

"Most folks are as happy as they make up their mind to be." – Abraham Lincoln

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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BLANDFORD

BIG FUN

begins at library

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

February fun at the Porter Memorial Library starts the first weekend in the month as the library participates in National Take Your Child to the Library Day on Saturday, Feb. 3.

There will be a scavenger hunt and an 11 a.m. story-time. The craft will be book-worm marionettes. Library Director Nicole Daviau said there will be "giveaways all day."

Book Squirms continue every Tuesday from 4-5 p.m. and Wednesday from 10:30-11:30 a.m. and Ancestors and Archives every Friday from 3-5 p.m.

School vacation week, Monday, Feb. 19, the library will be closed for Presidents'

LIBRARY, page 7



Logan Farrell and Chloe Salvas with their crafty penguins at last Tuesday's Worm Squirms at the Porter Memorial Library. The young patrons listened to Cynthia Rylant's *Little Penguins* and then created their own. Photo by Mary Kronholm

HUNTINGTON

Age and Dementia Friendly Work Group discuss FRTA

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

The Age and Dementia Friendly Huntington Working Group met at Stanton Hall on Tuesday, Jan. 23.

The meeting was a first look at the draft action plan that came out of a series of listening sessions last fall, concerning the needs of Huntington's senior citizens in areas such as housing, transportation, mobility, community support, accessible outdoor spaces including sidewalks and accessible community spaces. Attending were Huntington COA Chair Kat Peterson; Crystal Wright, who leads supports to those caring for elders and people who have dementia; Jim Arnold

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PAW PATROL



These dogs don't seem to mind the cold and are enjoying time outside in the snow. Turley photo by Kathryn Koegel

BLANDFORD

Fuel tank needs repairs

Library Director discusses grant

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

Highway Department Superintendent David Waldron told Select Board members at Monday's meeting that the fuel tanks at the highway garage required necessary repairs that cost \$2,062.12.

Because the Fire Department, Water Department, Council on Aging and Cemetery share in the use of fuel, he said he thought that the cost be a shared expense by all departments specifically for maintenance. "Sensors were broken," said Waldron and had to be repaired.

He also told the board that

REPAIRS, page 7

EVEN THE STREETS ARE COLD



This street is aptly named, Cold Street, located in Worthington. Worthington is not only the highest elevation in the Commonwealth, but the coldest. Turley photo by Kathryn Koegel



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HILLTOWNS

Baystate mask policy returns

SPRINGFIELD – In light of the steady increase in the number of COVID-19 cases, both among patients and in the community, Baystate Health is updating its masking policy to require masking at its hospitals and strongly recommending mask wearing in its ambulatory care settings.

Effective Friday, Dec. 29, masks are required at all times for visitors over the age of five at Baystate Medical Center, Baystate Children’s Hospital, Baystate Noble Hospital, Baystate Wing Hospital and Baystate Franklin Medical Center, as well as the D’Amour Center for Cancer Care.

Masking is strongly recommended, but not required, in other ambulatory settings, such as Baystate Medical Practices offices and in non-patient care locations.

Key data points based on community testing and wastewater surveillance data point to the increase in COVID-19 cases and they expect this trend to continue. Baystate Health hospitals and their Emergency Departments also have seen a steady increase in patient volume.

The multidisciplinary team of experts meets regularly to evaluate the environment locally and regionally to assure that they are nimble and thought-

fully responding to infection changes that are impacting the communities. Baystate is taking this step to protect their patients, their care partners and team members while continuing to provide excellent and compassionate care.

Guidelines for the Visitor Policy can be found by visiting baystatehealth.org/patients/visiting.

Guidelines for staying healthy include:

Stay up-to-date with the recommended vaccinations against COVID-19, the flu, and RSV

Use a face mask when there is a high risk of transmission of respiratory viruses in the community

Practice good hand hygiene and wash hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water

Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol when soap and water are not available

Disinfect commonly touched areas like doorknobs, handles and countertops Cover coughs and sneezes to protect others around you

Be aware of early detection and treatment of illnesses

People may learn more about when to call their doctor, visit convenient care or go to the emergency room by visiting baystatehealth.org.

WESTFIELD

St. Joseph’s Church to hold community winter picnic

WESTFIELD – St. Joseph’s National Catholic Church, 73 Main St., is hosting a Community Winter Picnic on Sunday, Feb. 18 at noon.

This picnic will feature grilled hamburgers, hot dogs, baked beans, salad, dessert, s’mores and hot and cold beverages. The picnic will be held in the Social

Center.

Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$7 for children under 12. All are welcome. For tickets, people may call 413-977-2007. The deadline for purchasing tickets is Thursday, Feb. 15. Dinners-to-go are also available as well. People can escape winter and join in the fun of an in-door Sunday picnic.

Alzheimer’s Association Support Group meets Feb. 28

WESTFIELD – On Wednesday, Feb. 28 at 6 p.m. the Alzheimer’s Association Support Group meets in Armbrook Village Senior Living and Memory Support Community, 551 North Road.

Caregivers and family members are invited to enjoy a light dinner and

to share their personal experiences and strategies for communicating with their loved ones. The public is welcome.

To join this group, people should email reception@armbrookvillage.com or call 413-568-0000. Groups are held the last Wednesday of the month.

OTIS

Library Cookbook Club scheduled to meet Feb. 9

OTIS – The Otis Library Cookbook Club will meet on Friday, Feb. 9 from 12:30-1:30 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the library. People may stop in at the

library circulation desk to pick a recipe from “Comfort A winter Cookbook,” which they will prepare and share with others at the Cookbook Club meeting.

MIDDLEFIELD

COA announces lunch menu

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

The menu is eat in or take out. The choice is eggplant parmesan or chicken parmesan, pasta, broccoli, zucchini and

tomato and apple crisp. People should call 413-623-9990 to reserve a meal the previous Monday, Feb. 5. Suggested donation is \$3

Following the meal there will be a blood pressure clinic and an information session on diabetes

CHESTER

Library announces new events

CHESTER – The Hamilton Memorial Library, 195 West Main St., announces its front door is now open.

Patrons are asked to park on Middlefield Road or in the lot across from the Town Hall during renovations. With the library’s new CW Mars library card, patrons will conveniently be able to take and return any library items from any CW MARS library. People may stop in and staff will show them how to place a book hold or download an audio book from home.

Drop-in Story time for toddlers and preschoolers is anytime on Thursdays. Staff are happy to read, work on puzzles, or take part in creative play with a child. LEGO Club meets the first Saturday of every month. The next LEGO club is Saturday, Feb. 3 at 11 a.m. Cocoa will be served.

Writer’s Club continues to meet on the second Wednesday of the month at 4:30 p.m.; this month it will be held on Feb. 14. For the first quarter of the year, we will be using a writing prompt each session to get the creative juices flowing and work on creating content with the goal of submitting a short story. All are welcome.

The Monthly Book Club will meet on Wednesday, Feb. 21 at 4:30 p.m. They meet on the third Wednesday of every month. This month they will discuss “Now Is Not the Time to Panic” by Kevin Wilson.

A Special Museum event will take place on Saturday, Feb. 17 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. James Higby, local geologist and history enthusiast will be in the library museum during open hours on Saturday and also on Tuesday Feb. 20 from 1-6 p.m. He will answer questions about local history and how it intertwines with the museum’s amazing rock and mineral collection.

Microscope exploration for children will take place on Tuesday, Feb. 20. Children may examine some of the slides with one of the two microscopes or bring in something of their own that they want to get a closer look at

A Folk Dance Program will take place on Wednesday, Feb. 21 at 2 p.m. Laurel Lenski, who holds an AA degree in Dance, will be share some traditional folk dances relating to Chester’s heritage. All school-age children are welcome to attend. RSVP by calling the library at 413-354-7808 is helpful.

A Sock Puppet Craft will be available on Thursday Feb. 22, following 11:30 a.m. story time. All materials provided.

My Little Friend and Me Paint and Snack will take place Saturday, Feb. 24 at 10 a.m. This program is perfect for two friends, a parent and child or any duo will do. The painting can stand alone or come together to form a collaborative masterpiece. People should reserve a spot soon by calling the library at 413-354-7808 as there is limited seating.

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NORTHAMPTON

Regional Agricultural Conference to be held on Saturday, Feb. 3

NORTHAMPTON – The Northampton Agricultural Commission will present the Pioneer Valley Regional Agricultural Conference on Saturday, Feb. 3 from 9 a.m. to noon.

The conference will take place at Smith Vocational Agricultural High School Library, Building A in Northampton. Three

speakers include Tom Jenkins from Blue Dog Forestry, Laurie Cuevas from Thomas Farm and Dairy and Missy Leab from Ioka Valley Farm.

Doors open at 8:30 a.m., there will be coffee and baked goods. This event is free of charge and open to the public. Snow date Saturday, Feb. 10.

HUNTINGTON

FRTA

from page 1

- working group member; Jennifer Peloquin, Town Administrator and Franklin Regional Transit Authority liaison and Becky Basch of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, who has led the age and dementia friendly project since its onset last year.

Use of the FRTA van in the town was discussed at length during the meeting, including whether or not to expand to the 'Access Program' model and have the van operate at a fuller capacity. Under this option, any resident would also be able to schedule rides on the FRTA van, with 51% of priority given to senior citizens. According to Peterson, demand transit programs were at one time open to people with disabilities, but that eligibility went away some years ago. The Access Program is the answer to restoring that service to people with disabilities of any age.

"We are advocating for the Access Program because it is a benefit to the entire community. It opens the door for everybody," Peterson said after the meeting. "Aging in place is important for people with disabilities regardless of age, as well as senior citizens."

Currently, the town of Huntington is part of a five town consortium that includes Blandford, Chester, Montgomery and Middlefield, taking part in the "Demand Response" model through FRTA. Eligible residents who need a ride contact the driver to schedule.

Each town is assessed for their percentage of riders, with costs coming off of their town's Cherry Sheet, which earmarks state funding. The van is available for travel Monday through Friday to senior citizens age 60 and over and to Veterans, who have a disability rating of 70% or higher.

The van can be scheduled for "curb to curb" (meaning home to destination) travel for (in order of priority) medical appointments, meal sites, grocery shopping, other shopping, hairdressers/barbers or other needs, such as an entertainment or cultural program. Riders pay a nominal fee for each one-way trip of between \$1.25 and \$2.25 based on whether or not trips go outside of the resident's town. The FRTA Van is wheelchair accessible and a companion, who is needed to assist a rider pays \$.75 per trip one way.

When the Huntington Select Board was approached in December with the idea of opening the van up to more riders in a town that completely lacks any other type of public transit they declined, citing a lack of evidence for the need and the concern over further impact on town finances. Anecdotally, Peterson had numerous stories to report at that December meeting about difficulties seniors were encountering with the FRTA Van, as relayed in the listening sessions. However, Select Board members had no prior knowledge of this nor had they heard or received complaints from residents.

The group recognized the need to maintain data and collect testimony from riders. "When you have a complaint, you don't just tell your neighbor. It has to be reported to someone in

authority," said Peloquin. "If they don't report it to us, it's like it didn't happen."

While FRTA indicates that expanding the model could have a financial impact to towns, it would again depend on the number of residents using the van from each town. Assessments for a town could go up, but they might also go down if other partner towns used the van even more. Preliminary cherry sheet figures for the town of Huntington for the coming fiscal year shows costs for Regional Transit, the FRTA Van, projected to decline from an estimated \$3,028 in FY'24 to \$2,299 in FY'25.

"It just seems as though in the hilltowns, anything that would expand transportation should be an automatic yes," said one participant. Another suggested the town look at a pilot program for six months to a year to see what the impact would be. Peloquin agreed to check with FRTA to see if that's a possibility.

Some of the transportation issues heard during the listening sessions, such as not being picked up for return trips home, might have a solution on the horizon. According to Deputy Administrator Michael Perreault, FRTA is unveiling a new automated scheduling app that could ease some of the scheduling issues that seniors had reported. If the town moves to the Access Program, the app would also ensure priority scheduling for senior citizens while helping to fill empty seats.

Currently, the van schedule is as follows: Mondays, 9 a.m. -5 p.m. for medical trips for all towns; Tuesdays from 9-11 a.m. for appointments at the Huntington Health Center and from 1-3 p.m. for shopping; Wednesdays from 9-10:30 a.m. for medical, hair/barber and other appointments; Thursdays from 9 a.m.-noon for shopping in Westfield and Fridays by appointment.

In other issues taken up at the meeting, Covid continues to impact attendance at caregiver support events, as elder services recommends staying home if ill. Caregiver support is happening remotely or at home at this time. Arnold reported on his survey of the sidewalks downtown and whether or not they met American Disability Act requirements for width (one small section didn't; another was impeded by snow near the fire station). And while the sidewalks are graduated at intersections for wheelchair use, many do not have the bubbles that denote an intersection to the blind or vision impaired. Gateway Regional High School, located at the end of the town's sidewalk system, expanded their Vision Impairment Program so there is a need for that.

The town of Huntington currently has an estimated 650 residents, who are senior citizens, which is over 30% of the town. The working group reported that the percentage of residents over age 65 is starting to outnumber the population under age 18. It is the largest town in the consortium and the only one that does not have a dedicated senior center.

The next meeting of the working group will be on Tuesday, March 5 at 10 a.m. at Stanton Hall.

BECKET

Athenaeum announces events

BECKET – The Becket Athenaeum, the Becket and Washington Community Library, 3367 Main St. have partnered with libraries other libraries to bring 12 virtual programs in February.

People should visit BecketAthenaeum.org for the list of virtual program and to register. Meetings are:

Feb. 2 from 10:30-11:30 a.m. A History of Boston's Long Black Freedom Struggle, Feb. 5 from 2-3 p.m. Look & Feel Your Best For Your Job Interview, Feb. 6 from 12:30-1:30 p.m. A Visit with the Boston African American National Historic Site, Feb. 12 from 2-3 p.m. 3 Questions You Should Ask Yourself When Networking, Feb. 13 from 12:30-1:30 p.m. The Internment of Japanese Americans: A Visit with the FDR Presidential Library, Feb. 14 from 10:30-11:30 a.m. Sight & Sound: The Integration of Montage & Music in American Film, Feb. 15 from 10:30-11:30 a.m. Creative Couples of Paris: Elisabeth Le Brun & Elizabeth Gardner, Feb. 16 from 10-11 a.m. Understanding the Voting Behavior of Young People, Feb. 20 from 12:30-1:30 p.m. Armchair Travel To Switzerland: Historic Cities & Alpine Vistas, Feb. 27 from 12:30-1:30 p.m. Armchair Tour of the Codman Estate with Historic New England,

Feb. 28 from 10:30-11:30 a.m. Hydrangea Ps & Qs: Planting, pH, Pruning, Problems & Your Questions and Feb. 29 from 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Tracking Beavers, Raccoons, Coyotes & Other Wild Mammals in Winter with Mass Audubon.

The library will be close at on Wednesday, Feb. 28 at 6 p.m.

Library story time is held Saturdays at 10:30 a.m. at the Becket Athenaeum. Children hear a story and make a craft. On the second Saturday of the month, the craft is replaced by creative movement with Laurel Lenski. RSVP to bit.ly/BA-storytime.

Movie night or adults will be held Saturday, Feb. 3 from 6:30-9:30 p.m. The movie starts at 7 p.m. This month's movie is "The Fabelmans" rated PG-13. Older children age 13 plus may come with an adult at the discretion of their guardian. RSVP to bit.ly/BA-Feb3-movie.

The Book Club will meet on Tuesday, Feb. 6 at 1:30 p.m. in the library or via Zoom. The book is "Still Life" by Sarah Winman. People should email the info@bwlibrary.org to request a physical book or for details on the Zoom meeting. Digital copies of the book are available on Libby.

The Cookbook Club meets Monday, Feb. 12 at 6 p.m. People should email ior@bwlibrary.org to register and request a copy of the cookbook. Participants should let the library know which recipe they will be preparing.

Game night will be held Thursday, Feb. 22 from 5-7 p.m. for ages 13 plus. People should RSVP to bit.ly/BA-Feb22-game.

Yoked Parish to hold Valentine's Day cookie sale to be held Feb. 10

BECKET – The Yoked Parish of Becket will have a Valentine's Day Cookie Sale on Saturday, Feb. 10, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Guild Hall on YMCA Road, to raise funds for the Becket/Washington Fuel/Emergency Fund.

Cookies will be \$5 per dozen and people may choose from the selection of

homemade cookies. Coffee, tea and hot chocolate will be available for those in need of a cookie and drink break. Drink and cookie will be \$1.

People may come purchase a selection of cookies and help fund the fuel and emergency fund. They may email ellsworths@verizon.net or call 413-623-6455 with any questions.

Correction

In the Jan. 25 edition of the Country Journal under Becket Art Center news there were two errors. It should be Central Berkshire Regional School District and the sentence about the dance should read, People will dance to their favorite tunes.

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OPINION

GUEST COLUMN

in the Garden

by Roberta McQuaid



Re-blooming paper whites

I purchased some paper white bulbs early in December, figuring I'd need some flower power come January.

Four bulbs were planted in potting soil in an old tureen bowl that I found at the local recycling center swap shed. I covered the soil in moss I saved from my yard and honest to goodness when those bulbs burst into bloom about a month after planting, I felt pretty proud of myself for creating such a chic display.

Now what to do with it? Usually, when paper whites are forced in pebbles, or just plain water, they are a once and done kind of experiment. But because I planted them in decent potting soil, there may be hope for re-bloom.

Read on to see how it's done.

First, it's important to think about how bulbs work. They are a self-contained unit that has everything in that unit to bloom the first time no matter what, as long as basic environmental needs are met.

Pretty impressive.

For bulbs to bloom again, we have to make sure that unit gets re-charged. I read once to think of the bulb as a solar battery – that's not far off!

For typical daffodil bulbs that are planted in the ground that means removing spent flowers, keeping the foliage intact until it yellows, and giving the plant a little fertilizer or a compost top dressing if the soil isn't fertile. Now that we understand, we can use this information to re charge our hyacinth bulbs.

The flowers are still on my chic display, but they are definitely gone by. I will snip off the spent blooms.

Next, I will put the tureen in a sunny window. To be honest, I had placed it in my pantry when it was in bloom.

My husband found the fragrance a little too overpowering and not to his liking. Over the years I have found that people either love it or hate it and sadly he leans toward the latter of the two.

But, because it was placed in the window of a cool room, it grew upright without falling over, and the flowers lasted close to three weeks! Now that I have the pot of foliage in a sunny window, I will sprinkle a little bulb fertilizer on the soil surface and water it in.

Choose one that has both nitrogen for the leaves and phosphorus for the bulb. The numbers on the fertilizer indicate NPK: Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium.

We want to encourage those leaves to photosynthesize and make energy to build up the reserves in the bulb. Fertilization will happen monthly as long as the leaves are green.

The leaves will grow for longer than you might think, maybe even into late spring and summer. I'll put the pot outside in the sunshine once the weather warms up enough.

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Corrections policy

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

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



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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Huntington community collected for Operation Christmas Child

Generosity throughout Huntington contributed to a successful shoebox gift collection season at drop-off locations for the Samaritan's Purse project Operation Christmas Child.

Across the U.S., the project collected 10 million shoebox gifts in 2023. Combined with those collected from partnering countries in 2023, the ministry is now sending over 11.3 million shoebox gifts to children worldwide including many who are suffering from war, poverty, disease and disaster.

Through shoeboxes-packed with fun toys, school supplies and personal care items Huntington area volunteers brought joy to children in need around the world. Each gift-filled shoebox is a tangible expression of God's love, and it is often the first gift these children have ever received. Through the continued generosity of donors since 1993, Operation Christmas Child has collected and delivered more than 220

million gift-filled shoeboxes to children in more than 170 countries and territories.

Across Massachusetts, shoebox packers often shop for deals on shoebox items throughout the year and many serve at a deeper level by becoming a year-round volunteer. Information about ways area participants can get involved year-round can also be found by visiting samaritanspurse.org/occ or by calling 518-437-0690.

Although local dropoff locations for shoebox gifts are closed until Nov. 18 - 25, 2024, anyone can still be a part of this life-changing project by conveniently packing a shoebox gift online in just a few simple clicks at samaritanspurse.org/buildonline.

These simple gifts, packed with love, send a message to children worldwide that they are loved and not forgotten.

Jasmin Sutton
Samaritan's Purse
Operation Christmas Child

GUEST COLUMN

Will withdrawing from 401(k) affect my Social Security?



Dear Rusty

My full retirement age (FRA) is 66 and 8 months, which I'll reach in September 2024. I'm still working three days a week. I want to cash in my 401K and want to know if I have to wait until my FRA for IRS purposes or can cash it in anytime in 2024. I don't want to affect my Social Security or end up paying taxes on my benefits.

Signed: Seeking to Avoid Taxes

Dear Seeking

We're not experts on IRS matters here at the AMAC Foundation so I can't address 401(k) questions, but we can provide information on your Social Security circumstances and how 401(k) withdrawals may affect your SS. I assume from your question that you are now receiving early Social Security and wish to avoid any tax consequences thereto by cashing in your 401(k), as well as from working. Here's what you need to know:

Since you will reach your Full Retirement Age in 2024, your 2024 work earnings limit will be \$59,520 up to the month you reach FRA. If you were born in January 1958, you'll attain FRA in September 2024. After you have reached your FRA there is no longer a Social Security limit to how much you can earn from working, so your work earnings thereafter will not affect your monthly Social

Security benefit regardless of how much you earn. If your part time work between January and August 2024 won't put you over the \$59,520 limit, your work earnings will not negatively affect your gross monthly Social Security benefit.

Assuming you are on Medicare, the premium for which is deducted from your Social Security payment, withdrawals from your 401(k) might affect your net monthly Social Security payment in two years hence. Medicare premiums are based upon your combined income from all sources, including 50% of the SS benefits you received during the tax year. If your 401(k) withdrawal(s) put you over an income threshold for your tax filing status, you may be required to pay an Income Related Monthly Adjustment Amount on top of the standard Medicare premium. That IRMAA supplement would be deducted from your Social Security, which would affect the net amount of your Social Security payment. Your Medicare premium for each coming year is determined by your combined income from two years prior, so if you "cash in" your 401(K) in 2024, it would affect your net Social Security payments in 2026.

Whether you will pay income tax on your Social Security benefits is determined by your combined income from everywhere, which the IRS calls your "Modified Adjusted Gross Income." MAGI is your income from all sources except ROTH IRA withdrawals and includes half of the SS benefits you received during the tax year.

If you file your taxes as a single, and your MAGI is over \$25,000 or if you file your taxes as "married-jointly" and your

SECURITY, page 5

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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Country Journal TEAM



EDITOR
Ellenor Downer
countryjournal@turley.com



ADVERTISING SALES
Wendy Delcamp
wdelcamp@turley.com

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PATRICK H. TURLEY
CEO

KEITH TURLEY
President

DEANNA SLOAT
Graphics Manager

Turley Publications, Inc.

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OPINION

HILLTOWN HISTORY

Hilltown Hikers search for Keefe Quarry

By Deborah Daniels
Correspondent

The Hilltown Hikers were on a quest to find the Keefe Quarries. Keefe Quarry was listed on a 1917 map of Becket and it was in the general area of the Hudson Chester Granite and Bowe Quarries. So armed with Light Detection and Ranging, a device that shows 3-D pictures of the land surveyed by satellite and old maps, the Hilltown Hikers set out for an adventure.

It was easy going walking on the Railroad bed constructed around 1898 to carry quarried rock from Becket to Chester for finishing. This was a raised railroad bed well constructed, very level including a granite block culvert bridge. It was an impressive piece of engineering that could handle track being laid for use on it again over 100 years later.

Only the quarries, the hikers were seeking weren't on this line. In fact the quarries we did locate were small about 10 to 12 feet across with water in the middle and with piles of grout, discarded cuts of granite, around the perimeter.

The area around Cushman Brook was known to have early quarries according to Becket historical documents. We wondered if these were the Keefe Quarry. There was evidence the rock was quarried with chisel and wedge patterns in the granite.

Were these just small granite operations done by the landowner to sell or for personal use? Any slabs of heavy granite that were removed must have been transported by oxen to their destination.

We were almost at the top of a mountain peak and heavy cargo going downhill must have challenged cart transportation. How much control did these hardy pioneers have over their oxen traveling downhill with a granite load? Was it good brakes, or did they put the oxen at the back of the cart to act like brakes on the load.

Well most likely the cart path wound its way around the mountain top, adding more mileage, but safe transport. Unfortunately, there was no evidence of a cart path. Were these quarrying efforts before the Hudson Chester Quarry that was active from 1860-1940 and in a limited capacity to 1960 that was located not far from here? This quarry did have a rail-

road branch line built with oxen and two wheeled carts hauling out the earth to create the 3.5 mile line from the quarry to Chester prior to the Becket quarry RR line.

The group did find two tiny quarries, which may have been the Keefe quarry referred to on the map. They may have been a family operation that predated the Hudson Chester Quarry. More evidence is needed to support or dispute this claim.

The group did find a ton of moose scat in the area of the tiny quarries. This may have been the biggest find.

What of those beasts of burden, the oxen, perhaps you may wish to know a bit more about them? Well oxen were the "Mack trucks" of farm life. They worked in pairs and were instrumental in transforming the New England landscape into farmland.

They plowed, logged, moved field stones, transported goods and worked long hours with just grass and grain as their reward. They often ended up on the dinner plate as well. These were the unsung heroes of colonial times, stoic hard workers unlike the mercurial horses, who got most of the credit.

An ox is a male bovine, which has been neutered. They benefit from their male hormones and they grow bigger muscles and bones and can weigh 1,500 to 3,000 lbs. Most have horns unless they are a polled bovine breed or had them removed as a calf.

They are gentle giants and must be at least four yrs old before becoming work animals. It is said that there were no cattle brought over on the Mayflower, but that the Pilgrims made sure the next ship in 1624 brought one Devon bull and three heifers, another early descendent to populate the New World. One might say the Pilgrims were tired of being the only beasts of burden.

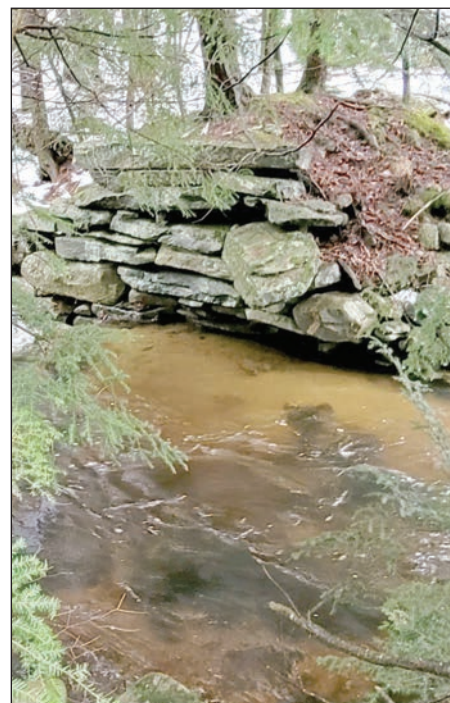
The Becket History Facts website reveals one more fascinating ox tale. The white marble obelisk that sits at the intersection of Route 20 and Route 8 commemorates a fatal accident that occurred nearby in 1847. Young John Glede and his dad were racing their ox teams on their farm when the boy's cart hit a stone and tipped over. He was killed instantly. The monument was erected by his family and friends in his memory.



This is Cushman Brook in Becket. The quarry railroad goes beside it for some ways.



Remnants of stone building, possibly quarry related building, stand beside Cushman Brook. Turley photos by Deborah Daniels



This stone dam remains over Cushman Brook.



A grout pile, ie granite debris from a small quarry is located below the dam. Is this Keefe Quarry?



Notched wedge marks from the granite being quarried are visible in a lintel stone placed over the stream culvert for the railroad.

GARDEN

Eventually, though, the leaves will yellow and brown. Once they do it's time to cut them back and let the soil dry out completely, after which the bulbs can be removed.

Give them a couple of days in the sun to dry out further. The outer skin

of the bulbs will get papery.

Now it is time to store them in a brown paper bag until planting. Old panty hose or onion bags would also work.

I will replant my paper white bulbs during Advent, and with any luck, all

of my work will pay off with blooms when I need it the most – this time next year! And maybe every year thereafter!

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For

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

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News, photo publication policy

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

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

Deadline is Monday at NOON, on holidays it is Friday at 2 p.m.



SECURITY

from page 4

MAGI is over \$32,000 then 50% of the Social Security benefits received during the tax year becomes part of your overall income taxed by the IRS (at your normal IRS tax rate). But if your MAGI as a single filer is more than \$34,000 – or as a married/jointly filer over \$44,000 – then up to 85% of the SS benefits received during the tax year becomes part of your overall income taxed by the IRS.

So, to recap:

Your part time work earnings in 2024 won't affect your monthly Social Security benefit, unless your 2024 work earnings prior to September 2024 exceed \$59,520.

Depending on the amount of your 401(k) withdrawals, your 2026 net Social Security payments may be impacted by Medicare's IRMAA provision. But your 401(k) withdrawals will not affect your gross Social Security payments.

Depending on the amount of your 401(k) withdrawals, some of the Social Security benefits received during the 2024 tax year will likely be subject to income tax. That is, if your annual total income, including your 401(k) withdrawals, exceeds the MAGI thresholds described above.

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

SCHOOLS & YOUTH

Hampshire Regional Middle High School lists honor roll

WESTAMPTON – Hampshire Regional Middle High School, 19 Stage Road, announces the honor roll.

Grade 7 academic excellence

Students in grade 7 at Hampshire Regional Middle School making Academic Excellence are: Austin Barcomb, Elizabeth Barry, Elaina Bigda, Samantha Black, Victoria Bond, Gabriel Carrasquillo, Grayson Clark, Raquelle Denoronha, Sabella Donatelli, Leila Doolittle, JacqueEmersen Florek-Grader, Savannah Fredette, Jackson Galenski, Ryan Garvey, Lexie Gauger, Samantha Gay, Jaymes Goddard, Talia Goddard, Aiden Goyette, Daniel Guiel, Willow Gutermuth, Mackenzie Harrison, Aralyn Jenco, Madison Johnson, Savannah Judd, Saoirse Keane, Margaret Kugler, Natalie Labrie, Sophia Lashway, Anna MacLachlan, Felicity Manganelli,

Elle Marcinek, Noa Nabut, Matthew Nadolski, Teagan Noel, Damian Pasiut, Mason Pedersen, Abigail Phelan, Mackensie Provost, Shane Radon, Kacey Reed, Maeve Reynolds, Caleb Riel, Karolina Robak, Holly Sampson, Hazel Scully-Henry, Suleman Shahid, Sienna Steffenhagen, Emmett Stith, Nicholas Theroux, Addison Thomas, Anna Tompkins, Amaya Torres Mor, Sadie Wasiuk, Brody Watkins, Ava Westcott, Jack White, Jax Williams, Danielle Wolf and Tarlo Zerbach.

Grade 7 academic achievement

Grade 7 students at Hampshire Regional Middle School earning Academic Achievement are: Madison Bannish, Julia Bertera, Carson Bisbee, Miles Cameron, Hazel Chute, Becky Cote, Emerson DeWitt, Jailin Ericson, Cailin Gougeon, Noah Haryasz,

Mason Hean, Carter Heath, Thomas Janik, Hayden Johnson, Henry Judd, Robert Loiko, Nora McCarthy, Emma McDonald, Bryce Meunier, Ethan Neylon, Deryk Nuttelman, Connor Perkins, Elka Pruzynski, Benjamin Raymond, Adalynn Roberts, Austin Sojkowski, Balin Sullivan, Ethan White, Amelia Woz and Brooke York.

Grade 8 academic excellence

Grade 8 students at Hampshire Regional Middle School earning Academic Excellence are: Cooper Alexander, Colby Cabrini, Amanda Clemeno, Ada Corner, Brianna Day, Rosemarie Estelle, Gabrielle Falkowski, Alana Hanke, Grant Jennings, Logan LaPointe, Samantha Law, Charlotte Letendre, Moira Long, Isabella Matthew, Olivia McAvoy, Charlotte Niswonger, Fiona Reynolds, Elise Rida,

Grace Scoble, Keira Tataro and Joseph Wright.

Grade 8 academic achievement

Grade 8 students at Hampshire Regional Middle High School earning Academic Achievement are: Logan Andrades, Declan Butler, Juliette Cerone, Ace Charette, Isaac Clark, Talia Craig, Weston Crawford, Noah Cruz, Griffin Darling, Madeline Desilets, Kalin Dubai, Addison DuCharme, Calvin Faiella, Jackson Garcia, Kylie Grimsley, Hayden Hyde, Jack Isherwood, Abigail KaufmannTelyn Kelly, Lilian Lumbr, Grace Malo, Eleanor Miller, Owen Moylan, Hobbes O'Sullivan, Luke Pickard, Torin Rowlett, Patrick Schmidt, Dominic Servaes, Colton Shadrack, Connor Tefft, Malcolm Todd and Madelyn Zannotti.

Colleges and Universities announces college honors for fall 2023

President's list

Fitchburg State University
Jordyn T. Gagliardi of Dalton

Dean's list

American International College
Dominic Allaire of Westfield, exercise science major; Jordyn Cole of Westfield, nursing major; Morgan Dunham of Westhampton, nursing major; Anna Dunlap of Westhampton, occupational science major; Dakota Durkee of Westfield, economics and finance major; Chase Foster of Westfield, occupational science major; Rachel LapradeBerger of Westfield, nursing major; Zulma Lopez of Westfield, nursing major; Mark Marquez of Westfield, cybersecurity major; Colin McGrady of Westfield, accounting major; Nicholas Mee of Westfield, economics and finance major; Maggie Prystowski of Westfield, health science major; Jessica Raptor of Westfield, nursing major; Shelby Rowell of Westfield, nursing major; Ian Soto of Westfield, sociology major; Eilin Torres of Westfield, nurs-

ing major and Jaelyn Towle of Westfield, management major

Dean's list

Elms College

Spencer Daughdrill of Easthampton, Brandon McCormick-Wilhite of Easthampton, Laura McDermott of Easthampton, Emma Petrowicz of Easthampton, Marie Poulin of Easthampton, Rebecca Boszko of Huntington, Alicia Potter of Huntington, Fiona Reynolds-Cornell of Huntington, Berta Warner of Huntington, Emma Bialas of Montgomery, Natalie Brown of Montgomery, Alyssa Allen of Westfield, Nathalia Carando of Westfield, Moirean Coffey of Westfield, Julia Daley of Westfield, Alesya Danyuk of Westfield, Lauren Darwick of Westfield, Emily Elton of Westfield, Gregory Hamelin of Westfield, Megan Heath of Westfield, Felicia Leblanc of Westfield, Katy McMahon of Westfield, Nelly Moka of Westfield, Angelina Rodriguez of Westfield, Alicia Rossi of Westfield,

Cassidy Ryan of Westfield, Ricardo Santiago of Westfield, Ashley Watt of Westfield, Kaylie Novak of Westhampton, Kailey Bak of Williamsburg and Maya Parker of Williamsburg

Dean's list

Fitchburg State University

Elijah Stathis of Northampton
Owen T. Bonney of Pittsfield
Ashley L. Farina of Pittsfield
Miles A. Norkskog of Pittsfield

Dean's list

James Madison University

Erin Jachym of Westfield, writing rhetoric and technical communication

Dean's list

Nichols College

Chelsea Indyk if Easthampton

Dean's list

Springfield College

Gavin Carzello of Westfield

Dean's list

University of Alabama

Patrick Flaherty of Westfield

Dean's list

University of Delaware

Calder Perry of Becket
Haley Springman of Chesterfield

Dean's list

University of Rhode Island

Megan Danahey of Westfield, Jack DeMarinis of Montgomery, Kyleen Labrecque of Westhampton, Julia Langenheim of Cummington, Addie Lashway of Williamsburg, Hannah Marney of Williamsburg, Brynja Miltimore of Russell, Larissa Riley of Chesterfield and Meghan Tobin of Westhampton

December Graduates

Hofstra University

Hadleigh LeClair of Westfield earned a Bachelor's Degree in psychology

GYAA to hold election and lists info

Sunday, Feb. 4 at 8 p.m. Gateway Youth Athletic Association will be holding their annual general meeting via Google Meet.

This meeting will include voting on the positions up for re-election; Vice President, Treasurer, and Fundraising Director. The current Vice President has decided to not run for re-election so this position is open. If people are interested in any of the above positions, they should make sure to attend this meeting and reach out if they have any questions. The meeting link can be found on the website. By visiting <https://www.gatewayyouthathletics.org>.

any parent/guardian of a child playing GYAA sports is able to attend and vote on these matters.

Registration is currently open for Spring Travel Soccer This is open to grades 2-12. The cost is \$90 and goes up to \$110 after Friday, Feb. 16 until registration closes Saturday, March 16.

To register, people may visit <https://www.gatewayyouthathletics.org/> and choose registration either at the top of the page or under useful links. This will bring them to the website to login and the available options for their player will be listed.

R.H. Conwell Elementary School announces upcoming news

WORTHINGTON – A walk to school day will take place on Wednesday, Feb. 7.

Buses will be dropping students off at the Worthington Golf Club that morning. Staff will be there to greet students, and walk down Ridge Road to school together. Caregivers that drive their student(s) to school should plan to drop off their student(s) at the Golf Club at 8:30 a.m.

They should make sure students

are dressed appropriately for the weather. A flyer and permission slip were sent home with the students.

The Office of Public School Monitoring recently conducted a monitoring review in the district. During this review, they monitored selected special education and civil rights criteria to determine the district's compliance with laws and regulations. They found no corrective action was required at this time.

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BLANDFORD

BCC announces awards

BLANDFORD – Cultural Council Chair Nicole Daviau announced the local council awards for the coming year in the amount of \$5,095.

The funding is provided by the state from lottery sales. The Local Cultural Council mission is to fund events and programs that will have the greatest impact on our residents and community.

“Funding priorities include supporting Gateway students and enriching cultural opportunities in town for Blandford resident,” said Daviau.

There were 23 requests and the Cultural Council funded eight programs.

They are: Dawson Atkin, In Performance and Conversation; Becket Arts Center of the Hilltowns, Inc.; Music Brings Communities Together;

Blandford Fair Art Show; Blandford Historical Society Bel Canto Opera; Gina Clark, the New England Sax/Wind Quartet; Hilltown Community Health Centers Creative Movement and Story Time; Karl Rausch for the New England Swing Orchestra and Dance and Jon Waterman for Live Music, Making History Live.

Other members of the Cultural Council are Mary Kronholm, Janet Strausberg and Susan Racine

The Cultural Council is one of 329 such groups that provide cultural opportunities to all the cities and towns in Massachusetts. The Blandford Cultural Council will review applications again this fall. Guidelines and deadlines can be found at massculturalcouncil.org.

Households may lose ACP credit for internet access

BLANDFORD – Municipal Light Plant Chair Peter Langmore shared information about the potential loss of a \$30 monthly credit for internet access for those eligible households subscribing.

There is uncertainty over the funding from the federal government that the Affordable Connectivity Program will end in April or May this year. The program provides the monthly credit.

If the program is not funded by Congress, the credit will end. According to information provided by Whip City Fiber as required by the Federal Communications Commission last week, additional information is available at the

FCC website.

There are more than 22 million households relying on the ACP to “reduce the expense of access” to high-speed internet access. Whip City Fiber encourages contacting elected Congressional Representatives to let them know that the program is important to fund.

Massachusetts’ senators are Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey. Western Massachusetts

Representatives are Richard Neal, First Congressional District and James McGovern, Second Congressional District.

LIBRARY

from page 1

Day, but ongoing throughout the week is a sensory story-time for all ages from 4-5 p.m. Lego Club meets on Wednesday from 3-5 p.m. and Slime Time on Thursday from 3-4 p.m.

Pokemon Club is on Friday from 3-4 p.m. for six to 13-year-olds to trade

cards, play games and make crafts.

The week finishes off with the Graphic Novel Art and Book club for eight to 13-year-olds. Copies of “Amulet” are available to be picked up at the library for discussion and there will be an art project.

REPAIRS

from page 1

there is a need to replace the tanks as they have been in place since “the 90s.” The tanks may be good for 30 years. A cost for a new split tank would be about \$30,000, but that is apparently not an immediate purchase.

Chair Cara Letendre said there is a possibility the repair funds could come from the Reserve Account and this will be discussed with the Finance Committee.

The possibility of a fuel access card for the departments will be considered so tracking expenditures will be easier.

Snowstorm

Waldron said there were “no issues” with the snowstorm and Select Board member Theodore Cousineau said he had received compliments on road conditions.

Two of three potential Highway Department employees were introduced to the board with the third coming next Monday.

Library grant

The library is applying for a Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners Small Building Grant which, said Daviau, “will allow us to expand, provide Americans with Disabilities Act compliance and expand the children’s area.”

The library, in order to move forward, needs a vote of the town to apply for, accept the grant, expend grant money and use the existing Library Stabilization funds \$120,000, with an additional \$30,000 this year. The town has put \$25,000 in the Library’s Building Stabilization account for the past five years in support of a building

project.

The grant deadline is May 31. Accepting the grant requires \$150,000 commitment from the town. “This grant will provide up to 75% of the cost of expansion and work on this grant began last May,” said Daviau.

March 13 representatives from the Board of Library Commissioners will be available virtually at the library to answer questions about the building program. Justifying the program, Daviau presented statistics on library circulation and foot traffic.

Town election hours

Town Clerk Doris Jemiolo asked the Select Board to reduce the election hours for the June 8 local election to 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. which the board did. Jemiolo told the board that early in-person and vote by mail reduces the need for the longer hours. More people cast ballots with the two additional options. She said last year there were 200 mail-in ballots cast.

Snow policy

The board discussed drafting a snow day policy as a result of confusion during the recent snow storm. The school district was closed, and some employees thought the town shut down when there was a snow day and employees would be compensated. This is not a town policy.

“This is nothing that we (the Select Board) would ever agree to,” said Letendre. It was suggested that the library did pay staff for snow closures but the library is checking.

Monday’s meeting was the first for new Town Administrator Michael Szlosek.

AREA GETS ANOTHER EARLY WEEK SNOW STORM



Snow covers Main Street in Blandford in this westerly view after a snow fell on Sunday and Monday. Evergreens in Blandford are covered in heavy wet snow.

Photos by Mary Kronholm



Maryann Deming, R.N. checks Don Carpenter’s blood pressure Friday morning during the Council on Aging breakfast at Town Hall.

Turley Photo by Mary Kronholm

Checking blood pressures

BLANDFORD – Maryann Deming, R.N. of Tolland is the new shared services nurse for Blandford.

She will be available during the Council on Aging Friday lunches and breakfasts to check blood pressure and answer any questions. Her next scheduled visits are Fridays, Feb. 9 and Feb. 23.

Pat Lombardo, Board of Health member and one of the fire department’s Emergency Medical Technicians will be available in the Town Hall gym every other Monday from 5-7 p.m. for blood pressure checks and sugar testing. This month he will be there on Mondays, Feb. 12 and Feb. 26.

COA lists upcoming events

BLANDFORD – The Council on Aging Lunch on Friday, Feb. 12 at noon will feature lasagna, salad, garlic bread and cherry cheesecake.

Reservations may be made by calling the Town Hall at 413-848-4279, extension 400 and leaving name and the number of people planning to attend.

There will be an opportunity to sign up to attend game day set now for Friday, Feb. 19 at 2 p.m. in the COA room at Town Hall. Anyone interested can call the COA number at 413-848-4279, extension 400 and indicate their interest. There will also be a sign-up sheet at the Monday morning exercise class.



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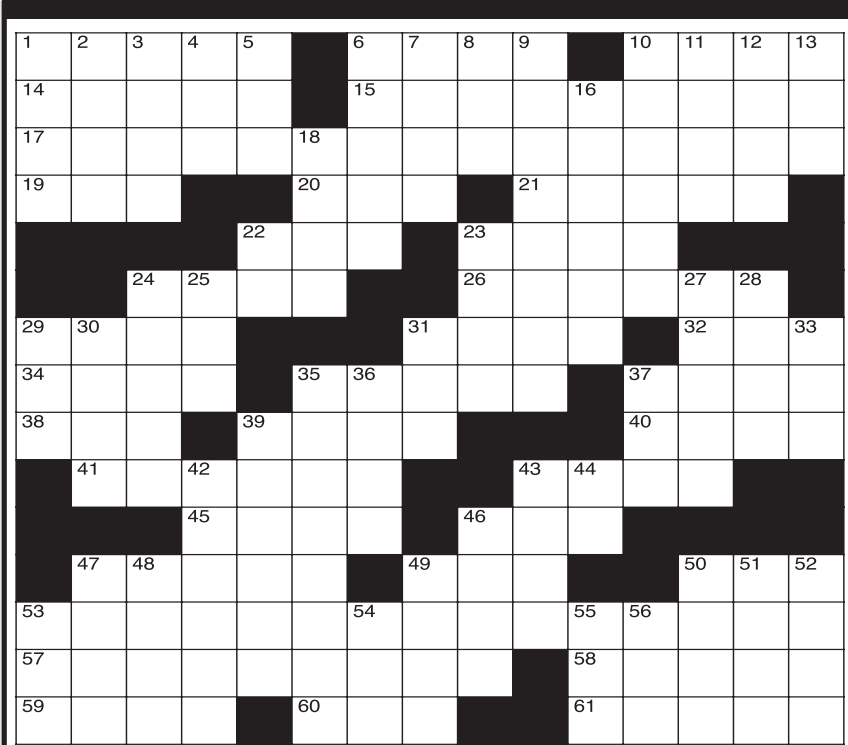
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CLUES ACROSS

- Become less intense
- Variety of pear
- Religion native to China
- Type of tooth
- Fitted out
- Make every effort
- Autonomic nervous system
- Complete
- Alternate name
- River in France and Belgium
- Miami's mascot is one
- Turfs
- Most cognizant of reality
- Broad volcanic crater
- Canadian surname
- Satisfaction
- Traitorous Greek mythological prince
- Collide
- Immune response
- Feline
- High opinion of one's own appearance
- Thin strip to align parts
- Containers
- Convicted American spy
- Breathe noisily
- Taxi
- Pancakes made from buckwheat flour
- Swiss river
- I.M. __, architect
- Have surgery
- Formal withdrawal
- Dutch and German surname
- Square measures 60, 2,000 lbs.
- Degrade someone

CLUES DOWN

- Siberian river
- Blessing
- Substitutes (abbr.)
- Principle underlying the universe
- Work unit
- Yellow edible fruits
- Gemstone
- A place ships dock (abbr.)
- Evergreen tropical tree
- Reality TV star Richards
- Nonflowering aquatic plant
- Stakes
- Antidiuretic hormone
- Make warm again
- Light beams
- Lethal dose
- Terrorist group
- Kids love him
- Naturally occurring solid
- German surname meaning "man from Saxony"
- Popular cuisine
- Partner to cheese
- Type of horse
- __ Diego
- Defensive nuclear weapon
- Most shrewd
- It may be for shopping
- Midway between south and southeast
- A stock of foods
- The bindings of books
- Swiss river
- Megabyte
- Sammy __, songwriter
- Dutch colonist
- Clare Booth __, American writer
- Sun or solar disk
- Popular type of bread
- Transfers of money (abbr.)
- Association of engineering professionals
- Young women's association
- City
- Niger-Congo branch of languages
- Pointed end of a pen

THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPES

ARIES

Mar 21/Apr 20
Something will occur this week that surprises you, Aries. You may even wonder if it is a trick being played on you. It is no trick, so buckle down for an adventure.

CANCER

Jun 22/Jul 22
Cancer, you might not be able to control what is happening this week, but you can control how you react to different situations. Keep your distance if an altercation arises.

LIBRA

Sept 23/Oct 23
More than anything right now, this week you need to relax and unwind, Libra. Take things at a slow pace, and spend more time at home with family than at work.

CAPRICORN

Dec 22/Jan 20
Even though you are conservative by nature, this week you are ready to take a chance of some sort. Enjoy the journey even if the efforts do not bring you enormous success.

TAURUS

Apr 21/May 21
You have pushed your mind and body quite far over the last several days. Now you have to slow down or pay the consequences. Do not add anything else to your list.

LEO

Jul 23/Aug 23
Something you discover about a friend this week could leave you reeling, Leo. The signs have been there for awhile and you really should have seen it coming.

SCORPIO

Oct 24/Nov 22
Try not to take any financial risks right now, Scorpio. If you are planning to invest, then you may want to get all of the facts before gambling too much in the stock market.

AQUARIUS

Jan 21/Feb 18
A kind word from you may be all that is needed to bring a smile to someone's face. Do not underestimate the power of a kind and simple gesture.

GEMINI

May 22/June 21
Gemini, you may believe you have discovered a good thing and it could be right. But don't wait too long to act since this good thing has an expiration date. The clock is ticking.

VIRGO

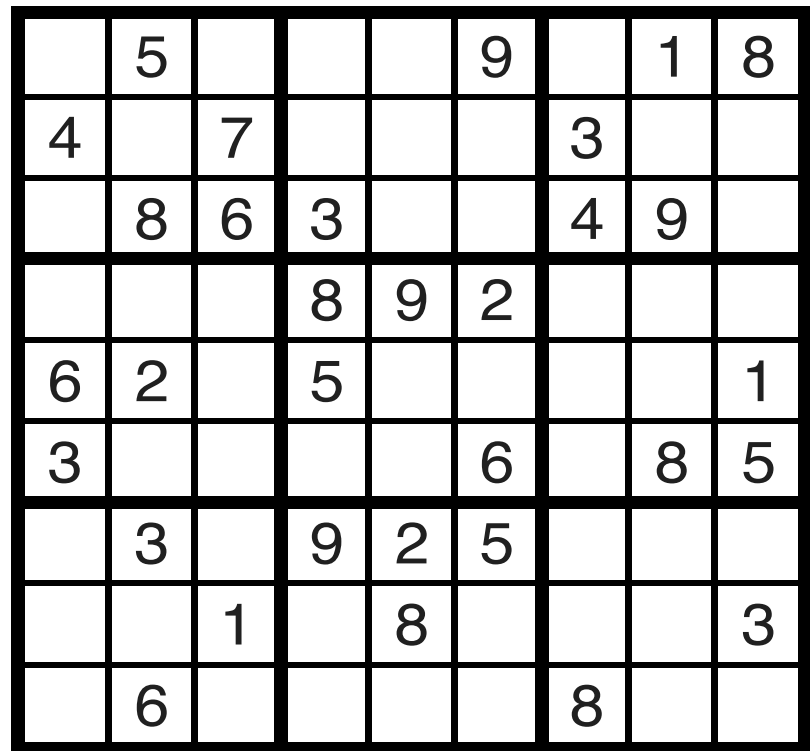
Aug 24/Sept 22
Virgo, if you are on the move this week, there is a chance that you will experience some interesting people along the way. At least one person might be a good networking contact.

SAGITTARIUS

Nov 23/Dec 21
This week you will be back to your best, Sagittarius. Things will work out, so use your positive attitude to the benefit of yourself and others.

PISCES

Feb 19/Mar 20
You don't usually lack confidence. But you may not want to push ahead with a project for fear of failure. You should be more adventurous and not worry too much.



SUDOKU

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

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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!

answers

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

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

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RUSSELL

Russell library holds events and vacation activities

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.

On Saturday, Feb. 2 families and adults can meet at Noble View Outdoor Center Russell for Wildlife Tracking with certified tracker and AMC leader, Jim Pelletier. There will be a session for families from 10 a.m.-noon. Librarian Dawne Piers-Gamble will provide cocoa, stories and games.

An adults and teens session will be held from 1-4 p.m.

People should register by visiting <https://activities.outdoors.org/search/index.cfm/action/details/id/148023>, by email dawne4amc@gmail.com, by call-

ing 413-862-6221 and leave a message or come in and sign up at the Library, by Thursday, Feb. 1.

On Saturday, Feb. 10 from 2-4 p.m. a presentation for adults by Dr. Robert Kidd on the Story of Horace Moses and his contributions to the development of Russell. People may register by email rpldirector@townofrussell.us, call 413-862-6221 and leave a message or come in and sign up at the Library, by Friday, Feb. 9.

During February vacation there are some activities for children. On Tuesday, Feb. 20 from 11:30-12:30 p.m. there will be a Family Skate Party at Amelia Park Arena. This event will be held during public skating, followed by a pizza social from 12:30-1:30 p.m.. The Appalachian

Mountain Club Western Massachusetts will provide free admission and skate rentals for children, (\$10) as well as pizza for all registered participants. People are welcome to bring their own skates and it is recommended that participants wear a helmet and dress with loose, layered clothing. AMC requires all children under 18 to be accompanied by a parent or guardian for the entirety of this event and that everyone has a signed waiver.

People may register by visiting <https://activities.outdoors.org/search/index.cfm/action/details/id/148022>, by emailing dawne4amc@gmail.com, calling 413-862-6221 and leave a message, or come in and sign up at the Library, by February 19th.

On Wednesday, Feb. 21 from 10

a.m.-noon Skulls, Scat and Tracks with Bob Kidd will be held at the library. This is great follow up to the Tracking hike on Feb. 3. Hands on activities and snacks are provided.

In honor of African American Heritage Month the library will show segments of, “The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross” on Tuesday, Feb. 13 from 6-7 p.m. and Tuesday, Feb. 20 from 6-7 p.m. This is for adults and teens. Register by email rpldirector@townofrussell.us, call 413-862-6221 and leave a message, or come in and sign up at the Library, by Monday, Feb. 12.

An everybody Birthday Celebration will take place Saturday, Feb. 17 from 10:30 a.m.-noon. It is open to all and no registration is required.

EASTHAMPTON

bankESB, employees donate \$50K to United Way

EASTHAMPTON – bankESB and its employees recently made donations of \$50,000 to the United Way of the Franklin and Hampshire Region.

Employees pledged nearly \$23,000 of their own funds in the bank’s United Way workplace campaign. Combined with the bank’s dollar-for-dollar match and additional corporate contribution, the campaign total of \$50,000 will be donated to the United Way of the Franklin and Hampshire Region. The campaign lets employees donate and direct funds, advocating for causes that are most important to them.

As a long-time contributor, the bank and its employees have donated over \$690,000 to United Way organizations in Western Massachusetts over the last 12 years. The United Way is a volunteer-driven organization that serves residents through its own programs and services as well as those of its partner agencies. The organization works to advance the common good by focusing



Shown are bankESB Senior Vice President, Retail Banking, Gary Turku; bankESB Executive Support Specialist and United Way workplace campaign coordinator, Marge Prendergast; bankESB President and CEO, Matthew S. Sosik; United Way of the Franklin and Hampshire Region Director of Development, Holly Martineau; bankESB Assistant Vice President, Branch Officer, Jessica West; bankESB Executive Vice President, Chief Retail Banking & Marketing Officer, Dena Hall and Executive Vice President, Chief Administrative Officer, Bozena Dabek.

Submitted photo

on the building blocks for a good life – education, financial stability, health, and basic needs.

“bankESB and our employees are proud to support the United Way in its mission to unlock the full potential of our friends, neighbors and communities in need throughout Western Massachusetts,” said bankESB President and CEO Matthew S. Sosik.

Founded in 1869 as Easthampton Savings Bank, bankESB is headquartered in Easthampton and operates 11 branches throughout Western Massachusetts. Through its sponsorship and charitable giving program, The Giving Tree, bankESB and the Easthampton Savings Bank Charitable Foundation support non-profit organizations and causes throughout Hampden and Hampshire counties. In 2022, The Giving Tree donated nearly \$500,000 and over the past decade has donated more than \$3.2 million. For more information, visit bankESB.com.

State Rep. Carey announces run for Clerk of Courts

By Nick Boonstra
nboonstra@turley.com

EASTHAMPTON – State Rep. Dan Carey (D-2nd Hampshire) announced his intention to run to be the next Hampshire County Clerk of Courts after the incumbent, Harry Jekanowski, Jr., decided not to seek a sixth term.

Carey, who has served in the state legislature since 2018, will formally announce his candidacy at an event at the Hotel Northampton at 10 a.m. on Saturday, Feb. 17, according to a press release from his campaign.

Clerks of Courts are county-level elected officials that serve six-year terms as the administrative head of their county’s Superior Court, overseeing tasks such as the scheduling of cases and the handling of evidence.

Carey said of Jekanowski, “Harry’s been there a long time and done such an amazing job.” Jekanowski, also a Democrat, has served as Hampshire County Clerk of Courts since 1994.

Carey announced his campaign event soon after word of Jekanowski’s retirement became public. He said his decision to pursue the seat came after a number of individuals in the county encouraged him to do so ahead of Jekanowski’s announcement.

Carey added that he has already received positive feedback from the community since announcing his intention to run. “I’ve really been humbled by all the support already,” he said.

Looking back over his six years on Beacon Hill, Carey highlighted the opportunity to work directly with his constituents as the most rewarding part of the job. “It has been a tremendous privilege for me to serve as State Representative serving the people of Easthampton, South Hadley, Hadley, and Granby,” he said in his campaign’s press release.

Nevertheless, he made clear that he was still focused on finishing his term strong, saying that there was plenty to do this year and that he was excited about it.

A move to the Hampshire County Superior Court would be something of a homecoming for Carey, who previously served as an Assistant District Attorney and a District Court Administrator, and who currently serves on the House Judiciary Committee.

“I used to work in that courthouse, so I’m very familiar,” he said.

Drawing from his firsthand experience, Carey said he intended to make modernization an important part of his work as Clerk of Courts should he be elected. Echoing comments from Governor Maura Healey in her recent State of the Commonwealth address, Carey said that “government should make things easier for people, not harder.”

“I see across government and the judiciary the move towards electronic and digital services,” he said. He went on to say that he wanted to make sure

that the Hampshire County Superior Court was keeping up with these changes and remaining accessible for everyone who walks through the door of the courthouse — “folks walking in usually on their worst day,” he added.

His time on Beacon Hill already saw the passage of a bill that saw that Wi-Fi access was provided in all court-houses across the state.

“That’s the type of area where there’s room to add to the good work that Harry and his staff have been doing,” he said.

Carey planned to make community input an important part of his campaign and, he hoped, his work as Clerk of Courts. “I want to learn from the folks of Hampshire County what they want,” he said.



Hampshire County Courthouse.

Turley Photo by Nick Boonstra

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PUBLIC NOTICES

**LEGAL NOTICE
TOWN OF CHESTER
Public Hearing
Monday, February 12, 2024
6:00 PM
in the Chester Town Hall,
15 Middlefield Road,
Chester, MA 01011
Proposed FY 2024
CDBG Application**

The Chester Board of Selectmen will conduct a Public Hearing on **February 12, 2024, at 6:00 PM in Chester Town Hall, 15 Middlefield Road, Chester, MA** regarding a proposed FY2024 application by the Towns of Chester, Huntington, Middlefield and Russell to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities for up to \$1,375,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds. The projects under consideration include:

- Prospect Street and Soisalo Road Infrastructure Build Project Phase II (Chester)
 - Housing Rehabilitation (Chester, Huntington, Middlefield, and Russell)
 - Public Social Services (Chester, Huntington, Middlefield, and Russell)
- If awarded, the Town of Chester will be responsible for administration of the grant program, with assistance from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.

All persons with questions

or comments regarding the grant application will have an opportunity to be heard. Persons who require special accommodations to attend the hearing should contact the Town at (413) 354-7760 several days prior to the hearing. Those unable to attend can send written comments to Joseph Hagopian at PVPC at 60 Congress Street, Springfield, MA 01104, or jhagopian@pvpc.org.

*In the event of a snow storm, the Public Hearing will be held on February 26, 2024 at 6:00 PM in the Chester Town Hall, 15 Middlefield Road, Chester, MA. 02/01/2024

**Town of Blandford
Conservation Commission
Public Notice**

At its regularly scheduled meeting on **Monday, February 12th, 2024, at 6:00 PM** at the Blandford Town Hall, 1 Russell Stage Road, the Blandford Conservation Commission will consider a Request for Determination of Applicability (RDA) received from the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission for the mechanical removal of invasive plant species within a Boarding Vegetated Wetland and its associated Buffer Zone on Hiram Blair Road (Map 411, Lot 7). The Commission will make its determination in accordance with the

provisions of the Wetlands Protection Act, M.G.L. c 131, Sec. 40 (as amended).

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

Nicolas Pietroniro,
Conservation Agent
Town of Blandford
Conservation Commission
02/01/2024

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

Project File No. 607231
A Live Virtual Public Informational Meeting will be hosted on the MassDOT website below to present the design for the proposed Reconstruction of Mountain Street project in **Williamsburg, MA.**

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

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

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

This meeting is accessible to people with disabilities. MassDOT provides reasonable accommodations and/or language assistance free of charge upon request (e.g interpreters in American Sign Language and languages other than English, live captioning, videos, assistive listening devices and alternate material formats), as available. For accommodation or language assistance, please contact MassDOT's Chief Diversity and Civil Rights Officer by phone (857-368-8580), TTD/TTY at (857) 266-0603, fax (857) 368-0602 or by email (MassDOT.CivilRights@dot.state.ma.us). Requests should be made as soon as possible and prior to the meeting, and for more difficult to arrange services including sign-language, CART or language translation or interpretation, requests should be made at least ten business days before the meeting.

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

JONATHAN GULLIVER
HIGHWAY
ADMINISTRATOR

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

**Commonwealth of
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Docket No. HS24P0041EA
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Also known as:
Nancy S. Penn,
Nancy Sue Penn
Date of Death: 12/27/2023
CITATION ON
PETITION FOR
FORMAL
ADJUDICATION**

To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Formal Adjudication of Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Kimberly A. Penn of Huntington, MA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that: **Kimberly A. Penn of Huntington, MA** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration.**

IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 02/14/2024.

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

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A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. **Diana S. Velez Harris**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: January 23, 2024
Mark S. Ames,
Temporary Register

02/01/2024

**TOWN OF BLANDFORD
MASSACHUSETTS
CONSERVATION
COMMISSION
NOTICE OF
PUBLIC HEARING**

The Blandford Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing pursuant to the Wetlands Protection Act MGL Chapter 131, Section 40, to consider a Request for Determination of Applicability filed by the Springfield Water & Sewer Commission for confirmation of exempt activities associated with the repair of the existing Sugar Creek Bridge on Borden Brook Perimeter Road in Blandford, Massachusetts.

The hearing will be held on **Monday, February 12, 2024 at 6:00 pm** at the Blandford Town Hall, 1 Russell Stage Road. To view the Request for Determination of Applicability, contact the Conservation Commission at (413) 848-4279 x202.

Any person interested or wishing to be heard should appear at the time and place designated.
02/01/2024

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Advertising Sales
Wendy Delcamp
wdelcamp@turley.com

Editor
Ellenor Downer
countryjournal@turley.com

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cgriswold@turley.com

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HILLTOWN HIKING ADVENTURES



Dave Pierce, President of the Chester Railway Museum, explains the Western Railroad construction through Chester, Middlefield and Becket.



Karen McTaggart visits the Hoosac Tunnel booth. Submitted photos



The Chester and Becket Railroad had a booth at the Railroad show held at the Big E Fairgrounds in West Springfield on Sunday.



Karen McTaggart stops at the Friends of the Keystone Arches booth.



Shown from left are Karen McTaggart, Doug Lyman and Liz Massa.



People look at the many booths at the Railroad Show Sunday at the Big E Fairgrounds in West Springfield.

Visiting a railroad show instead of taking a hike

WEST SPRINGFIELD – The Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers were at the largest Railroad Show, sponsored by the Amherst Railway Society in the country on Sunday at the Big E Fairgrounds in West Springfield.

Dave Pierce, President of the Chester Railway Museum and the Friends of the Keystone Arches premiered the new Chester and Becket information board,

as well as displaying the Keystone Arch Bridges model made by him. They also had information on the caboose at the Chester Railroad Station.

The Friends of the Keystone Arches maintains the trail which encompasses the historic stone arch bridges in Chester, Middlefield and Becket and includes two bridges as National Landmark structures. The Chester Railroad Museum is also a

National Landmark on Prospect Street in Chester.

The Hilltown Hikers also visited great area trolley museums including Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum, Seashore Trolley Museum, Connecticut Trolley Museum, plus the Boston Street Railway Association booths. Chester is an important part of railroad history, the entire Chester Factory

Village was built because of the Western Railroad being brought through town. This shifted the town's center from Chester Hill to the River Valley.

Every January the largest Railroad Hobby Show brings over 10,000 visitors for two days to the Big E Fairgrounds where all four buildings are packed full of vendors and non-profit train and trolley organizations.

CHESTERFIELD

James Kitchen with musical friends entertain both young and old

CHESTERFIELD – “James Kitchen and his musical friends hosted an incredible performance that was accessible to kids and adults of all ages, said Amanda Faro, New Hingham Regional Elementary School Principal.

“Our students were engaged and excited to learn about music, musical instruments, and their history. Not only did they listen to some wonderful music, but they had the opportunity to make music themselves! We will gladly welcome James and his friends back to share again,” said Faro.

On Thursday, Jan. 25 at 9 a.m. in the New Hingham Elementary School sculptor James Kitchen displayed, and played, a huge array of musical instruments he collected over the past fifty years connecting music and history with creativity and imagination. Everything from a Dideridoo to a Theremin, along with some odd instruments that were popular before radio or TV existed, were on display. This was a community event for all ages and the Council on Aging had a group attending.

Nan Clark, who turns 95 this year, demonstrated an old wind-up 78 record



Shown from left are Cynthia Jirak, Jonas Cain, Claudia Waite, James Kitchen, Dave Abbott and Nan Clark. Submitted photo

player for the children to see and hear. She played a tambourine, showed how an Inca rain stick worked, then shared how she started writing stories when she was in grade school; something she con-

tinues to do as a published writer.

Before the students even entered the gym, where the event took place, they could hear a tuba echoing through the halls, played by Dave Abbott along

with Cynthia Jirak who accompanied him with a Zydeco Rubboard. Cynthia played many other percussion novelties during the event with the talented tuba playing of Dave Abbott. Later both answered questions and demonstrated various instruments to the students after the event.

A high note was hit when Claudia Waite, famous for her many performances at the New York Metropolitan Opera and the world stage, filled the gym with her voice and then shared stories from her musical career to the delighted students. Fortunately, plastic cups were in use, and no glass was broken from the resounding sonorous sounds.

Jonas Cain, the music teacher at New Hingham, has a goal to get the students thinking creatively, learning the history of instruments and appreciating music in a new way. Cain surprised the students by playing a saxophone and recorder with everyone at the event.

“The students loved the music and were so excited to talk about it in their music classes the rest of the day,” said Cain.

Chesterfield Congregational Church to hold monthly breakfast Feb. 11

CHESTERFIELD – The Chesterfield Congregational Church will be having its monthly breakfast on Sunday, Feb. 11 from 8-10 a.m.

The cost is a voluntary donation. The menu features pancakes with or without blueberries; French toast; pure Chesterfield

maple syrup; free range, organic, farm-fresh eggs any style; breakfast sandwiches, sausage, home fries, excellent homemade corned beef hash; juice; tea and coffee.

In addition, the special item for this breakfast will be fresh fruit salad with strawberry yogurt sauce.

WORTHINGTON

Council on Aging to host Valentine's pot luck luncheon on Feb. 12

WORTHINGTON – The Worthington Council On Aging will be hosting a Valentine's pot luck on Monday, Feb. 12 at noon in the

Worthington Town Hall.

Anyone 60 and over is welcome to attend.

Wearing red is optional.