

"Though it is little that one woman can do, still I crave the privilege of doing it." – Clara Barton

# Country Journal

*Devoted to the Needs of the Hilltowns*

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

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## HUNTINGTON

# Local fire departments trained on new FEMA-funded equipment

By Wendy Long  
Correspondent

Firefighters from the towns of Blandford, Chester, Huntington, Montgomery and Russell gathered at Stanton Hall on Thursday, Feb. 15 for training on the new Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus units delivered to each town earlier.

The 74 units replaced units that averaged 20 years of age. The new SCBAs were funded by a \$653,314.28 Assistance to Firefighters grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, written by Huntington Fire Chief Josh Ellinger.

Corey Forrest and Josh Beaudoin from Fire Tech & Safety, which won the procurement bid for the new equipment, were on hand, with Forrest providing training to all on the new units and Beaudoin doing fit testing to ensure the masks were properly fit to faces of new personnel. The event, which began at 6 p.m. in Stanton Hall, launched with numerous fire station test alarms going off on the radios car-



An unidentified hilltown firefighter is fit-tested for the new SCBA units by Josh Beaudoin of Fire Tech & Safety. *Turley Photo by Wendy Long*

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## HILLTOWNS

# Legislative breakfast airs library issues

By Mary Kronholm  
Correspondent

Several members of the library community addressed their needs focused in the Legislative Agenda for FY 2025 as presented by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners on Friday morning, Feb. 16 at the Agawam Public Library.

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Massachusetts Library Commissioner Vicky Biancolo spoke at a recent Legislative breakfast held on Feb. 16. *Turley photos by Mary Kronholm*



Western Massachusetts Library Advocates President and Blandford Library Director Nicole Daviau is shown with state Rep. Nicholas Boldyga.



State Sen. John Velis was one of the speakers at legislative breakfast.

## HILLTOWNS

# Sikes twins turn 90 with optimism and nostalgia



Geraldine and Gerald Sikes are shown in their home. *Photo by Kathryn Koegel*

By Kathryn Koegel  
Correspondent

On Feb. 22, 1934, in a house just under where the green bridge that now crosses the Westfield River in the center of Huntington, twins were born.

Geraldine and Gerald Sikes were delivered by Dr. Arenstam, the local physician who came up from Russell for the event. Their lives continue to be intertwined with the families and the paper industry that built the southern Hilltowns.

Geraldine was born a few minutes earlier than Gerald and says that her

brother has always had her back. "He's the best brother you could have. He watched out for me. He was a prankster though. I remember as a kid him getting me to open my mouth and he flicked a caterpillar in."

The family moved to Montgomery, which is the twins' first school memory. The tiny one-room schoolhouse had eight to 12 children at a time. There was no electricity or plumbing, just kerosene lanterns and an outhouse. Bessie Smith, the teacher, appears to have been better at recess than teach-

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# HILLTOWNS

## SIKES

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ing. “We were good at sliding,” says Geraldine, “It took me a long time to realize that school wasn’t just fun and games.”

One not-so-mundane early childhood event stuck in both their memories. “The teacher had us all leave school and go to the train tracks to see [the King and Queen of England],” said Gerald. In 1939, at the behest of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, King George VI came to the U.S. with his wife Queen Elizabeth.

The children waived at the royal car as it made its way west on the historic Boston to Albany rail line to the Roosevelt’s home in Hyde Park, New York.

That school was closed in 1941 and they then attended in the relatively big city of Russell. A woman drove up the hill in an old limousine to pick them up and deliver them to school.

As the oldest boy in the school, Gerald got the honor or chore of walking to the river to get water for the students. He carried it back in a bucket and everyone drank out of the same cup.

They lived in Westfield during high school where their father Clarence Sikes was a tool maker who repaired motors. World War II did not make much of an impression other than seeing planes from the Air Force base flying in formation.

Geraldine was not inspired by school and decided to leave after two years. She took a job in the Torrington Needle Factory in Westfield where she straightened needles with a hammer. She made around 50 cents an hour and is pleased to say that she got fired after a month or two of such onerous work.

As children they sold newspapers door to door for three cents a piece and as teens both picked up seasonal work in local agriculture picking tobacco for cigar wrappers. “We got 80 cents an hour,” says Gerald. “It was good work. We’d chop it, spear it then hang it.” Geraldine remembers the women, who would sew the leaves together by hand.

Strathmore Paper defined Gerald’s working life. He started in high school after their father died in 1951 and continued there for 45 years. His boss hired him under the condition that he stay and graduate from high school.

He first worked at Strathmore Mill Number 1 in Woronoco as a paper maker. He produced writing paper, fine stationery and the artist watercolor paper that still bears the Strathmore



Geraldine and Gerald Sikes stands in front of the one room schoolhouse they attended.

Photo by Karen Sikes McTaggart

brand. He would dump liquid pulp into a machine that ran a wire across it to draw water from the slurry before it then went through presses. This paper used primarily wood pulp that was trucked in from Canada. It was steady pay and he remembers making \$1 an hour at the time. With much hard work, including sometimes double and triple shifts that could last 12 hours, it enabled him to raise a family with six children.

Horace Moses, the founder of Strathmore, was a social progressive who died in 1947 but his legacy and treatment of the workers impressed Gerald. His estate is now the Horace Moses Scout Camp in Blandford. “Workers could go to the company coal pile with wheelbarrows and heat their houses,” he says. “In 1955 I lived for two years in a company house that cost \$5 a month.”

Gerald’s motto was “never live more than 10 minutes from work,” and living in such proximity enabled him to pick up extra shifts. He would sometimes drive down to take his dinner with the family before going back to work another shift. One challenge of life at the paper mills was the roar of the machines. Gerald now has a hearing implant that his family says is the cost of that steady employment.

Geraldine’s future was as a wife and mother and hotel keeper. In 1953 she

married Edwin Larrabee, who was literally the boy next door. They raised three children together in Russell after his stint in the Air Force took them to Bangor, Maine. When they moved back to the area, they lived in a house that was the Russell Hotel, which served tourists from Springfield along with paper mill workers and had a separate bar for men and women. They believe it had the area’s first liquor license after

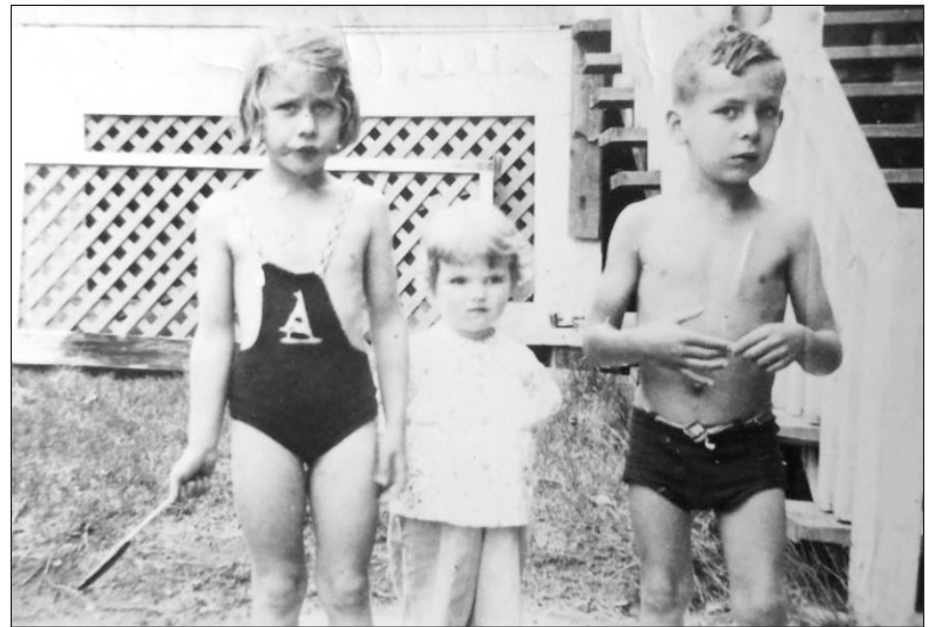
Prohibition was repealed. They also built apartments next to the hotel that they managed.

For years Geraldine and her husband proudly hosted The Hunters Ball, an annual get together at the end of the deer season held around what is still Geraldine’s table. Other annual highlights were the Blandford Fair and the canoe races on the Westfield River that started in 1953.

For both Gerald and Geraldine, the Hilltowns were and are the only place they can imagine being home. “It’s so quiet and friendly,” she says. “So many of the families here are related.” They count the local Thayers, Chamberlains, Meissners and Hermans among their cousins. When Geraldine’s children got married, she says she could count back five generations on each side of the families represented.

What are they most looking forward to as they enter their ninth decade? “Looking up!” Geraldine jokes. She considers herself very lucky to have her brother and they remain close. “As a kid I played his games,” she says. “He always protected me when I was not protecting him.”

“This year has been good,” she concludes. And though her husband passed during Covid, she has the company of many relatives and friends, who are gathering this week. They are celebrating their 90 years and the closest bond that any sibling can have – being a twin.



Here is a summer photo of Geraldine and Gerald Sikes as young children. Submitted photo

## LIBRARY

from page 1

Welcoming remarks from Agawam Library Director Nancy Siegel and Agawam Mayor Christopher Johnson opened the morning’s program.

Commissioner Vicky Biancolo asked for support of House Bill 3239 which would help libraries access electronic copies of books at a price offered individuals. She said a hard copy of a book for a library could be \$14.99 and lasts as long as it’s relevant to a library collection, while an e-book, which is sold as a licensed entity, costs libraries as much as \$130 for only two years. The demand for e-books has increased greatly and there may be over 100 requests for a single e-book, creating a long wait time.

The bill will empower library access to electronic books and digital audio books.

Regarding book banning, Biancolo said, “Banning books is not an attempt to protect children,” adding that protecting a child is the responsibility of parents. Libraries are “the embodiment of the democratic ideal,” providing equal access to all information to everyone. There is pending legislation to help insure diverse voices stay in our collections and give everyone the opportunity to learn from different perspectives, according to the Legislative Agenda.

She stressed the importance of fund-

ing the State Aid to libraries, the MBLC Staffing and the Center for the Book line items.

State Aide is used at the discretion of the library to cover costs not budgeted, the high cost of e-books and unanticipated non-emergency expenditures. The MBLC staff is available to support all libraries and assist in anyway. The Center for the Book provides a multitude of reading awards, opportunities and supports family literacy.

The Massachusetts Library System, represented by Staff Consultant Anna Popp, is supported by the State Aid to Libraries and the Technology and Resource Sharing lines. She said that 92% of the state’s libraries do not charge overdue fines any longer and a new online catalogue is soon to be rolled out. In 2023 she said that there were 2.23 million check-outs of materials from libraries through resource sharing. She also asked legislators to support the equitable costs bill for electronic materials and prioritize protection for library staff due to stress generated by frequent First Amendment Audits and harassment that accompanies book challenges.

Dr. Courtney Andree spoke about the Massachusetts Center for the Book and their sponsored events.

Mike Moran from the Massachusetts Library Association asked legislators

also for support of the bill for electronic materials and noted the Freedom to Read bills sponsored by Sen. Jacob Olivera and Rep. Aaron Saunders. There are 14 library legislative breakfasts across the Commonwealth and encouraged attendance at the breakfasts.

Western Mass Library Advocates President and Blandford Library Director Nicole Daviau summed up the morning. “Building a Stronger Commonwealth: One Person at a Time,” the theme of the MBLC legislative agenda, Daviau said, “Massachusetts libraries embody this message, working together...” in every community.

Encouraging legislative support for State Aid to Libraries funding, Daviau said that every library has a “saved by state aid” story. Her library is no different. Citing the need for more space to hold programs, specifically the Summer Reading events, State Aid was used to bridge the gap for funding a new grant funded outdoor patio, construction cost estimate exceeded the grant and with State Aid, the project is able to move forward. Her one-room library has a very limited occupancy.

The State Aid will also fund the installation of an after-hour book pickup locker to allow patrons who cannot make it to the library to still get their items. “State Aid funding is making it possible

for us to remove these barriers to access library services,” she said.

“This line item truly reaches every librarian and library patron in the state,” she said. “This funding is not just for the nice to have elements, it is essential to maintaining basic library services...”

Daviau will again speak on behalf of WMLA at the Springfield Library Legislative Breakfast Friday, Feb. 23 at the Springfield Library. Dr. Andree has also invited Daviau to speak at a State House briefing on the importance of State Aid to Libraries on Wednesday, March 6.

Sen. John Velis, whose district includes Russell, Montgomery, Easthampton and Southampton along with several other communities, told the gathering, “These meetings really matter.” He spoke of the personal importance of libraries for himself and his family and impact libraries have.

Rep. Dan Carey said, “There’s no end to what our libraries do,” and said that the written word is something you can study forever.

Rep. Nicholas Boldyga voiced his support for library funding and said, “I’m always going to say yes...”

Both representatives referenced their personal experiences involving libraries. Rep. Michael Finn was not able to attend, but did send a representative.

## HUNTINGTON

## Grant funding dominates Select Board meeting

By Wendy Long  
Correspondent

HUNTINGTON – The Saturday, Feb. 17 Select Board meeting opened with a 30 minute hearing for input on the town's upcoming Community Development Block Grant, which will be submitted by Monday, March 25.

On hand was John O'Leary, Principal Planner and Megan Haberle, Director of the Community Development Department, both from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. O'Leary has worked with the town of Huntington for the past few years.

The 2024 application under discussion will be to complete an infrastructure project on Stanton Avenue. An engineering firm has already surveyed the road and an engineering design has been completed, O'Leary said. A resident public meeting was held in December with Huntington Highway Superintendent Brad Curry attending. The final design plans have led to a project and town can now apply for construction funds, O'Leary reported.

Included will be new storm water drainage, water and sewer reconstruction, new sidewalks and road paving, for a total project of \$950,000. If the full amount is not awarded, a contingency plan is to do the project over two years using two different grants.

Selectman Roger Booth questioned the estimate, which he felt was not high enough when compared to recent proj-

ects on Crescent Street and Lowell Lane/Kennedy Drive, which he said didn't have all of these items. O'Leary responded that the budget includes a 10% contingency fee for unexpected overages. Selectman William Hathaway thought the budget might be lower than expected because Stanton Avenue is a newer road and isn't as long as the other projects were.

"At the time of bidding, we will have a better idea of how realistic this price is," O'Leary said.

Attending from the public was Water and Sewer Commissioner Karon Hathaway, who stated that their department has a list of needed future projects they would like considered in upcoming CDBG applications.

Select Board Chair Edward Renauld moved to authorize PVPC to pursue this project, not to exceed \$950k for construction of the Stanton Avenue project, which was unanimously approved. Renauld followed up with a second motion authorizing Select Board member Roger Booth to sign all authorizations on this project, which was also approved unanimously. Typically, Renauld explained, the Chair does this, but Renauld intends to complete this term and not run for re-election this spring.

The application's outcome should be known sometime this summer. Questions may be directed to John O'Leary, Principal Planner by calling 413-781-6045 or emailing joleary@pvpc.org.

In other business, Town Administrator Jennifer Pelouquin



Megan Haberle, Director of the community Development Department and John O'Leary, Principal Planner, both from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, took part in the town's public hearing for this year's Community Development Block Grant.

Turley Photo by Wendy Long

announced that the town's annual election will be on Saturday, May 11. The last day to obtain nomination papers will be Wednesday, March 6; these must be taken out in person and returned on Wednesday, March 20 no later than 5 p.m. Candidates must be registered to vote in Huntington, have lived in town for at least nine months and must obtain a minimum of 20 signatures from other Huntington voters.

The Select Board also approved this year's Veterans and Senior Citizen property tax work-off participants; approved several Stanton Hall use requests and approved a one day liquor license to the Gateway Education Foundation for their annual trivia night at Stanton Hall on Saturday, March 23.

Pelouquin also announced that Veterans Services has found a person from Huntington who was Killed in Action and therefore eligible for the Medal of Liberty, which will be presented at the Memorial Day observances.

Pelouquin announced that she had won a \$22,500 District Local Technical Assistance grant through the PVPC to update the town's Open Space and Recreation Plan. The grant requires that a committee form and work on this; the Select Board suggested trying to recruit representatives from Zoning, Planning and Conservation Commissions. Anyone else interested in working on this new plan should contact Jennifer Pelouquin by calling 413-512-5200 or emailing admin@huntingtonma.us; she expects to begin meeting in early March.

Fire Chief Joshua Ellinger received word that the town is getting two additional pockets of grant funding. A \$2,194.07 grant from the EOPSS Automated External Defibrillator Program will fund an AED for the department's command vehicle. Ellinger also reported that they received \$7,792.47 in grant funding, as part of the FY'24 Firefighter Safety Equipment Grant, which will be used to purchase three sets of firefighting turn-out gear to outfit new hires.

Finally, the board took a deep dive into the current status of projects earmarked for funding through the American Rescue Plan, which must be closed out by December. A new boiler is being considered for town hall from remaining funds.

## FIRE DEPT.

from page 1

ried by the thirty firefighters attending.

Fit testing, Ellinger said, is required annually in order to use the SCBA. "Huntington is scheduled to be fit tested next month using the Hampshire County Fire Defense owned and operated fit tester that circulates through the county's numerous departments," he said.

Oxygen canisters will be tested at five years and ten years of use and are to be removed from service at 15 years, Forrest said. Hangers on the cylinder have each been lasered to identify, which town they belong to. Forrest told them the largest repair on the cylinders happens when the hand wheel is overtightened, which can cause breakage and leaks.

The gauges on these new SCBA's will be more accurate than the equipment the towns have been using. Forrest also cautioned them that the weight of the unit has to be carried on the hips, not the shoulders. "The hips can hold more weight and you will require less oxygen, meaning the cylinder lasts longer," Forrest said.

Each town received a different num-

ber of units, based upon the number of SCBA's they were replacing. Blandford received 13, Chester 12, Huntington 16, Montgomery 15, and Russell 18. Each town had to pay a local cost share of 5%, as per the terms of the grant, which totaled \$26,675.24.

FEMA states that the purpose of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant program is to "protect the health and safety of the public and firefighting personnel against fire and fire-related hazards."

According to Ellinger, the advantage of all purchasing the same units at the same time will be the interoperability of the equipment across departments. As the towns respond to each other's fires through mutual aid, the importance of this opportunity is significant.

"Regionally, this is a huge win for the area and being more interoperable with our mutual aid partners," Ellinger reported. "And it's a huge improvement having current standard equipment, keeping our firefighters that much safer when operating on emergency scenes. And the amount of money this saved the taxpayers is incredible."



Chester Fire Chief Henry Fristik, from left and Huntington Fire Chief Josh Ellinger look on as about 30 local firefighters are trained in the new equipment purchased through a five-town FEMA grant written by Ellinger.

Turley Photo by Wendy Long

## COA hosts corned beef and cabbage luncheon

HUNTINGTON – The Huntington Council on Aging is hosting a sit-down corned beef and cabbage luncheon on Saturday, March 16 at noon at Stanton Hall, 26 Russell Road.

COA Chair Kat Peterson announced that this is the first year since Covid that the event is being done in person. In the past, it has sold out, with 100 people taking part in the "drive-through" dinner during Covid and 60 attending in-person previously.

Food will be prepared under the direction of Helen Speckels, with assistance from COA Board members.

Live music will be provided by Wild Thyme, a mix of violins, guitars and vocals that will provide foot stomp-

ing Irish tunes.

All ages are welcome; a \$7 donation is suggested per meal. Reservations are required for this event. People should call 413-512-5200 for reservations by Friday, March 1.



## Hilltown Memory Cafe lists upcoming music lineup

HUNTINGTON – The Hilltown Memory Cafe is held every Wednesday from 2-3 p.m.

This is open to residents from any community with or without memory issues. Art instruction is offered with therapeutic artist Lori Bacon and a caregiver support group is held each week.

Live music is offered once a month, and the program has announced their upcoming schedule of performers. The Pioneer Valley Fiddlers will perform on Feb. 28; Wild Thyme on March 27; Jack & His Guitar on April 24 and Sarah the Fiddler on May 8.

The Huntington Council on Aging also offers outreach services that support elders and their caregivers with information and resources. This includes assistance with finding and securing benefit programs and making home visits. People may call Coordinator Crystal Wright-Partyke at 413-685-5283 or email caregiver-

outreach@huntingtonma.us for more information or to sign up for either program.

Transportation is available by calling the Franklin Regional Transit Authority Van Driver Richard Homan at 860836-1844 no later than 6 p.m. the night before to schedule a ride.

Availability increases if people call well in advance of the appointment or event. An application needs to be completed before they can ride the van. People should call 413-512-5205 to have a form mailed or emailed to them. The fare for the van ride to the Memory Cafe or COA office is \$1.50 round trip.

These programs are funded in part by a grant from Highland Valley Elder Services, through funding under the Federal Older Americans Act and by a grant from the Huntington Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

# OPINION

## GUEST COLUMN



### More questions for the Garden Lady

Eleanor wrote in with this question for the Garden Lady regarding amaryllis bulbs: "I have three bulbs from last year that have been hibernating and now they are in the sun and have produced long green leaves but no buds. I read it somewhere that if you let them dry out, no more water, but keep them in the sun they will send out buds, but I cannot find where I read that. I hope it is true...so I can still get flowers this year before I have to repeat the whole process (by putting them back in dormant condition in August for a few weeks). I do have one more bulb from last year that did give me a flower...but these other three ones are not showing me any prospects. Can you help?"

Without seeing your bulbs and the foliage, my best guess would be that they will likely not flower this year. What leads me to that conclusion is that one other bulb you have already flowered.

If they were on the same timeline, then probably the other bulbs did not have enough strength to send up a flower stalk. I would not let them dry out, but continue to water and fertilize monthly so that the foliage will grow strong, and be able to make enough energy for blooms next year, after a period of dormancy in the fall.

I know this is upsetting after all of your hard work. Re-bloom is often an experiment.

Sadly, sometimes it happens and sometimes it doesn't. It may not be anything you did wrong – it could be that the one bulb that did flower was a bigger bulb to begin with or was from healthier stock initially.

Meredith, who gardens in Wilbraham, posed this question to the Garden Lady: "As I look at all of the seed packets strewn before me, what your best advice would be for starting seeds indoors?"

Ah-hah! I have been itching to talk about this, so your timing is perfect.

Although we are excited to get the season started, the biggest mistake people make is starting seeds too early. Always research the varieties you want to grow in a good seed catalog.

Johnny's Selected Seed and Fedco come to mind as having great advice on how many weeks prior to the last frost seeds should be sown. For example, tomato seeds should be planted indoors the last week of March or first week of April.

Although that seems late (we want to do it now), we don't want root bound transplants come May.

While average household temps will still result in seeds sprouting, bottom heat by use of heat mats will aid in germination because it will keep the seed bed a constant temperature.

Plants usually suffer without enough light – placing seedlings in the window usually results in seedlings that stretch to the sun. A simple shop light with fluorescent bulbs set a

GARDEN, page 5

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DAVE GRANLUND © www.davegranlund.com

## GUEST COLUMN

### Should I claim Social Security at 68 or wait until I'm 70?



Dear Rusty

I have a question regarding my SS benefits. I turned 68 this month and work part time.

I earned \$28,000 last year, but will probably gross \$36,000 to \$38,000 this year. My husband collects his SS and he earned \$25,000 last year. I was told by a financial planner that I should apply for my benefits now, instead of waiting until I'm 70. I would collect \$1,700 per month at 68 and \$1,944 per month if I wait. Which is the smarter move?

Signed: Seeking Answers

Dear Seeking

I'm sure your financial advisor would agree that your decision on when to claim your Social Security comes down to just a

few basic things: 1) how badly you need the money, 2) your life expectancy and 3) whether you will receive a spousal boost from your husband when you claim.

Because you have already passed your Full Retirement Age of 66 years and 4 months, your work earnings won't negatively affect your monthly SS benefit amount. If you claim now, however, your work earnings will affect how much of your SS benefits will be subject to income tax. Assuming you file your income tax as "married/filing jointly," up to 85% of the Social Security benefits you receive during the tax year will become part of your income taxable by the IRS. If you do not urgently need the extra money that your SS will provide, then waiting longer to claim will also postpone paying income tax on your received benefits and that may be a consideration.

Your life expectancy is key in making your decision on when to claim. You already know that your benefit will be \$244 per month more if you wait until you are 70 to claim. If you claim at 68 (e.g., this month),

SECURITY, page 5



American Goldfinch winter plumage

I received an email from a Brimfield resident who counted 36 plus American goldfinch in his yard during a snow storm. The next day he saw about a dozen.

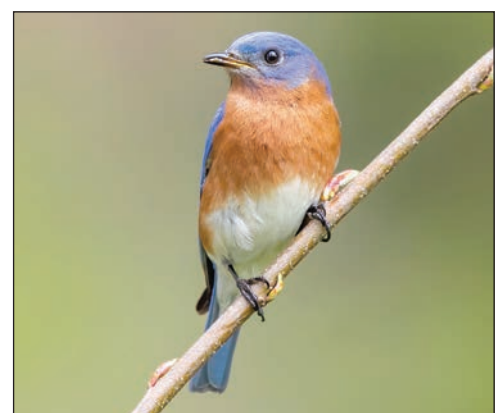
I also had about 20 plus goldfinch eating on the ground under my feeder. I had seen two or three mixed in with juncos and sparrows from time to time, but not this many. In winter, they are found in flocks that wander in search of food.

The American goldfinch is five inches long. The male during breeding season has a bright yellow body and black cap, wings and tail. The wings also have white bars. The female is yellowish, green overall with black wings and tail.

In winter, the male looks more like the female with a yellowish brown, yellowish wash on the face and chin and black wings with white wing bars. The female in winter is grayish brown with a little yellow and dark brown wings with white wing bars.

Goldfinch feed on the ground, on weed stalks, thistles and foliage. At feeders, they prefer hulled sunflowers and thistle (Niger) seeds.

The female lays three to seven light, blue eggs in a nest of strands from weeds and vines, downy elements from wind-dispersed seeds such as thistles bound with caterpillar webbing placed in a shrub or tree.



Bluebird

Bluebirds

A flock of about eight male and female bluebirds continue to come to my raisin suet cake and the feeder with mealworms. I fill it once or twice during the day as I enjoy watching them as I work at my desk. During the snow on Tuesday, they visited the meal-

BACKYARD, page 5

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# OPINION

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Task Force offers advice regarding teen dating

February is teen dating violence prevention month. If you have a teen or pre-teen in your life, we'd like to ask you to talk to them about relationship health.

It can be hard for all of us to know what we have in a relationship. Most relationships start out healthy and if they do become unhealthy or abusive it is often gradual.

Teens often miss the early warning signs and misunderstand what their partner's behavior means. Jealousy can look like love. Possessiveness and wanting to spend time only with you can feel flattering. Blame shifting and gas lighting can make teens feel that being mistreated is their fault and that if they only tried harder their relationship would go back to being how good it was at the beginning.

We think that if teens and pre-teens understand the signs of a healthy, unhealthy, and abusive relationships early on, they will have a better chance of avoiding harmful relationships and understanding that being mistreated is never their fault.

We also think that if they are used to talking to adults they trust about relationships, they will be more likely to reach out if they ever do need help. A good way to start a conversation is to ask a question. You might ask a teen if they think the relationships they see at school are healthy or not, and why they think so.

Add what you know about relationships a little bit at a time, without overwhelming them. Listen more than

Healthy	Unhealthy	Abusive
<p>A healthy relationship means both you and your partner are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicating</li> <li>• Respectful</li> <li>• Trusting</li> <li>• Honest</li> <li>• Equal</li> <li>• Enjoying personal time away from each other</li> <li>• Making mutual choices</li> <li>• Economic/financial partners</li> </ul>	<p>You may be in an unhealthy relationship if your partner is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not communicating</li> <li>• Disrespectful</li> <li>• Not trusting</li> <li>• Dishonest</li> <li>• Trying to take control</li> <li>• Only spending time together</li> <li>• Pressured into activities</li> <li>• Unequal economically</li> </ul>	<p>Abuse is occurring in a relationship when one partner is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicating in a hurtful or threatening way</li> <li>• Mistreating</li> <li>• Accusing the other of cheating when it's untrue</li> <li>• Denying their actions are abusive</li> <li>• Controlling</li> <li>• Isolating their partner from others</li> </ul>

you talk. And don't worry if they don't agree with you. It is when there is tension between two ideas that real learning often happens. Two websites we recommend are [www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org) and [www.joinonlove.org](http://www.joinonlove.org) (from [www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org)).

If you are worried your teen may already be in an unhealthy or abusive relationship, here are some more tips: Ask questions about your teen's life, Listen with an open mind and don't interrupt, Ask them what they want to

do and help them review their options, Be supportive and remind them of their strengths rather than criticizing them, Don't insult their partner, but instead talk about their partner's behaviors that worry you, Above all, keep communicating and try to maintain a connection with your teen and Learn more (see [www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org), or [www.onelove.org](http://www.onelove.org), or contact the Southern Hill Task Force through Facebook @ Southern Hilltown Domestic Violence Task, or Instagram @ Southern Hilltown DV or email us @

[SouthernHillsDVtaskforce@gmail.com](mailto:SouthernHillsDVtaskforce@gmail.com).

As always, we'd like to thank the Hilltown community for everything you do to keep our community healthy and safe.

**Phil Barry, Steph Conway,  
Lindsey Maxwell,  
Police Chief Jennifer Dubiel,  
Sarah McGuinness, Kim Savery,  
Monica Moran and Donna Larocque  
Southern Hilltown DV Task Force**

## SECURITY

you will collect about \$40,800 by the time you reach 70. If you, instead, wait until age 70 to get that extra \$244 per month benefit, it will take you about 14 years collecting at the higher rate to offset the \$40,800 you would have received had you claimed now (in other words, you would break even money wise at about age 84). If your life expectancy is longer, then waiting to claim may be the better choice. Of course, no one knows how long they will live but, for general guidance, average life expectancy for a woman your current age is about 87. Family history and your current health are obviously influencing factors as well. If you wish to get a more personal esti-

mate of your life expectancy, I suggest using this tool:

[www.socialsecurityreport.org/tools/life-expectancy-calculator/](http://www.socialsecurityreport.org/tools/life-expectancy-calculator/).

In the end, if you believe you will attain at least average life expectancy and you don't urgently need the money now, waiting longer will not only give you a higher monthly benefit in your later years, but also the most in cumulative lifetime benefits. If, however, you have reason to suspect you won't achieve at least average life expectancy or you need the SS money sooner, claiming before age 70 is likely the better move.

One other thing to consider: If your benefit as your husband's spouse will

be more than your own earned maximum SS retirement benefit, then you should claim your SS benefit now. Your maximum benefit as a spouse would be 50% of your husband's full retirement age entitlement and, if that is more than your own benefit will be at age 70, then claiming now to get your maximum spousal benefit would be your best choice. To get a spousal benefit from your husband, your personal FRA entitlement (not your age 68 amount) would need to be less than half of his FRA entitlement. If that isn't the case, then you should make your decision based only on your own Social Security entitlement, as described above.

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

from page 4

## BACKYARD

from page 4

worm feeder and suet feeder frequently. The blue against the white snow was almost as striking as the red of the cardinal against fresh snow.

### Bald eagles

I received a photo of a pair of bald eagles taken by a Palmer resident at Forest Lake in Palmer. They were in the top of a pine tree by the lake.

### Brimfield birds

A Brimfield resident sends emails of the birds in his yard on a regular basis. He said, "One day last week a Carolina wren showed up for a day. The warm brown coloration of the bird caught my eye when I glanced out at the feeders. It was feeding on the suet cakes and the 'log' made of suet, berries and mealworms."

He counted 36 plus goldfinch in the yard during a snow storm. The next day there were over a dozen still about. Usually it is three or four goldfinch that show up.

He shared an email from a friend in Belchertown, "We had a female redwing at the seed trays today. It's unusual to get one here this early. We also had four bluebirds show up and munch on the suet. They seem to make a visit when the weather is crappy."

The Belchertown resident also said, "We're inundated with goldfinch. The

thistle seed bag is covered with them. I had to fill the hearts feeder three times today due to the numbers of goldfinch around."

The Brimfield resident reported a large number of juncos, four white-throated sparrows and come house finch. He said, "A pileated woodpecker did a fly by the other day. That is how we most often see then although a few years ago a male was coming to our suet feeders. The female came close to the feeders but never feed that I saw." His wife drove past Wheeler Pond in town and was surprised to see the pond was not completely frozen and that there were two pair of hooded mergansers on the pond.

### Birds on Feb. 13

The Brimfield resident observed ten species of birds in his yard during the snow on Tuesday, Feb. 13. He counted five mourning doves, one downy woodpecker, one hairy woodpecker, two black-capped chickadees, three tufted titmice, two house finches, one American goldfish and 80 dark-eyed juncos.

*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](mailto:mybackyard88@aol.com) or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.*

## GARDEN

from page 4

couple of inches above growing plants works out great.

Think about the soil you are using, too.

A soilless mix is far superior to regular potting soil or garden soil. It's milled a little finer, and is made to be well-drained weed and pathogen free.

Moistening it to the consistency of a wrung out sponge before use is perfect. Don't bury small seeds too deep. Tiny seed should simply be pushed into the soil surface and not covered.

Hardening off the seedlings you grew before planting them in the ground is very important. Start acclimatizing them to the great outdoors

slowly, first by putting them in the shade for a few hours, working up to full sun over the course of a week's time.

By taking my advice into account, you will be well on your way to growing healthy seedlings indoors.

*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](mailto:pouimette@turley.com) with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.*

## WESTFIELD

### St. Joseph's to hold Italian dinner

WESTFIELD – St. Joseph's National Catholic Church, 73 Main St., will host a community Italian dinner on Sunday, March 10 at noon.

This community dinner will feature traditional baked cheese lasagna, meatballs with Marinara sauce, salad, fresh Italian bread and an Italian dessert along with hot coffee and cold beverages.

Dine-in or take-out tickets are \$18

for adults and \$8 for children under 12. For tickets, people may call 413-562-3067 and leave a message with number of tickets requested either dine-in or take-out along with their name and telephone number. The deadline for purchasing tickets is Thursday, March 7. Take-out dinners will be available for pick-up at 12:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome.

# OTIS

## Grief Support Group to meet on March 13

OTIS – A Grief Support Group meets Wednesday, March 13 from 1:30-2:30 p.m. in Otis Town Hall. Everyone is welcome to attend.

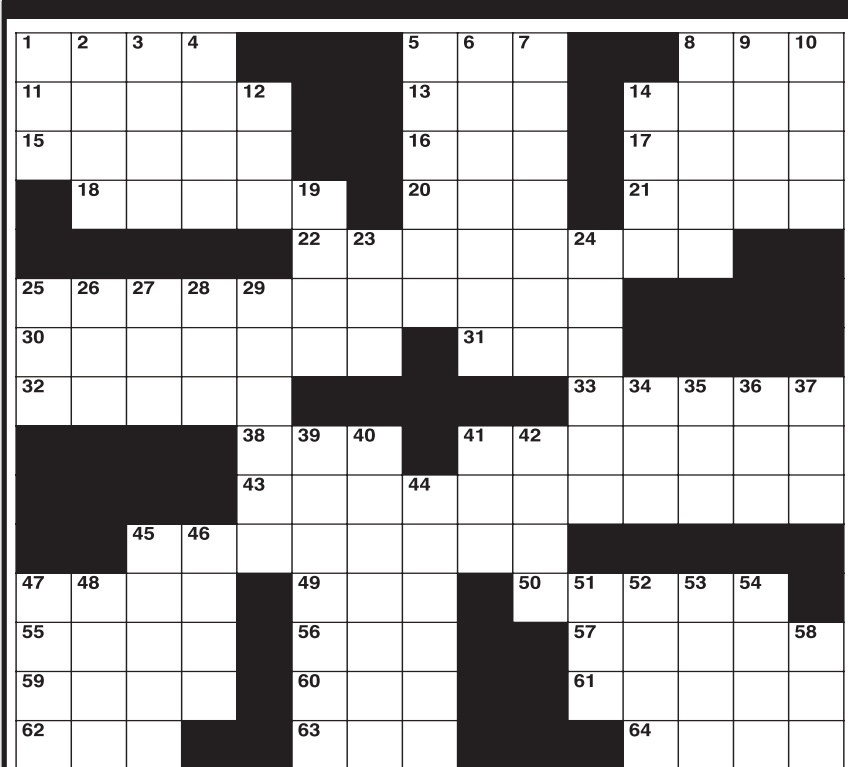
# CHESTER

## Library to host children's paint and snack

CHESTER – Hamilton Memorial Library, 195 West Main St., will hold My Little Friend and Me Paint and Snack on Saturday, Feb. 24t at 10 a.m. The event is free and perfect for

two little friends, siblings, parent/child etc., any duo will do. A parent will need to supervise the younger participants. The painting can stand alone or come together to form a collaborative mas-

terpiece. Image to be painted includes flowers and a ladybug. To reserve a spot or for more information, people should call 413-354-7808f; there is limited seating.



**CLUES ACROSS**

- 1. Golf scores
- 5. Shock therapy
- 8. Ballplayer's tool
- 11. Quench one's thirst
- 13. Female relatives of American war vets (abbr.)
- 14. Every one of two or more things
- 15. Member of Muslim people
- 16. Play
- 17. Type of cheese
- 18. Type of lounge chair
- 20. \_\_\_ King Cole, musician
- 21. Fellows
- 22. North, Central and South
- 25. In an early way
- 30. Foes
- 31. Georgia rockers
- 32. Cryptocurrency
- 33. Narrow path
- 34. When you hope to get somewhere
- 35. Tease
- 36. Actress Gretchen
- 37. Midway between northeast and east
- 39. Inoffensive
- 40. Yellowish cotton cloth
- 41. Consume
- 42. Does not tell the truth
- 44. Improved something
- 45. Spiritual leader
- 46. Abba \_\_, Israeli politician
- 47. Fix
- 48. Evergreen tree genus
- 51. Swiss river
- 52. Prejudice
- 53. Major C. European river
- 54. Long, narrow strap
- 58. Male parent

**CLUES DOWN**

- 1. Pacific Standard Time
- 2. Protruding ridge on
- 3. Indian king
- 4. Type of milk
- 5. One who brings home the bacon
- 6. More comprehensible
- 7. Connected with sense of touch
- 8. Red mineral
- 9. Breezed through
- 10. Therefore
- 12. Supplement with difficulty
- 14. Early kingdom of Syria
- 19. Satisfy
- 23. They confuse doctors (abbr.)
- 24. Brass instrument
- 25. Domesticated animal
- 26. Ribonucleic acid
- 27. Snakelike fish
- 28. Woman (French)
- 29. Economically-minded aircraft

## THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPES

**ARIES**

Mar 21/Apr 20

Aries, a measure of controversy has found its way into your life, but you may want to avoid letting others know your feelings. Keep conversations to trivial topics this week.

**CANCER**

Jun 22/Jul 22

Setting boundaries right now could be difficult for you, Cancer. You are always caring for others and that may affect how involved you get in another person's issues.

**LIBRA**

Sept 23/Oct 23

Libra, pursuing the truth about a situation may seem very important to you and even urgent. But will having all of the answers really change much right now?

**CAPRICORN**

Dec 22/Jan 20

A quiet and practical approach is the way to sort through a confusing situation. Your detailed-oriented nature will help you go through all the facts.

**TAURUS**

Apr 21/May 21

Advice about how to handle a confusing financial matter may not be resonating right now, Taurus. You may need to review the data a few different times.

**LEO**

Jul 23/Aug 23

Share your light and vitality with another person this week, Leo. You can boost this person's mood or even change his or her perspective dramatically if you so desire.

**SCORPIO**

Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, be careful not to take everything that people say to you at face value right now. You need to vet all information for yourself before you make decisions about anything.

**AQUARIUS**

Jan 21/Feb 18

You may not be happy with the direction a family member, friend or even your larger community is moving at the current moment. Consider ways you can help.

**GEMINI**

May 22/Jun 21

Gemini, consider another's perspective more closely in the days to come. A different point of view may help you to more clearly define your own outlook.

**VIRGO**

Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, heated emotions between you and a family member could drive a wedge in your relationship for some time. It is best to carefully weigh your words before speaking.

**SAGITTARIUS**

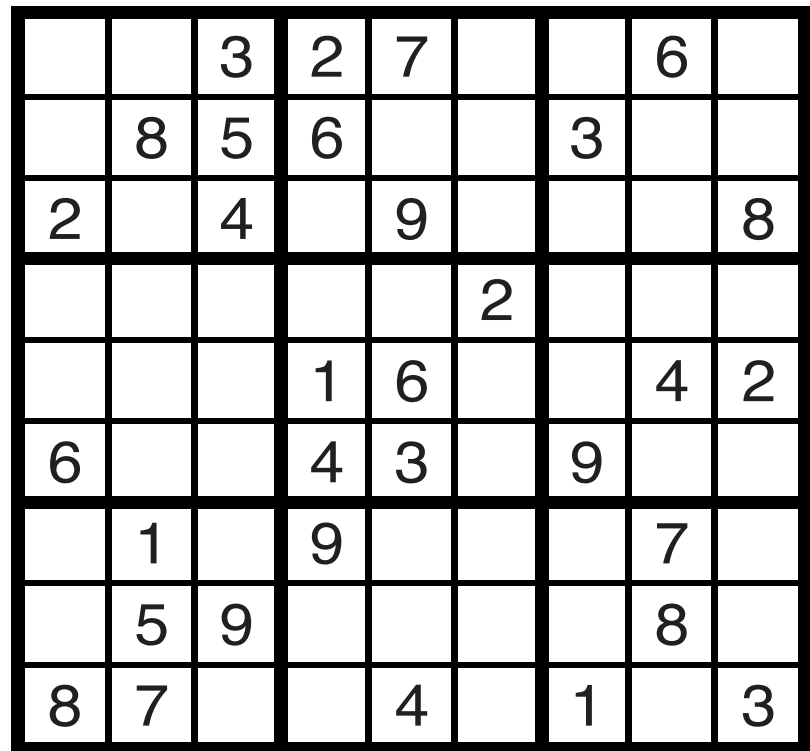
Nov 23/Dec 21

You may be feeling sorry for someone even if they didn't ask you to weigh in on a situation, Sagittarius. You simply can't help getting involved, but remember to listen.

**PISCES**

Feb 19/Mar 20

You may be feeling pulled by the demands of a few different people in your life right now. It's probably best to give things more thought before making any decisions.



# SUDOKU

**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!

**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!

**answers**

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## SCHOOLS & YOUTH

# Colleges and universities announce fall 2023 Dean's List

### President's List

*Carolina Coastal University*  
Conway, SC  
Jaycee Beaulieu of Williamsburg and Joseph Delgado of Westfield

### President's List

*Goodwin University*  
East Hartford, CT  
Jane Dragnea of Russell and Veronika Vysotska of Westfield

### President's List

*University of Hartford*  
West Hartford, CT  
Marina Slivca of Westfield

### Dean's List

*College of the Holy Cross*  
Worcester  
Olivia Lawry of Westfield, class of 2026  
Lilly Patton of Washington, class of 2026  
and Colin Scanlon of Westfield, class of 2024

### Dean's List

*Curry College*  
Milton  
Alexis Balland of Westfield

### Dean's List

*Emerson College*  
Boston  
Ella Mastroianna of Westfield, class of 2026  
and writing, literature and publishing major

### Dean's List

*Fairfield University*  
Fairfield, CT  
Zoe E. O'Neill-Garvey of Easthampton, Jenna E. Codey of Pittsfield, Kiera E. Devine of Pittsfield,

Keely L. Connor of Westfield, Abigail J. Menzel of Westfield and Catherine E. Morrissey of Westfield

### Dean's List

*Fitchburg State University*  
Fitchburg  
Jordan G. Degrenier of Cheshire, Elijah Stathis of Northampton, Owen T. Bonney of Pittsfield, Ashley L. Farina of Pittsfield and Miles A. Nordskog of Pittsfield

### Dean's List

*Goodwin University*  
East Hartford, CT  
Jessica Mitchell of Westfield

### Dean's List

*Hamilton College*  
Clinton, NY  
Jessie Paradis Stern of Westhampton, a sophomore and Eleanor Sangree of Washington, a senior majoring in biology and environmental studies

### Dean's List

*University of Massachusetts Amherst*  
Nicole Mary Hannigan of Chester, Byron Joseph Dudas of Cummington, Terence Maurice Ragston of Cummington, West William Joseph Williams of Cummington, Nicole Allen Claudia Cunningham of Easthampton, Mark Eugene Gardyna of Easthampton, Brenna Lynn Gaspari of Easthampton, Erik Thomas Geertsma of Easthampton, Dylan Tyler Girouard of Easthampton, Aliyah Jae Hall of Easthampton, Elijah Howe of Easthampton, Sydney Lewandowski of Easthampton, Adeline Mary Mantz of Easthampton, Erin

Rachel Caoilinn McElrath-Templin of Easthampton, Sonam Ottaviani of Easthampton, Desire Wanjiku Wanyoike of Easthampton, Jenna Mary Wooster of Easthampton, Mohamed Zabir of Easthampton, Gena Blaisdell Zucchini of Easthampton, Fiona Roisin Bulman of Haydenville, Georgia Trowbridge Horton of Huntington, Mary Jasmine MacNeil of Huntington, Jacob Penn of Huntington, Clarissa Grace Grzybowski of Montgomery, Catherine Consolati of Otis, Elizabeth Jean Sarnacki of Otis, Caden Richard O'Rourke of Sandisfield, Kota Rinaldi of Sandisfield, Lilly Claire Argo Wood of Sandisfield, Colby Austin Lennon of Washington, Alexander Nathan Auclair of Westfield, Brooklyn Jane Borges of Westfield, Joseph Elliott Calderella of Westfield, Grace Emma Cannady of Westfield, Ava Julia Cichonski of Westfield, Megan Cichonski of Westfield, Megan Julianna Clemons of Westfield, Mackenzie Rose Conroy of Westfield, Alexander Paul Dawicki of Westfield and Andrew Dion of Westfield

Also, Carlos Javier Flores-Skribiski of Westfield, Isabella Alene Gorman of Westfield, Ah Gue of Westfield, Mason Bradley Hynes of Westfield, Kelsey Johnstone of Westfield, Bryant M. Keeney of Westfield, Matthew Timothy Kotfila of Westfield, Grace Emily Kuhn of Westfield, Claire Elizabeth Lamarche of Westfield, Alessandro Gerardo Liucci of Westfield, Patrick Philip Martell of Westfield, Benjamin McCann of Westfield, Jeremy William McCormick of Westfield, Wade Jess Miller of Westfield, Sarah Margaret Moriarty of Westfield, Caroline E. Murray of Westfield, Bailey James

O'Shea of Westfield, Chandler Pedolczyk of Westfield, Emma Lauryn Pedolczyk of Westfield, Alyssa Sheileen Piper of Westfield, Madelyn MacKinnon Powers of Westfield, Nina Marie Prenosil of Westfield, Asha Maria Puri of Westfield, Sophia AnnMarie Roselli of Westfield, Brooke Louise Siart of Westfield, Saige Kathleen Smith of Westfield, Aria Luz Sotolongo of Westfield, Ethan David Thompson of Westfield, Paul Max Thomson of Westfield, Lillian Rose Winslow of Westfield, Cadence Loven of Westhampton, Kira Jade French of Williamsburg, Sarah Guiel of Williamsburg, Katherine Jane Tanner Joyner of Williamsburg, Mikayla Marie Tanner Joyner of Williamsburg, Madison Jenna Marney of Williamsburg, Greta Darcy Muellner of Williamsburg, Charles Gustav Strate of Williamsburg, Katherine S. Towler of Williamsburg, Alexander Richard Zimmerman of Williamsburg, Zachary John Archambault of Worthington, Joanna Inez Davis of Worthington, Hannah Clare Matica of Worthington, Olivia Amelia Millis of Worthington and Lydia Eva Pollard of Worthington

### Dean's List

*Vermont State University*  
Randolph, Vermont  
Calvin Rioux of Easthampton and Megan Ward of Easthampton

### Graduate

*Clarkson University*  
Potsdam, NY  
Lindsay Elizabeth Walsh of Westfield, Bachelor of Science with great distinction in engineering and management and project management minor

## HCC Foundation scholarship deadline is Sunday, March 3

HOLYOKE – The deadline to apply for scholarships from the Holyoke Community College Foundation for the 2024-2025 academic year is Sunday, March 3.

Each year, the HCC Foundation awards hundreds of scholarships worth more than \$300,000 to incoming, current and transferring HCC students. Many students receive multiple scholarship awards.

Students must be currently enrolled at HCC or have been accepted for the upcoming academic year to be eligible for scholarships, which are awarded through the HCC Foundation, HCC's nonprofit fundraising corporation.

Applicants only need to fill out a single online form to be automatically matched with the scholarships they are most qualified to receive. There are scholarships for new students, current students and students transferring to other institutions, scholarships based on financial need, scholarships for students in specific majors, scholarships for resi-

dents of certain communities and scholarships that recognize academic achievement.

To make the process of applying easier, HCC opened a Scholarship Resource Center in January on the first floor of the Donahue Building (Room 158). The center is open Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Those in need of assistance can drop in any time during office hours to ask questions or to use one of the center's three computer workstations. They can also schedule appointments to meet with center staffers.

"We're so excited that we have this beautiful space to help students through the scholarship process," said Laura Freeman, manager of stewardship and donor relations and Scholarship Resource Center coordinator.

To view scholarship opportunities and begin the application process, people should visit [www.hcc.edu/scholarships](http://www.hcc.edu/scholarships). Any questions should be directed to Laura Freeman by calling 413-552-2613 or emailing [lfreeman@hcc.edu](mailto:lfreeman@hcc.edu).

## HCC seeking Junior College alumni for special reunion

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College is putting out a call to all alumni who graduated from Holyoke Junior College between 1947 and 1964 to attend a special reunion celebration later this spring at the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute.

The first-ever reunion event for graduates of Holyoke Junior College, the predecessor of HCC, will be held Wednesday, June 5, from 3-6 p.m., at the culinary arts institute on Race Street.

Founded in 1946, Holyoke Graduate School changed its name to Holyoke Junior College in April 1947. After HJC joined the state's community college system in 1964, the name was changed yet again to Holyoke Community College, which was then located downtown on Sergeant Street and Pine Street in the former Holyoke High School building, which burned down in 1968.

"This is a time for our oldest alumni to meet our new leader, President George Timmons, catch up with class-

mates, and reminisce about the good old days," said Julie Phillips, HCC director of development.

Reunion guests will be able to tour the culinary arts facility and also enjoy a dinner prepared by HCC culinary arts students and faculty.

"I'm getting older, and there are people I miss because they live far away," said Angela Wright, a graduate of Holyoke Junior College from the Class of 1954 and a member of the reunion planning committee. "You don't often have a chance to catch up with classmates from your school. I don't know how many of us are left. I'd be thrilled to see them and just chat."

Also on the reunion planning committee are alumni Maurice Ferriter '52, Frances Kane '56, Carl Iger '56, Pat Bresnahan '57, Peg Wendlandt '58, Jim Izatt '59, and Richie Sobon '64.

For more information about the event or to secure your spot for the reunion, please contact John Sieracki at [jsieracki@hcc.edu](mailto:jsieracki@hcc.edu) / 413-687-0322.

## Dr. Ilyasah Shabazz, daughter of Malcolm X, to speak at STCC Feb. 29

SPRINGFIELD – Dr. Ilyasah Shabazz, the daughter of the late activists Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz, will speak at Springfield Technical Community College on Feb. 29 at noon as part of the college's celebration of Black History Month.

Shabazz, an accomplished educator, author and activist, will share her insights and experiences rooted in the rich legacy of African American history and culture.

Shabazz will speak in the auditorium of Scibelli Hall (Building 2) at STCC. The event is free and open to the public. Attendees are encouraged to pre-register. To register for the event, please visit [stcc.io/shabazz](http://stcc.io/shabazz).

Shabazz is chairperson of the Malcolm X & Dr. Betty Shabazz Memorial and Educational Center Board of Trustees. In her work to preserve the legacy of her parents, she has dedicated herself to institution-building and inter-generational leadership development with the tenets of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Her books include a memoir, "Growing Up X," and a children's book, "Malcolm Little: The Boy Who Grew Up to Become Malcolm X."

Shabazz has furthered her commu-



Dr. Ilyasah Shabazz

nity impact with the City University of New York's Office of Academic Affairs, where she created a curriculum to encourage higher education for underserved, inner-city and marginalized high school dropouts.

She has worked with the Office of the Mayor in Mount Vernon, as director of Public Affairs & Special Events. She founded and produced a young adult development program to provide historical context on social justice – encouraging personal empowerment and community service as a way of life.

As president and founder of Ilyasah Shabazz Enterprises, she produces a variety of forums dedicated to power, possibility and sovereignty.

"We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Shabazz to STCC," said Dr. Kiyota Garcia, Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs and Interim Chief Equity Officer at STCC. "We want our students, staff and faculty and the community to prepare to be enlightened and empowered by Dr. Shabazz. She will illuminate the significance of Black history and its enduring impact on society."

Interested in applying to STCC? Visit [stcc.edu/apply](http://stcc.edu/apply) or call Admissions at (413) 755-3333.

# BLANDFORD

## JOANN MARTIN RECEIVES BIRTHDAY WISHES



Joann Martin, Administrative Assistant and member of Council on Aging and Recreation Committee, celebrated her birthday Monday, Feb. 12 with a surprise from colleagues at the Town Hall. Her cake was decorated by Jennifer Girard at the Blandford Country Store and the flowers were from the Council on Aging. Everyone's sweet-tooth was accommodated. *Submitted photo*

## Collector reminds excise tax bills due March 6

BLANDFORD – Treasurer/Tax Collector Sara Hunter reminds resident vehicle owners that excise taxes are due by March 6.

These taxes can be paid online at [townofblandford.com](http://townofblandford.com). Once on the Treasurer/Collector page there is a dialogue box, "Click here to pay your tax or

water bill online" with additional information that the link opens in a new window to the actual payment site.

The first wave of excise bills due now will be followed by two additional mailings later this spring, but, according to Hunter, the March mailing goes to the largest number of vehicle owners.

## Legislators invite the public to forum in Blandford

BLANDFORD – State Senator Paul W. Mark and state Rep. Nicholas Boldyga invite the public to a "ReMarks and Refreshments" forum on Friday, Feb. 23 from 9-10:30 a.m. at the Blandford Town Hall, 1 Russell Stage Road.

The legislators welcome the public to ask questions or offer up comments about opportunities and/or challenges facing the town of Blandford and Western Massachusetts. Sen. Mark and Rep. Boldyga will also share some legislative updates from the State House.

Sen. Mark's Berkshire, Hampden, Franklin, and Hampshire District consists of 57 municipalities in western Massachusetts. He is the chair of the Joint Committee on Tourism, Arts and Cultural Development; the vice chair of

the Joint Committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets; and the vice chair of the Joint Committee on Transportation.

Rep. Boldyga's Third Hampden District consists of the Hampden County towns of Blandford, Chester, Granville, Montgomery, Russell, Southwick and Tolland; Precincts 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 in the city of Agawam and the Hampshire County towns of Huntington and Middlefield. He is the Ranking Minority on the House Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs.

The Blandford ReMarks and Refreshments event is one in a series of public forums Senator Mark is organizing in an effort to reach all 57 communities.



Send Us Your Photos!

countryjournal@turley.com

## Art class offered in Blandford

BLANDFORD – Artists gathered Wednesday, Feb. 14 in the Council on Aging room at Town Hall to paint limes. The next session is set for Wednesday, March 13 at 10 a.m. and the subject will be grapes on the vine. People may register for the class by emailing [stheresa811@live.com](mailto:stheresa811@live.com). There is a \$10 fee.



Sue Racine, standing left, gives suggestions as does Lucia Sullivan, standing right to budding water color artists, seated from left Joann Martin, Cindy Carr and Sandy Mann.



Sue Racine, who offered an art class on Wednesday, Feb. 14 in the Blandford Town Hall Council on Aging room, laid out the supplies for her class. *Photos by Mary Kronholm*

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# RUSSELL

## WHOA draws Scouts to Moses for winter adventure

RUSSELL – Scouts from near and far enjoyed a variety of winter adventures and activities for Woronoco Heights Outdoor Adventures held at the Horace A. Moses Scout Reservation on Birch Hill Road.

Offering blacksmithing, disc golf, geocaching, ice fishing, It's All Things Birds, orienteering, a sugar shack hike and more, Scouts and their leaders had plenty of fun, skills-based and team-building activities to participate in this past Saturday.

In the Blacksmith Shop, Scouts learned how to forge a J-hook with the guidance of Dana Dupuis of Heroic Wolves Forge.

For It's All Things Birds, Scouts learned about feeding, housing and observing wild birds. Scouts recorded any birds observed and identified at the reservation's birdfeeder for the Great American

Backyard Bird Count that was held Feb. 17-20.

Scouts enjoyed the reservation's 9-hole disc golf course, and searched for seven geocache locations.

Using compasses, Scouts honed their orienteering skills, getting both instruction and practice.

A hike to the Top O' The Hill Maple sugar shack in neighboring Blandford followed in the footsteps of General Henry Knox, who passed through the area in the winter of 1775-1776 to deliver artillery from Fort Ticonderoga to General George Washington in Cambridge.

The next WHOA event is scheduled for Saturday, March 16 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. This program is open to anyone ages 5 and up, whether they are a Scout or not.

For more information about WHOA, visit 413WHOA.org.



Robert Kidd, a longtime staffer at Horace A. Moses Scout Reservation in Russell, shares the history of the peak located on Chips Norcross' property in Blandford with Scouts from Haverhill Troop 24. Scouts hiked up the peak to visit Top O' The Hill Maple sugar shack during the second of three Woronoco Heights Outdoor Adventures held during the winter.



Dana Dupuis of Heroic Wolves Forge in Russell taught Scouts how to create J-hooks in the Blacksmith Shop.



Cub Scouts from Pack 168 of Monson enjoyed ice fishing. *Turley Photos by Paula Quimette*



Scouts from Troop 7281 of Ware and Troop 161 of Sturbridge worked together to drill a hole through the ice.



Scouts from Troop 161 of Sturbridge cleared pieces of ice from a hole they drilled.



A Scout demonstrated how to use a depth finder to set the length of the fishing line on the tip-up.



A Scout used an auger to drill holes through the ice.

## State offers to pay for public access to Westfield River

RUSSELL – The town of Russell has the opportunity to have a boating and fishing access area constructed on town property on Frog Hollow Road, adjacent to the bridge on Main Street

The Office of Boating and Fishing Access, a department of the Fish and Game Department of Massachusetts, has responded to a request initiated by local boaters and fishermen to construct an accessible public access to the Westfield River for non-motorized carry-in boats.

The Office of Boating and Fishing has subsequently visited Russell, scouted several potential sites and identified the Frog Hollow location to be best for engineering of the project, which includes a parking lot, path to the bank, path down a modified bank to the water, railings, low lighting and regulation signage. All engineering, project design, permitting and construction of the site would be done by the state at no cost to the town.

Four potential designs have been submitted to the Russell Select Board from the Office of Boating and Fishing Access Department. The Commonwealth has constructed many such access points on public properties throughout the state.

The Commonwealth does require that when the Boating & Fishing Access is completed, the town will be responsible for maintenance and management of the area.

Local boaters and fishermen cite several reasons why they support developing the boating and fishing access site. The Frog Hollow location is presently in poor physical condition, steep and unsafe for human access along the riverbank. There is no other improved public boating / fishing access in Russell or on the Westfield River, which is considered a prime fishing destination. All of the pull-off parking areas within the borders of Russell along Route 20 are posted with "Live Parking Only" and subject to towing if "unattended after 30 minutes." These restrictions alone diminish reasonable access for fishermen and paddlers.

In addition, public access for fishing and boating onto Russell Pond, a "Great Pond," has been denied by the administration of Camp Moses, the owners of almost all of the property encircling the pond. This denial appears contrary to MGL, Title XIX, Ch 131, Sect. 45. There is no parking along Birch Hill Road adja-

cent to the pond, limiting access to the water.

Fishing from the Russell owned beach at Russell Pond is prohibited because of the tendency for fishing gear such as hooks and lines to be left in the sand and water, a hazard to beach goers and requiring cleanup by the Recreation Committee.

Boating and fishing enthusiasts from Russell and surrounding towns are advocating for the town of Russell to accept the offer from the Office of Boating and Fishing to construct the river access for these recreational activities. Discussion at the administrative level during open Russell Select Board meetings has not been wholly accepting of the project. Some individuals of the administration and other town departments are not accepting of the requirements mandated by the Commonwealth OBFA. The mandate states that the area is to be open to the public around the clock, at least initially, without overnight parking. And the site would be added to the OBFA website. If an issue arises at the site once opened, an appeal can be made by the town to the OBFA, to tailor the hours to

the town needs.

Other administrative concerns center around town policing, maintenance and emergency response. The Boating and Fishing enthusiasts counter these concerns by stating, "This Frog Hollow location has always been open to the public for access without concentrated concern for policing or emergency response. And the grounds have always been maintained by the Highway department. It has never been posted 'for Russell resident use only,' always open to the general public."

The objections to accepting the Commonwealth's offer has prompted some town officials to do a preliminary search to build an access with town funds, so as not to be held by the regulations of the Commonwealth.

More public conversation will likely take place at future Select Board meetings, which are held every other Tuesday at 6 p.m.

To express support for the Commonwealth's construction of a boating and fishing access project in Russell, people should call the boating and fishing enthusiasts at 413-862-4747 and leave a callback message.



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## WORTHINGTON

# Local author to speak at Historical Society Feb. 25

WORTHINGTON – The Worthington Library presents local author, Steven Cormier on Sunday, Feb. 25, 24 at 3 p.m. at the Worthington Historical Society, 6 Williamsburg Road.

Cormier will give a book talk on his 2023 publication, “Life and Times of Parley B. Hutchins: the mystery continues” based on the true story of a local hilltown resident whose murder was never fully resolved. Parley B. Hutchins, a Huntington resident and mill owner, lived a reclusive life in the 1800s and is the victim of an unsolved murder that once shook the town.

Cormier, who moved to Huntington in 2016, took an interest in the history of

his newly purchased home and uncovered the mystery surrounding its former resident. Cormier’s research draws from court transcripts, newspaper articles and other historical documents to recount the story.

The book talk includes a PowerPoint presentation and is open to the public. It is hosted by The Worthington Library and supported in part by a grant from the Worthington Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

For more information, people may call the Worthington Library at 413-238-5565 or email [TheWorthingtonLibrary@gmail.com](mailto:TheWorthingtonLibrary@gmail.com).

# COA lists St. Patrick’s Day event

WORTHINGTON – The Council on Aging is hosting the annual St. Patrick’s celebration (dine in) on Monday, March 11 at noon at the Town Hall for Worthington seniors 60 plus.

The Chesterfield General Store/Cafe will again be serving their famous corned beef buffet. The Rolling Sconesagain will again be there for their listening pleasure.

Kelly Slattery will be the Council on Aging guest from the Highland Valley Elder Services to explain the free grab-n-go meal. Enrollment forms will be available.

Reservations are required. Limited seating is available so call 413-238-1999. They should clearly state their name and phone number. This is underwritten by the Rolland Trust Fund.

### STUDENTS DISTRIBUTE VALENTINES TO SENIORS



The Worthington Council on Aging’s Valentine’s celebration Potluck on February 12, guests were delighted by the smiles of the R.H. Conwell School students distributing Valentine cards that they had made for the guests.

*Submitted photo*

## EASTHAMPTON

# Dan Carey announces candidacy for Hampshire Clerk of Courts

NORTHAMPTON – On Saturday morning, Feb. 17, before a standing room only crowd at the Hotel Northampton, State Representative Daniel R. Carey (D-Easthampton) formally announced his candidacy for Hampshire County Clerk of Courts.

Carey said running for Clerk of Courts allows him “to join my love of public service with my profound respect for the rule of law, and to ensure that the

Hampshire County Superior Court remains among the very best in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.”

Carey promised a vigorous campaign, noting that although state law requires the submission of 500 nomination paper signatures, his goal is “to gather from every one of our 20 Hampshire County cities and



Dan Carey

towns a total of 1,000 signatures.”

Carey was elected to the Massachusetts Legislature in 2018, where he serves on the Joint Committee on the Judiciary. Carey also served as an Assistant District Attorney and a District Court Administrator for Northwestern District Attorney

David E. Sullivan. Carey previously served on the Easthampton City Council and the Easthampton School Committee.

Carey concluded his remarks promising, “If elected, I will devote my whole head and heart to being the best servant of the public I can be, and I will fight to ensure that for every person entering its halls, the Hampshire County Superior Court remains a source of equal justice under law.”

# bankESB donates to Junior Achievement of Western Massachusetts



bankESB Executive Vice President, Chief Information Officer is shown with Junior Achievement of Western Massachusetts Emeritus Board Member, Lynn Starr.

*Submitted photo*

EASTHAMPTON – bankESB made a \$12,500 donation to the Junior Achievement of Western Massachusetts in partnership with the Elan Charitable Giving Program.

Elan Financial Services, bankESB’s credit card solutions partner launched their charitable giving program in 2022 and has donated over \$1.7 million to charities on behalf of their credit card partners since the program’s start.

bankESB selected Junior Achievement of Western Massachusetts, whose proven lessons in financial literacy, work and career readiness, and entrepreneurship are shown to positively impact the lives of young people. They work to help young people discover what’s possible in their lives by connecting what they learn in school with life outside the classroom.

They let them know it’s possible to

invest in their future, to gain a better understanding of how the world works and to pursue their dreams. bankESB is proud to be a long-time supporter of Junior Achievement and is thrilled to give back to such an impactful organization with a partner like Elan.

“We’re delighted to expand our reach this year to the communities of 15 credit union and 15 community bank partners,” said John Owens, Elan Credit Card General Manager, “From food insecurity and housing to animal shelters and youth arts programming, the Elan Charitable Giving program continues to support the needs of our partner’s communities.”

Founded in 1869 as Easthampton Savings Bank, bankESB is headquartered in Easthampton and has 11 branches located throughout Western Massachusetts.

This paper publishes birth, engagement, wedding and significant anniversary announcements free of charge. Simply log on to our web site, choose the paper you want the announcement to appear in, then use our SUBMISSION link to email your information.



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# OBITUARY

## Rose Marie Sherman, 86

WORTHINGTON – Rose Marie Sherman, age 86 passed away peacefully on Jan. 27, 2024.

She was born Nov. 26, 1937 and resided in Worthington her entire life. Rose graduated from Northampton High School where she enjoyed playing basketball.

She married Ralph B. Sherman on Jan. 29, 1960. They lived on their family farm in Worthington where they raised their three children. Rose had several jobs throughout the years Pro Brush, Albert Farms, drove school bus, Ashmere Nursing Home and Swift River Academy.

Rose grew up loving horses and loved competing in local gymkhanas and horse shows at the local fairs. Her happiest times were fair season where she participated in any way she was needed, especially announcing for the horse and ox draws at the local fairs.

Rose was involved with the Cummington Fair for 42 years, first



as secretary starting in 1982 and later as a Fair Director. In November 2014, Rose was inducted to the Massachusetts Agricultural Fairs Association 2014 Hall of Fame.

She is predeceased by her late husband, Ralph B. Sherman; her mother, Mary E. Brooks and sister, Ginger

Donovan and her faithful dog and companion of 15 years, Chloe.

She is survived by her three children, Terry R. Malloy, Wendy S. Sherman (Terry Corbett) and Dale L. Sherman (Mary Bourdon) and grandson, Joshua Culver and her sisters, Elizabeth Parish and Deen Nugent and several nieces and nephews.

A Celebration Of Rose's Life will be held in the spring at the Cummington Fairgrounds on May 18 from 1-4 p.m.

Donations in her memory may be made to: Hillside Agricultural Scholarship, c/o Sandy Lilly, P.O. Box 3004, Ashfield, MA 01030.

# DEATH NOTICE

## SHERMAN, ROSE MARIE

Died Jan. 27, 2024  
Celebration of Life May 18 1-4 p.m.  
Cummington Fairgrounds

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# PUBLIC NOTICES

## TOWN OF BLANDFORD Performance Hearing Monday, February 26, 2024, at 6:00 PM FY 2020 CDBG Performance Hearing

The Town of Blandford, in association with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, will conduct a performance hearing regarding the town's ongoing FY20 Community Development Block Grant Program. The hearing will take place at **6:00 PM on Monday, February 26, 2024**, in person at the Town Hall, 1 Russell Stage Road, Blandford, MA 01008.

The hearing will review the projects funded through the town's FY20 Community Development Block Grant Programs including the Town's ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan and housing rehabilitation. These activities received funding through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, Massachusetts CDBG program.

The meeting will be held in person with a virtual option. Meeting link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2155918777>. All persons with questions or comments regarding the performance hearing will have an opportunity to submit comments until and through the public hearing. Please submit comments to Joseph Hagopian at the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission @ [jhagopian@pvpc.org](mailto:jhagopian@pvpc.org) or 413-781-6045. Persons who require special accommodations should contact the Town prior to the hearing date at 413-848-4279 ext. 206. 02/22/24

## In the matter of: Jamie Kathryn Iglesias CITATION ON PETITION TO CHANGE NAME

A Petition to Change Name of Adult has been filed by Jamie Kathryn Iglesias of Russell, MA requesting that the court enter a Decree changing their name to:

## Jackson Aleister Iglesias IMPORTANT NOTICE

Any person may appear for purposes of objecting to the petition by filing an appearance at: **Hampden Probate and Family Court before 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 03/18/2024.**

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance if you object to this proceeding.

WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M Hyland, First Justice of this Court.

Date: February 16, 2024  
**Rosemary A Saccomani**  
Register of Probate  
02/22/2024

## Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 (413)748-7758

Docket No. HD24P0320EA  
Estate of:

## Benedict Alex Mazzoni Also known as: Benedict A Mazzoni Date of Death: 12/08/2023

## CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons:

A Petition for **Formal Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Linda R Mazzoni of Southwick, MA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that: **Linda R Mazzoni of Southwick, MA** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration.**

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

**You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 03/15/2024.**

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections

within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

## UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)

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

WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M Hyland, First Justice of this Court.

Date: February 15, 2024  
**Rosemary A. Saccomani**  
Register of Probate  
02/22/2024

## NOTICE BY PUBLICATION OF PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF GUARDIAN DOCKET NUMBER 24GU0004HA

## COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, Franklin/Hampshire County Juvenile Court 116 Russell Street Hadley, MA 01035 413-584-7686

TO: **Leon J. Vieu, III**  
WHEREAS, DCF Holyoke has filed in this court a petition seeking the appointment of a guardian for following minor child, with custody of said child: **Kendel L. Vieu, born on February 14, 2012 to Cynthia Michele Singletary in Tampa, FL**

You are hereby NOTIFIED that a preliminary hearing is scheduled in this court on the following date and time: **03/29/2024 at 11:30 AM (via Zoom).** Please call the Clerk's Office at 413-584-7686 for further information.

You may bring an attorney with you. If you have a right to an attorney and if the court determines that you are indigent, the court will appoint an attorney to represent you.

If you fail to appear, the court may proceed on that date and any date thereafter with a trial on the merits of the petition and an adjudication of this matter.

For further information call the office of the Clerk-Magistrate at 413-323-4056.

Witness: Hon. Charles S. Belsky, FIRST JUSTICE, DATE ISSUED: 02/16/2024,

Christopher D. Reavey, Clerk-Magistrate. 02/22/2024

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## TOWN OF HUNTINGTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION PUBLIC NOTICE

The Huntington Conservation Commission will hold a public meeting at 7:30 pm on **March 6, 2024** at Stanton Hall to review a Request for Determination submitted by Virginia Martell, BSC Group on behalf of Eversource Energy. The proposed activity is to conduct line upgrade work along the 1915 Distribution Line right-of-way between Searle Road and Norwich Lake Road. This hearing is in accordance with M.G. L. Chapter 131 Section 40 of the Wetlands Protection Act. 02/22/23

Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
The Trial Court  
Hampden Probate and Family Court  
50 State Street  
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Docket No. HD24C0032CA

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

## WESTHAMPTON

# Library announces upcoming news and events

WESTHAMPTON – The Westhampton Public Library, 1 North Road, is open Monday and Thursday 2-8 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday 9 a.m.-noon and 1-5 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

The library is open for in-person browsing and materials pickup as well as curbside pickup. To place a request for curbside pickup, people may either email westhampton@cwmar.org or call 413-527-5386.

Recurring programs include: Council on Aging computer class with Bob Miller second and fourth Mondays from 10 a.m.-noon, knitting group Mondays at 6 p.m., Scrabble group

Tuesdays at 2 p.m., CFCE Playgroup Tuesdays at 3:30 p.m., book group fourth Tuesdays at 7 p.m., walk-in wellness clinics with Westhampton's Public Health Nurse first and third Wednesdays from 10-11:30 a.m. and coffee and chat Wednesdays from 10 a.m.-noon.

Homework help is held Mondays at 3:15 p.m. Children receive mentorship and homework assistance from Academic Society Hampshire Regional High School teen homework helpers with support from retired teachers. This is a way to find help from peers in a low-pressure, resource rich environment. People may email westhampton@cwmar.org for more information.

Other activities include: playgroups on Tuesday at 3:30 p.m., story time on Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. and after school fun on Thursdays at 3:30 p.m., with LEGO Club first Thursday; Craft Club second Thursday; Nintendo Switch Happy Hour third Thursday and Comics Club fourth Thursday.

Teen Craft Night meets the third Thursday, March 21 at 6 p.m. This month's craft is a Yarn Rainbow Wall Hanging. Materials are limited to eight participants and registration is required by emailing Emily at ewayne@cwmar.org.

The February/March artist is Pierre Archambault. His Moments in Time will

be on view through Thursday, March 28 during library hours. Pierre Archambault is a visual artist, a musician and a sound-designer for film. Mediums of choice for painting are oils and gouache paint. Musical instruments of choice are violin and guitar. Pierre also teaches courses in the field of sound arts and is an Associate Professor at Emerson College, Boston.

Archambault's works have been exhibited nationally and internationally. His undergraduate degree in fine arts is from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and Tufts University. Pierre's MFA is from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

## LENOX

# Kick the Winter Blues concert set from March 16 and 17

LENOX – Berkshire Lyric is presenting their annual "Kick The Winter Blues" pop concerts on Saturday, March 16 and Sunday, March 17 at 3 p.m. at the Lenox Town Hall Auditorium.

This year's program is titled "Happy Trails, Music from the American West." The two identical concerts will feature well known and traditional standards and cowboy songs from the old west. The music will range from Gene Autry to The Chicks. The Berkshire Lyric Chorus, the Lyric Children's Chorus and Melodious Accord will be joined by guest instrumentalists, Bobby Sweet, Eric Martin and Dan Broad and will be led by Berkshire Lyric's Jack Brown and accompanist Joe Rose. The concerts will conclude with a sing-a-long and the audience is encouraged to dress in western apparel.

Recent Kick the Winter Blues concerts have been standing room only. People may purchase their tickets early from chorus members or by visiting [www.BerkshireLyric.org](http://www.BerkshireLyric.org).

Tickets are \$25 with children admitted free. The annual KTWB concert supports the year round educational efforts of Berkshire Lyric including three choruses for young people, the Summer Kids Choral Camp and the Choral Scholars Program for outstanding local high school aged singers.

The ninety voice Berkshire Lyric Chorus is also preparing for their upcoming Spring Masterworks Concert at Tanglewood's Seiji Ozawa Hall, performing a Bruckner and Brahms concert with orchestra on June 2. For ticket link people may visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/berkshire-lyric-47947478253>.

## CUMMINGTON

# Friday Night Cafe on Feb. 23

CUMMINGTON – The Friday Night Cafe features Forest Avenue, a musical ensemble offering traditional music and original tunes.

The group interprets tunes from a wide diaspora of cultures in ways that range from eccentric and reverent to dramatic and downright deconstructed. Members are Andy VanAssche, guitar; Désirée Lowit, fiddle; Eveline MacDougall, fiddle, viola and accordion and Dan Frank, mandolin and hurdy-gurdy. Together, the members of Forest Avenue bring broad experience and diverse viewpoints to the stage while still remaining strongly rooted in traditional music.

The show is on Friday, Feb. 23 from 7-9 p.m. at the Village Church in beautiful downtown Cummington in the heart of the Cummington

Cultural District. The event is free, donations are appreciated, snacks are provided, BYO drinks.

The show will take place in the intimate Vestry space. Masks are welcome, and encouraged. Once again the Friday Night Cafe is sponsored by the friendly folks at the Village Church, who believe music can be a powerful force for building community.

Friday Night Cafe receives promotional support from the Cummington Cultural District and is supported in part by grants from the Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Hinsdale-Peru, Plainfield, Williamsburg, Windsor, and Worthington Cultural Councils, local agencies which are supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

## BECKET

# Becket Art Center lists events

BECKET – A songwriting workshop with Chris Merenda will be held on Saturday, Feb. 24 at 4 p.m. at the Becket Arts Center 7 Brooker Hill Road.

People should bring their instruments, a pen and paper and their creative spirit. The fee is \$25 and free for students ages 14-18.

Becket Community Day is Saturday, March 9 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at

Canterbury Farm. People are invited to stop by the Becket Arts Center and make a masquerade mask from noon-2 p.m.

Other activities at the Becket Arts Center include Yoga with Rima Sala on Thursdays at 9:30 a.m. Fee is \$10 and \$5 for BAC members. Nia, somatic movement with Diane Firtell is held on Fridays at noon. Fee is \$15 for drop-ins and \$10 for BAC members.

# Cemetery Commission has vacancy

BECKET – The town of Becket seeks a Becket resident to fill the unexpired term of a Cemetery Commissioner through May 17, 2025.

Interested parties are asked to see Town Clerk Robin Mathiesen to obtain nomination papers for this elected position. Nomination papers must be submitted to the Town Clerk by Monday, April 1. Cemetery Commissioners are available to answer questions about the Cemetery Commission by either calling Dean Williams at 413-623-8934 or 413-564-1592 or calling Michelle Smith at 413-358-1853.

The Cemetery Commission controls all business matters pertaining to operating and overseeing the care of the town's cemeteries. Responsibilities include: overseeing the care and expenditures of perpetual care funds; selling burial plots; coordinating burials; maintaining the records of the cemeteries, including maps and deeds; completing Deed of Right to Burial for each lot owner; proposing and, with Town approval, establishing new rules or regulations for use of the cemeteries; maintaining grounds and overseeing burial services. Must be available or make arrangements with the other Cemetery Commissioners.

## MONTGOMERY

# Library lists upcoming events

MONTGOMERY – The Grace Hall Memorial Library, 161 Main Road, announces the Kid Reading Challenge 2024, inviting children aged 3 to 12 to embark on a literary journey from A to Z.

Running from now to Sunday, March 31, this exciting reading challenge encourages young readers to explore 26 books from authors A to Z. Participating in the Amazing Authors reading challenge is easy. Simply visit the Montgomery Library to pick up a challenge form, where children can record each author's name for every letter in the alphabet. For every library book read and checked out during the challenge, participants will be entered into a drawing for a chance to win fantastic prizes.

Prizes include: ages 3-5 Pet Vet playset, ages 5-10: Turbo Pop STEM Challenge and ages 10-12 Solar BOT.14 robot kit or Mech 5 Robot kit.

Attendees of the Kid Reading Challenge and WingMaster's New England Birds of Prey event on Saturday, Feb. 24 at 1 p.m. will receive a free book. WingMaster's Julia Ann Collier returns to the Montgomery Library with "New England Birds of Prey." This event offers a unique

and educational experience, bringing live birds into the library for a close encounter with eagles, hawks, falcons and owls. The presentation will delve into the birds' role in the food web, their hunting adaptations and their status in a changing world.

As many birds of prey face declining numbers, the program will highlight endangered raptors and the challenges they confront. This is a not-to-be-missed opportunity to learn, engage and appreciate the beauty and importance of these majestic creatures.

On Thursday, Feb. 22 at 6 p.m., join Ed the Wizard for a hands-on workshop where participants can create their own glider and learn the basics of aerodynamics. This event promises a fun and educational experience for all ages.

For those attending either event, the Montgomery Library offers a free book and entrance into the Kid Reading Challenge from A to Z, 2024.

Information on any of these events is available by calling the library at 416-862-3894 or emailing [montgomerylibrary@yahoo.com](mailto:montgomerylibrary@yahoo.com). Library hours are Tuesdays 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Thursdays 4-8 p.m. and Saturdays from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.



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## REGION

# Baystate doctors discuss obesity and type 2 diabetes

SPRINGFIELD – The numbers tell the story in what is being called a twin epidemic of obesity and type 2 diabetes worldwide, something which endocrinologists and other physicians across the country and at Baystate Health are helping their patients to battle.

In the United States alone, nearly 1 in 3 adults (30.7%) are overweight. More than 2 in 5 adults (42.4%) have obesity. About 1 in 11 adults (9.2%) have severe obesity. Obesity is also increasing in children. Roughly 1 in 6 youths ages 10-17 have obesity. Also, more than 38 million people in the U.S. have diabetes, most with type 2 which can be fueled by obesity and other factors. This number continues to rise and we are seeing type 2 diabetes diagnosed at younger ages in children and adolescents.

February is American Heart Month, a reminder for all Americans to keep their weight and diabetes in check.

Endocrinologists like Dr. Gortakowski, who are specialists in hormones and metabolism, evaluate and treat obesity as well as related diseases, such as type 2 diabetes. She noted that obesity is about more than just what you eat. Obesity is a complex, chronic condition that involves interactions between one's health, genetic, environmental, social, and lifestyle/behavioral factors.

"The last few years have brought about several new medications that target some of the hormones involved in these complex pathways that are beneficial for diabetes, weight loss and heart health," she added.

These new classes of medications, known as GLP-1 and GIP/GLP-1 receptor agonists, include liraglutide (Victoza, Saxenda), exenatide (Byetta, Bydureon), dulaglutide (Trulicity), semaglutide (Ozempic, Rybelsus, Wegovy), and tirzepatide (Mounjaro, Zepbound), respec-

tively. Approved initially by the FDA to treat diabetes, liraglutide, semaglutide and tirzepatide also have FDA approval to treat adults with obesity or with excess weight and weight-related medical problems.

These drugs mimic the action of the hormone called glucagon-like peptide 1 (GLP-1), which helps lower blood sugar. It also helps promote fullness and satiety by working on the hormonal signaling from the brain and gut. Tirzepatide is the first dual agonist and is a GLP-1 and a glucose-dependent insulinotropic polypeptide (GIP) agonist, which has further glucose lowering and weight loss effects.

But you can't rely on medications alone, noted Baystate Health internist Dr. Kathryn Jobbins, trained in internal medicine and fellowship trained in obesity medicine. Her role is to discuss behavioral and lifestyle interventions to be used in conjunction with medications or on their

own to help with weight management and reducing the risk of cardiac disease.

It's not only about the numbers on the scale or your BMI per se. Think about measuring the circumference of your body around the waist, arms, hips and thighs. You want to see a shift in distribution, for example, those who have a large abdominal girth have a greater risk for heart disease, so that is where you want to lose your fat. It is not just getting rid of the weight, but body fat while not losing muscle.

Half of our body weight is water and it is important to drink between 64 to 120 ounces of water a day in order to stay hydrated and help improve weight loss. And if you don't like plain water, try adding slices of your favorite fruit to add some flavor.

For more information on Baystate Health, people may visit baystatehealth.org.

## DCR announces closures of snowmobile trails

Due to the lack of snow, the Department of Conservation and Recreation closed all snowmobile trails, effective immediately, in Western Massachusetts including: Mount Greylock State Reservation, Monroe State Forest, Savoy Mountain State Forest, Mohawk Trail State Forest, Windsor State Forest, Daughters of the American Revolution State Forest, and Dubuque State Forest.

Trails will reopen if conditions improve; they encourage visitors to enjoy cross-country skiing and snowshoeing at these locations. People may email mass.parks@mass.gov with any questions.



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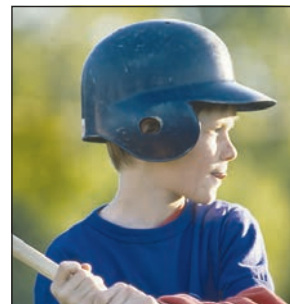
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# HILLTOWN HIKING ADVENTURES

## Searching for boulder quarrying in Becket



Tom is shown at another small quarry site, the larger boulder was split and removed.



Pieces of the original boulder remain at the site.



This closeup shows some of the original pieces of the boulder along with split pieces.

BECKET – At first quarrying was pretty limited. James W. Turner, did “boulder quarrying” cutting the boulders on an old farm into shape, and hauling the rough slabs out by team.

About 10,000 years ago, the glaciers covered most of New England. As the glaciers slowly moved southward, they picked up large chunks of rock from the mountains and moved them many miles to the south.

When the glaciers eventually melted and retreated, these large boulders were left behind. The larger examples of these boulders are called by geologists “glacial erratics.” The colonists, who arrived in Massachusetts in the 1600s, used these glacially deposited stones as an easy source of building materials for foundations, chimneys and stone walls.

The smaller stones were used as is, while the larger stone were split apart using several simple but rather crude quarrying techniques. William Bartram, the noted naturalist, was splitting boulders as early as 1730 in Pennsylvania.

In New England, the first recorded use of quarried field boulders occurred with the construction of King’s Chapel in Boston, which was completed in 1754. The boulders for the chapel were

first blasted and then the chunks were shaped into rectangular blocks using a method called “hammering.”

In 1790 The New-England Farmer offered the following advice to farmers, “Stones that are very large, and which cannot with ease be removed whole, may be blown to pieces with gunpowder.” The book also suggested a second method of removing field boulders, another method of breaking rocks; “Drill two holes in a stone, ranging with the grain, then filling each hole with two semi-cylindrical pieces of iron, drive a long steel wedge between them. The stone will thus split open. And commonly, very regular shaped pieces for building may be obtained.”

By the mid 1800s some farmers were supplementing their income by quarrying field boulders on their farms during the off seasons. The quarrying of boulders continued as late as the 1860s.

Partially quarried boulders are a common occurrence with boulder quarries. Many times the reason for why it was abandoned is obvious. The boulder either split poorly or simply refused to be split at all. In the 19th century, there was a shift toward surface ledge quarrying which proved much more reliable and efficient.



Liz stands by a boulder, which was split and cut using original bouldering quarry techniques.

*Submitted photos*



Members of the Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers explore this old quarry.