entertaining. Simply tailor the gardens to the timeframe in which these locations are used most often, and choose your plants accordingly.

Next week we will get into the “nitzy-gritty” of each of the three seasons: spring, summer and fall, and how to capture the essence of each in your plantings. You too can have museum quality gardens within your home landscape!

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

## Election letters to the editor welcome

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

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

### Campaign news

As part of its election coverage,

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

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

## SECURITY

from page 4

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

# SCHOOLS & YOUTH

## COLLEGE NOTES

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

#### PRESIDENT'S LIST

##### Elton University

Greensboro and Charlotte, North Carolina

Nancy Elizabeth Mueller of Russell, majoring in international and global studies with a focus on the Middle East

Daughter of Mary Hull and Mark Mueller of Russell

##### Nichols College

Dudley

Abigail Fraser of Westfield

#### PROVOST'S LIST

##### Hofstra University

Hempstead, New York

Reese Gibson of Westfield

#### DEAN'S LIST

##### American International College

Springfield

Dominic Allaire of Westfield, majoring in exercise science; Olivia Allaire of Chicopee, majoring in occupational science; Tatyana Denisyuk of Westfield, majoring in nursing; Chase Foster of Westfield, majoring in occupation-

al science; Zulma Lopez of Westfield, majoring in nursing; Mark Marquez of Westfield, majoring in cybersecurity; Ashley Pacheco of Westfield, majoring in nursing; Chelsey Priest of Westfield, majoring in nursing; Kaitlyn Priest of Westfield, majoring in nursing; Maggie Prystowski of Westfield, majoring in health science; Yaireliz Rivera Tirado of Westfield, majoring in social science; Makenna Slate of Easthampton, majoring in health science; Ian Soto of Westfield, majoring in sociology; Eilin Torres of Westfield, majoring in nursing; Jeilianis

Vazquez of Westfield, majoring in educational studies; Lizmarrie Williams of Westfield, majoring in cybersecurity and Erin Rose Young of Easthampton, majoring in nursing

##### Nichols College

Dudley

Chelsea Indyk of Easthampton

##### University of New England

Biddeford and Portland, Maine

Jackson Harding of Chester and Kelly Couch of East Otis

## HCC scholarship season open

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Community College Foundation began accepting scholarship applications for the 2025-2026 academic year on Tuesday, Jan. 21.

The application deadline is Friday, March 14.

Last year, the HCC Foundation awarded 388 scholarships worth about \$350,000 to 323 incoming, current, and transferring HCC students. Some students received multiple scholarship awards. The average scholarship award is typically around \$900.

"Awarding scholarships to deserving students has been a cornerstone of the work of the HCC Foundation since its founding," said Amanda Sbriscia, vice president of Institutional Advancement and executive director of the HCC Foundation.

Students must be currently enrolled at HCC or have been accepted for the upcoming academic year to be eligible for scholarships.

"While the recent launch of MassEducate, the state's free-community-college-for-all program, has made HCC accessible to more individuals, that only means we have a greater responsibility to ensure students make it to the finish line," Sbriscia said. "Tuition and fees represent only a portion of the cost of being a college student today and oftentimes, a donor scholarship can truly change a student's life."

Applicants need only to fill out a

single online form to be automatically matched with the scholarships they are most qualified to receive. There are scholarships for new students, current students and students transferring to other institutions, scholarships based on financial need, scholarships for students in specific majors, scholarships for residents of certain communities, and scholarships that recognize academic achievement.

To view scholarship opportunities and begin the application process, people may visit [www.hcc.edu/scholarships](http://www.hcc.edu/scholarships).

Last January, HCC opened a dedicated Scholarship Resource Center to help current and incoming students navigate the process of applying for scholarships and filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. The office, located on the first floor of the Donahue Building, Room 158, is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

The HCC Foundation is a 501(c)(3) that works to advance the college's mission, vision and values. Founded in 1968 as the Friends of Holyoke Community College, in response to a devastating fire that forced the college to rebuild on a new campus, the Foundation now manages assets of more than \$20 million, the largest community college foundation endowment in Massachusetts.

Questions should be directed to the HCC Foundation office by calling 413-552-2182 or by emailing [scholarships@hcc.edu](mailto:scholarships@hcc.edu).

## Families needed for international student exchange program

MINNEAPOLIS, MN – ASSE International Student Exchange Programs, a Non-Profit Public benefit organization, invites local families to host a foreign exchange student.

ASSE Exchange Students come from more than 50 countries worldwide: France, Denmark, Spain, Italy, Ukraine, Japan and Australia, to name a few. They are between the ages of 15 and 18 years, and they are enthusiastic and excited to experience American culture, family life, school, sports, etc. They also love to share their own culture and language with their host families, who welcome the students into their home, not as a guest but as a family member, giving everyone involved a rich cultural experience. Host families may be single parents, couples and single persons.

The exchange students have pocket

money for personal expenses and full health, accident and liability insurance. ASSE students are carefully selected based upon academics and personality and host families choose their student from a wide variety of backgrounds, countries and personal interests.

ASSE also offers qualified American students the opportunity to learn another language and culture by spending a school year, semester or a summer with a host family in another country.

Those interested in hosting an exchange student or becoming an exchange student abroad, should call Saphia Lesch at 1-800-736-1760, visit [www.asse.com](http://www.asse.com) or send an email to [asseusamidwest@asse.com](mailto:asseusamidwest@asse.com) to request more information or start the application process.

## OTIS



Muriel Dyas of Herstorically Speaking took on the person of Susan B. Anthony at a recent potluck by the Otis Council on Aging. *Courtesy photo Otis Council on Aging*

## Seniors attended reenactment presentation of Susan B. Anthony

OTIS – Susan B. Anthony wearing her traditional garb attended the Thursday, Jan. 16 Otis Council on Aging potluck at the Town Hall.

She told the story of her childhood, early activism, temperance, abolition and women's suffrage, and her arrest for ille-

gally voting in 1872.

The reenactment presentation was written and given by Muriel Dyas of Herstorically Speaking. Susan B. Anthony was born in Adams and her birthplace there is a museum where Dyas is a docent.

## Cookbook Club meets Feb. 21

OTIS –The Otis Library, 48 North Main Road, Cookbook Club will meet on Friday, Feb. 21 from 12:30-1:30 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room.

Those wishing to participate should stop by the library circulation desk to pick out a recipe from "Mexico Cookbook" by Margarita Carrillo Arronte.

## Library holds pajama drive

OTIS – The Otis Library, 48 North Main St., will host a pajama drive to benefit Berkshire Department of Children and Families. from Saturday, Feb. 1 to Saturday, March 15.

Donations of new pajamas sizes 2T to adult are welcome.

**ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION**

## LIVING WELL AFTER THE DIAGNOSIS

**JANUARY 31, 2025**

**PRESENTED VIRTUALLY**

**9:30 AM (EDT)**

Hosted by the Alzheimer's Association  
New England Chapters:  
CT, MA/NH, ME, RI, VT

*Designed for individuals living with early-stage dementia and their care partners.*

<https://www.alz.org/manh/events/living-well-after-the-diagnosis>

Sponsors

**PRESENTATIONS**

9:30 - 10:30 AM  
*Opening Remarks & Keynote, Living Well: Panel of Individuals Living with Dementia; Presented by Meghan Lemay, MS, and Panelists*  
This session will highlight what it is like to live with Alzheimer's disease and other dementia. Panelists will discuss coping with the diagnosis and combating the stigma associated with the disease. They will also talk about the importance of disease education, social engagement, and having a voice in your own care.

10:30 - 10:45 AM: Break

10:45 AM - 12:00 PM: Living Well with Cognitive Challenges: Tips and Strategies  
*Presented by Julie Brody Magid, PysD*  
Establishing a more simplified routine and schedule can be helpful and affect one's well-being. This session will review cognitive strategies to help manage common difficulties encountered in daily life with the goal of improving feelings of well-being and self-reliance. Specifically it will focus on how to develop a person-centered roadmap to optimize meaning, structure and appropriate levels of stimulation.

[alz.org/MANH](http://alz.org/MANH) | 24/7 Helpline 800.272.3900

# BLANDFORD

## President Cleveland's ancestor has interesting story

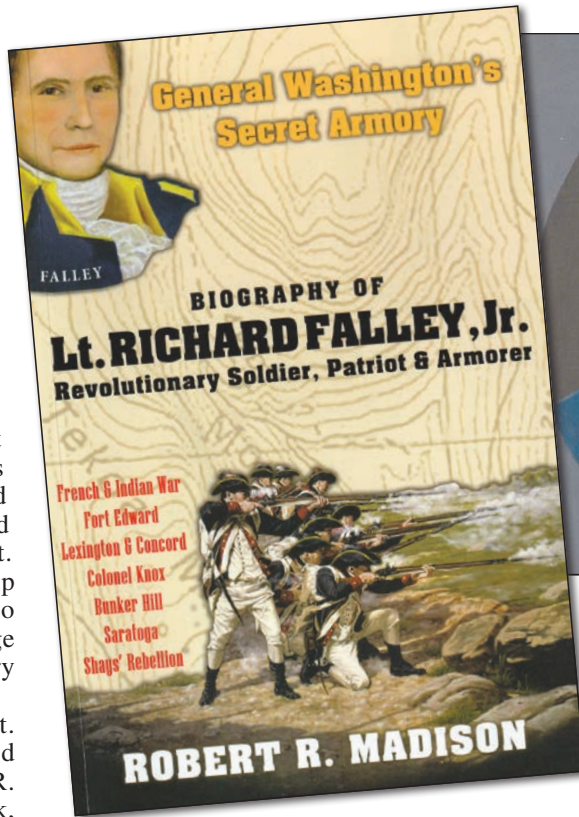
By Mary Kronholm  
Correspondent

BLANDFORD – How did a journalist on Guernsey Island come to write a story about Grover Cleveland and include Blandford artist Jeri Hamel's commissioned portrait of American Revolutionary Lt. Richard Falley, Jr.?

Guernsey is part of the United Kingdom and is an island in the English Channel.

Since Grover Cleveland was the only other president to serve a second non-consecutive term, Journalist Jack Silver of Guernsey, through his research discovered that Cleveland had ancestral roots in Guernsey. He learned Cleveland was also connected to Lt. Falley, a military man who ended up in Westfield in the 1700s in time to build a secret armory for Gen. George Washington during the Revolutionary War.

The American history part of Lt. Falley's story was researched and written by Agawam author Robert R. Madison. As part of Madison's book, he commissioned Hamel to paint a portrait of Lt. Falley from an old portrait



This portrait of Richard Falley Jr. by Jeri Hamel of Blandford was commissioned by Agawam author, Robert Madsions for his book "General Washington's Secret Armory."

Courtesy photos by author

This is the book cover of "General Washington's Secret Armory" by Robert R. Madison, a story about Lt. Richard Falley, Jr.

done during the war era.

She had little to work with, only a tiny black and white photograph of the original portrait, which, according to her, "was probably done by an itinerant artist" many of whom canvassed people during that time.

Hamel said, "I made it to make the portrait appear as though it were from the 1770s while correcting for inaccuracies in the way it was painted."

She accomplished the task Madison set for her, a large portrait, oil on linen according to Hamel. The portrait has been donated to the Westfield Historical Commission, who has in turn, donated the portrait to the Westfield Atheneum.

Silver's article was published on the British Broadcasting Website Jan. 19 to coincide with President Donald Trump's inauguration as he is the second president to be elected to a second non-consecutive term in office.

The story can be read online at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cvgx1ex6r2po>.

The story includes Hamel's portrait of Lt. Falley.

### BOOK CLUB MEETS FEB. 15



Porter Memorial Library's book club met Saturday Jan. 18 to discuss Eowyn Ivey's "Snow Child," a novel based on a Russian folk tale. The next meeting is Saturday, Feb. 15 and the book is "Smoke Season" by Blandford's author Amy Hagstrom. This is her second novel.  
Turley photo by Mary Kronholm

## Library to hold Chromebooks training session

BLANDFORD – The National Digital Inclusion Alliance for Digital Equity representative Samuel Pascual brought 15 Chromebooks with chargers to the Porter Memorial Library on Friday, January 10. They are for the library to pass on to patrons to keep. Forever.

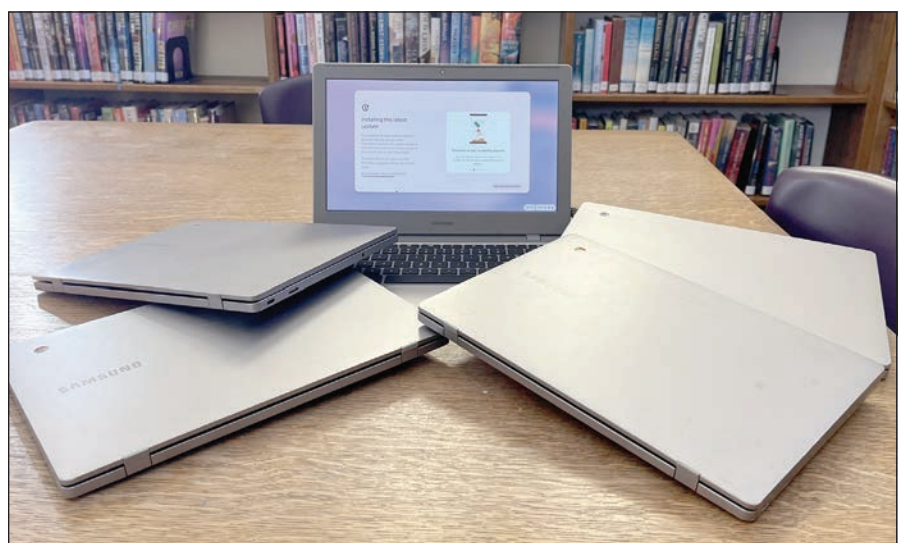
"No strings attached," said Pascual.

Library Director Nicole Daviau said there will be a tech training session especially for learning how to use the Chromebooks and they will be given to patrons on a first-come basis.

The date and time for the training class is yet to be determined, but it will be announced as soon as it is finalized.



Samuel Pascual presents Chromebooks with chargers to Porter Memorial Library Director Nicole Daviau recently to distribute to patrons.



A training class will be held on how to use a chrome book with the date to be announced. The chrome books will be given to patrons on a first come basis following the training session.  
Turley photos by Mary Kronholm

## COA lists February menu

BLANDFORD – Joann Martin, Council on Aging board member and cuisinière announced the luncheon and breakfast menus for February.

Luncheon, Friday, Feb. 14 at noon is a Valentine's Day event. Diners will enjoy creamy tomato basil soup, crispy grilled cheese sandwiches, cherry bars and a special Valentine's Day Party Punch.

Breakfast, Friday, Feb. 28 at 10

a.m. features breakfast strata with Italian Sausage, Fontina and mushrooms, frozen yogurt with strawberries and granola and mini-muffins.

People should call the COA at 413-848-4279, extension 400 to leave name and number of people attending. Director Margit Mikuski said, "The meals are at no charge, but \$5 donations are welcome to keep the program going."

### LIBRARY BUILDING CONSULTANT HOLDS FOCUS GROUPS



Pat Basler, center, Building Consultant for the Porter Memorial Library expansion plan conducted the first of two focus groups for patrons to provide information about what they would like to see in the library. The first group was Wednesday, Jan. 22 at the Town Hall. The next session is Saturday, Feb. 1 from 11 a.m. to noon at the Town Hall in the Select Board room.  
Turley photo by Mary Kronholm

## SELECT BOARD

from page 1

### COA vehicle

Town Administrator Cristina Ferrara told the board she had found through Marcotte Ford, a firm that is on state contract, a 2025 hybrid Ford Escape four-wheel drive vehicle for the Council on Aging. The board approved moving forward with this vehicle.



Asa Kerr

### Other business

In other business, the

board appointed Asa Kerr of Main Street to the Zoning Board of Appeals through June 2028. The board approved a tax map maintenance proposal from the Board of Assessors and accepted the resignation of Water Department Administrative Assistant Karen Shaw and an acknowledgement of the resignation of Nicolas Pietroniro as Conservation Agent for the Conservation Commission.

## RUSSELL

# Library announces February events

RUSSELL – The Russell Public Library, 162 Main St., has officially joined the Central and Western MA Automated Resource Sharing system.

A library card holding Russell resident will be eligible to borrow over 8 million items from the library consortium, made up of 160 libraries, with convenient pick up and return, right here at the Russell Public Library. People may come to the library during regular hours to sign up. Library hours are 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. 17 for Presidents Day.

The library now has a room for people to work on puzzles. Patrons may sip a warm drink from the coffee table as they work.

Tweens and Teens also have a special space in the library. It is a place for quiet reading or conversation, game playing or homework.

Children ages 3-9 may join Ms. Jennifer at the library on Saturday, Feb. 8 from 11 a.m.-noon for “Do you Want to Build a Snowman?” If there is snow

they’ll celebrate, if not they’ll make their own fun with a winter story, snack, games and a snowman craft project. They should register by email at [rpldirector@townofrussell.us](mailto:rpldirector@townofrussell.us), call 413-862-6221 and leave a message or come in and sign up at the library by Thursday, Feb. 6.

A The Russell Public Library will hold an adult informational session presented by the Hilltown Community Ambulance, Tuesday, Feb. 11 from 6-8 p.m. on Seasonal Affective Disorder. This presentation represents a partnership between Western Hampden County Public Health District the Hilltown Community Ambulance. People should register by email [rpldirector@townofrussell.us](mailto:rpldirector@townofrussell.us), call 413-862-6221 and leave a message or come in and sign up at the library by Friday, Feb. 7.

Families are invited to join the library in collaboration with the Western Massachusetts Appalachian Mountain Club for a family skate and pizza party at Amelia Park, Westfield, during the public skate on Tuesday, Feb. 18 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m.. Skates and admission will be free for children. Adults pay \$9 for admission and \$5 for skate rental. Skating will be

followed by a Pizza Party and book give away. It is recommended that all children wear a helmet and dress in layers. They should register by email [dawne4amc@gmail.com](mailto:dawne4amc@gmail.com) or come in and sign up at the library by Tuesday, Feb. 11.

Tweens and Teens may join Ms. Kate on Friday, Feb. 21 from 3:30-5:30 p.m. at the library to learn the basics of crochet, make their own decoration or stuffed animal using the supplies provided. Staff will have snacks and drinks for participants. They should register by email [rpldirector@townofrussell.us](mailto:rpldirector@townofrussell.us), call 413-862-6221 and leave a message or come in and sign up at the library by Wednesday, Feb. 19.

Adults are invited to the library’s technology help session on Friday, Feb. 7 from 5-7 p.m.. Ms. Kate will be available to help individuals with their technology questions. People should bring their phone, laptop or tablet to learn an app and/or get the tech support they need.

People should check out StoryWalks® sponsored by the Hilltown Family Center at the Noble View Outdoor Center, All Person’s Trail and behind the Russell Public Library around the Community fruit trees and play area.

# RPD holds info session

RUSSELL – The Russell Council on Aging and the Russell/Montgomery Police Department will hold an important informational session on how to avoid some common scams affecting the area on Wednesday, Feb. 5 at 10:30 a.m. at the senior center, 65 Main St.

The meeting is open to everyone, regardless of age. People may call the Senior Center at 413-862-6217 if they have any questions.



## CHESTER

# Library lists February events

CHESTER – The Hamilton Memorial Library, 195 West Main St., holds Story and Fun Time every Thursday at 11 a.m.

This is a great opportunity to foster a love of reading in our young patrons while providing an opportunity to socialize with others and learn new skills through crafts and play.

The library will be showing the animated movie, “Sing,” on Tuesday Feb. 4 at 4 p.m. as the next winter season feature. This 1hr. 50-minute, PG rated film is about a koala bear who, in order to save his failing theater, puts on a singing contest in one last attempt to keep it going. Snacks and cocoa served. RSVP is helpful.

Winter Social on Saturday, Feb. 8 from 10 a.m.-noon is for those looking for an opportunity to be around others for some conversation or just to get out of the house. There will be a warm beverage and light refreshments. The library has a puzzle on the table, but feel free to bring along knitting, coloring book or other activity to enjoy while chatting with friends.

School vacation week activities for

children include on Tuesday, Feb. 18 from 4-6 p.m. drop in for a fun science discovery activity and on Wednesday, Feb. 19 from 2-4 p.m. stop in for some winter craft fun.

Book Club meets every third Wednesday of the month at 4:30 p.m. (Feb. 19). They will be discussing the science fiction best seller, “Sea of Tranquility” by Emily St. John Mandel. Light refreshments will be served. Extra copies are available.

Dr. Seuss’s Birthday at the library celebrates the legendary author’s birthday and Read Across America Day a few days early on Thursday, Feb. 27 during regular 11 a.m. story time. Guest reader, Maryanna Broman will be reading the story, “Horton Hears a Who.” This beloved story is about a kind-hearted elephant who overcomes adversaries to save a tiny village of people on a tiny speck of dust. The story’s theme is “a person’s a person no matter how small.”

People may visit [www.hamilton-library.org](http://www.hamilton-library.org) for more information or call 413-354-7808

## MONTGOMERY

# ‘Music in Montgomery’ series showcases musicians

By Wendy Long  
Correspondent

MONTGOMERY – The February lineup for the weekly concert series at Montgomery Town Hall, 161 Main Road, has been announced.

The “Music in Montgomery” series takes place every Thursday afternoon starting at 3 p.m. February opens with Ravenwood on Thursday, Feb. 6. Ravenwood is a local classic jazz band led by guitarist Barry Searle in jazz mode. Instrumentation includes a mandolin and violin with a female lead singer.

Jerry and Kara Noble return on Thursday, Feb. 13, promising great music and stories across the decades. Jerry is a pianist, guitarist and composer; his wife, Kara, plays bass. Their performances are dubbed, “We are the people our parents warned us about.”

Larry Southard on vocals and guitar will perform on Thursday, Feb. 20. Organizer Dale Rogers says Southard always brings “a heart-warming, singing along, tapping, clapping good

time.” While Southard will be solo at Music in Montgomery, he also performs with Papa and Friends, a rock-country-folk band who include Lesley Friedman Rosenthal (violin, harmony), Terry AlaBery (Terrance Hall on drums), Mike Patoniac (bass and harmonica) and Andy Gordon (pedal steel and banjo). Papa and Friends can be seen at local venues such as the Knox Trail Inn or Chester Common Table.

Doug Pi and the Harmonics will close the month on Thursday, Feb. 27.

This series is co-hosted by the Montgomery Public Library and by Gray Catbird Pottery Studio. Attendees are invited to bring baked goods to share. Donations are accepted for the refreshments, with money split between the Montgomery Volunteer Firemen’s Association and the Town Library. Donations are also accepted to tip and thank the fabulous musicians, who perform each week.

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

## CHESTERFIELD

# CDC holds program on senior circuit breaker tax credit

CHESTERFIELD – Denise Leduc, retired Finance Director for the Community Development Corporation will present an in person discussion on senior circuit breaker tax credit on Tuesday, Feb. 25 from 3-4:30 p.m. at the Hilltown Community Development Corporation, conference room, 387 Main Road.

Seniors over the age of 65 can get a senior circuit breaker tax credit on their tax return in Massachusetts even if they do not need to file a Massachusetts tax return.

File and include Schedule CB to receive up to the maximum of \$2,730 for 2024. This is a refundable credit, which means even if a person does not owe Massachusetts taxes they can get this money sent to them. To be considered, 2024 total income for a single cannot exceed \$72,000 and head of household \$91,000 and \$109,000 for married filing a joint return.

More information is available by visiting [Mass.gov](http://Mass.gov) on Senior Circuit Breaker Tax Credit. For questions, people may call Joan Griswold at 413-296-4536, extension 102.

## PUBLIC NOTICES

### Town of Williamsburg Request for Proposals

The Town of Williamsburg, Massachusetts together with the Planning Board is interested in retaining the services of a Consulting Firm to prepare a long-range Comprehensive Planning document that will encom-

pass the required elements of a Master Plan under MGL C.41 §81D. The Request for Proposal shall be available beginning on 27 January 2025.

Information and related documents shall be available by emailing the townadmin@burgoyne.org with the subject

line **RFP\_#01272025-WCP.**

This Contract is being bid under the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30b §6.

**RFP Available - 27 Jan. 2025, 9:00am**

**RFP Due - 24 Feb. 2025, 2:00pm**

01/30/2025

## PUBLIC NOTICES ARE NOW ONLINE

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

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

visit [www.publicnotices.turley.com](http://www.publicnotices.turley.com)

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

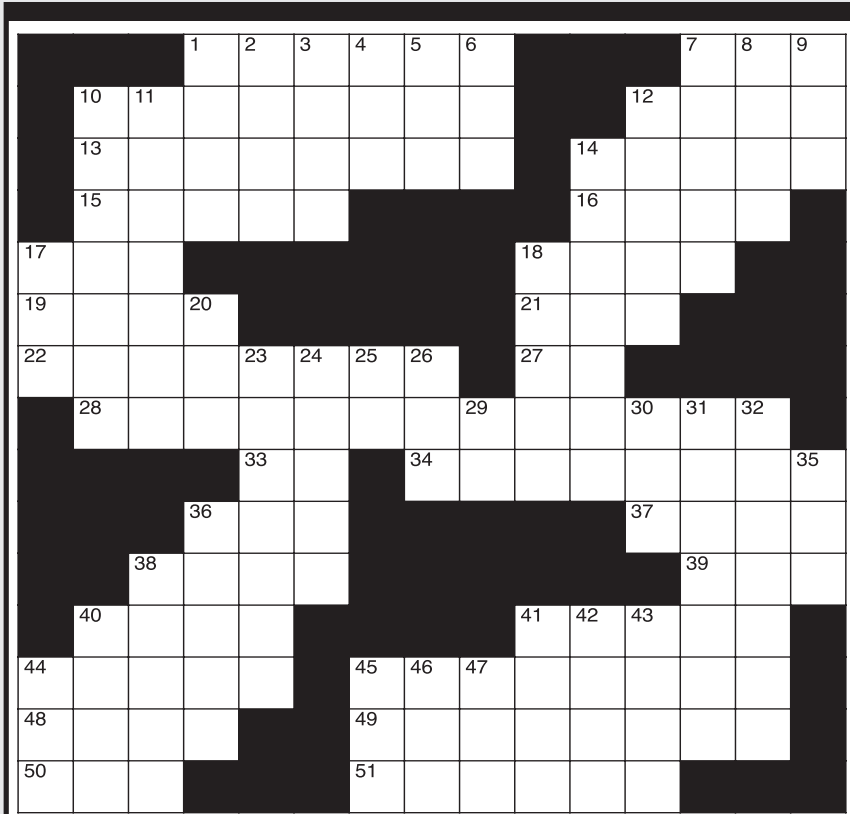
PLEASE RECYCLE THIS NEWSPAPER



# MIDDLEFIELD

## Middlefield Congregational holds monthly church service

MIDDLEFIELD – The Middlefield Congregational Church will be holding their monthly church service on Saturday, Feb. 1 at 5 p.m. Pastor Susan Borsella will be leading the service and Communion will be given. Following the service, a macaroni-n-cheese dinner will be served for those that wish to attend. All are welcome.



**CLUES ACROSS**

- 1. Where entertainers perform
- 7. Miller beer variety
- 10. Ageless
- 12. River in SE Europe
- 13. Able to be repaired
- 14. Type of wrap
- 15. Atomic #54
- 16. Type of tent
- 17. U.S. Treasury position
- 18. Opposed to
- 19. Protective covering
- 21. Bridge building degree
- 22. Clouding of the lens
- 27. Priestess of Hera loved by Zeus
- 28. Unacceptable
- 33. Mr. T's "The A-Team" character
- 34. American national

**CLUES DOWN**

- 36. One point south of due east
- 37. Assist in a crime
- 38. Greek mythological personification of Earth
- 39. A major division of geological time
- 40. German courtesy title
- 41. English family dating back to Norman times
- 44. Discounts
- 45. South American nation
- 48. Former Milwaukee Buck Michael
- 49. Hostile
- 50. Passports and drivers licenses are two
- 51. Discourages from doing

**CLUES DOWN**

- 1. Supreme god of ancient Egyptians
- 2. Nevada city
- 3. Energy, style and enthusiasm
- 4. Bird's beak
- 5. Language
- 6. Midway between south and southeast
- 7. Punjab village
- 8. Small biting flies
- 9. Sportscaster Patrick
- 10. A way to get around
- 11. Repeat
- 12. A way to cook with fat
- 14. Temporary loss of consciousness
- 17. Reciprocal of a sine
- 18. Fir tree genus
- 20. "Transformers" director Michael
- 23. Criminals who steal
- 24. Genus of leaf-footed bug
- 25. Music product
- 26. "Talk to you"
- 29. Santa says it three times
- 30. Doctors' group
- 31. African nation
- 32. Ageless
- 35. When you hope to get somewhere
- 36. Worn
- 38. Deprives of vigor
- 40. Used to have (Scottish)
- 41. Where you live
- 42. Muslim ruler title
- 43. Basics
- 44. Type of drug (abbr.)
- 45. Spanish soldier
- 46. It precedes two
- 47. Illuminated

## THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPES

**ARIES**

Mar 21/Apr 20

Express yourself with great confidence this week, Aries. You feel like you are in control and well organized. This is a recipe for success regarding the things you need to accomplish.

**CANCER**

Jun 22/Jul 22

Cancer, you may find you're an asset and sought-after among friends and coworkers. Use social situations to your advantage to network even more.

**LIBRA**

Sept 23/Oct 23

Libra, you might be very popular with superiors at work this week. Use this to your advantage to seek out a raise. Ask to head an important project.

**CAPRICORN**

Dec 22/Jan 20

Capricorn, happy news is coming your way this week. Share the good fortune with others in your life, either a spouse or a sibling. These people can use some sunshine as well.

**TAURUS**

Apr 21/May 21

Taurus, you have a clear mind this week to put plans in place. But you might need some inspiration to get started. Avoid procrastinating.

**LEO**

Jul 23/Aug 23

Clear up some space at home so you can work more easily, Leo. Too much clutter in your home or work area can be a distraction. Disorganization can make tasks harder.

**SCORPIO**

Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, you can do anything you set your mind to. Share your ideas with others and determine which concepts have merit. If nothing comes up, go back to the drawing board.

**AQUARIUS**

Jan 21/Feb 18

Aquarius, if at first you don't succeed, you may need to change your approach to things. Enlist the help of others to help turn your ideas into results.

**GEMINI**

May 22/Jun 21

There are many tasks that lie ahead this week, Gemini. It will be essential that you stay focused. One of the areas to consider is changing personal health for the better.

**VIRGO**

Aug 24/Sept 22

Practice being smooth and professional in your manner. This will be the best way to get good results at work. Others may be impressed by how you handle yourself under pressure.

**SAGITTARIUS**

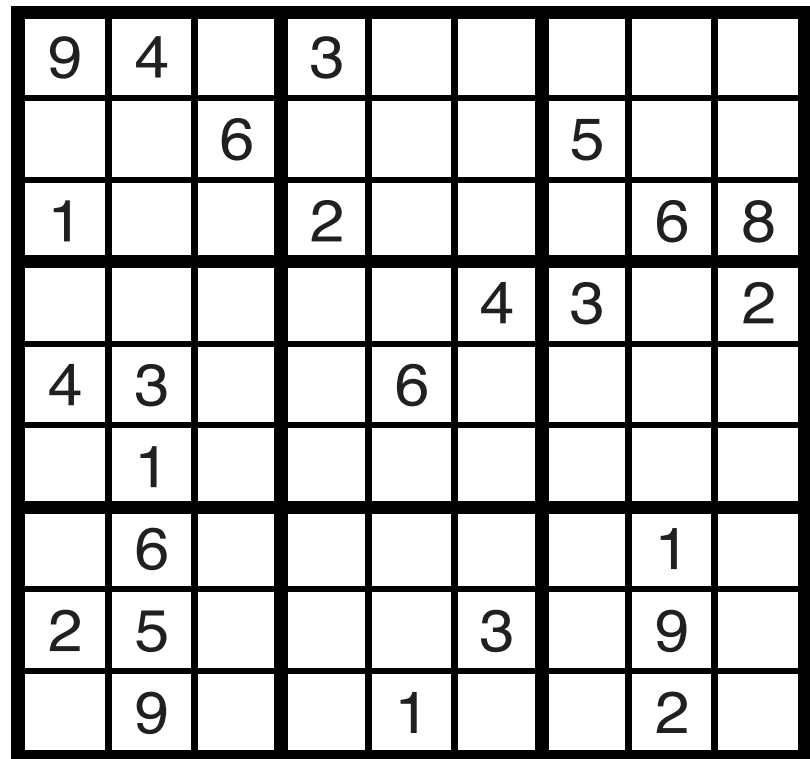
Nov 23/Dec 21

Others admire your ability to be a good friend, Sagittarius. This week you will showcase your compassion and humility in myriad ways. It might garner you extra attention.

**PISCES**

Feb 19/Mar 20

Develop a better strategy for saving money, Pisces. You need some extra funds to pay for larger expenses, and clipping coupons alone might not be the answer.



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**answers**

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29 Base Price \$30.50	30 Base Price \$31.00	31 Base Price \$31.50	32 Base Price \$32.00
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# OBITUARIES

## William “Bill” Stanley Hart, 84

RUSSELL – William (Bill) Stanley Hart, 84, passed away peacefully at home surrounded by his loving family on Jan. 22, 2025. Born to the late Hubert and Emily Hart (Rose), he was raised in Blandford, and graduated from Westfield High School.

He spent his career working at Texon Paper Mill and the Blandford Ski area. He leaves behind his loving wife of 63 years, Carol (Pease) Hart; his daughter, Lori Hart; granddaughters, Hannah (Chris Beauregard) and Sarah (Colin Powers) and his three great-grand kids, Wyatt, Ryan and Emma. As well as his brother, Donald Hart (Linda) of Louisiana as well as many nieces and nephews.



He is predeceased by his daughter, Karen in 2002. Bill was a quiet man with a big heart for his family. He spent most of his retirement in the woods of New England metal detecting with his brother-in-law, Dick Boisseau, or in his back yard gardening and being a jack of all trades building anything and everything for his grandkids.

The family would like to thank his excellent and loving caregivers Luda and Tatiana for their kindness and support over the years. We love you so much Grandpa, thank you for all the years of laughs and love. Per his request, services will be private; handled by Firtion-Adams F.S.

## Peter H. McCready, 84

HUNTINGTON – Peter H. McCready, 84, passed Sunday, Jan. 19, 2025 at home with his family by his side.

He was born on June 3, 1940 in Presque Isle, Maine to the late Hollis and Gertrude (London) McCready. He moved to Huntington when he was two where he built and lived his life. He was a 1959 graduate of Huntington High School. He married his wife Mary in 1960 and they spent 64 years together.

He worked most of his career at Texon, started in the plant, became a truck driver and moved into the role of fleet manager. After 27 years at Texon, he and his wife were co-owners of Mary’s Variety in Chester, which they operated together for 12 years. He was a member of Huntington Lodge of Mason’s for 60 years serving as Master for two years. He also served on the Huntington Volunteer Fire Department.

He loved the many weekend parties we had at the house. He liked to spend his free time fishing and hunting with his family. He enjoyed time at his wood lot



and until a few years ago was still splitting wood.

He leaves behind his wife of 64 years, Mary (Pease) McCready; four children, Stuart (Lisa), Tina Brewster (Ted), Howard (Cathy) and Cindy Bourgelas (Rich). Also eight grandchildren: Jenn, Annie, Zak, Nate, Ciara, Tim and Anthony. He was predeceased by his grandson, Maxx. He also leaves behind three great grand-children Maxx, Willow and Colton. He leaves behind many nieces and nephews.

Calling hours will be held on Saturday, Feb. 8 at the Firtion-Adams Funeral Service, 76 Broad St., Westfield from 10 a.m.-noon. A service will follow at noon. Burial will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made to the Hilltown Ambulance, 1 Bromley Road, Huntington, MA 01050, (hilltownambulance.org) or the Shriners Hospital, 516 Carew St., Springfield, MA 01104 or to the First Congregational Church, P.O. Box 536, Worthington, MA 01098. Firtionadams.com.

## DEATH NOTICES

### HART, WILLIAM (BILL) STANLEY

Died Jan. 22, 2025  
Services will be private.

### MCCREADY, PETER H.

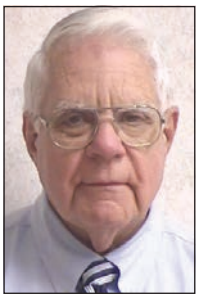
Died Jan. 19, 2025  
Calling hours Feb. 8 from 10 a.m.-noon  
Service following at noon  
Firtion-Adams Funeral Service, Westfield  
Burial will be held at a later date.

### PAIST, GERALD “GERRY” LAVERNE

Died Jan. 24, 2025  
Burial will be private at West Laurel Hill Cemetery  
Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania  
Services will be private and at the convenience of the family.

## Dr. Gerald LaVerne Paist

Gerald LaVerne Paist (“Gerry”) passed away peacefully at Harrisburg Hospital on January 24, 2025. He was a resident of Country Meadows Mechanicsburg since April 2024.



Born in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, Gerry was the son of Thomas Holland Paist, Jr. and Ethel Ann (Hubbell) Paist. He grew up in Willow Grove, Pennsylvania and attended the Upper Moreland School District, where he graduated Valedictorian of the class of 1957.

Gerry was very active in Scouting and attained the rank of Eagle Scout. During his senior year, Gerry was selected to tour Europe with the World Friendship Organization. While there, he visited 18 European countries and received the Queen’s Scout Badge, the highest award in English Scouting.

Following high school graduation, Gerry earned a B.S. in mathematics from Lafayette College and Masters and Doctoral Degrees in educational administration from Harvard University.

After teaching mathematics at Stoneham and Framingham School Districts, Gerry served as Assistant Dean of Westfield University in Massachusetts. He then became the Superintendent/Director of Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School, where he served for 47 years. Currently he is the longest running School Superintendent in the United States.

Gerry will be remembered lovingly by his sister, Susan Hubbell Whyte (Howard) of Carlisle; niece, Kimberly Eshbach Barger (Chad) of Mechanicsburg and grand-nephews, Alec Barger and Chase Barger.

Burial will be private at West Laurel Hill Cemetery in Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania. The family would like to thank Country Meadows Mechanicsburg and UPMC Harrisburg for the excellent care given to Gerry. Also, the family would like to express their gratitude to Greg Salois, Eric Duda, Jim Jyz, Dan Whaley, Scott Moynihan, Mark Moynihan and Tim Moriarty for their ongoing support and friendship.

Memorial donations can be sent to: Pathfinder Vocational Technical High School, 240 Sykes Street, Palmer, MA 01069.

Services will be private and at the convenience of the family.

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### HELP WANTED

#### ACTIVITIES COORDINATOR

**Council on Aging for the Town of Oakham is seeking an experienced Activities Coordinator.** Miscellaneous duties to include supporting current programs and developing new programs to increase attendance and participation of the growing aging population in the Oakham Senior Center. Up to 12 hours per week (flexible) \$20.00/hr. depending upon experience. Resume should be sent to [Admin@Oakham-Ma.gov](mailto:Admin@Oakham-Ma.gov), or mailed to **Board of Selectmen, Town of Oakham, 2 Coldbrook Road, Oakham, MA 01068.**

**COA COORDINATOR** for Town of Westhampton. Description available online at [www.westhamptonma.gov](http://www.westhamptonma.gov). Applications accepted until position filled.

**HAMPDEN POLICE DEPARTMENT** is now accepting applications for a **FULL-TIME police officer.** Review of applications begins immediately. Visit [www.hampdenpolice.com](http://www.hampdenpolice.com) for more information. EOE

#### TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

**Middlefield, MA.** Part-time, ~960 hrs/yr, \$36-40,000 range. Email resume+ cover letter highlighting strengths/ flexibility to Administrative Assistant: [middlefield.assistant@gmail.com](mailto:middlefield.assistant@gmail.com)

### HELP WANTED

#### TOWN OF BARRE

**Cemetery Clerk**  
The Town of Barre is seeking qualified applicants for the part-time position of Cemetery Clerk. This position is approximately 10 hours per week and the minimum hourly rate is \$15.00/hour and the maximum hourly rate is \$18.02/hour. A full job description is available upon request. Applicants must have HS Diploma or GED, with a minimum of two to three years’ experience in office setting, or equivalent combination of education and experience. Interested applicants should submit a letter of interest to: **Tammy Martin, Town Administrator, 40 West Street, Suite 697, Barre MA 01005** or [townadmin@townof-barre.com](mailto:townadmin@townof-barre.com). For further information, please contact the Board of Selectmen’s Office at (978) 355-2504 x135. A.A. / E.O.E.

**WILBRAHAM UNITED CHURCH** is hiring a sexton three evenings, 7-10 hours per week, \$16 per hour. Additional compensation for hours needed for weddings and funerals.

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Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

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

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph.

**Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: [obits@turley.com](mailto:obits@turley.com).

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



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# HILLTOWN HIKING ADVENTURES



Tom looks over the expanse of the grout piles and granite wall.



Frank uses his rock hammer to verify the stone is granite.



Hilltown Hikers explore several grout piles.

## Hilltown Hikers discover 'snowflake granite quarry'

After years of research and mapping, the Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers pulled together to waypoint and find the earliest granite pit quarry in the Hilltowns.

The search for the "Hoary Little Snowflake Granite Quarry in Becket," the first Quarry known to

exist in the written history of Becket, was lengthy, but this week they hiked right into it.

In 2023 they unknowingly hiked past it, not seeing the large grout piles through the leaves. Using vague descriptions of the few and far between written history and mostly by lidar mapping technology and many hikes on foot looking for clues and deciphering history, the quarry was found just over the town line in Middlefield not Becket.

Per the 1881 deed found by Tom Hoffman, Silas Clark deeded the land for seven years to Nellie Clark, female

owned quarry, of Chester. It was 100 acres for the purpose of quarrying and cutting stone and erecting a blacksmith shop with Clark still having use of the land for pasturing. Nellie paid Clark one dollar for each and every cart load of stone with the option within seven years to pay \$2,000 for a deed. Nellie Hopkins husband, Homer was a board member of the Chester Granite and Polishing Works.

"According to tradition, the discovery of the area and eventual pinpointing of the site of the biggest of quarries was accomplished by tracing the pattern of glacial granite boulders to its source, back up the Westfield Valley and up the mountainside until it ended in a farmer's pasture. A quarry on this

site was opened in 1888 by Messrs. George Roebuck and Francis S. Gross. Gross had been owner and superintendent of the little "Snowflake Quarry" on the Daniels Place below North Becket Village, which had been opened in 1879 by Brown and Cheney, and under Gross, of Lee, had become the

"Snow Flake Granite Quarry of Becket" producing granite of fine texture susceptible to a high polish.

From the Snowflake quarry, Gross brought with him the three experienced Mitchell brothers, John, William and Alexander, whose descendants quarried until recently in East Becket. Norman Harris became the first boss. The business gradually expanded. The biggest problem barring this expansion was

that of getting rough stone down to the Chester finishing sheds. Up at the quarry rim the stone would be hoisted by hand derrick upon a large flat-bed wagon, and since it was all downhill, one team and luck and good brakes would suffice to get the stone as far as Chester Depot," Leonard Spencer.

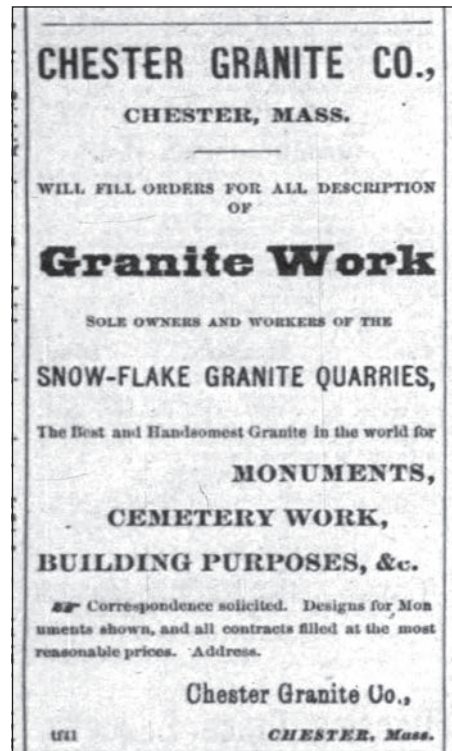


This 1874 map shows the northeast corner of Becket.

Submitted photos



This is an overhead view of the Snowflake granite quarry.



This is an ad for Snowflake granite finished at the Chester Granite and Polishing Works.

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