

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

A TURLEY PUBLICATION | www.turley.com

February 13, 2025 | Vol. 46, No. 42 | 75¢

www.countryjournal.turley.com

HUNTINGTON

Principal main school committee topic

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

With a simple, one-item agenda, the Gateway Regional School Committee convened a special meeting at Wednesday, Feb. 5 at 7 p.m. to announce the Substitute Principal position at Chester Elementary School.

As always, the first item on the agenda invited public input—this time from parents reeling from the loss of Principal Vanna Maffuccio, who is on a leave of absence and did not return to the school from the holiday break in January.

Approximately 55 parents, students and staff members attended the meeting, along with ten school committee members. And while everyone had an opportunity to speak—and speak they did, many were left frustrated by not having their questions answered. Under the law, the school district was not able to publicly comment as to the reasons for Maffuccio’s absence, the review process currently underway, nor the expected timeline for a resolution.

In opening the meeting, Chairperson Jason Forgue said they decided to hold this special meeting due to numerous requests of families, school committee members, staff and others. Typically, a school committee agenda holds public comment to the first 15 minutes of a meeting, but Forgue’s first motion was to extend the public comment period to 45 minutes. That motion was unanimously approved and was later extended by another 15 minutes to ensure time for everyone to speak.

Over 30 parents, young students and staff members offered public comments in support of



School Committee Secretary Stacy Stewart, from left, Chairperson Jason Forgue, Superintendent Kristen Smidy and Assistant Superintendent Stephanie Fisk listen to testimony supporting Vanna Maffuccio, at the special School Committee Meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 5.



Substitute Principal Mark Fulton was introduced and spoke to parents, students and staff at the Feb. 5 meeting.

Maffuccio. In themes that were repeated by almost everyone, speakers shared their frustration and sadness that Maffuccio was not at the school, affirmed the positive changes that had occurred since Maffuccio arrived as principal several years ago, gave examples of the innovative educational programs such as tree tapping, composting and hydroponic gardening, which Maffuccio launched and heralded the academic success the



Littleville second grade teacher Linda Hyjek, who worked for Fulton a few years ago, assured stakeholders that he was a good choice for the post.

Courtesy photos by Jerry Long

school had seen with Maffuccio at the helm. In 2024, CES was one of 50 schools in the state recognized by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for high achievement.

Many spoke about Maffuccio’s efforts to reduce bullying and to instill confidence in shy learners. Long term

school volunteer Misty Robitaille shared the principal’s support of the staff as well, saying that Maffuccio had encouraged her to go back to college and finish her teaching degree. Parents of older students were nearly unanimous in describing their experiences at

PRINCIPAL, page 3

HUNTINGTON

Gateway High seeks waiver to exceed cap

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

Gateway Regional Superintendent Kristen Smidy sought waiver from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to allow the district to “exceed the current statutory cap on the capital stabilization account.”

If approved, the towns’ building payments can continue to be collected and saved toward a major repair on the middle school roof.

According to Smidy, “This would allow us to responsibly plan for and execute the roofing repairs without sacrificing other essential district priorities.” The advantage to the towns, she said, is keeping their budgets stable while preparing for a major expenditure.

“I am super appreciative that towns are supportive of this project. If we had to go back and raise this later, it would impact all of us,” Smidy said.

Last year saw the final repayment to the Massachusetts School Building Authority, which fronted funding for the renovations to the middle school and high school and newly constructed elementary schools in Chester and Huntington. Each year, the member towns paid their portion of the building program’s repayment.

Smidy and town officials have been working on a plan to continue to make those payments—this time to Gateway’s Capital Stabilization Account. Under the law, the state caps such accounts at 5% of the total district budget. If approved, the waiver would allow the district to continue to collect funds from the towns to go towards an upcoming roof repair at the Gateway complex.

The middle school roof is 22 years old and has been problematic during rainfalls and snow melts. According to Smidy, they are not talking about dripping water: water streams into the second floor hallway during heavy rainfall and must be collected in barrels.

Middlefield select board—and former Gateway school committee member, Curt Robie, recently assessed the conditions of the roof. Robie, who is a retired Facilities Director from Westfield State University, brought in an architect and project manager

GATEWAY, page 2

BLANDFORD

Town Administrator reflects on first six months

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

Town Administrator Cristina Ferrera has been on the job for six months.

“I am humbled daily by this job,” she said. She went on to say that the major difference she finds with her job in Blandford, looking at coming from Springfield, a city with a population just over 153,000 to a town with a population of barely 1,200, is “the resources.”

There is a support staff readily available for all sorts of needs. While she has that support staff in place in Blandford, it’s one person, Administrative Assistant Joann Martin, who also wears several hats.

Ferrera is very thorough in all her efforts to accomplish what needs to be done, but she would like to have things “done timely and efficiently.” It is a goal she is working towards and she believes is within her grasp. She said what she likes about the job is that she is “afforded the challenge daily...and lots of



Cristina Ferrera

adapting every day.”

Major accomplishments so far include the Green Light letter for the Water Department so grant funds can be expended. Interviews for a permanent Highway Department Superintendent are underway.

Three applicants have made the cut and according to Ferrera, two will be forwarded to the Select Board for consideration.

This week she has been taking courses with the Office of the Inspector General to become certified as the town’s Chief Procurement Officer.

In order for the town to use the Mass General Laws Ch. 30B request for proposal process, the Select Board must appoint a CPO to oversee purchases of \$50,000 or more. As CPO, Ferrera will also be responsible for everything involved with buying, leasing, renting or acquiring supplies or services for all departments.

Right now, Ferrera is engaged in getting the budget prepared for the Annual Town

Meeting in June. She is working with the Finance Committee participating in departmental budget meetings.

There is an opening on the Finance Committee and the need, according to Ferrera, is great. She said there are also seats open on the Recreation Committee and the Zoning Board of Appeals.

She encourages anyone

interested in any opening to contact her.

Also on her list is working with the Conservation Commission on a solar battery installation on North Blandford Road. Everything that comes across her desk needs more than a cursory look, and Ferrera is aware and acknowledged everything becomes part of her “daily adapting.”

WEEKEND STORM KEEPS HIGHWAY CREWS BUSY



The Highway Department crews were out early Sunday morning, well before sunrise to clear snow. This was taken at 7:45 a.m. Sunday on Glasgow Road.

Turley photo by Mary Kronholm



PAGE 7

Blandford.....6	Easthampton.....7	Otis.....3	Schools & Youth.....6
Business Directory.....3	Hilltowns.....2	Pittsfield.....7	Westfield.....7
Chesterfield.....7	Huntington.....3	Plainfield.....7	Williamstown.....6
Classifieds.....11	Obituaries.....10	Public Notices.....7	Worthington.....7
Cummington.....7	Opinion.....4, 5, 6	Puzzle Page.....10	



8 0 4 8 7 9 1 3 1 7 8 6

HILLTOWNS

Steve Cormier presents new book on 'The Sacrificial Land'

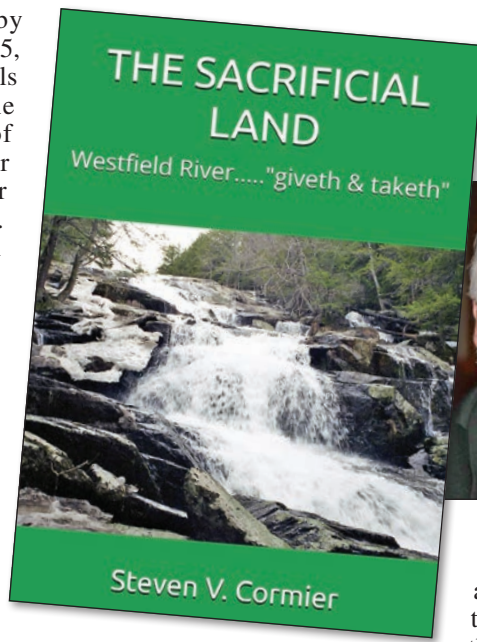
Local author and historian Steven V. Cormier has announced a series of author talks on his latest book, "The Sacrificial Land," a deep dive into the history and impact of the Westfield River on the former towns of Knightville, Indian Hollow and Littleville from the 1800s through the present day.

Cormier will be speaking at the Huntington Public Library on Saturday, Feb. 22 at 11 a.m.; on Sunday, Feb. 23 at 3 p.m. in the Worthington Historical Society; on Saturday, March 1 at 2 p.m. in the Westfield Athenaeum and on Saturday, March 8 at 1 p.m. in the Montgomery Town Hall at 1 p.m.

The series continues in April with the History Fest at Westfield State University on Saturday, April 12 at 1 p.m. and the Southwick Public Library on Wednesday, May 21 at 6 p.m. Cormier also anticipates a date, still to be determined, at Hamilton Memorial Library in Chester in May.

Included in the book is the Westfield River's early history with industry and com-

merce powered by watermills. In 1845, there were 28 mills located along the middle branch of the Westfield River between Chester and Huntington. It also reports on some of the volatile flooding that led to significant damage from the hilltowns all the way to West Springfield, and the decisions to build Knightville and Littleville Dams for flood control, recreation, and as a back-



Steve Cormier

up water supply for the City of Springfield. Of special interest is his research on how area residents were treated when displaced for the building of the two flood control dams. His book is therefore "dedicated to all of the inhabitants of Knightville, Indian Hollow and Littleville who sacrificed their land and homesteads so that others could live in peace

surrounding the unexpected rage and ultimate destruction introduced by the Westfield River."

Each author talk will be about an hour long with time for questions and answers. The Sacrificial Land will be available for sale (\$9.99) and signing.

Cormier says he will focus on the direct impact that the Knightville and Littleville Dam had on the villages-including cemeteries-that were displaced, along with the conflicts between possible recreational uses, hydroelectricity and as a backup water supply for Springfield. He will also highlight the river's "Wild & Scenic" designation in 1993, which was the first within the state of Massachusetts.

Cormier's first local history book was "The Life and Times of Parley B. Hutchins," which detailed the 1880 unsolved murder of the Huntington resident and entrepreneur and the disappearance of an estimated \$100,000 in gold, which made national headlines.

MassDOT announces 1-90 bridge painting, construction

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation announces construction operations on I-90 eastbound and westbound for bridge painting.

In Becket, bridge painting will occur on I-90 eastbound and westbound at mile marker 18.4, utilizing lane closures from now through Friday, Feb. 14 from 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m. each day.

In West Stockbridge, bridge painting will occur on I-90 eastbound and westbound at mile marker 1.3, utilizing lane closures, on Thursday, Feb. 13 and Friday, February 14 from 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m. each day.

Drivers traveling through these areas should expect delays, reduce speed, and use

caution. Appropriate signage and messaging will be in place to guide drivers through the work areas. All scheduled work is weather dependent and subject to change without notice.

For more information on traffic conditions, travelers are encouraged to: dial 511 and select a route to hear real-time conditions or visit www.mass511.com to view live cameras, travel times, real-time traffic conditions and project information before setting out on the road.

Users can subscribe to receive text and email alerts for traffic conditions. Follow @MassDOT on X, formerly known as Twitter, to receive regular updates on road and traffic conditions.

Local towns receive grant to improve internet service

BOSTON – The Healey-Driscoll administration and the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative's Massachusetts Broadband Institute announced \$12,671,242 to expand internet in locations unserved and underserved by broadband in 96 cities and towns across the state.

MBI awarded the funds to two internet service providers, Comcast Cable Communications Management and Verizon New England, through the second round of the Broadband Infrastructure Gap Networks Grant Program, which deploys broadband infrastructure in areas that currently it.

"Internet access is an economic imperative, and we're proud to be expanding access to these essential services to communities across the state," said Governor Maura Healey. "MBI is connecting people without sufficient access so they can take advantage of the digital economy."

A grant recipient was \$11,317,283 to Comcast Cable Communications Management for Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery, Northampton, Northfield, Russell, Westhampton, Westminster and Williamsburg.

The Gap Networks program aligns with the goals of the federal Internet for All initiative, which aims to connect every community across the country to reliable high-speed

internet. The Massachusetts Broadband Institute has continued to make significant progress in expanding high-speed internet access, affordability and adoption across the state.

A division of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, Massachusetts Broadband Institute is working to extend high-speed internet access and availability across the state. To achieve this, MBI uses state and federal funding to launch infrastructure expansion programs that target areas of the state that lack high-speed internet access as well as digital equity programs that tackle barriers to internet adoption and increase availability, addressing critical issues around affordability, enhanced public Wi-Fi, the need for internet-enabled devices and digital literacy training. People may learn more by visiting <https://broadband.masstech.org>.

GATEWAY

from page 1

from Sika Sarnafil, the company who did the Gateway roof previously. They have been able to give no cost seasonal inspections to help the facilities staff maintain the roof in the interim, Smidy said, adding that this is an issue of continued safety and functionality of the facilities.

Gateway will be eligible to apply for more MSBA funding for the roof project in 2027. At that time, the district will have better repair options if they are able to keep standing water off of the roof in the interim. If the roof stays dry, they will have the option of doing a "go-over" repair as opposed to completely removing and rebuilding the roof. While the go-over is much less expensive, Robie noted that the air handlers on the roof

are also nearing the end of their useful life. He recommends the go-over, plus replacing the air handlers.

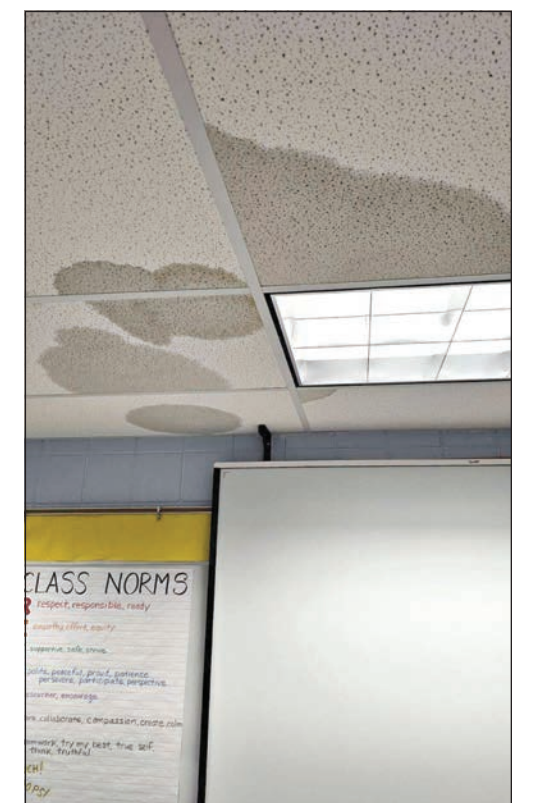
Several years ago, Gateway received a quote of \$3 million for the roof. If the waiver is approved and the towns continue making payments, they should have \$1.5 million saved by 2027.

Even if approved for this year, the waiver will need to be requested annually until the funding is spent and the Capital Stabilization Account goes back to 5% or less.

"I know towns were looking for this money to come back to them. I am very grateful for them working with us," Smidy said.



The Gateway Regional Middle High School roof will require extensive repairs in the next few years in order to protect the facilities and safety of students and staff. Barrels collect water leaking from the rood during a rainstorm.



Water damage is evident in the ceiling tiles during a rainstorm at Gateway Regional Middle High School. Submitted photos

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 Friday at NOON.**



HOUSING REHABILITATION ASSISTANCE TOWNS OF CHESTER, HUNTINGTON, MIDDLEFIELD AND RUSSELL

The towns of Chester, Huntington, Middlefield and Russell, with the assistance of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) is applying for funding to assist qualified homeowners in making necessary repairs to their homes. In order to be eligible for assistance, total household income shall not exceed current federal income guidelines based on the number of people residing in a household. (See table below).

If you need to make improvements to your roof, windows, siding, plumbing, electrical, lead paint/ asbestos removal, heating system, septic system repair/ replacement and/or other program eligible improvements, please fill out the following form and return to Joe Hagopian at the PVPC (address appears below). ALL information received is strictly confidential and will be maintained in the Springfield office of the PVPC. If you have questions, please contact PVPC Senior Planner Joe Hagopian, at (413) 781-6045.

Name: _____
 Property Address: _____
 Mailing Address/Zip: _____
 Telephone: _____
 Email: _____

For P.V.P.C. use only
 Date Received: _____
 Staff Initials: _____

Single/Multi Family (Please Circle One)

Type of improvements needed: _____

My household income is not greater than (circle one according to your household size):

1 Person	2 Person	3 Person	4 Person	5 Person	6 Person	7 Person	8 Person
\$61,350	\$70,100	\$78,850	\$87,600	\$94,650	\$101,650	\$108,650	\$115,650

POSITIVE CHANGES

The Country Journal Is Always Striving To Give The Hilltowns The Best Local News In Print & Online Every Week!

To advertise, call Wendy at 283.8393 or email welcamp@turley.com

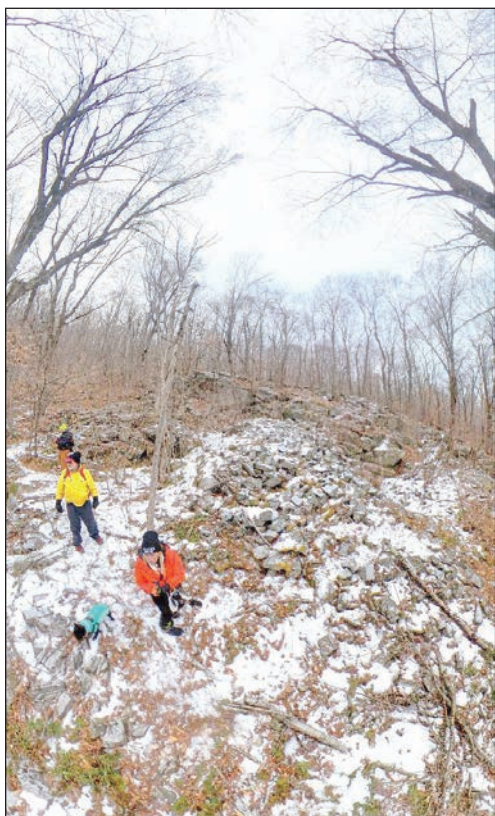
editorial, call Ellie at 283.8393 or email countryjournal@turley.com

Country Journal

24 Water Street | Palmer, MA 01069
 413-283-8393 | www.countryjournal.turley.com

HUNTINGTON

Hilltown Hikers to host group hike Feb. 22



HUNTINGTON – Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers will host a group hike to Black Panther Lost Ski Resort on Saturday, Feb. 22 at 10 a.m.

Parking will be at Knightville Dam Ranger Station, 201 Worthington Road.

Directions from Northampton take Route 66 to Route 112 Huntington, take a left on Knightville Dam Road, follow the road uphill to the Ranger station and top of Dam. From Westfield Route 20 West to Huntington Route 112, take a right on Knightville Dam Road.

Hike rating is moderate plus four miles in and back with inclines and some steep sections. Crampons and walking sticks are recommended if there is snow or ice. Hikers should be prepared for winter conditions. They should keep in mind there will most likely be snow and ice and this route is not flat.

Knightville Dam is where the largest ski resort in the Pioneer Valley once operated.

Constructed in 1937 on old Worthington Road at Burr's Maple Grove Farm by Sid and Russell Burr to be a skiing mecca for college

students with two ski jumps, a 20 acre beginners area, downhill ski races, cross country runs and slalom competitions. Silver cups were given to the winners and the area attracted expert skiers. Four tow lines brought skiers up the hill and lights were installed along the slopes to offer skiing at dusk. Busses were provided from Springfield and Westfield to the resort as well as a 300 car parking lot for day trippers.

In 1940 the Knightville Dam was built and the construction was shared with the ski resort to improve the trails by grading with the heavy equipment on site. In 1942 the Army closed Black Panther down in the name of national defense, shortly after a fence was erected to keep all away, but the Burr's filed suit and won to re-open in 1946. In December of 1950, the Burr's announced their retirement; much larger ski resorts had opened in the Berkshires increasing competition and ultimately Black Panther was lost in the woods of Huntington forever.

The group will hike rain or shine.

Registration is required. Hikers should be prepared for winter conditions; snow and ice gear is recommended.

People may register per car load by visiting <https://westernmasshilltownhikers.ticketleap.com>. Maps and bottled water will be provided. Well-behaved dogs are allowed. The event is volunteer lead. Suggested donation is \$15. More details are available by visiting www.hilltownhikers.com. People may email westernmasshilltownhikers@aol.com or call/text 413-302-0312 if they have any questions.

People who want to hike every weekend year round should consider becoming a Hilltown Hiker member. They will get access to the private Messenger Group Text with hike and event announcements that are member exclusive events. They can sign up by visiting www.HilltownHikers.com.

Tees, hoodies, hats, patches and bags will be for sale by donation at the event. Please keep these beautiful places clean and carry in and carry out.

PRINCIPAL

from page 1

Chester before Maffuccio arrived, citing problems with bullying, absent leadership, and high staff turnover. Sarah Stone, who drives her child in from Palmer said, "Vanna is the first person they see when they walk in and she walks students out at the end of the day. She is the heart of Chester Elementary."

Stone has launched an online petition in support of Maffuccio at change.org, with 131 verified signatures as of Friday, Feb. 7. Tammy Miranda of Becket, who also used school choice to bring her child to Chester, is an experienced foster parent whose kids have attended 8 different school districts in Berkshire County. She describes going on a search for the best educational option for her then first grader and finding it at Chester Elementary School under Vanna.

"To remove somebody who embodies such passion is a disservice," Miranda said. Several parents of children with significant medical needs also described the ways that Maffuccio had worked with them to ensure that their children were cared for at school. An oft-heard refrain was Maffuccio's motto, "We don't do what's easy for us, we do what's best for the students."

Testimony ranged from heartfelt and sad to extremely frustrated and angry, with accusations of a lack of transparency on the part of the Superintendent. One parent asked if the administration was fighting for Vanna, to which Forgue responded, "I truly believe that this administration is doing what is necessary to follow the process through. I do not believe that the administration is fighting against Vanna."

Massachusetts General Law (Chapter 71, Sections 41 and 42) cites specific requirements for the removal of a principal and due process for arbitration. Principals work under individual administrative contracts and do not have union protection. These procedures require that the district not speak publicly about the matter. Parents came seeking answers that the district could not give.

Parent Alicia Swendsen asked how to pursue a vote of no confidence against Superintendent Kristen Smidy. Forgue answered that it would have to go onto an upcoming school committee agenda.

To this point in the meeting, staff had echoed parent calls for Maffuccio's return, but diverged at the call for no confidence. Chester teacher Jenna Kakimoto said, "It is obvious that we all agree that Vanna is awesome and we miss her. But this is a legal situation and the administration is not allowed to speak publicly on this matter, by law." Kakimoto said she supports both Smidy and Maffuccio and is willing to fight for both of them.

Chester School Committee Representative Jeana Briggs also echoed support for Smidy. While Briggs had expressed anguish and frustration in her testimony, she

balked at a no confidence vote against Smidy. "I am appalled by this situation, but there is no way I will support a motion of no confidence against Kristen," Briggs said.

Introduction of Substitute Principal

Once everyone spoke, Forgue moved onto the agenda item announcing a Substitute Principal at Chester. Mark Fulton, who will serve in this role, addressed the assembly describing himself as having a long history in education and saying he had agreed to take the temporary post as a personal favor to Smidy, a former colleague. "All of the words you used to describe Vanna, I would use to describe Kristen," Fulton said to applause. "Don't you think it is killing her to not talk about this? She is being directed by attorneys to not talk about this. I'm like the rest of you—we're all guessing, we don't know."

Fulton said he has visited the school over the past four days and will be in the building full time beginning Monday, Feb. 10. Fulton's career had been in secondary education (upper grades), but he'd come out of retirement to serve as an Interim Principal at Littleville Elementary School a few years ago, an experience he found to his liking.

Linda Hyjek, a second grade teacher at Littleville, said she had worked for Fulton when he was there. "I want to assure you all that the kids at Littleville totally bonded with him. It was a valuable and healing time for us," Hyjek said. "I hear everything you're saying, but this can work out."

"I'll just do the best I can," Fulton said. "If something serious happens (alluding to the recent loss of heat at Chester) you will hear from me."

CES parent and former staff member, Kayla Brady, had the last comment, asking that a no confidence vote not be put on the agenda and asking that everyone respect Vanna's privacy. The meeting adjourned at 8:19 p.m. Chester Elementary School serves 114 students in grades Prekindergart through grade 5 at their building on Middlefield Road in Chester.

Before the meeting, Chairperson Jason Forgue placed handouts at the edge of the stage that outlined district policies on special school committee meetings, public comment at school committee meetings, and one titled "The People and Their School District," which declared the school committee's intent to maintain two-way communication with citizens of the community. It stated, "The public will be kept informed of the progress and problems of the school district, and citizens will be urged to bring their aspirations and feelings about their public schools to the attention of this body, which they have chosen to represent them in the management of public education."

"To remove somebody who embodies such passion is a disservice."

— Tammy Miranda

OTIS

Town Clerk announces election and town meeting information

OTIS – Town Clerk Lyn O'Brien reminds voters the Caucus takes place Tuesday, April 15; the Annual Town Meeting on Tuesday, May 20 and the Town Election on Tuesday, May 27.

Both the caucus request form and the nomination papers are available now from the Town Clerk. Candidates can run at the Caucus and fill out nomination papers or they can do one or the other. Candidates should inquire with the Town Clerk they you are interested in running by either emailing clerk@townofotis-ma.com or 413-269-0100, extension 112. The deadline is Tuesday, April 8 at 5 p.m.

The offices up for 2025 are as follows: one Assessor for three years, one Cemetery Commissioner for three years, one Finance Board Member for two years, one Finance Board Member for three years, one Library Trustee for three years, one moderator for one year, two Planning Board Members for five year terms, one School Committee Member for three years, one Select person for three years, one Tree warden for one year and one Town Clerk for three years.

The Town Clerk reminds residents to return their 2025 street listing form. Dog license renewal forms are also available.

OWNER TRYING TO FIND LOST CHAIN SAW



This lost chain saw sign was spotted on Rte. 66 junction with Route 112 in Huntington.

Turley photo by Deborah Daniels

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

George PROPANE INC.
PROPANE GAS PLUMBING • HEATING
(413) 268-8360
TOLL FREE 1-800-464-2053
Family Owned & Operated
3 Berkshire Trail West (Route 9), P.O. Box 102, Goshen, MA 01032
www.georgepropane.com

Paul's Plumbing & Heating
238-0303
PAUL GRAHAM
Mass. License 23299

AQUA PUMPS WATER SYSTEMS
Water Pumps • Sewer Pumps
Water Conditioners
46 Pitcher Street
Montgomery, MA 01085
Donald Washburn
862-3301

Kirke R. Henshaw, Inc.
Water Well Drilling, Water Pump Sales & Service
Water Testing System Evaluations
Water System Repairs HENSHAW Hydrofracture to Increase Flow
800-232-4725 • Fax 413-296-4565
Charles R. Henshaw
130 Cummington Rd., W. Chesterfield, MA • 413-296-4725

FEED • PET SUPPLIES • CLOTHING • COAL
WOOD PELLETS • WILD & CAGED BIRDSEED
POOL SUPPLIES • MOTOR OILS • FENCING
LAWN & GARDEN SUPPLIES • FERTILIZER
GATEWAY FARM & PET
Poulin Grain RED-WING SHOES Carhartt
59 RUSSELL ROAD, HUNTINGTON, MA 01050
1-413-667-2279 M-F 8am-5pm
Sat. 8am-4pm
TARA GRENIER • PAUL GRENIER

DOWN TO EARTH EXCAVATING INC
Highly Regarded Professionals: Complete Site Work, Septic Development and Repairs. Fully insured.
413-667-5269
Paul & Randy LaPointe, Owners Huntington, Mass.

Dale's Structural & Carpentry
Home Improvement • Additions • Restorations • Repairs
Post & Beam Repairs
Sagging Floors - Beams - Columns
Sill Timbers - Termite Damage
Foundation Repairs - Piers & Footings
Chimney Rebuilds
FULLY LICENSED & INSURED
Huntington, MA • 413-667-3149
dalesstructuralandcarpentry.com

ARCHITECT JEFFREY SCOTT PENN
77 Worthington Road, Huntington, MA 01050
Tel. 413-531-1868
Fax. 413-667-3082
Email: jspsed@verizon.net
new construction, renovation,
historic preservation

Contact Wendy Delcamp TO ADVERTISE AT 413-283-8393 or email: wdelcamp@turley.com

Jeff's Oil Burner Service
• Tune Ups
• Installations
• Oil Tanks
Huntington, Massachusetts
Office 413.667.0245
Cell 413.530.7037
jeffsoilburnerservice@hotmail.com

OPINION

GUEST COLUMN



Why was Social Security money moved to the General Treasury?

Dear Rusty:

Why were the Social Security funds moved from the Social Security account to the General Fund with the government?

Is it not then called a tax making it an entitlement? That then gives the government control of our retirement. Most of us feel that someone should be in charge and use the Social Security fund with investments that grow our savings.

I invested my 401,000 and savings and the original amount made me money during the Trump years and I'm now trying to catch up. I make this statement because I draw more from my investments than I receive from Social Security.

Signed: Questioning Senior Citizen

Dear Questioning Senior:

I'm afraid I must inform you that no Social Security funds have ever been moved from the Social Security account to the government's General Fund; this is a pervasive myth which we have refuted many times over the years. For information, here is one of many articles I have published on this topic, which I hope you find interesting: <https://socialsecurityreport.org/ask-rusty-about-repaying-social-security-money-taken-by-politicians/>.

Someone actually is charged with monitoring our Social Security funds, a board of Social Security Trustees consisting of the Secretaries of Treasury, Labor, and Health and Human Services, as well as the Commissioner of Social Security plus two Public Trustees. Each year the Social Security Trustees do a complete analysis of the Social Security program, especially its financial status and outlook for the future. If you have interest in the Trustee's latest annual report, here is a link to the 2024 analysis: <https://socialsecurityreport.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/tr24summary.pdf>.

What you will find in the Trustees' report is that Social Security will run out of reserved funds in about 2033, necessitating an across the board cut of about 21% for everyone, unless Congress acts soon to reform the program and restore it to fiscal solvency. The Trustees have warned Congress about this problem for many years, but Congress has yet to find the bipartisan cooperation needed to fix the problem.

Association of Mature American Citizens has steadfastly offered proposals to Congress, which would restore Social Security to solvency and will continue to do so with the new 119th Congress, which convened on Jan. 3, 2025.

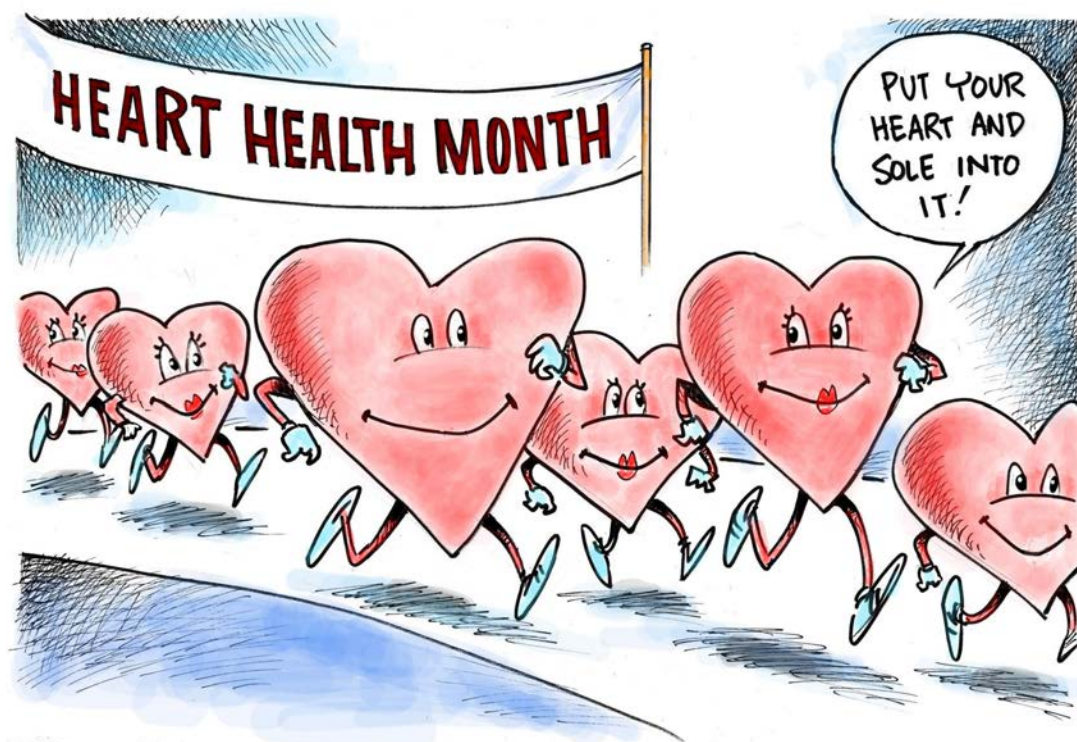
Please know that we appreciate your feedback and commend you for the wise use of your 401k investments, something that many of our members find necessary to supplement their Social Security. Remember, Social Security was never intended to provide all your retirement income, so earlier saving to supplement your retirement financial needs was a very wise move on your part.

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-advisor or email us at ssadviser@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

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.



DAVE GRANLUND © www.davegranlund.com

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Teacher remembers former student

I feel fortunate to have made it to 70, considering that I should have died on the operating table donating my kidney.

I have two surgeons to thank for my longevity, Dr. Lloyd Ratner at Columbia-Presbyterian in Manhattan, who removed my Polish/Italian kidney in 2012 and gave it to Henry, who was in end stage kidney failure and Dr. David Deaton at Baystate, who did my bypass surgery nine months later.

What brings me overwhelming sadness, however, is finding out that another one of my former students has passed. It's not supposed to happen that way. Parents aren't supposed to outlive their children, and teachers aren't supposed to outlive their students. But, over the years, I've read obituaries and have attended wakes of students who sat in my classroom back in the day.

Too many.

I attended yet another wake recently in Westfield. This one was especially tough for me. One of my favorites, Kiera Coon, passed away on the Jan. 17. This one hit me hard. Kiera was a wonderful young lady. She always had a

smile on her face and was loved by anyone and everyone who had the good fortune to know her. There wasn't one bad thing to be said about her. Kiera always aimed to please. Always...

The grief over her passing was more profound, as she is the first student who has passed since my youngest brother, Tony, passed away one day after his 64th birthday this past June.

Dealing with depression only exacerbates the grief I carry.

I had the good fortune to tutor Kiera in her home as she was convalescing from a prior medical condition some years back. It was obvious that she was part of a loving home where her every need was taken care of. I found great comfort in that.

Kiera will be fondly remembered by all who had the good fortune to know her. She will be dearly missed.

RIP, Kiera... you left an indelible mark on your Gateway family. I'm thankful for the time we had together.

Pete DelMasto
Stockbridge

GUEST COLUMN

Roses or carnations, you chose!



With St. Valentine's Day coming up, my thoughts turn to flowers. I am not a "rose girl" so to speak. It is probably because I am frugal and roses cost an arm and a leg this time of year.

Get me a carnation and I am happy. They don't bend at the neck or pick you with thorns. They even smell nice, to me the fragrance is that of cloves.

So this will be a combo column. First, it will give our rose lovers out there the best chance of keeping their admirer's big investment healthy for the longest possible time. Then, I will do the same for the humble carnation.

Perhaps you will be the lucky recipient of roses on Friday. I have a couple tricks up my sleeve to help you increase their vase-life. First, remove the roses from their box and give each one a fresh cut on a forty-five degree angle.

If you can do this under water, all the better to prevent what I call "bent head" or "limp neck" syndrome- an air bubble clogging the stem.

You should also remove any foliage that will be underwater - it will rot and make the water stinky and full of bacteria. Leaves on the top third of the stem can remain as long as they look pretty;

unbeknownst to me, these will continue to photosynthesize, making food to help the rose color up to its full potential.

We all have had a few "bent heads" or "limp necks" in our day - a shame, considering how expensive roses are, especially when purchased on a holiday. If you catch this situation early there is a way to remedy it: recut the stem of the rose or roses in question and soak them horizontally, under water for a half-hour or so.

This technique is contrary to what one might think is good for a many-petaled flower. I would argue that water trapped within the petals would breed fungi and shorten vase-life, but I guess if the rose is doomed to the fate of a bent head, it's worth a shot. Regular folks have tried it in the bathtub and have been successful.

How about those carnations? They aren't as fussy as their more expensive counterparts, but here are a few helpful hints. Recut their stems to just above a node (the bump where leaves come from) and place in floral preservative.

If you don't have floral preservative, you can make your own. Here is a recipe that, just like the professional blends, contain the three necessary components for fresh flower health and longevity: carbohydrates, a biocide and pH adjuster.

1t sugar
1t bleach
2t lemon or lime juice (strained)
1 quart water

Alternate version:
1-12 ounce can decaf lemon/lime soda
3 cans water
1T bleach
Mix and stir to flatten

GARDEN, page 6

Election letters to the editor welcome

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

following Thursday'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 newspa-

per 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.

Country Journal TEAM



EDITOR
Ellenor Downer
countryjournal@turley.com



ADVERTISING SALES
Wendy Delcamp
wdelcamp@turley.com

The Country Journal (USPS 483-550) is published every Thursday by Turley Publications, Inc., 24 Water St., Palmer, Mass. 01069. Telephone (413) 283-8393, Fax (413) 289-1977. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Turley Publications, Inc., 24 Water St., Palmer, Mass. 01069.



@ Country Journal



countryjournal.turley.com

PATRICK H. TURLEY
CEO

KEITH TURLEY
President

DEANNA SLOAT
Graphics Manager



www.turley.com

Turley Publications, Inc. cannot assume liability for the loss of photographs or other materials submitted for publication. Materials will not be returned except upon specific request when submitted.

ISSN NO. 0747-2471

EDITORIAL POLICY

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

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



PHONE
413.283.8393
Fax: 413.283.7017
Subscriptions: 413.283.8393

EMAIL
Advertising Sales
Wendy Delcamp
wdelcamp@turley.com

Editor
Ellenor Downer
countryjournal@turley.com

Subscriptions
www.turley.com

\$31 per year pre-paid
(\$36 out of state)
Newsstand: \$.75 per copy

WEB
www.countryjournal.turley.com

@ Country Journal

The Country Journal is published by Turley Publications, Inc. • www.turley.com

OPINION

HILLTOWN HISTORY

Oatmeal has long history as breakfast food

By Deborah Daniels
Guest Columnist

Are we getting in touch with our New England roots: out shoveling snow and clearing ice off cars and pathways?

All this cold activity calls for a “stick to your ribs” breakfast like oatmeal right? How about some 411 on oatmeal, still powering you through your day just the way your grandmother intended?

You can't have a better start to your day than eating a bowl of oatmeal. It is low in calories, composed of 84% water, 12% carbohydrate and is gluten free, 2% protein and 1.5% fat. It is a good source of selenium, phosphorus and manganese

It also contains an antioxidant, avenanthramides that dilates your blood vessels which in turn reduces your blood pressure. Oatmeal also contains the soluble fiber, beta glucan which slows digestion and helps to lower your blood sugar. You feel satisfyingly full, making it easy to just say “No” to all those enticing doughnuts and muffins. So start your day with some oatmeal.

Oats are a member of the grass family. The plants need cold weather to grow so today it is grown in Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin. But it was grown in Massachusetts by colonists as early as the 1700s. It was an easy crop to grow. Oats are ready to harvest when the green oat plant turns golden yellow.

Farmers pinched a seed head to see if it was soft and doughy signaling it was ready for harvest and not oozing a milky white liquid meaning it was unripe. The oats were cut down with a scythe and tied into a bundle and left to dry. Next it was threshed, where the seed heads were beaten to remove the chaff or husk leaving only the seeds with hulls on them behind.

The seeds or oat groats in farming lingo were separated from the hulls in a process called winnowing. Today fans are used to blow away the chaff and hulls leaving behind just the seeds or groats. Oat seeds would go bad in 4-5 days unless they were stabilized by heating them in a kiln. The oil in the grain would go rancid if it was not cooked in the kiln. I suspect that we have seen the remains of these kilns on hikes with the Hilltown Hikers. They were a mystery to the hikers because they only associated kilns with brick making and not grain toasting. The seeds or groats that came out of

the kiln looked like plump, tan cooked rice. It could now be stored for later use.

We need an oat primer before proceeding further into the intricacies of making oatmeal porridge. Oat groats are dehulled seeds that are the main ingredient in oatmeal. Steel cut oats are oat seeds sliced by sharp steel blades. These are often referred to as Irish oatmeal.

Rolled oats are oat seeds that are steamed and then flattened between heavy steel rollers. Flattening them reduces the cooking time needed to make oatmeal cereal. Oat flour is made from seeds that have been ground into a fine powder and used in baking. The less the oat groats are processed the more nutritional value they retain.

Oats were originally grown as livestock feed in the United States. However, it must be pointed out that it had been eaten by peasants in ancient Rome and in Greece for thousands of years. It wasn't until 1888 that seven major oat millers united to form the American Cereal Company, which later became the Quaker Oats Company in Ohio.

Henry Seymour and William Heston took over the mills and produced trial size boxes of Quaker Oats breakfast cereal in 1890. They knew Quakers, formerly known as the Religious Society of Friends, had a reputation for honesty and integrity so even though they were not Quakers they chose the image of a 17th century Quaker man holding a scroll that bore the word “pure” on it to represent their oatmeal cereal. It worked.

They introduced quick oats in 1922, instant oats in 1966 followed by the first flavored oatmeal, maple and brown sugar in 1970. Porridge made from cornmeal or oats had been used for breakfasts since the 1700s but Quaker Oats made oatmeal a commercial success.

Not to confuse anyone, but there was gruel which was oatmeal served with more water than cereal and served mainly in prisons and poorhouses. This may have de-glamorized the notion of oatmeal as a popular breakfast food in America. And then there is muesli a product of Swiss origin. It is oats soaked overnight in water and mixed with fruit, seeds and nuts and served with milk or cream. The legend is that the Swiss army added milk powder to their muesli so that when they were out in the mountains, they needed only to melt snow and add it to their muesli for a meal of champions.

Granola was yet another breakfast food,



This shows oat seeds or groats, steel cut oats and rolled oats.

created by an American doctor, James Caleb Jackson in 1863 who mixed cereals of oats, nuts, dried fruit and seeds with oil and sugar, formed it into clusters and baked it.

A word about instant oatmeal, read the label because many of these have added sugar and flavorings that are not as healthy a choice as the coarser oatmeal. FYI it is rolled oats that are used in oatmeal cookies and in desserts such as apple crisp. Adding oatmeal to meatloaf gives it a nutritional boost.

And it would be remiss not to mention Scottish black pudding made of oatmeal mixed with sheep's blood, pork fat and salt and pepper as well as haggis, which is sheep organs mixed with oatmeal and spices, encased in a sheep's stomach and boiled. Oh no oatmeal is not limit-



This photo shows an oat plant with stalk and husk evident. Submitted photo

ed to breakfast.

But you can celebrate your heart with a bowl of oatmeal on Valentine's Day.

Here is a recipe for granola from the author of this column.

Darn Good Granola

5 cups oatmeal Quaker Oat 1 minute cooking variety (use entire 18 ounce drum)
1/3 cup maple syrup
1/2 cup canola oil
1/3 cup brown sugar
4 tablespoons vanilla
1 tablespoon salt – optional
1 cup chopped almonds or to taste
1 cup raisins – set aside to added after mix is baked

Mix in syrup, oil, brown sugar, vanilla, salt. Add oats and stir until oats are coated. Press into wax paper covered baking pan.

Bake for 40 minutes at 325 degree – should be crispy. Add raisins and mix. Serve with milk, yogurt or ice cream.



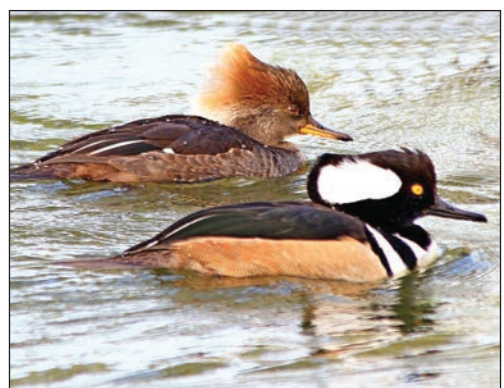
My daughter saw a pair of hooded mergansers on the Ware River on two different occasions.

She said, “They were riding those rapids to the bridge and looked like they were having a blast. Then they just hung out under the bridge.”

The hooded merganser is the smallest of the mergansers at 18 inches long. It has a short thin bill and crested head. The male has a black head, white fan shaped patch within the crest, which is only visible when the crest is raised. The flanks are brown and the back black. It also has black vertical lines on its white breast. The female is plain brown with a darker back and red brown crest. The immature female looks like the adult female and the immature male similar to the female, but they some white in the crest.

Hooded mergansers dive underwater and eat small fish, frogs, crustaceans, mollusks and aquatic insects. Courtship begins in mid winter. Females do head bobbing and pumping. Most male displays involve crest raising. The male makes a frog like note and the female makes a hoarse “gak.”

The female lays six to eight white eggs in a nest of grasses and down placed in a tree cavity or nest box. Mergansers summer on wooded rivers and lakes and winters on similar locations as well as along the coast.



Male and female hooded merganser

Ludlow birds

On Saturday, Jan. 25 a Ludlow resident emailed about the birds in her backyard. She said, “The usual visitors are purple finches, white-throated sparrows, juncos, titmice, nut-

hatches, bluejays, mourning doves, cardinals and red bellied woodpeckers. Yesterday Jan. 24, we had a cowbird at the feeder. We haven't had any visit us in the five years we've fed the birds in winter. Just wondering if others in the area have seen a cowbird this early.”

Bluebirds and northern flicker

I received an email on Sunday, Jan 26 from a North Brookfield resident, She said, “I live in North Brookfield, down on Lake Lashaway. I had five blue birds and a northern flicker on my feeders this morning along with the usual birds. Early Spring?”



Northern flicker

Brimfield birds

I received an email from a Brimfield resident on Jan. 21. He said, “Today in the yard all the usual birds were about however the junco flock has increased to about 65 birds. Other not so commonly seen birds were a Carolina wren, and a white-throated and a tree sparrows.”

In another email he wrote, “Yes the blue jays sure do like the peanuts. The titmice also get their

share. And once in awhile a red-bellied woodpecker with show up and take a peanut. When I walk around the yard there are a couple of places under a tree or shrub where the ground is littered with empty peanut shells.”

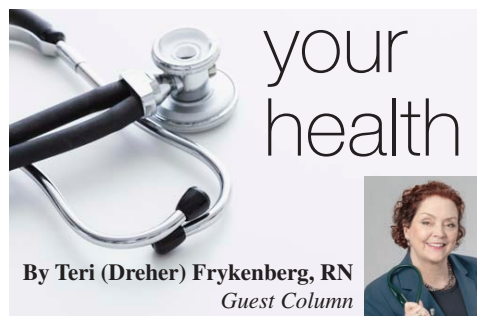
Birds in my yard

I continue to have the usual birds at my feeders and suet feeder such as black capped chickadees, titmice, white breasted nuthatches, downy woodpeckers, mourning doves and blue jays. Now that it is February, I expect to see male red-winged blackbirds.

I received a state of the art bird feeder equipped with a camera for my birthday. I have not set it up yet. I will take it down once bears come out of hibernation because I would not want it destroyed.

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

Love a good nap? So does your brain, maybe



The headlines were all over the internet a couple of months ago: Napping is good for brain health. But, as with all health studies, you have to read the fine print.

Habitual napping was associated with larger total brain volume, which is in turn associated with a lower risk of dementia and other diseases, according to researchers from University College London (UCL) and the University of the Republic of Uruguay. The researchers estimated the difference in brain volume between nappers and non-nappers was equivalent to 2.5 to 6.5 years of aging.

As I've noted before, though, association is not causation. Is brain volume larger because of napping, or could there be other factors at play – heredity or physical activity, for instance. The study only compared people who are genetically predisposed to nap and those who aren't – not those who elect not to nap. Also, the napping behaviors studied were self-reported by participants, which is not exactly the gold standard for research.

Even with all of those caveats, I agree with the researchers that there's nothing wrong with a brief daytime nap. By brief I mean 30 minutes or so -- you don't want it to interfere with the next night's sleep. Afternoons are a good time for napping because that's when we tend to experience a dip in energy levels.

Nappers tend to feel more alert and clear-headed after a snooze, and there's a movement afoot to permit naps on the job, particularly for office workers. Naps are especially helpful for people who don't work regular schedules or who are doing shift work. Aging bladders can wake us up during the night, too. If you don't fall back asleep right away, a nap the next day might be just the thing.

But if you're not regularly getting seven to nine hours of sound sleep a night, I don't recommend long daytime naps to make up the difference. First, you're more likely to wake up groggy after an extended nap because your brain is trying to enter the deep sleep phase. There's evidence that

people make more mistakes after a long daytime nap.

Second, a nap doesn't give you the benefit of the restorative nature of sleep – when your eyes and muscles fully relax and your body is repairing and rebuilding bone and muscle, consolidating memories and shoring up the immune system.

Everyone has a bad night once in a while. For many consecutive nights of disrupted sleep and days filled with naps, though, consult your doctor. You might need a sleep study to determine whether something like sleep apnea could be the cause.

Napping is associated with other issues as well. Elderly adults who napped at least once a day or more than an hour a day were 40 percent more likely to develop Alzheimer's than those who did not nap daily or napped less than an hour a day, according to a study published in Alzheimer's and Dementia: The Journal of the Alzheimer's Association, in March 2022. Also last year, a study found that people who often nap have a greater chance of developing high blood pressure and having a stroke, according to CNN.

And then there are those who can't nap.

Just as there appears to be a genetic disposition toward napping, there also appear to be people for whom napping is physiologically difficult, if not impossible. Jeremy Derbyshire, writing in the Financial Times, is one of those. His attempts at napping usually end in frustration, he says, “after 10 minutes or so lying down rigidly and willing myself, unsuccessfully, into unconsciousness.”

Maybe we need to expand the definition of “nap.” Let's consider a nap everything from closing your eyes for 10 minutes to just letting your mind wander for a while.

No pressure here!
Even one of the authors of the UCL study is not a big fan of napping. “Honestly,” she told the BBC, “I would rather spend 30 minutes exercising than napping.”

So, nap if you can. But if you're not cut out for napping, don't lose sleep over it. A brisk walk might be just as beneficial.

Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, a registered nurse and board-certified patient advocate, is the founder of Northshore Patient Advocates LLC (NShore). She is also founder and CEO of Nurse Advocate Entrepreneur, which trains medical professionals to become successful private patient advocates. Teri offers a free phone consultation to newspaper readers as well as to nurses interested in becoming advocates. Reach her at Teri@NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com.

SCHOOLS & YOUTH

Local elementary schools win literacy launch grant

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

Governor Maura Healey has announced that the Gateway Regional and Farmington River School Districts won a Partnership for Reading Success in Massachusetts grant funded through Literacy Launch.

One of Healey's budget priorities from last year, Literacy Launch promotes reading success from age 3 through grade 3 to make sure Massachusetts schools, educators and students have access to high-quality, evidence-based reading instruction through literacy materials, technical support, coaching and professional development.

The Gateway/Farmington River Regional

grant was one of 15 grants awarded statewide, and the only grant awarded to rural schools.

"I'm so thrilled that Gateway will have the opportunity to work in partnership with Farmington River as a first round recipient of the Partnership for Reading Success in Massachusetts or PRISM grant," Superintendent Kristen Smidy said. "Early literacy has been a priority for us to get our earliest learners set up for success, and this grant will allow our two small, rural districts to work together to build skills and capacity to benefit our students."

Gateway's Curriculum Director Deanna LeBlanc wrote the proposal and won \$15,000 for the partnership. According to Smidy, the grant required the participation of at least three

elementary schools. Gateway Regional School District has two elementary schools, Littleville and Chester, but was able to form a consortium to apply with Farmington River Elementary School.

"This is something that our legislators always push when we are advocating for rural school aid, so I'm happy this grant was supported with our joint application," Smidy said. Gateway will serve as the lead district and fiscal agent for the grant. Like Chester Elementary School, Farmington River only has one classroom per grade and having the opportunity to work with teachers from all three schools will lead to robust discussions and shared experiences, Smidy said.

This is a planning year so funds will be

used to organize and evaluate early literacy needs, along with professional development. Next year, the partnership expects to get significantly more money to fund a staff member at each school to support early literacy along with professional development and screeners, according to Smidy.

"It's particularly exciting that the PRISM grant is meant to be a multi-year grant and will fund staff positions in all of the elementary schools in our two districts to focus on reading instruction and materials for our early learners – with many other state grants going away and rural aid not being fully funded, the resources that the PRISM grant will fund can fulfill a service that our students need to succeed," Smidy said.

COLLEGE NOTES

Colleges and universities announce President's and Dean's lists

PRESIDENT'S LIST
University of Hartford

West Hartford, Connecticut

Nick Brisson of Williamsburg, Sydney Kleppinger of Easthampton and Marina Slivca of Westfield

DEAN'S LIST
Clark University

Worcester

Kelly E. Burns of Westfield, first honors; Tanya J. Sheinkman of Becket, first honors; Hannah L. Quesenberry of Easthampton, second honors and Samantha G. Adamtsev of Westfield, second honors

College of Our Lady of the Elms
Chicopee

Kaylie Novak of Westhampton
Emma Petrowicz of Easthampton
Moirean Coffey of Westfield
Angelina Rodriguez of Westfield
Emma Bialas of Montgomery
Rebecca Boszko of Huntington
Hadleigh Rogalski of Easthampton
Christina Rodriguez of Westfield
Alyssa Allen of Westfield
Lauren Darwick of Westfield
Nathalia Carando of Westfield
Ashmita Sarki of Westfield

Zoe O'Neill-Garvey of Easthampton
Laura McDermott of Easthampton
Berta Warner of Huntington
Alicia Potter of Huntington
Carson Brunt of Westfield
Nelly Mokan of Westfield
Cassidy Ryan of Westfield
Leah Martin of Williamsburg
Fiona Reynolds-Cornell of Huntington
Caitlynn Therrien of Easthampton
Avery Jansen of Easthampton
Theanna Hernandez-Tiedemann of Easthampton

Emily Kostek of Easthampton
Gabriel Colenback of Easthampton

Community College of Vermont

Montpelier, Vermont

Alexandra Tinari of Plainfield

University of Albany

Albany, New York

Fiona Bowler of Huntington, emergency preparedness, homeland security and cybersecurity major and Owen Ouimet of Westfield, business administration major

University of Hartford

West Hartford, Connecticut

Mackenzie Kuzon-Burnette of Westfield

OPINION

GARDEN

from page 4

Each of these preservatives should be stored in the refrigerator with contents labeled.

Sometimes, carnations come very tightly budded. If you want them to open quickly, without waiting days, you can up the sugar content in the preservative to force bloom.

Do expect that you won't get to enjoy them as long in the vase if you do this, though, since their energy will be spent.

Cut flowers are sensitive to ethylene gas, and carnations are especially sensitive. Rotting foliage, ripening fruit, cigarette smoke and exhaust all release ethylene gas, which acts like a hormone that triggers maturation and death. For that reason we avoid storing flowers in the household fridge.

I had my own firsthand experience. I had arrangements to make at work, but

had jury duty the day they were needed. I made them a day early and cleared out one of the coolers. Wouldn't you know it that someone put an apple inside without my knowing. Sure enough everything was ruined.

Whether you are a rose lover or a carnation lover, or enjoy any flower in between, I hope that you either treat yourself, or are treated by someone else, either on St. Valentine's Day or sometime soon!

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.



Artist Sheryl Anaya sets one of the dining tables in her exhibit "Absurd Appetites." Submitted photo

HCC art gallery exhibits 'Absurd Appetites'

HOLYOKE – A woman spreads slices of salami on a baguette while taking a bath.

Eggs on beds of bread lay nestled among blankets of Swiss cheese and lettuce. Pears wear aprons. Hot dog ends appear inside gelatin cakes. Men's work shirts have been stitched into quilted table linens.

These pieces and more comprise the world of Texas artist Sheryl Anaya's "Absurd Appetites (Tables for Two)," now on display in the Taber Art Gallery at Holyoke Community College.

The exhibit opened Tuesday, Jan. 21, with the start of the spring semester at HCC and will continue through Thursday, March 13.

"Absurd Appetites distorts the norms of a typical dining experience," Anaya says in her artist's statement. "Considering the deconstruction and consumption of the body, absurd actions surprise and set the tone for the examination of our roles within gendered labor, sexuality, and domestic space. Humor tempers the seriousness of these topics to avoid confrontation at the dinner table."

Throughout the gallery there are tables set for two diners. Each includes a stack of sandwich bread inside which there are mini projectors that display videos on the walls.

"The videos are all of me making sandwiches in various stages of undress, doing

things you wouldn't normally be doing in those settings," said Anaya.

"Absurd Appetites" continues a theme Anaya began with her master's thesis exhibition that centered around the third century story of St. Agatha, the patron saint of bakers and breast cancer patients and a Christian martyr who was imprisoned, tortured, and mutilated by a Roman governor.

"My original piece was a 20-by-8-foot table, she said. "Absurd Appetites turns that into a more intimate experience, and really leans into the absurdity of some of the food items."

Anaya is a queer Puerto Rican artist and educator based in Fort Worth, Texas. She received a master of fine arts in studio art with an emphasis in sculpture from Texas Christian University in 2023 and received her bachelor of fine arts from Texas Woman's University in 2013. Her work examines identity and empathy through the universality of the human experience, intimate relationships and nostalgia, whether humorous or gut-wrenching.

The Taber Art Gallery, located off the lobby of the HCC Library on the second floor of the HCC Donahue Building, is free and open to the public Monday through Thursday from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. during regular school sessions.

WILLIAMSTOWN

Clark Art Institute holds sensing nature program

WILLIAMSTOWN – The Clark Art Institute, 225 South St., continues its seasonal program series, Sensing Nature: From the Outside In, on Sunday, Feb. 16 at 2 p.m.

A Clark educator leads a slow engagement with nature and art focused on

enhancing wellbeing and encouraging visitors to connect with the landscapes on the Clark's campus and in the galleries. The event begins outdoors with a short, mindful walk in the woods designed to engage the senses with the natural environment; a contemplative art-looking experience in the

galleries follows. Participants meet in the Clark Center admissions lobby.

Advance registration is required for this free program recommended for adult audiences. To register, they should email education@clarkart.edu.

It will be held rain or shine; extreme

weather cancels the event.

For more information, people may visit clarkart.edu/events. Admission to the Clark is free now through March 2025. The next Sensing Nature program is offered on Sunday, May 18 at 2 p.m. beginning in the Clark Center admissions lobby.

Gallery tours offered for parents and pre-toddlers

WILLIAMSTOWN – On Saturday, March 1 at 10:15 a.m., the Clark Art Institute, 225 South St., hosts the next in its series of free tours of its permanent collection galleries designed specifically to meet the interests of new parents/caregivers and their infants.

Participants should meet at the Clark's main admissions desk. The program is specially designed to provide new parents and caregivers with a stress-free experience that offers chances to socialize with others who

are caring for young infants. The guided gallery tour offers an informal visit to the Clark's permanent collection free from any concerns about short attention spans or fussy babies. Works by a variety of artists are featured during the casual tour of the collection. This program is best suited for adults with pre-toddlers. Strollers and front-carrying baby carriers are welcome.

For more information, people may visit clarkart.edu/events. For accessibility questions, they may call 413-458-0524.

Clark screens 'Raging Bull'

WILLIAMSTOWN – On Thursday, Feb. 27 at 6 p.m., the Clark Art Institute, 225 South St., screens the final installment in its free Hollywood Auteurs film series, "Raging Bull" (1980) in the Manton Research Center auditorium.

Presented in partnership with Images Cinema, this series captures the explosion of creativity, critical acclaim and box office success that Hollywood directors found after the fall of the studio system.

Robert De Niro pours his blood, sweat, and brute physicality into the Oscar-winning

role of Jake La Motta, the rising middle-weight boxer from the Bronx whose furious ambition propels him to success within the ring but whose unbridled paranoia and jealousy tatter his relationships with everyone in his orbit, including his brother and manager (Joe Pesci) and his gorgeous, streetwise wife (Cathy Moriarty). Run time is 2 hours, 9 minutes.

Accessible seats are available; for information by calling 413 458 0524. For more information, people may visit clarkart.edu/events.

WORTHINGTON

Worthington Fire and Rescue receives grant

WORTHINGTON – The Worthington Fire and Rescue Department received the award of a grant of \$10,467.94.

On behalf of the Healey-Driscoll administration and the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security The Worthington Fire and Rescue department announces the Department of Fire Services grant awards for the FY25 Firefighter Safety Equipment Grant program. This program provides reimbursement to fire departments for the purchase of essential firefighter turnout gear, hoses, nozzles, communications equipment, hand tools and more.

A total of 273 local fire departments will share in more than \$4.5 million in funding, with awards ranging from \$4,502.88 to \$50,000.00. Over 100 types of equipment were eligible for reimbursement, with scoring focused on those items that help depart-

ments meet current National Fire Protection Association and Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards.

This grant will enable the Worthington Fire and Rescue to purchase two new sets of structural firefighter Personal Protective Equipment, which is two sets of helmets, coats, pants, boots, hood and gloves compliant to current NFPA standards.

This will be for two newest Fire Department members, Hayden Cleveland and Evan Graham, who joined in the last year and have recently completed the Hampshire County Basic 6 FF course. Congratulations to them as well!

Nancy Brown, the Fire Department grant writer, also contributed significantly to working the grant process, grant application and quotes, communicating with State grant officials and now helping to implement.

CHESTERFIELD

Church holds pie contest

CHESTERFIELD – The Chesterfield Church at 404 Main Road, will hold their annual pie contest on Sunday, Feb. 16.

The contest follows the annual meeting and pot luck lunch and should start around 12:45 p.m. To enter the contest, participants should bake two identical pies and bring to the church before 10:30 a.m. or after 12:30 p.m. They should make sure their name is on the bottom of their pie pan.

To vote, people bring money. People follow the time honored tradition of voting with dollars. They sample all the pies, put their money in the container in front of the pies they like. The money is counted to determine the winners. The uncut pies are auctioned. Any kind of pie may be baked. If the baker thinks it's a pie, it's a pie. People are welcome to join this fun event.



PITTSFIELD

1Berkshire lists newly elected Board Members and Officers

PITTSFIELD – 1Berkshire announces their 2025 slate of newly reelected board members and officers, as well as the addition of new board members.

These individuals will each help support the work of 1Berkshire as the marketing and economic development organization for the region. All these officers and board members were voted in and welcomed at 1Berkshire's Annual Meeting on Dec. 12, 2024.

"I am delighted to welcome such a strong group of new and returning board members and I'm also very pleased that Lori Gazzillo Kiely will continue to lead the board as our

board chair for 2025," said Jonathan Butler, President and CEO of 1Berkshire. "The Board's extensive knowledge and leadership experience will add tremendous value to the organization, and I am excited about the path ahead. I look forward to working with each of them in the coming year."

Officers are: Chair Lori Gazzillo Kiely - Sr. VP and Director of Berkshire Bank Foundation; President Jonathan Butler - President and CEO of 1Berkshire; Vice Chair Colleen Taylor - Partner, Bay State Hospitality Group;

Vice Chair Peter Stasiowski - Director of

Communications, Interprint, Inc.; Treasurer Margaret Keller - Executive Director, Community Access to the Arts and

Clerk Jesse Cook-Dubin - Partner, Cohen Kinne Valicenti & Cook

New Board of Directors Members are Jesse Cook-Dubin, Partner, Cohen Kinne Valicenti & Cook; Ellen Kennedy, President Berkshire Community College; Harry Monti, PresidentBerkshire Life Insurance Company (Guardian);

Yina Moore, Founder and Artistic Director, Adams Theater LLC and

Gina Puc, Special Assistant to the

President Williams College

1Berkshire is a county-wide marketing and economic development organization that works to simultaneously preserve, position, and promote Berkshire County's profound sense of place. Its mission is to advance Berkshire County's economy by advocating for the business community and attracting visitors. Powered by membership, 1Berkshire provides programs that connect businesses with resources and potential customers, as well as develop future leaders and support entrepreneurs. For more information, people may visit 1Berkshire.com.

PLAINFIELD

Director of Operations appointed

PITTSFIELD – KB Accounting announces the appointment of Timothy "Tim" Brelsford as the new Director of Operations.

With an extensive background in financial management and operational strategy, Brelsford is set to play a pivotal role in driving the company's growth and innovation in the accounting industry.

"As we continue to expand our services and enhance our operational efficiency, the addition of Tim to our leadership team is a significant milestone for KB Accounting," said Katie Brelsford,

CEO of KB Accounting. "His proven track record in operational excellence and strategic planning will undoubtedly strengthen our ability to deliver exceptional value to our clients."

Tim Brelsford brings over 30 years of experience in the human services and operations sectors. His expertise in streamlining processes and implementing forward-thinking solutions aligns perfectly with KB

Accounting's commitment to excellence and client satisfaction. In his new role, Brelsford will oversee daily operational activities, spearhead process improvement initiatives, and collaborate with other department heads to ensure the company continues to meet the evolving needs of its diverse clientele.

"I am honored to join KB Accounting at such an exciting time in the company's evolution," said Timothy Brelsford. "I look forward to leveraging my experience to optimize our operations and contribute to the long-term success of the organization, while upholding our commitment to integrity and excellence."

KB Accounting has established itself as a trusted partner in the bookkeeping industry, known for its personalized service and innovative solutions tailored to meet the unique needs of businesses, for-profit and not-for-profit alike. The appointment of Brelsford underscores the company's ongoing dedication to operational excellence and strategic growth.

CUMMINGTON

Contra Dance to be held March 29

CUMMINGTON – A Community Contra Dance will take place in the Cummington Community House, 33 Main St., on Saturday, March 29 from 7-9 p.m.

All are welcome to attend. Admission is free. Donations are accepted, but are optional.

Contra Dance is fun and appropriate for all ages. No special skills or dance experi-

ence is necessary. Caller is Steve Howland. George Wilson, fiddle; Annika Amstutz, fiddle; Becky Hollingsworth, piano and friends will provide music.

This event is supported by grants from the Goshen and Worthington Cultural Councils, local agencies which are supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

WESTFIELD

Athenaeum hosts Shawn Farley

WESTFIELD – The Westfield Athenaeum, 6 Elm St., announces the next exhibit, the art of Shawn Farley, one of the most important artists working in Western Massachusetts today.

The show opened on Tuesday, Jan. 14 and will remain on display until Saturday, March 1. The event is free and open to the public.

Shawn Farley earned her Bachelors in Fine Arts at the University of Nebraska with a double major in dance and sculpture. Farley went on to obtain her Masters in Arts Administration from the University of Iowa. After moving to Massachusetts in 1984, she became active in artmaking while continuing to study the Surrealists, Constructivists, Suprematists and the Russian Avant-garde.

Her artmaking has involved gathering found objects from parking lots, streets, nature, flea markets and tag sales, and has evolved from assemblage work with little painting to figurative sculptures fully painted. As an older artist, with the freedom to work full-time on her artwork, she feels she has come into her "creative time" and finds age means nothing.

In this current exhibit Farley employs foundry molds, discarded hardware and

other found objects as the building blocks for sculptures. Foundry molds are wooden forms, carved out or built up to create negative space, which in turn is used to make the inverse form or shape to be used for the casting of metal. The molds were primarily used during the last two centuries to create everything from parts for the Hoover Dam to sewing machines and automotive parts. Sometimes these works come together by intention, but more often than not, by chance placement of objects. I find these objects in the streets, but also from people who rescue them from the trash or abandoned factory buildings.

Influenced by the early 20th century art movements known as Suprematism, Constructivism, and Surrealism, her process employs automatism, allowing her to be guided by subconscious associations between fundamental forms and colors. The composition comes first, but with constant editing, a theme emerges. It might be women's rights, climate change, or more personal themes such as aging, spirituality, or dreams. By embracing chance, welcoming play, and trusting her instincts, these compositions inevitably take on human qualities.

EASTHAMPTON

bankESB promotes Gerardo Sanchez

EASTHAMPTON – bankESB recently promoted Gerardo Sanchez to digital banking product officer, based at its 241 Northampton St., Easthampton office.

Sanchez of Holyoke, has 26 years of banking experience. He joined bankESB in 2021 as an electronic banking systems manager. Previously, he was the financial center operations manager at Bank of America and before that, eBanking manager at



Gerardo Sanchez

Florence Bank. In this new role, he will focus on the bank's digital banking roadmap, initiatives and upgrades.

Sanchez earned an associate degree in business studies from Holyoke Community College and a bachelor's degree in both business management and human resources from Bridgewater State University. He also earned a certificate from the Mass Bankers Association's New England School for Financial Studies.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Senior Center Crawspace Structural Repairs and Renovations Invitation to Bid

The Town of Middlefield is accepting Bids from state certified general contractors to make repairs and renovations to the crawspace area in the Town Senior Center located at 169 Skyline Trail in Middlefield, MA 01243. Work will include selective removal of existing debris, stones, rocks and insulation in the building crawspace, repairs to beams, floor joists, and related work. Bid documents may be requested online at middlefield.assistant@gmail.com. Bids can also be picked up at the Select Board

Office from the Middlefield Administrative Assistant on Mondays from 9:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. and Fridays from 9:00A.M. to 11:00AM. The Select Board Office is located in the Town Hall 188 Skyline Trail Middlefield MA 01243. There is no cost for Bid Documents. A Pre-bid Site Visit will be held for all interest ed parties on February 12, 2025, at 10:00 A.M. at the front entrance to the Senior Center, 169 Skyline Trail Middlefield, MA 01243. **The Bid deadline is March 3, 2025, at 2:00P.M.** The project will start immediately after award (approximately March 17, 2025) and shall be completed no later than November

21, 2025. Note: Massachusetts Prevailing Rates are required to be paid on this project. Questions can be directed to Curt Robie, Member, Select Board by calling 413-623-2079, 413-374-2082, or by email: middlefield.CDR@gmailcom 02/06, 02/13/2025

Public Notice
The Chester Water Commission will hold a Public Hearing on March 11, 2025 at Chester Town Hall, 15 Middlefield St., Chester, MA at 6:30 p.m.,

for discussion of a proposed FY'26 Water Rate increase 02/13/2025

NOTICE

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.

Public Notice CHANGES

Deadline has changed to **FRIDAY at 3 p.m.**



REGION

Fire and ice festival plus luminaria takes place Feb. 22

AMHERST – The Amherst Business Improvement District in collaboration with Amherst Recreation is excited to announce the Fifth Annual Fire and Ice Festival plus luminaria, scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 22 from 3-6 p.m. on the Amherst Common. This event marks the culmination of Amherst's week-long WinterFest and has become a highlight of the winter season, attracting over 2,000 attendees each year.

"The Fire and Ice Festival plus luminaria is a cherished tradition that brings the community of local families and residents, students and seniors together to celebrate the beauty and excitement of the winter season," said Sarah Barr of Amherst College, which

presents the event. "We invite everyone to join us for an afternoon filled with art, performances, and delicious treats, all while supporting our local businesses."

Attendees can look forward to a variety of engaging activities, including: Hot Cocoa, S'mores and Fire Pits: Warm up with complimentary hot cocoa and roast s'mores over open fire pits. Ice Sculptures: Marvel at ten intricate ice sculptures displayed throughout the Amherst Common, by Joe Almeida

Winter Tie-Dye Crafting: Participate in creative winter-themed tie-dye projects with Amherst Recreation. Fire Arts Performance: Enjoy a captivating fire juggling performance by Matica Arts.

Metal Sculptures Demonstration: Witness live metal sculpting by local artist and Hampshire College alum Kamil Peters. Wood Carving Demonstration: Observe Amherst resident Cody Stosz of Kodiak Carving showcase his wood carving skills. Special Menu Items: Savor delicious food and cocktail specials from the Inn on Boltwood.

Additionally, the Amherst Fire Department will be present with their fire truck, offering fire safety information and an opportunity to meet Sparky the Fire Pup.

"This festival not only celebrates the winter season but also highlights the vibrant community spirit of Amherst," said John

Page, Executive Director of the Amherst BID. "We encourage everyone to explore downtown Amherst's unique shops and restaurants before and after the event."

The Fire and Ice Festival plus Luminaria is organized by Amherst Recreation and the Amherst Business Improvement District made possible by the generosity of many local businesses and community partners including presenting sponsor Amherst College, Summerlin Floors, Encharter Insurance, Amherst Innovative Living and more. For more information and updates, people may visit amherstdowntown.com and follow us on social media @amherstdowntown.

NAMI to hold family to family education program

HOLYOKE – National Alliance on Mental Illness NAMI Western Massachusetts offers their Family-to-Family Education Program in person, starting Tuesday, March 11, beginning at 6 p.m. in Holyoke.

NAMI Family-to-Family is a free, nine-session educational program for family, significant others and friends of people with mental health conditions. It is a designated evidenced-based program. This means that research shows that the program significantly improves the coping and problem-solving abilities of the people closest to a person with a mental health condition.

NAMI Family-to-Family is taught by NAMI-trained family members who

have been there and includes presentations, discussions, and interactive exercises. NAMI, is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental health conditions. NAMI-WM is an affiliate of NAMI Massachusetts. NAMI Western Massachusetts and its dedicated volunteers, members, and leaders work tirelessly to raise awareness and provide essential education, advocacy, and support programs for people in our community living with mental health conditions and their loved ones.

Pre-registration is required. For more information, people may call Bonnie at 413-426-7644 or visit namiwm.org/support.

MassDOT alerts customers of EZDriveMA scam

BOSTON – The Massachusetts Department of Transportation reminds customers to be mindful of text message-based scams, also known as smishing.

The scammers are claiming to represent the tolling agency and requesting payment for unpaid tolls. MassDOT urges customers to be cautious about email, text and phone scams demanding payment of outstanding toll balances. Some attempts have been made to trick customers into sharing credit card numbers and other sensitive information by directing them to a website to pay their outstanding balances. MassDOT strongly encourages customers not to click the link contained in those messages.

MassDOT is underscoring that EZDriveMA will never request payment by text. All links associated with EZDriveMA will include www.EZDriveMA.com

The EZDrive "smishing" scam is part of a series of smishing scams which the FBI is aware of. Smishing is when unscrupulous actors send deceptive text messages to get someone to reveal confidential or financial information.

The FBI recommends individuals that receive the fraudulent messages to file a complaint with the IC3 by visiting www.ic3.gov and be sure to include: the phone number from where the text originated and the website listed within the text.

Delete any smishing texts received. If people clicked any link or provided private information, take efforts to secure their personal information and financial accounts. MassDOT encourages all customers to stay alert to these types of scams and to contact EZDriveMA by visiting www.EZDriveMA.com with any questions about notifications.

AAA offers tips to avoid potential vehicle winter damage

WESTWOOD – With temperatures expected to dip into the single digits this week, homeowners across the Northeast might be worried about the potential for winter-related damage to their properties and rightly so.

In 2022 alone, cold weather and winter storms caused nearly \$6 billion in insured losses in the United States, according to the Insurance Information Institute. The most common types of insurance claims related to severe winter weather include frozen pipes, ice dams building up along roof edges, damage from falling trees and limbs and even house fires.

Fortunately, a few preventive measures can reduce the risk of a winter catastrophe, starting with a review of their existing homeowners insurance policy to ensure any potential disaster is covered. Water damage from a leaking pipe or an ice dam that sends water

through the roof may be covered by a typical homeowners policy. But flooding caused by other events, such as rapid snow melt, may require a separate flood insurance policy.

"Winter storms are not typically thought of as natural disasters, but they can cause significant damage in the Northeast," said Greg Smolan, vice president of insurance operations for AAA Northeast. "Taking preventive measures will help minimize the risk associated with winter weather."

AAA Insurance recommends that all homeowners take these steps to effectively winterize their homes for safety and to avoid costly repairs:

Clear gutters and downspouts of debris to allow melting snow and ice to flow freely. To help prevent ice dams from forming, keep the attic well-ventilated and the attic floor well-insulated. Heat tape may also help pre-

vent ice buildup and can facilitate melting.

To prevent pipes from freezing and bursting, insulate exposed pipes, seal cracks in outside walls near pipes, keep cabinet doors on exterior walls open and keep a slow trickle of water flowing through unprotected pipes during cold spells.

Know the location of the main water shutoff valve. If pipes freeze, the faster you shut off the water, the better chance you have of preventing them from bursting and causing major damage.

Ensure the heating system is up to snuff by having the furnace, boiler or chimney serviced at least once a year. Be sure to have ducts, vents and filters inspected.

Check smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Residential fires and carbon monoxide poisonings increase in the winter as people rely on indoor fires and heating systems.

Detectors should be checked at least twice a year.

Follow all safety guidelines when using supplemental space heaters to prevent electrical fires or fires caused by the placement of heaters too close to flammable materials.

Trim trees and remove dead branches. Ice, snow, wind and rain can cause weak trees and tree limbs to fall and damage car or home or fall on people walking on or near your property. Clear your driveway and walkway of snow as soon as possible to prevent slips and falls.

AAA Northeast is a not-for-profit auto club with offices in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, New Hampshire and New York, providing more than 6.5 million local AAA members with travel, insurance, finance and auto-related services.

Cat in the Hat license plates available in Massachusetts

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Museums announces Dr. Seuss specialty license plates are now available across Massachusetts.

Featuring the iconic Cat in the Hat, the plates honor Springfield native Theodor Seuss Geisel, whose writings inspired generations of learners worldwide. The museums are home to the world's only museum dedicated to the beloved children's author, with proceeds from the plates supporting their mission to promote literacy and learning.

"We're thrilled with the response to the Dr. Seuss plate and can't wait to see them across the state," said Kay Simpson, President and CEO of the Springfield Museums. "These plates are a great way to attract visitors to our museums, including the Amazing

World of Dr. Seuss Museum, which welcomes thousands of people each year."

Dr. Seuss Plates can be purchased online or at an RMV service center. Any Massachusetts resident with a passenger car registered in the state is eligible. Specialty plates cost \$40, plus standard registration fees, with a portion supporting the museums. When re-registered, the full \$40 benefits literacy programs and services the museums.

The museums began a campaign to offer

Massachusetts drivers a specialty license plate in 2019. Orders came in quickly at first but then plateaued during the pandemic.

More recent efforts to resurrect the campaign got things moving again with the museums exceeding the minimum number of applications required for the Registry of Motor Vehicles to begin production of a specialty plate in March 2024. The Registry reached out to this initial round of supporters in late January 2025 with details on receiving their Cat in the Hat plates.



For questions, people may call the Springfield Museums Development Office at 413-314-6458 or email seussplates@springfieldmuseums.org.

The Amazing World of Dr. Seuss Museum was created with the gracious consent of Mrs. Audrey Geisel, widow of Theodor S. Geisel, and Dr. Seuss Enterprises, L.P.

The Springfield Museums uses art, history, science and Dr. Seuss to explore shared connections and unique perspectives to promote engagement, literacy and learning. The museums, located in the heart of downtown Springfield, Massachusetts, is home to five historic and architecturally significant buildings on a beautiful green known as the Quadrangle.

MassWildlife give advise on dealing with coyotes during the winter months

Mass Wildlife reminds people late January through early March is coyote mating season. Coyotes are very active during the winter while courting mates and defending their territory. Coyotes are in every city and town in mainland Massachusetts, meaning the opportunity for human-coyote interaction is high. The mere presence of a coyote is not a cause for concern. MassWildlife officials are reminding the public to take these three simple steps to prevent conflict with coyotes during the mating season:

Protect pets

Pets should always be directly supervised on a leash when outdoors, especially during the coyote mating season. Coyotes can't differentiate between their natural prey and small pets, so they will view unprotected outdoor cats and small dogs as a potential food source.

Coyotes can't distinguish a dog from an intruding coyote, causing the coyote to be more aggressive toward medium and large sized dogs as they will view them as potential competition for mates and territory.

Do not supervise a pet from a distance on porch or at the backdoor. Most coyote attacks

involve dogs that are unsupervised or being supervised from a distance in a backyard.

Remove human-associated food sources

As opportunistic omnivores, coyotes will utilize naturally available food, like small mammals and birds and human-associated foods, like bird seed, garbage, compost, pet food left outdoors and backyard chickens.

Coyotes that find human-associated food sources will spend more time in yards and neighborhoods. It's essential for neighbors to work together to secure or remove all human-associated food sources in a community.

Coyotes that become dependent on human-associated food sources can start to exhibit bold behavior toward people. Never intentionally feed coyotes.

Haze coyotes

While coyotes are naturally wary of people, this fear can lessen over time when they spend a lot of time around people or when they are fed, intentionally or unintentionally, by people.

When you see a coyote in your yard, you

should aggressively haze it. Hazing is a safe technique used to deter an animal from an area or to change its behavior. The intent of hazing is to frighten, not injure, the animal.

You can haze a coyote by creating loud noises by yelling or using a small air horn, waving a jacket overhead to look bigger, spraying a hose or throwing small objects in the coyote's direction, and physically chasing and driving the coyote off. Haze the animal until it has fully left the area.

Hazing will not be effective if it's done from inside a building, from behind a screen door, or from a car. Hazing is most effective when it's done repeatedly, when a variety of techniques are used and when many people participate.

Negative encounters with coyotes are rare and human-coyote attacks are exceptionally rare. If people encounter a coyote that is exhibiting concerning behavior like approaching leashed pets, closely following people, or not running off when effectively hazed they should contact your local Animal Control Officer or local MassWildlife office for assistance. If there is an immediate threat to public safety, they should call local law enforcement.



REGION

Better Business Bureau offers winter traveling tips

Traveling in the winter can offer lower rates, smaller crowds and different views.

However, it also comes with its own set of potential hazards. From being stuck on the highway for hours to dealing with flight cancellations, winter weather can hinder travel and vacation plans in a variety of ways. Preparing for potential weather-related emergencies, delays or cancellations can help mitigate the stress of these situations.

Here are a few tips on preparing for winter road tripping travel. Get your vehicle ready. Before hitting the road for any extended trip, it's important to make sure everything on the vehicle is in working order, but it's even more paramount in the winter when conditions can become more precarious. Here are some basics of what you should do before venturing out in the winter. Check the battery. Ensure it's fully charged and functioning well, as cold weather reduces its efficiency. Test the brakes. Have them inspected to ensure they respond properly in icy or snowy conditions. Top off the fluids. Ensure windshield washer fluid is rated for freezing temperatures and check the antifreeze level. Replace wipers. Install winter wipers for better performance against snow and ice if you live in a colder climate.

Check lights. Ensure all exterior lights are clean and functioning. Have a full tank of gas: A half tank or more of gas limits the moisture condensates in the tank, preparing you to tough out an unexpected traffic jam or survive being stuck in the snow.

Check under the hood: Check the battery and cables for erosion, cracks, and dirt. Inspect hoses and belts for any cracks, soft spots, or bulges. For a thorough inspection,

visit an auto service provider.

Make sure you have good tires: Tires with good traction are essential to safe winter driving. Check tire pressure monthly, topping off as necessary, keeping in mind that cold winter temperatures can lower tire pressure. Inspect tread depth, which should be at least 5/32 of an inch to 6/32 of an inch, or about 4 to 5 mm in thickness. Tread depth can be gauged using a quarter and measuring from the coin's edge to Washington's head. Look for uneven tread wear, which typically indicates poor wheel alignment or worn suspension components. Before investing in new tires or getting a professional assessment, visit BBB.org to find a qualified tire specialist.

Prepare an emergency kit: Keep an emergency preparedness kit in the vehicle at all times. During winter travel, having the following items easily available is essential: jumper cables, flashlight, extra batteries, basic first-aid supplies, battery powered radio, tool-kit, bottled water and non-perishable food, safety flares, windshield ice scraper, tire chains (if allowed in the area and a tire repair kit).

Put together a list of potential places to shelter along the route. If continuing your travels uninterrupted just isn't possible, having an idea of where you can pull off and safely stay for the night is important. Take some time to map out any hotels, motels and even truck stops along the route, particularly those located on long stretches between towns or cities. Check out hotels in the U.S. and hotels in Canada by visiting BBB.org for a full list of options ahead or hotels near me to see places to stay while already on the road.

If you're flying, stay in the know: Stay up



to date on your flights by signing up for any offered alerts or updates regarding your flight. Additionally, follow the airline you're using on social media and check for posts related to your travel plans. In case of a cancellation, social media can offer an additional avenue through which to communicate with an airline and might actually be more expedient than other forms of communication.

Keep documentation. When flights are canceled by the airline, consumers are always entitled to a full refund, including any bag fees or other extras, such as additional legroom for a seat. Keep receipts related to the flight and record any expenses incurred as a

result of a significantly delayed or canceled flight, such as renting a hotel room.

Prepare a carry-on: If a flight gets canceled after you're already checked in at the airport, there's a chance your luggage made it off the runway while you stayed grounded. To ensure you're not without essentials while waiting for another flight, pack what you absolutely need in your carry-on, such as:

Passport or ID, phone and device chargers, change of clothes, headphones, daily medication, hygiene products, cash credit or debit cards and car keys.

For more information, people may visit BBB Travel for travel tips and news.

State Fire Marshal offers cold snap heating safety advice

STOW – With temperatures expected to dip into the teens overnight this week, Massachusetts State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine reminds residents to stay warm safely and protect their loved ones from some of the most common home heating fires.

"We're expecting very cold weather in the nights ahead, and home heating appliances will be working overtime," said State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine. "Heating equipment is the leading cause of carbon monoxide at home and the second leading cause of residential fires. Whether you're using gas, oil, solid fuel or space heaters to keep warm, be sure you keep safe, too."

State Fire Marshal Davine said there were nearly 6,000 heating fires in Massachusetts from 2019 to 2023. These fires claimed eight lives, caused 139 injuries to firefighters and residents, and contributed to over \$42 million in damage. And in 2023 alone, Massachusetts fire departments reported finding carbon monoxide at nearly 5,000 non-fire incidents.

Every household needs working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms on every level of their home. Check the manufacturing date on the back of the alarms so people know when to replace them: smoke alarms should be replaced after ten years and carbon monoxide alarms should be replaced after five to ten years depending on the model. If the alarms take alkaline batteries, put in fresh batteries twice a year when people change their clocks. If it's time to replace alarms, choose new ones from a well-known, national brand. Select smoke alarms with a sealed, long-life battery and a hush feature.

If people have a furnace, water heater or oil burner, have it professionally checked and serviced each year. This will help it run more efficiently, which will save money and could save a life. Always keep a three-foot



"circle of safety" around the appliance clear of anything that could catch fire. Never store painting supplies, aerosol cans or other flammable items near these appliances. If people smell gas, don't use any electrical switches or devices: get out, stay out and call 9-1-1 right away.

Residents struggling to pay for heating bills or maintenance may be eligible for assistance through the Massachusetts home energy assistance program, HEAP. No matter what type of heating equipment people use HEAP may be able to help pay their winter heating bills or maintain their heating system. All Massachusetts residents are encouraged to explore eligibility for this free program and apply for assistance.

If people use a fireplace or a stove that

burns wood, pellets or coal always keep the area around it clear for three feet in all directions. This circle of safety should be free of furniture, drapery, rugs, books and papers, fuel and any other flammable items.

To prevent sparks and embers from escaping, use a fireplace screen or keep the stove door closed while burning. Use only dry, seasoned hardwood and don't use flammable liquids to start the fire. To dispose of ashes, wait until they are cool and shovel them into a metal bucket with a lid and place it outside at least 10 feet away from the building.

People should have their chimney and flue professionally inspected and cleaned each year. Most chimney fires are caused by burning creosote, a tarry substance that builds

up as the fireplace, wood stove or pellet stove is used. If burning creosote, sparks, embers, or hot gases escape through cracks in the flue or chimney, they can cause a fire that spreads to the rest of the structure.

Annual cleaning and inspection can minimize this risk. They may contact the Massachusetts Chimney Sweep Guild or Chimney Safety Institute of America to identify reputable local companies.

Keep space heaters at least three feet from curtains, bedding and anything else that can burn. Plug them directly into a wall socket, not an extension cord or a power strip and remember that they're for temporary use. Always turn a space heater off, when people leave the room or go to sleep.

When purchasing a space heater, select one that's been tested and labeled by a nationally recognized testing company, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL) or Intertek (ETL). Newer space heaters should have an automatic shut-off switch that turns the device off if it tips over. Unvented kerosene space heaters and portable propane space heaters are not permitted for residential use in Massachusetts, State Fire Marshal Davine said: the risk of fire and carbon monoxide poisoning that they pose is too great.

Everyone should have a home escape plan that accounts for two ways out of every room, and everyone should be able to open the doors and windows along the way. Remember that children, older adults, and people with disabilities may need extra assistance.

The Department of Fire Services offers a wealth of home heating safety information, including the "Keep Warm, Keep Safe" tool kit for local fire departments, caregivers, and service providers, on the DFS web site by visiting <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/winter-home-heating-safety>.

State officials urge fire safety during open burning season

STOW— After an unprecedented fall fire season in Massachusetts and as wildfires rage in California, state officials are urging residents to protect themselves and their communities by following local and state restrictions on open burning.

State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine, Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Bonnie Heiple, and Chief Fire Warden David Celino of the Department of

Conservation and Recreation said restrictions on open burning are imposed at the state and local levels.

"Open burning season begins Jan. 15 in communities where it's allowed," said State Fire Marshal Davine. "Even where burning is authorized, a permit from your local fire department is always required in advance and it's your responsibility to be able to extinguish the fire on a moment's notice. For two years in a row, Massachusetts residents have lost their lives when they couldn't contain their fires – please make safety your priority when burning."

"Open burning is limited to protect public health and public safety," said MassDEP Commissioner Heiple. "The governing laws and regulations are in place to reduce air pollution, property damage, and personal injury. If open burning is allowed in your community, please follow the local and state guidance to keep yourself, your neighbors, and our environment safe."

"This fall, residents across Massachusetts saw just how quickly outdoor fires can grow out of control," said Chief Fire Warden Celino. "Right now, California is facing an even worse crisis with devastating fires consuming entire neighborhoods. Please don't risk a fire that puts you, your home or your community at risk. Burn only approved mate-

rials and always get a permit from your local fire department first."

These restrictions are authorized by 310 CMR 7.07, which sets baseline requirements based on air quality and allows for "no burn" days; MGL chapter 48, section 13, which prohibits any open air fire unless a permit is issued and the Massachusetts Comprehensive Fire Safety Code, which gives local fire chiefs the authority to impose additional limits.

Open burning is prohibited year-round in the cities and towns of Arlington, Belmont, Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, Chelsea, Chicopee, Everett, Fall River, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, Malden, Medford, New Bedford, Newton, Somerville, Springfield, Waltham, Watertown, West Springfield and Worcester.

In the remaining communities, open burning season runs from Wednesday, Jan. 15 through Thursday, May 1 with the following limitations. Local fire departments may deny a permit or set additional limitations if circumstances make open burning hazardous. Only certain agricultural waste may be burned. This includes brush, cane, driftwood, residential forestry debris, fruit tree and bush prunings, raspberry stalks, infected bee hives, trees and brush from agricultural land clearing and fungus-infected elm wood if no other

acceptable means of disposal is available. It is unlawful to burn leaves, grass, hay, stumps, tires, household trash, construction materials, demolition debris or brush, trees, cane or driftwood from commercial or industrial land clearing.

Open burning may only be conducted with a permit issued in advance by the local fire department between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.; at least 75 feet from all dwellings and without causing a nuisance; as close as possible to the source of material being burned and when it will not cause or contribute to a condition of air pollution. Persons, who burn unlawfully or allow a fire to grow out of control, could be held liable for firefighting costs or face fines or even jail time.

Open Burning Safety

An adult should tend to the fire at all times and keep tools to extinguish it close by.

Burn small amounts at a time.

Never use gasoline, kerosene or other accelerants to start the fire.

Don't wait for the fire department to tell you that it has become unsafe to burn: put the fire out if winds pick up or the weather changes. Most fires get out of control during sudden wind changes.

If the fire gets out of control, call the local fire department right away.



OBITUARY

Aline Euler, 85

Aline Euler, 85, passed away at home in Bayside, New York on Nov. 27, 2024 after a long illness.

She is survived by her brother and caregiver, Henry Euler. Aline was the daughter of the late Alice (Revaz) and Henry Euler Sr. She was also predeceased by her brother, Joseph. She leaves behind many cousins in the United States, Switzerland and Germany and many wonderful friends including Christina Scherer, who helped with Aline's care.

Aline spent much of her spare time at her family seasonal home in Montgomery over a period of 70 years. She enjoyed gardening, playing the guitar and banjo, painting and studying the natural world.

After graduating from Queens College in 1960, Aline became a first grade teacher at West Islip, New York Public Schools for 18 years.

She then taught at the Alley Pond Environmental



Center in Douglaston, New York for the next 36 years, developing many of the programs used for class visits. During that time, she became the Education Director of the Center.

Along the way, Aline received her doctorate in curriculum and teaching in environmental studies from St. John's University. Over her long teaching career, Aline came into contact with thousands of children whom she treated with kindness and respect. Her teaching included learning about our environment and the need to take care of our planet.

She was honored with many awards and citations and was selected as a Woman of Distinction in Albany, New York by State Senator Frank Padavan.

A Funeral Mass was held for Aline at St. Kevin's Roman Catholic Church on Dec. 4, 2024, followed by interment next to her parents, brother and aunts at Mount Saint Mary's Cemetery, both in Flushing, New York.

DEATH NOTICE

EULER, ALINE

Died Nov. 27, 2024

Funeral Mass held Dec. 4, 2024 followed by interment

Country Journal

OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

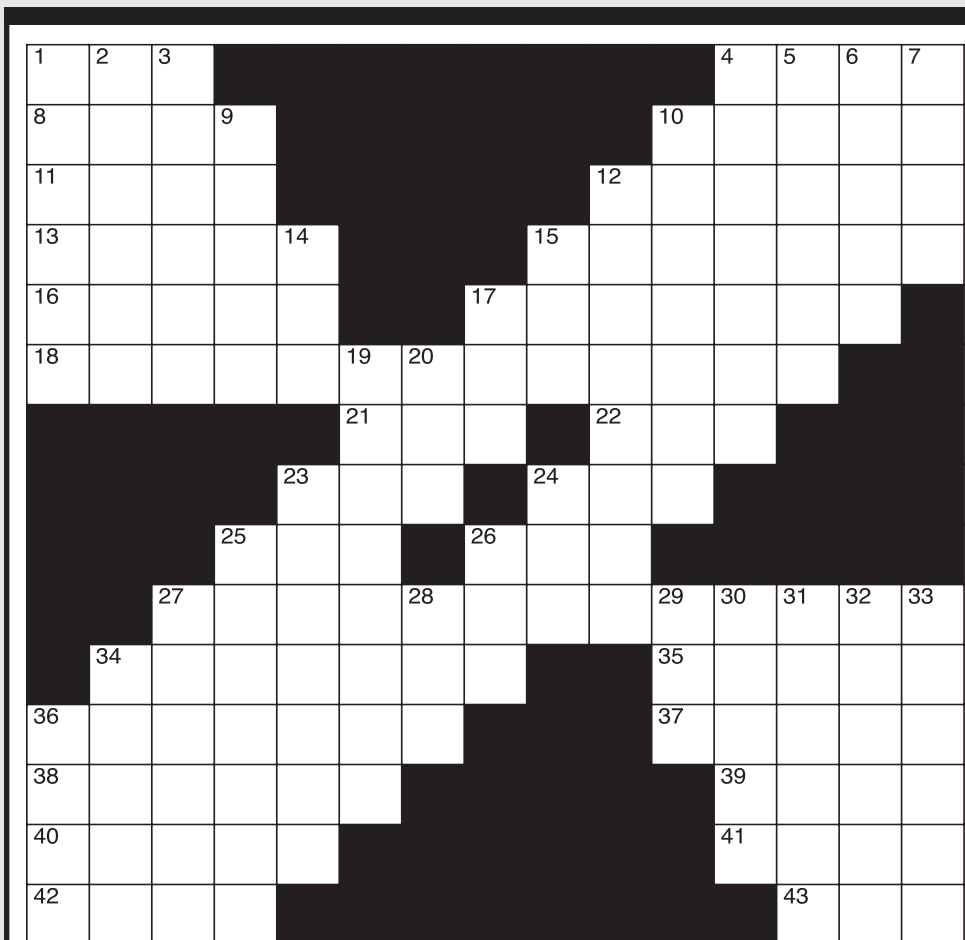
One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

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

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



Send Us Your Photos!
countryjournal@turley.com



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Racquet sport group (abbr.)
- 4. Norse god of thunder
- 8. Russian industrial city
- 10. What's good for the ___
- 11. Round-ish shape
- 12. Baltimore MLBer
- 13. French modernist painter
- 15. Burned with water
- 16. Intestinal issue
- 17. Take the lead
- 18. Prove oneself worthy
- 21. None
- 22. Tax collector

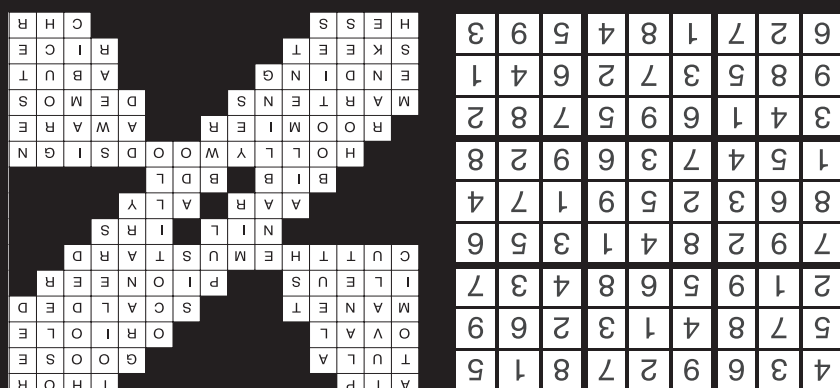
CLUES DOWN

- 23. Swiss river
- 24. Gymnast Raisman
- 25. Baby's dining accessory
- 26. Canadian beer distributor
- 27. Iconic American tourist destination
- 34. More expansive
- 35. Alert
- 36. Popular boots
- 37. Showings
- 38. Conclusion
- 39. Share a common boundary
- 40. Shooting sport
- 41. Popular side dish
- 42. Global energy firm
- 43. Chronicles (abbr.)

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Type of bomb
- 2. Polynesian island country
- 3. Heavenly body
- 4. Hard workers
- 5. Covered
- 6. Johns Hopkins Hospital founder
- 7. Plant of the grass family
- 9. Island person of the Bering Sea
- 10. Storehouse
- 12. Scarlet-flowered desert shrub
- 14. A pituitary hormone
- 15. Female sibling
- 17. Monetary unit of Afghanistan
- 19. Empowering
- 20. Space station
- 23. Disorder
- 24. State of fuss
- 25. Footwear for babies
- 26. Nuclear reactor (abbr.)
- 27. Drove
- 28. Affirmative
- 29. Male parent
- 30. Utter obscenities
- 31. Type of verse
- 32. Unpleasant person
- 33. One who settles down
- 34. Founder of source-based history
- 36. A way to snarl

answers



THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPES

ARIES

Mar 21/Apr 20

A good first impression is really important right now, Aries. Be sure to wear your best clothes and check out your appearance before you meet up with anyone this week.

TAURUS

Apr 21/May 21

Taurus, you are bound to have a lot of fun this week, and you will spread cheerfulness to others. You might host a party or plan some sort of night out with friends.

GEMINI

May 22/Jun 21

None of the usual strategies to confront family issues are working right now, Gemini. You may need to take a step away and give others distance for the time being until things cool off.

CANCER

Jun 22/Jul 22

Cancer, some tech upgrades can help ensure an exciting new project starts off on the right foot. Enlist others to help and welcome any insight.

LEO

Jul 23/Aug 23

This week is your chance to take a break and let someone else take center stage for a bit while you enjoy time out of the spotlight, Leo. Right now you may need a little alone time.

VIRGO

Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, you know what you have to get done, so it is well past time to put one foot in front of the other and get moving. Others have helped, but you have to see it to completion.

LIBRA

Sept 23/Oct 23

Focus all of your energy on the important people in your life right now, Libra. Other things can wait for the time being. Don't be too hard on yourself for not getting everything done.

SCORPIO

Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, as things in your life continue to evolve, you may be tempted to jump into something new. You might want to slow the pace and exercise due diligence first.

SAGITTARIUS

Nov 23/Dec 21

Sagittarius, have you bitten off more than you can chew this week? If so, you probably have to ask for some helpers to step up and pitch in. Teamwork is a good thing.

CAPRICORN

Dec 22/Jan 20

Some tough decisions are ahead of you, Capricorn. It might be best to think things through logically and leave emotion out of the equation for the time being.

AQUARIUS

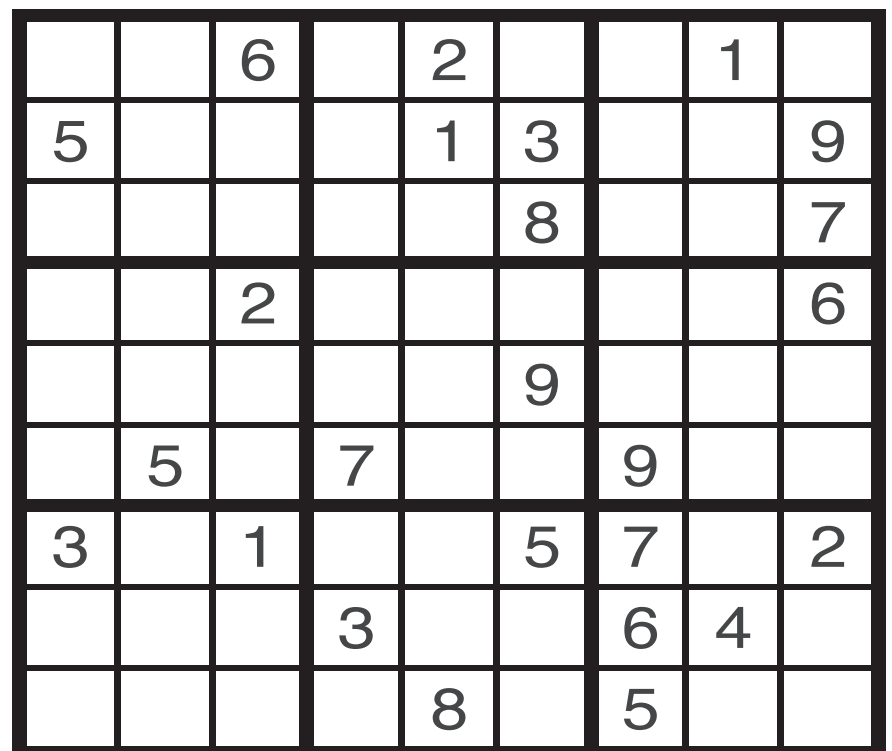
Jan 21/Feb 18

Aquarius, it can be dangerous to think you know everything. This week, listen to what others have to say before deciding if their ideas have merit. This approach can benefit all involved.

PISCES

Feb 19/Mar 20

Step up this week with confidence, Pisces. Now is not the time to be inflexible or shy. Go with the flow as much as possible, and learn and listen along the way.



SUDOKU

Here's How It Works:

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

Fun By The Numbers

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

WESTFIELD AUTO PARTS INC

AUTO PARTS & SUPPLIES

NATIONALLY ADVERTISED MERCHANDISE FOR ALL MAKES & MODELS

WHOLESALE RETAIL

- ★ Complete Auto Machine Shop Service
- ★ Engine Rebuilding Of All Kinds
- ★ Authorized Caterpillar Hydraulic Hose Dealer
- ★ Hydraulic Hoses

Call "DALE" 8-12 BIRGE AVE., WESTFIELD

Dial 568-8944 or 568-1611 FAX # 568-1554

Now stocking Car Quest Filters made by WIX, Amalie Oil, Bailing Twine & Tractor Parts

Classifieds

12 WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS | SERVING 50 LOCAL COMMUNITIES

A TURLEY PUBLICATION | www.turley.com

COMMUNITY MARKETPLACE

Call us at 413.283.8393

FOR SALE

MAXIMUM EFFICIENCY. EXTRAORDINARY performance. Central Boiler certified Classic Edge Titanium HDX OUTDOOR WOOD FURNACE. Call today **413-296-4320**.

FIREWOOD

FIREWOOD
Fresh cut & split \$200.00
Seasoned cut & split \$300.00
All hardwood.
Tree length available
*Also have seasoned softwood for outdoor boilers (Cheap). Quality & volumes **guaranteed!!** New England Forest Products **(413)477-0083**

MORE HEAT LESS WOOD. Central Boiler Classic Edge HDX Outdoor Wood Furnace. EPA Certified. Titanium Stainless Steel. 26% Tax Credit. Call **(508)882-0178**

TAG SALE

VALENTINE'S DAY GARAGE SALE.
February 14-16, 8am-3pm.
16 Paradise Lake Road, Monson.
No early birds please.
Moving, everything must go.

Find archives of this local newspaper at www.newspapers.turley.com

WANTED

WANTED TO BUY

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

JUNK REMOVAL

A Call We Haul FAST REMOVAL
Junk, Appliance, Cleanouts.
We load it & take it.
413-531-1936
CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED

SERVICES

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

SERVICES

ELECTRICIAN

NEED AN ELECTRICIAN?
Look no further!
PJ's Electrical offers fast and reliable electrical services for your home or business. Call now for a FREE estimate!
(413) 366-1703
LICENSED & INSURED

HEATING & AIR COND.

KELLUM HEATING & COOLING LLC. Licensed, insured HVAC Technician, 30 years experience, repairs, full and 24 hour emergency service. **413-275-4408.**

HOME IMPROVEMENT

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

RLH ENTERPRISES
Home improvements, restorations, renovations. Fully insured. HIC license. **(413) 668-6685.**

SERVICES

LANDSCAPING

A+ ROZELL'S LANDSCAPING & BOBCAT SERVICE
Excavator Services
Overgrown property?
Extreme Brush Cutting!
Shrub, Stump, Tree Removal
Lawn/Arborvite Installed
Loam, Stone, Mulch, Sand
Storm Clean-up
Small Demolition/ Junk Removal
Insured
Josh Rozell 413-636-5957

MASONRY

STOP WET BASEMENTS

ABC MASONRY & BASEMENT WATERPROOFING
All brick, block, stone, concrete. Hatchway doors, basement windows, chimneys rebuilt & repaired, foundations repaired, basement waterproofing systems, sump pumps. BBB+ rating. Free estimates. Lic #14790. Call **(413)569-1611, (413)374-5377**

PAINTING

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

SERVICES

PAINTING

KEN'S PAINTING SERVICES. Interior painting/staining, wallpaper removal, wall/ceiling resurfacing, cabinet painting. Quality workmanship, fully insured. Free estimates. Call **413-896-8264.**

RETIRED GUY

Will paint an average size room for \$200. Quality work. References available. Dave **413-323-6858.**

PLUMBING

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

RUBBISH REMOVAL

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

TREE WORK

AAA-TROM'S TREE SERVICE PROFESSIONAL SERVICE. Residential removal of trees. Free estimates, Fully insured W/Workman's Comp. Remove them before the wind takes them down. Cordwood, stump grinding. Call **413-283-6374.**

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

STUMP GRINDING

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

AUTO

CASH FOR JUNK AND REPAIRABLE CARS
FREE TOWING FAST SERVICE CASH PAID AS IS CALL OR TEXT 413-219-6839

HELP WANTED

COA COORDINATOR for Town of Westhampton. Description available online at 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 for more information. EOE

PRESSMAN for local printer. Four-color, 19x25 size press, L528. Experience preferred. Call **413-478-6964** or **413-519-3321.**

STORAGE

STORAGE: FREE MONTH! Secure gate access, well lit. Great prices. Call Secure Storage at **413-800-6278** for your free month.

REAL ESTATE



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

FOR RENT

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

This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate that is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertising in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain about discrimination call The Department of Housing and Urban Development "HUD" toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. For the N.E. area, call HUD at 617-565-5308. The toll free number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

NOTICE

CLASSIFIED AD DEADLINE IS NOW ON FRIDAY AT 12 NOON.



CHANTEL BLEAU ACCOUNTING SERVICES
For Full Accounting & Tax Service
Registered Tax Return Preparer
228 West St., Ware, MA 01082
413-967-8364
Call For An Appointment
The IRS does not endorse any particular individual tax return preparer. For more information on tax preparers go to irs.gov.

Personal & Small Business Federal & All States
FAST TAX USA
TAX PREPARATION SERVICE
413-348-2279
IRS Certified Tax Preparers
Independently owned and operated. Over 25 years experience.
1622 B North Main Street, Palmer, MA 01069
www.FastTax-MA.com
Free E-File & Direct Deposit

AJE FINANCIAL SERVICES
588 Center Street
Ludlow, MA 01056
www.ajefinancial.com
(413)589-1671
Personal, Business, Corporate and Partnership Tax Filing
Bookkeeping and Accounting Services
Trusted Experts Since 1995

TAX-TIME SURVIVAL GUIDE
Call your local Turley Publications sales representative for information and rates on advertising your tax service here!
413-283-8393

Call Your Local Turley Publications Sales Representative For Information And Rates On Advertising Your Tax Service Here
CALL 413-283-8393 TO PLACE YOUR AD TODAY!

FILL OUT AND MAIL THIS MONEY MAKER

MAIL TO: Classifieds, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069 DEADLINES: **FRIDAY AT NOON**
or call: 413-283-8393

CATEGORY:			
1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20 Base Price \$26.00
21 Base Price \$26.50	22 Base Price \$27.00	23 Base Price \$27.50	24 Base Price \$28.00
25 Base Price \$28.50	26 Base Price \$29.00	27 Base Price \$29.50	28 Base Price \$30.00
29 Base Price \$30.50	30 Base Price \$31.00	31 Base Price \$31.50	32 Base Price \$32.00
33 Base Price \$32.50	34 Base Price \$33.00	35 Base Price \$33.50	36 Base Price \$34.00
37 Base Price \$34.50	38 Base Price \$35.00	39 Base Price \$35.50	40 Base Price \$36.00

Name: _____ Phone: _____
Address: _____
Town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Number of Weeks: _____ X per week rate = \$ _____
Credit Card: MasterCard VISA Discover Cash Check# _____
Card #: _____ Exp. Date _____ CVV _____
Amount of charge: _____ Date: _____

Quabbin Village Hills
Circulation: 50,500

Hilltowns
Circulation: 9,800

Suburban Residential
Circulation: 59,000

All Three ZONES for \$26.00 for 20 words plus 50¢ for each additional word.

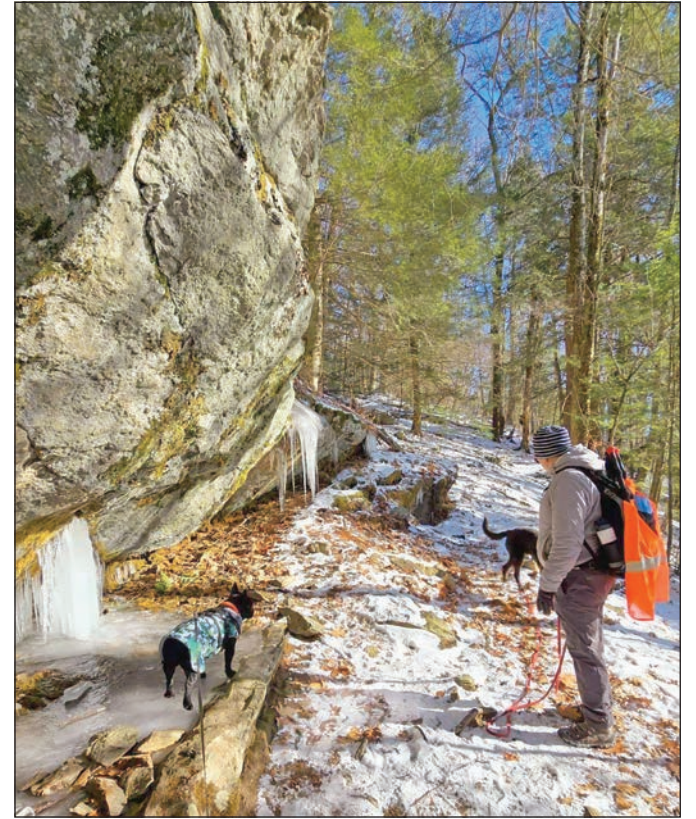
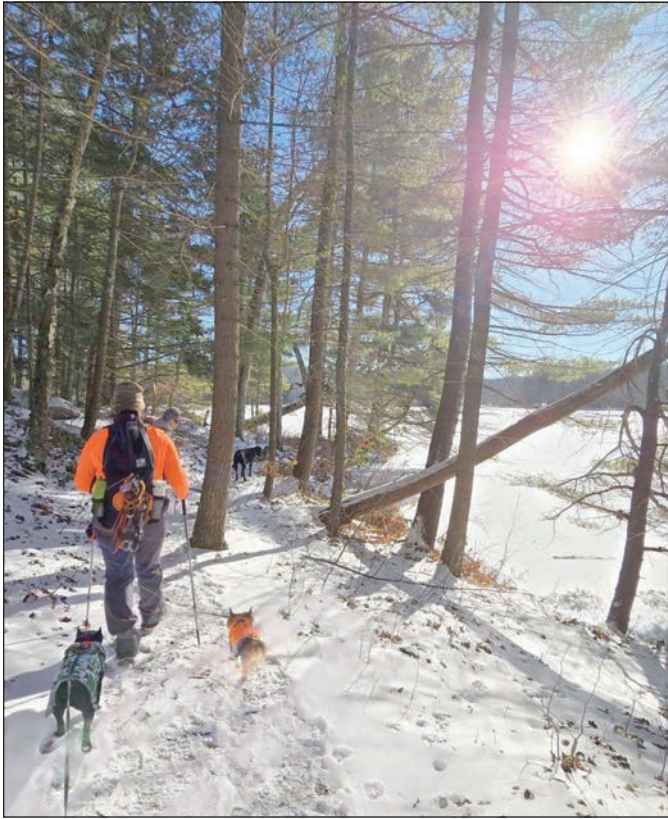
GREAT VALUE!
ALL 3 ZONES NOW FOR THE PRICE OF ONE!

STAY ON TOP OF IT ALL!
Subscribe Today!

Turley Publications, Inc.
12 HOMETOWN NEWSPAPERS
413.283.8393
www.turley.com
24 Water Street
Palmer, MA 01069

OUR CLASSIFIEDS REACH 50 COMMUNITIES EVERY WEEK!

HILLTOWN HIKING ADVENTURES



The loop trail around Benedict Pond is perfect for snowshoeing.

This Hilltown Hiker and canine companion explore Benedict Pond.

A hiker looks at one of the large rock formations along the trail.

Hikers walk around Benedict Pond

There was superb winter hiking and snowshoeing to be had at Beartown State Forest on the Benedict Pond Loop.

Hikers parked at a plowed parking lot coming in from the Great Barrington side via Route 23. The loop is just about three miles with many options for more. The pond is thirty five acres and very shallow. It was once used as an ice pond for the Great Barrington farmers to cool their milk. It is named for Fred and Good Hall Benedict, who once owned the farm on Blue Hill Road.

The pond was dammed and enlarged by the Civilian Conservation Corps, but it is still only eight feet deep. Bear Mountain State Forest includes the towns of Stockbridge, South Lee, Tyringham and Great Barrington and includes the vanished 19th century Beartown community.

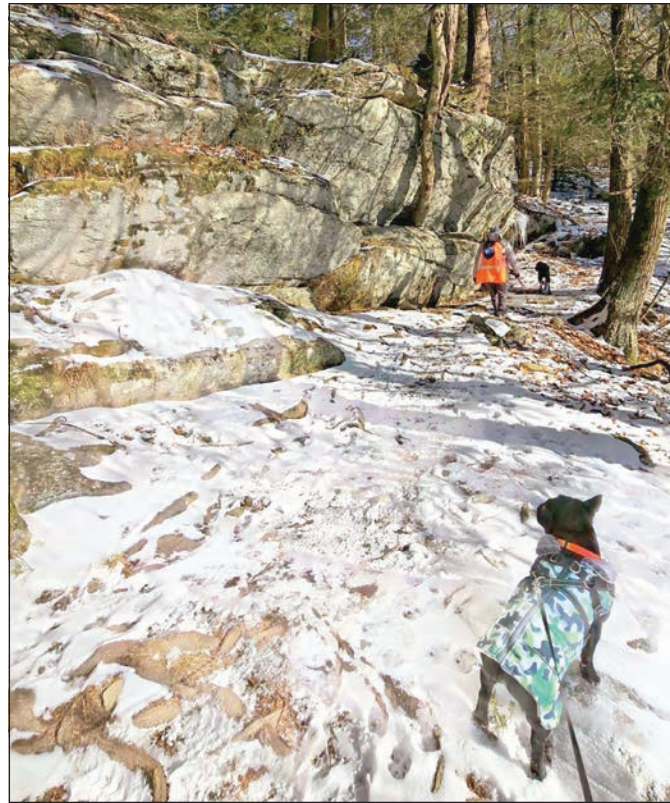
It also includes lost cemeteries, part of the Henry Knox 1776 route, Burgoyne Pass, Ice Glenn and it's old growth trees and much more. This is interesting area to explore and search for cellar holes. It is one of the most amazing historical forests right in our back yards.



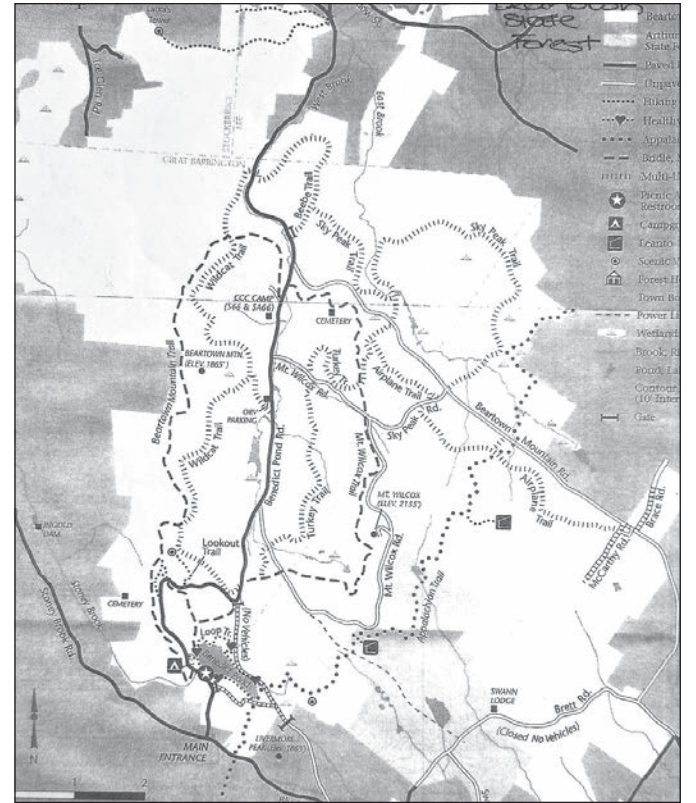
The trail contains numerous rock outcroppings. This one had icicles as well.



Stephanie holds up Cybill on Benedict Pond.



Dogs explore the trail along with their human companions.



This is a map of Beartown State Forest.

LOWER PRICES TO BOOST YOUR BUDGET!	INFLATION PRICE BUSTERS	PRICES IN RED ARE AT OR BELOW LAST YEAR'S PRICES!
USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS PORK BUTT STRIPS \$2.99 lb	VALENTINE'S ♥ DINNER FOR 2 ♥ 2 FROZEN TENDERLOIN STEAKS 4 JUMBO SHRIMP CHEESECAKE FOR 2 2/13-2/15 \$19.99 lb	USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS BEEF TOP ROUND ROAST or STEAKS..... \$4.99 lb
USDA INSP. FRESH PORK SIRLOIN CUTLETS..... \$2.22 lb	USDA INSP. FRESH BONE-IN BEEF SHORT RIBS \$8.99 lb	USDA INSP. FRESH CHICKEN DRUMSTICKS 10 LB BAG 77¢ lb
USDA INSP. FROZEN BONE-IN PORK LOIN END CHOPS \$1.79 lb	USDA INSP. FRESH BONE-IN BEEF SHORT RIBS \$8.99 lb	USDA INSP. FROZEN CHICKEN WINGS TRAY PAK..... \$1.88 lb
USDA INSP. SLICED IN OUR DELI TURKEY BREAST \$3.99 lb	USDA INSP. GROUND FRESH DAILY DIET LEAN GROUND BEEF \$4.99 5 LB BAG	USDA INSP. FROZEN HANDMADE CHICKEN EMPANADAS FULLY COOKED \$2.99 lb
USDA INSP. SLICED IN OUR DELI MONTEREY JACK CHEESE \$4.44 lb	f 90 Meat Outlet 90 Avocado St. Springfield 413-737-1288 www.90meat.com	USDA INSP. IQF FROZEN RAW SHRIMP EASY PEELED 31/40 COUNT 2 LB BAG..... \$9.99 ea
USDA INSP. FRESH BONE-IN BEEF SHANK..... \$3.99 lb	HOURS: Mon. - Wed. 8-4 Thurs. 8-6 • Fri. 8-6 • Sat. 8-3	
USDA INSP. FROZEN GOAT MEAT \$6.99 lb	SALE DATES: 2/13/25-2/19/25	
	BUY DIRECT FOR SAVINGS • SELECTION • SERVICE	

Adventure tours of Warren share the Adventure with us!

Think Spring!

April 27	Some Like it Hot at PPAC	\$120
May 23	7-Night Bermuda Cruise	from \$1699
June 10-12	Hampton Beach Getaway	\$529
June 28	Boston Harbor Lunch Cruise	\$175
July 12	Escape to Rockport	\$110

Share the Adventure with us soon!
For further information call Randall at (413) 436-5357 or email adventuretours@att.net or go to www.adventuretoursofwarren.com