

# 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

### Monthly play group opens at library

By Wendy Long  
Correspondent

Director Amanda Loisel announces a new partnership with Hilltown Community Health Centers, Inc., which is sponsoring a free monthly play group at the Huntington Public Library.

The first group will be held on Monday, March 9 starting at 10:30 a.m. Run by HCHC's Hilltown Family Center, this play group is a blend of story time, engaging movement activities, hands-on experiences and self-care tips for parents and caregivers. Connect and Play is for families of children ages 0 to 5.

March is also Youth Art Month and the regularly scheduled Crafternoon Thursday, March 12 at 4 p.m. is an opportunity for young artists to create a masterpiece to be showcased in their April Artist of the Month series. If people are unable to attend, they should feel free to create their artwork at home and bring it in for the upcoming display. All artists are invited to join in April for a special reception to celebrate young artists.

The library's monthly book club will meet on Thursday, March 5 at 4 p.m. to discuss February's read, "The Giver of Stars" by JoJo Moves. "Spying on Whales," written by Nick Pyenson, who is a paleontologist at the Smithsonian, has been selected as the read for March.

This book explains the evolution of whales from land to sea creatures over 50 million years, and describes the technology used to monitor the health, migration, and survival of these marine giants. Copies of April's book are at the library, while available, may be ordered through interlibrary loan or digital versions borrowed through Libby. This book will be discussed at April's Book Club meeting on Thursday, April 2 at 4 p.m.

The Book Swap Club will meet on Tuesday, March 10 at 4 p.m. This group works differently than most book clubs. Each person brings a book that they've read and loved to swap with another reader's pick. Readers return the following month to discuss their impressions and bring new books to swap.

Also returning in March are the library's new Coworking Coffee Hours,

**LIBRARY**, page 3

## WORTHINGTON



Photos courtesy of Charley Rose  
Above, these students from R.H. Conwell School show some of the Valentines they made for Worthington seniors.

### COA Valentine potluck

The February Council on Aging potluck, held on Monday, Feb. 9, was a festive event.

The food was delicious and the deserts were Valentine's Day themed. Both the COA volunteers and the tables were nicely decorated in pink and red.

Most exciting was



a visit from four R.H. Conwell School students, who brought handmade Valentines created by students from preschool through the sixth grade for all of the guests.

These Valentines were also delivered to residents at the Maples who couldn't attend the potluck.



Flowers and Valentine themed desserts were served at the Council on Aging potluck.

## BLANDFORD

### Town caucus March 2

By Mary Kronholm  
Correspondent

The Annual Town Caucus to nominate candidates for town offices will be Monday, March 2 at 7 p.m. at the Town Hall, 1 Russell State Road.

Nominations for the following offices can be made then: Assessor for three years, Stephen Jemiolo, incumbent; Board of Health for three years, Pat Lombardo, incumbent; Cemetery Commissioner for three years, Peter Sparks, incumbent; Fence Viewer for three years, vacant; Fence Viewer for two years, vacant; Field Driver for three years, vacant; Library Trustee for three years. Byam Stevens, incumbent; Municipal Light Board for three years, Peter Langmore, incumbent; Planning Board for five years; two positions, Scott O'Connor and Ron Racine, incumbents; School Committee for three years, Nicole Daviau, incumbent; Select Board for three years. Cara Letendre, incumbent; Town Clerk, Doris Jemiolo, incumbent and Water Commissioner for three years, vacant.

The first order of business will be the election of a chairman and a secretary for the meeting. If there are more than two nominations for any office, the two nominated candidates receiving the largest number of votes

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## MONTGOMERY

### Two newcomers join March Music in Montgomery

Performers for the Music in Montgomery program have been announced for March.

Organizer Dale Rogers posted this month's performers as Kara and Jerry Noble; Helen Arbour, Ursula Elmes and Joe Nerney; plus two newcomers: Caleb Harris and the Rolling Scones and Montgomery Man Bob Cipolli. Co-hosted by the Montgomery Public Library and the Gray Catbird Pottery Studio, Music in Montgomery takes place at Montgomery Town Hall, 161 Main Road, every Thursday, starting at 3 p.m.

Opening in March are perpetual favorites Kara and Jerry Noble on March 5. The duo hardly need any introduction and it's been said by one couple that they never miss a perfor-

mance by the Nobles. With Kara on bass and Jerry on keyboards, the couple are dubbed, "We are the people our parents warned us about."

It's always a special event when Helen Arbour, Ursula Elmes and Joe Nerney perform together and the trio returns to Music in Montgomery on March 12. Mother and daughter singer/songwriters Arbour and Elmes will be joined by saxophonist, Joe Nerney. Together, the group is magic. Separately, they perform with some of the top bands in Western Massachusetts.

Arbour has performed with the bands Skyline, Sure Shot and Liquid Floyd. Elmes is a member of the Mad Habits and is known for her soulful vocals with a honky tonk twist. Saxophonist Nerney

performs throughout the region with Seth Glier, as part of the duo West Hill Two, and his larger ensemble, West Hill Groove. Nerney also hosts "Podcast from Joe" on Apple podcasts.

The final two newcomers are a bit of a mystery. Caleb Harris and the Rolling Scones will perform on March 19 and Montgomery Man Bob Cipolli will finish the month on March 26. The correspondent was unable to obtain any information about either act by press time.

However, organizer Dale Rogers said that they had come highly recommended and had been vetted by some of her veteran musicians.

Attendees are invited to bring baked goods to share. Donations are



Submitted photo

Mother-daughter Helen Arbour and Ursula Elmes will be joined by Joe Nerney at Montgomery Town Hall on Thursday, March 12.

accepted for the refreshments, with money split between the Montgomery Volunteer Firemen's Association and the Town Library. Donations are also accepted to tip and thank

the fabulous musicians, who perform each week.

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

**SUMMER CAMP**  
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# HILLTOWNS

## HILLTOWN HIKING ADVENTURES



A Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers with their canine hikers explores the stone foundation of the Carroll Paper Mill.

### Hilltown Hikers visit paper mill site

This was by far one of the most intact and fascinating mill sites the Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers have ever visited.

The Lower Carroll Paper Mill was one of nearly a dozen small industries that once flourished on the Konkapot River as it passes through New Marlborough. George Sheldon and partners produced manila paper here from 1855 to 1872.

The mill was operated by water power. A dam about 300 yards upstream impounded water, releasing it as needed into a still visible head race or earthen trench, about four feet deep.

Channeled through the mill's wheel pit, the section of the foundation closest to the river, it turned a water wheel.

There were several wheels over the years, including a patented Risdon Water Wheel, which gained efficiency by capturing the water in metal cup-like blades. The water wheel was connected by pulleys and belts to power grinders that battered raw materials into mush and machines that formed paper, a sheet at a time.

The paper was hung in a second-floor loft to dry. In a technological upgrade, two years after a major fire in 1872, owner John Carroll, with his son, Theron, and partner James Goodwin, installed two massive Pagenstecher wood grinders to produce pulp fiber. This was barreled, sent by wagon to the Upper Carroll Mill and made into newsprint.

The grinders were bolted to enormous stone pedestals, still standing inside the mill foundation, to absorb vibration that otherwise could have shaken the building to ruin.

Berkshire Paper Co., as the firm was known, suffered financial setbacks and in 1877 installed a Fourdrinier machine here, which made large rolls of newsprint from rye straw. The rolls were taken by wagon to the railroad depot in Ashley Falls for shipment to market.

The owners built a boiler house and an 85-foot brick chimney (now in ruins on the site) for a more reliable source of power. The business went into bankruptcy in 1884 and closed for good in 1887. Hiker should not miss the opportunity to visit here when the snow melts.



This is another approach to the mill remains, which produced manila paper from 1855 to 1872. Submitted photos



This is a close up of one of the walls, which still remains of the Carroll Paper Mill in New Marlborough.



Above, this is a bird's eye view of the remains of the mill structure. Left, Here is another section of the mill remains located near the Konkapot River.



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# GOSHEN

## Goshen Council on Aging announces upcoming news and events

GOSHEN – The Council on Aging’s annual St. Patrick’s Day luncheon will be at the Goshen Town Hall, 42 North St., on Tuesday, March 10 at noon.

Their favorite Goshen Irishman Bill O’Riordan will host. He has invited his friend, Michael Cahillane from Northampton, to entertain us with stories, songs and a bit of blarney. Cahillane is a Northampton native, who has been involved with Irish politics, culture and education his entire life and seniors are sure to be entertained.

Jerry from Spruce Corner Restaurant will be cooking up a fabulous meal of corned beef and cabbage, potatoes and carrots. There will also be his delicious vegetarian Irish stew. They will have Irish Soda Bread from the Cummington Creamery and a festive Irish dessert. People may call Kerry at 413-268-9354 by Tuesday, March 3 to let her know they are attending and their choice of meal.

Live Well, Age Well

Informational series Tuesdays in March from 4:30-6 p.m. in Goshen Town Hall. Adults of all ages welcome; it’s never too early to start planning. On Tuesday, March 10, the COA welcomes an expert in Aging In Place. On Tuesday, March 17 they welcome Dr. Jin Joo from Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School to discuss Learning About Brain Health via Zoom.

On Tuesday, March 24, the COA welcomes the Funeral Alliance of Western Massachusetts to discuss planning memorial services and on Tuesday, March 31 they welcome Stacey Mackowiak to discuss legacy projects and vigil planning.

A light dinner will be provided each week. Participants are welcome to attend one or all weeks, but they should let Kerry know by Monday, March 2 if they plan to attend by calling 413-268-9354 or emailing coa@goshen-ma.us. This series is funded by a grant from the MCOA

through the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

On Wednesday, March 4 the games group meets at 4 p.m. They have a variety of games to choose from and will also have cards.

On Friday, March 6 Community Connections meets from 10-11 a.m. This month they welcome Michelle Ryan from Chesterfield, who will educate us on Ayurvedic practices. Ayurveda is a traditional Hindu system of medicine, which is based on the idea of balance in the bodily systems and uses diet, herbal treatment and yogic breathing. She will give us an overview as well as a few practices people can use at home to bring greater health and wellness to their daily routine. They meet in the upstairs dining room of the Goshen Town Hall.

On Wednesday, March 11 at 9:15 a.m. Goshen and Chesterfield older adults have been invited to New Hingham Regional Elementary School

for their March All School Meeting, which is an assembly hosted by a class where students share recent projects and community members are welcome. The school will have a special COA section of chairs, so let Kerry know if they plan to attend. It is so fun to watch the students in action.

On Tuesdays, March 17 and 24 Highland Valley Elder Services delivers grab and go lunches and delivers delivers to Goshen COA on the third and fourth Tuesdays of the month. Participants pick up their hot lunch at the Goshen Town Hall from 12:30-1 p.m. The lunch for Tuesday, March 17 is corned beef, of course or cheese and chive quiche and the choice for Tuesday, March 24 is Cobb salad or Greek chickpea salad. The meals also include milk, vegetables and dessert. There is a suggested \$4 donation given to Highland Valley Elder Services to offset the cost of the meal. People may call Kerry at 413-268-9354 if they

would like to sign up to get these nutritious and delicious meals. The COA would love to increase participation in this program.

On Wednesday, March 18 crafts group meets from 2-4 p.m. in the Library. People may bring their own crafts to work on in community. The library is also hosting an embroidery workshop with a focus on visible mending via open drop in from 2-5 p.m. Supplies are provided, but if people want help starting to repair an item, bring it in.

On Thursday, March 19 technology elp in the library will be available from noon-2 p.m. People can ask questions regarding their computer, phone, tablet or any other technology-related question and they will do their best to help.

On Saturday, March 28 from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. a guided painting workshop with local artist, Lena Garcia will take place at the Goshen Town Hall. People will create

a springtime inspired painting with step-by-step instructions. Participants will explore how to use acrylic paint and will have a finished painting to bring home at the end of the workshop. They will explore techniques like color mixing, blending, hard edge vs. soft edge, and others.

Beginners are welcome. Class size is limited to 12, so people should email Kerry at coa@goshen-ma.us or call 413-268-9354 as soon as possible to sign up. This workshop is funded in part by a grant from Highland Valley Elder Services. The class is free, however donations are appreciated.

Exercise classes with Joan continue with Joan Griswold on Wednesdays at 10:15 a.m. in the Goshen Town Hall. The focus is on functional movement which enhances physical strength and balance. This class is also offered simultaneously on Zoom, so if people prefer this method, they may email Joan at joan@bybhealth.com.

## HUNTINGTON

### COA lists upcoming events

HUNTINGTON – The Huntington Council on Aging will be hosting the following events at Stanton Hall, 26 Russell Road.

Games and Goodies will be on Tuesday, March 10 from 1-3 p.m. Seniors will play board games and enjoy free snacks. The movie “This is Where I Leave You” will be shown on Wednesday, March 11 at 2 p.m.

The annual St. Patrick’s luncheon will be held on Saturday, March 14 at noon and will feature a performance by Wild Thyme. The suggested donation is \$8 per person and reservations

need to be made by Monday, March 2 by calling 413-685-5283.

A presentation on tick borne disease illness prevention and blood pressure checks will be provided by the Hampshire Public Health Preparedness Coalition’s nursing team on Wednesday, March 18 from 1-2 p.m.

Musician Bill Cote will entertain on Wednesday, March 25 from 2-3 p.m. Hilltown Memory Café is held weekly on Wednesday at 2: p.m. The weekly café provides seniors with activities while their caregivers participate in a support

group. The café is open to all with and without memory issues.

The café is made possible 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 Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

All events are free and open to residents of any community. Free snacks are provided at all events. For more information, people may call Crystal Wright-Partyka at 413-685-5283.

## WORTHINGTON

### COA TO HOLD ST. PATRICK’S DAY LUNCHEON



Submitted photo

On Monday, March 9 at noon, the Council on Aging will hold a St. Patrick’s luncheon for Worthington seniors over age 60 in the Worthington Town Hall, 160 Huntington Road. The Chesterfield General Store and Cafe will be serving their famous corned beef and cabbage luncheon. The Rolling Scenes will be there for listening pleasure. Reservations are required. Seating is limited, so people should call or text 413-238-1557 for reservations by Monday, March 2.

## LIBRARY

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scheduled for Wednesdays March 11 and March 25 starting at 11 a.m. This is a great opportunity to get out of the house and enjoy camaraderie and accountability for those who are working from or creating at home.

Free wifi, coffee and tea are available. The library has a single serve Keurig coffee maker, electric kettle and k-cups and tea bags available, but people may bring their own favorites from home.

All of the favorite monthly events are on the calendar for March including weekly story hours on Mondays and Saturdays at 10:30 a.m. and the monthly game night on Thursday, March 19 at 4 p.m.

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## GUEST COLUMN



## My friend is 65; shouldn't she be exempt from Medicare payroll taxes?

Dear Rusty:

My girlfriend is 65 and she just enrolled in Medicare.

She is still working full time as a nurse, but they are still deducting Medicare taxes from her paycheck. I thought as soon as you started Medicare, that they would no longer take any Medicare taxes from her paychecks. Is that not correct?

Signed:  
Concerned Friend

Dear Concerned Friend:

Your understanding about Medicare payroll tax is, indeed, not correct. Medicare taxes are levied on everyone, who works and earns, regardless of whether or not they are currently enrolled in the Medicare program. That is how Medicare has worked since it was first enacted in the mid-1960s and how it still works today.

For Your Information, everyone who works for an employer must pay Federal Insurance Contributions Act payroll tax of 7.65%. Most (6.2%) of that payroll tax goes to support Social Security, but 1.45% goes to support Medicare Part A. Self-employed individuals must also pay this tax under the Self-Employed Contributions Act, which is equivalent to FICA, except the self-employed individual must also pay the employer portion of the payroll tax. The Social Security portion of the FICA/SECA tax has an earnings cap (\$184,500 in 2026), but there is no cap on earnings for the Medicare portion of the FICA/SECA payroll tax. FYI, employers pay an equivalent amount of Social Security and Medicare taxes and the Medicare portion of the payroll tax is paid on all earnings. There is no cap

on earnings from which the Medicare payroll tax is withheld.

To ensure understanding, Medicare Part A provides healthcare coverage for inpatient hospitalization services and Medicare Part B provides coverage for outpatient medical services (doctors, medical tests, etc.). That 1.45% of the FICA and SECA tax for the self-employed is paid by those who work to help fund the Medicare Part A program, which is premium-free for most Americans after age 65. For Medicare Part B, there is a separate premium which helps pay for Medicare outpatient healthcare services. The standard Medicare Part B premium for 2026 is \$202.90 per month, compared to Medicare Part A which is free to all who are eligible for Social Security benefits. But the 1.45% payroll tax which is being withheld from your girlfriend's paycheck is paid by everyone who has work earnings, even if they are enrolled in Medicare.

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 [ssadvisory@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadvisory@amacfoundation.org). Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

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



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## OPINION



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## GUEST COLUMN

On President's Day I saw a northern flicker fly up into a tree as I traveled in Barre.

The white rump patch was clearly visible. A Brimfield resident said he has a friend in Belchertown, who occasionally has a flicker come to his suet feeder. Four or five bluebirds also frequent his suet feeder.

Northern flickers are a fairly, large woodpecker about 11 to 12 inches long. They are larger than a hairy woodpecker and smaller than a pileated woodpecker.

They appear brownish overall with a white rump patch that's is conspicuous in flight and often visible when they perch. The undersides of the wing and tail feathers are bright yellow for eastern birds or red for western birds. The brown plumage has black spots, barring and a black "bib." The sexes are similar, but the male has a black mustache.

Flickers spend a lot of time on the ground and like many woodpeckers fly in an undulating up and down path with flapping and gliding. They make a repeated flicker or "wicka-wicka-wicka" call and a loud "kleer."

They inhabit open forests, woodlots, groves and semi-open country. The female lays five to eight eggs sometimes more. Both sexes incubate the eggs with the male incubating at night and part of the day. Both parents feed the young by regurgitation. The young leave the nest in about four weeks after hatching, but parents feed them for whilet. Later, they follow them to good foraging



By Ellenor Downer

sites. They mainly eat ants and other insects. They also eat fruits and berries in fall and winter.

### Bird bath visitors

A Brimfield resident sent an email recently. He said, "I have a heated bird bath so I modified it by placing rocks in the center so that the only water available is near the edge and birds can't immerse themselves in water to take a bath. The birds sit on the edge of the bird bath to drink."

He also said, "I have a trail camera aimed at the bird bath. I was looking at pictures taken during December (40,000) and saw that blue jays, house finches and juncos are the most frequent birds taking a drink. Birds that show up less often are cardinals, titmice and morning doves. Curiously chickadees drink infrequently even though they are often seen in the yard. We seldom see goldfinches drinking, but they are not seen in the yard often. I was surprised to see a downy woodpecker show up twice to get a drink. I can't recall ever seen a woodpecker drink at the bird bath before, summer or winter."

### Helping birds

The Brimfield resident said creating brush piles pro-

vides shelter for birds. The piles also provide shelter for small animals as well. He said this time of year is a good time to trim trees and shrubs, a source of materials for a brush pile.

He said someone sent him a link about the possible dangers to birds of their feathers freezing if they take a bath in cold weather. For more information, people may visit the link at <https://blog.nature.org/2022/01/31/should-you-provide-birds-water-in-winter/>.

### Project Feederwatch

The Brimfield resident also said, "I recently visited the Project Feederwatch 2025 results ([https://cdn.feederwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Winter-Bird-Highlights-2025\\_12.22.2025.pdf](https://cdn.feederwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Winter-Bird-Highlights-2025_12.22.2025.pdf)). The chart shows the top 25 birds seen in the Northeast during last year. The top 11 species can be seen most days in our yard."

Here is the list: 1. chickadee, 2. dark-eyed junco, 3. northern cardinal, 4. downy woodpecker, 5. blue jay, 6. mourning dove, 7. white-breasted nuthatch, 8. American goldfinch, 9. house finch, 10. red-bellied woodpecker, 11. tufted titmouse, 12. American robin, 13. European starling, 14. house sparrow, 15. hairy woodpecker, 16. Carolina wren, 17. white-throated sparrow, 18. song sparrow, 19. red-winged blackbird, 20. common grackle, 21. American crow, 22. brown-headed cowbird, 23. chipping sparrow, 24. northern flicker and 25 purple finch.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by emailing [mybackyard88@aol.com](mailto:mybackyard88@aol.com) or [edowner@turley.com](mailto:edowner@turley.com) or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005. The Palmer office has a new phone system and I will be getting an extension where messages may be left. I will publish the number as soon as it is set up.



Northern flicker

## Country Journal welcomes Election letters to the editor

The Country Journal welcomes readers to participate in this year's election campaigns by writing letters to the editor for publication on these pages. Letters of up to 250 words from local residents endorsing candidates on the ballot or discussing campaign issues should be sent to The Country Journal, care of Turley Publications, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, faxed to 413-289-1977 or emailed to [countryjournal@turley.com](mailto:countryjournal@turley.com).

Please include a daytime telephone number for verification purposes (it will not be printed). Letters must be received by **noon Friday** to be considered for the following Thursday's newspaper. No attack letters will be printed. No letters written by candidates supporting their own candidacy will be printed. If the volume of letters received is larger than the space available in the newspaper, or if the letters become repetitive, the

newspaper reserves the right to print a representative sample. No endorsement letters will be printed in the last edition before the election. For more information, call 413-283-8393.

### Campaign news

As part of its election coverage, the newspaper plans to print stories about contested races for Congress, state Senate, state House, district attorney and Governor's

Council during the weeks leading up to the election, as well as a question-and-answer voters guide. In order to ensure fairness to all candidates, no political press releases will be printed, nor will reporters cover political rallies or fundraisers.

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

## Country Journal TEAM



**EDITOR**  
Ellenor Downer  
[countryjournal@turley.com](mailto:countryjournal@turley.com)



**ADVERTISING SALES**  
Wendy Delcamp  
[wdelcamp@turley.com](mailto:wdelcamp@turley.com)

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**PATRICK H. TURLEY**  
CEO

**KEITH TURLEY**  
President

**Turley Publications, Inc.**

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## EDITORIAL POLICY

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

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



### PHONE

413.283.8393  
Fax: 413.283.7017  
Subscriptions: 413.283.8393

### EMAIL

Advertising Sales  
Wendy Delcamp  
[wdelcamp@turley.com](mailto:wdelcamp@turley.com)

### Editor

Ellenor Downer  
[countryjournal@turley.com](mailto:countryjournal@turley.com)

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# OPINION

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Good Neighbor Energy Fund helps those in need

A single mother has trouble juggling work and affordable childcare, a household has a hard time dealing with the high prices for essential items like food and rent and a father lost his job.

For many Massachusetts families in temporary crisis, possibly in your own community, lower temperatures have them facing another cold reality... not being able to pay the monthly energy bill.

The Massachusetts Good Neighbor Energy Fund, sponsored by 18 energy service providers in the state and administered by The Salvation Army, is often the last resort for families, who are in need of a helping hand and who have not qualified for federal and

state assistance programs.

Unfortunately, we expect the urgency of need to continue to escalate throughout the rest of the winter and into the spring. With this in mind, those in need of energy assistance should visit their local Salvation Army Service Center or call 800-262-1320 if they live in area code 413 or 800-334-3047 if they live in area codes 339, 351, 508, 617, 774, 781, 857 or 978.

To help us satisfy the more than 1,500 requests for aid anticipated this winter and spring alone, we appeal to everyone in the Massachusetts area to join their fellow residents in the Commonwealth and the Fund's sponsoring energy companies to "Give the Gift of Warmth." People can

donate by using the green Good Neighbor Energy Fund donation envelopes found as an insert in their monthly utility bills, scanning the QR code featured on the donation envelope or through the "add a dollar" program some energy companies offer.

Residents can also donate with a credit card by visiting [magoodneighbor.org](http://magoodneighbor.org) or by simply writing a check payable to "The Good Neighbor Energy Fund" and sending it c/o The Salvation Army, 25 Shawmut Road, Canton, MA 02021-1408.

On behalf of all the families in need, thank you.

**Justin Stearns**  
Chairperson, 2026  
Massachusetts Good Neighbor Energy Fund

### Keeping the Plainfield Church improves the town

The citizens of the town of Plainfield have an amazing opportunity to improve the future of their town or allow one of the leading organizations to fall by the wayside.

The question is will they rise to the occasion or will they fail from indifference?

I read in a local newspaper of Feb. 14 that the Plainfield Church plans to close in the fall. Why? Have they been bad, have they done something wrong, have they failed to honor their mission of promoting and delivering love, peace and justice? No, this faith family has done that for generations! So again, why?

That is the question I would like to explore. With 650 people in town, they could fill the church building three times each Sunday. Is everyone welcome? Yes. Are there admission fees or qualification standards? No. Are there barriers such as race, sex, color, age or health? No, all are welcome.

Do you have to believe certain doctrines or creeds?

No. Then why in the world would anyone feel reluctant to attend? You all go to the Fire Department chicken barbecue, you go to other town events, you fill this church for summer concerts that bring peace and joy to your ears. Why do you not set aside a time each week to bring peace and joy to your soul? What do you fear? What are you afraid of?

A small town like Plainfield has a special feel of community. I know, I enjoy that same feeling here in Westhampton. It is a rare blessing that only a few of us share.

Why would you allow one of the main contributors of that feeling to disappear? Do you really care about Plainfield? Are you concerned about what your children and grandchildren will have around them? In this period of time when hate and discrimination flow out of the highest levels of our government and hate groups are springing up all across the country; what we need are more faith communities, not less.

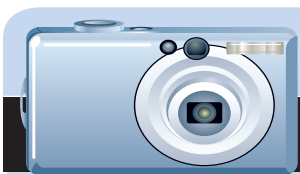
This happens to be a Christian Church, it doesn't have to be; it could be a Synagogue, or Mosque, or Temple, but it is a place that teaches and shares love, peace and justice. What's wrong with that? What's right with that?

I encourage everyone in and around Plainfield: look in your mirror, look carefully and ask that person, would it really do any harm if I became involved with this spiritual home? Might it actually do me some good? Where else can I go whose only purpose is to help me be happier and the world be better? Am I a coward to try?

I dare each one of you to attend family worship four times, meet the Rev. Bert Marshall, then ask yourselves: is this good for Plainfield or should we let it die?

I double dare you, Right now, you and only you, can determine the future of Plainfield. And, that is a big responsibility.

**Richard W. Tracy**  
Westhampton



**Send Us Your Photos!**  
[countryjournal@turley.com](mailto:countryjournal@turley.com)

## HILLTOWN HISTORY

### Snow sculpture brings out the creative side

By Deborah Daniels  
Guest Columnist

This challenging weather calls upon the creative genius buried deep within everyone or buried in the snow.

Let the snow artist out. Snow sculpture is just the ticket to get people in the fresh air and indulging in snow play. How's that for curing the February blahs? The basic formula for snow sculpture is to pack wet snow into a form such as a garbage can, let it set preferably overnight so all the snow crystals bond and condense.

Flip the can over and carve away at your masterpiece with shovels and saws. Experts recommend that you really stomp that snow into the garbage can, packing it in tightly.

There are many snow sculpting contests across the United States. A really big competition is held in Stillwater, Minnesota along the St. Croix River. There are international teams vying for prize money and the World Champion title. There were 16 teams participating this year. They are given 70 hours to create their sculpture from 10 ft. x 10 ft. x 10 ft. snow blocks provided by the town. Only snow, water and ice

may be used and no power tools allowed.

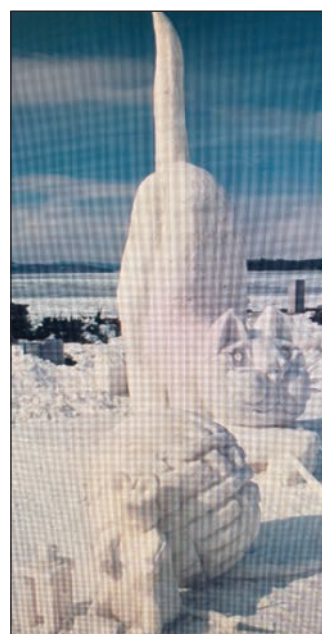
People know things are serious when they spell out that no laser levels or laser guides or alignment tools may be used. The sculptures are judged on artistic merit, technical skill, creativity, originality and adherence to the original sketch.

There is prize money for the first, second and third place as well as a people's choice prize and one for the artist's choice as voted by the fellow sculptors. The snow sculptures are lit up at night in kaleidoscopic colors making for a smashing show.

Oh and don't try and make any political statements with the sculpture: everything must be strictly neutral. Team USA was disqualified this year for making an anti-immigration and customs enforcement symbol.

Breckinridge, Colorado has a big snow sculpture contest as well. They display the snow sculpture throughout the town in unexpected locations. They also carve up massive snow blocks at the base of the ski area. Yes, the carving chainsaws come out here.

The Kichi Sibi Winter Trail in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada has 15 adorable bear sculptures created by a 78



Submitted photos

Dave Rothstein carved this snow sculpture.

year old woman, Maggie Glossup. Her work appears in one of the photos with this article. She claims this is her winter passion when the temperature gets to zero.

She uses dark wool to create the eyes and nose and to use Olympic terminology, boy does she nail it. Who can resist bear cubs clinging to trees and rolling on their backs in the snow? Go outside, don your mittens and let the carving begin.



Snow bear sculpted by Maggie Glossup in Ottawa, Canada.



This Team USA's snow sculpture was banned at the World Snow Sculpting Championship in Minnesota.

## News, photo publication policy

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

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

**Deadline is Friday at NOON.**



### Chester Baptist Church

Pastor Dan Herr  
14 Middlefield Road  
Chester, MA 01011  
413-354-7743  
Email: [pastor@chesterbaptistchurch.org](mailto:pastor@chesterbaptistchurch.org)  
Website: [chesterbaptistchurch.org](http://chesterbaptistchurch.org)  
Sunday School for all ages at 9:45 a.m.  
Sunday Worship at 10:45 a.m.  
Sunday Afternoon at 1:30 p.m.  
Wednesday Evening Bible Study and Prayer at 6:30pm

### First Congregational Church of Blandford

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

### First Congregational Church of Chester

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

### First Congregational Church of Williamsburg

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

### Hilltown Community Church

Dr. Robert Perreault, Senior Pastor  
55 Main St., Russell, MA 01071  
413-275-3232  
Office: 413-862-3341  
[hilltownchurch3341@gmail.com](mailto:hilltownchurch3341@gmail.com)  
[hilltowncommunitychurch.com](http://hilltowncommunitychurch.com)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/p/Hilltown-Community-Church-61580281487624/](http://www.facebook.com/p/Hilltown-Community-Church-61580281487624/)  
Sunday Mornings 10 a.m.

## CHURCH DIRECTORY

Your Community Church



### Holy Family Parish

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

### New Boston Congregational Church

4 Sandisfield Rd., PO Box 81  
Sandisfield, MA 01255  
Services held twice monthly, check website: [www.newbostoncongregationalchurch.org](http://www.newbostoncongregationalchurch.org)

### Pioneer Valley Assembly of God

Pastor Javier Melendez  
63 Old Chester Rd., Huntington MA 01050  
413-667-3196  
[pvagliffe@gmail.com](mailto:pvagliffe@gmail.com)  
[www.pioneervalleyag.org](http://www.pioneervalleyag.org)  
Facebook: Pioneer Valley Assembly of God  
Sunday service: 10:30 a.m.

### Pioneer Valley Mennonite Fellowship

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

# BLANDFORD

## SNOW FLURRIES FALL SATURDAY, MORE TO COME



Turley Publications photo by Mary Kronholm

Two Norway spruces really show the snowflakes falling in Blandford on Saturday, Feb. 21. The snow flurries started around 3 p.m. and the photo was taken around 4:20 p.m.

# Opossum are North America's only marsupial

By Mary Kronholm  
Correspondent

BLANDFORD – They are smallish nocturnal marsupials that is their babies are carted around with them in pouches like a kangaroo.

Except a possum doesn't jump. They come out at night and forage. It may not jump, but it can, however, climb trees. It's long, hairless tail wraps around branches and helps keep the critter upright and on a limb.

If a possum feels threatened, it will fall over and play dead, hence the phrase "playing possum" has a valid provenance. Actually, to be biologically or zoologically correct, the beast is the Virginia opossum and is the only one of its kind found in the United States. They inhabit Massachusetts throughout except on Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, according to the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. Possum is referred to as "a slang term."

Many may remember Walt Kelly's Pogo, a syndicated comic strip for both children and adults featuring Pogo the Possum with a mixed bag content that included political commentary, satire and humor. The strip ran from 1949 to 1972. It enjoyed a short revival with different authors, but eventually ceased to be in 1993.

The Virginia opossum has 50 teeth, more than any other land mammal on this continent. When they feel threatened, they will bare their teeth and hiss, before falling over to play dead. Which they can do for many



Turley Publications photos by Mary Kronholm

This opossum forages for food in a walkway flower bed.



This opossum is seen hanging around Blandford.

## The Possum

By Odgen Nash

*Oh, to be a possum, Napping in the warm sun,  
Gnawing on a tender shoot, Chewing roots for fun.  
To wander by moonlight, Quiet in the dark,  
Playing 'possum in a stump, That's the possum's mark.  
The owl looks on at midnight, With a solemn stare,  
But the possum simply yawns, Doesn't seem to care.  
Nocturnal in his habits, Shy and humble too,  
He scampers off to find his supper  
Before the night is through.*

hours or until they feel safe.

It may be worth noting that opossums have the smallest brain to weight ratio of any North American mammal and "they are an incredibly adaptable species that has been able to thrive in North America," according to the Division of

Fisheries and Wildlife.

Opossums are an important and valuable natural resource in Massachusetts. They eat ticks. And that's thousands of ticks in the course of a year. Opossums are a furbearer species and have regulated hunting and trapping seasons.

If people don't want these pesky 'possums' around, keep their bird feeder area clean, leave no open trash, equally as desirable by raccoons and protect pets and small livestock like chickens. Opossums like eggs.

Again, if the 'possum feels threatened, it will attack and those 50 teeth can do some damage. They can live in brush piles and probably compost heaps.

They are not used to the extreme cold temperatures and will seek warmth in garages, under porches/decks and even under houses if there is access. More information about opossums is available by visiting [mass.gov](http://mass.gov).



Juvenile Virginia opossum hissing defensively. Wikipedia photo

## CAUCUS

from page 1

for each office shall be declared nominated for such office as provided in S. 121, C. 53 of the Massachusetts General Laws.

Only two candidates for one office can be nominated during the caucus. If someone wants to be on the ballot and was

not nominated or did not receive sufficient votes, that person may take out nomination papers from the town Clerk.

## BRUNCH BUNCH REMINISCE ABOUT BLANDFORD



Turley Publications photo by Mary Kronholm

The brunch bunch meet at the Blandford Country Store Saturday morning. Shown from left are Peter Langmore, George Reichert, Jeri Hamel, Ann Reichert, Cosette Cousineau, Ted Cousineau, Jim Kronholm, Barbara Langmore, Richard Hamel and David Lovejoy. The group reminisced about Blandford and "settled" the woes of the world.

# GREAT BARRINGTON

## Berkshire Community Land Trust promotes Beth Carlson

GREAT BARRINGTON – Berkshire Community Land Trust announces the promotion of operations director Beth Carlson to a newly created executive director position.

The Community Land Trust movement was founded in 1969 by Civil Rights Activists Bob Swann, Slater King and others to return land and prosperity to Black

communities in the South. In 1980, Susan Witt and Bob Swann moved to the Berkshires to found what is now the Schumacher Center for New Economics. They simultaneously established the Community Land Trust in the Southern Berkshires. In 2015, CLTSB founded the sister organization, Berkshire Community Land Trust, to expand its capacity to hold multiple types of land.

Today, CLTSB/BCLT holds over 130 acres in community trust, providing homeownership opportunities to 23 families and two local nonprofits with residential and office facilities. Nearly 100 acres of that land are productive farmland supporting two thriving agricultural businesses that strengthen the local food system and economy.

Board member Sarah Downie said, "We are thrilled that Beth has stepped into the role as our first executive director. She brings experience, enthusiasm, great communication skills, and opti-

mism to our organization. We feel very lucky that she moved into this new role and look forward to a successful and invigorating future with her at the helm."

Carlson, a partner in Silo Media, initially got involved with BCLT and the Farmsteads for Farmers initiative through events, video and graphics projects. She became the campaign manager for Farmsteads for Farmers in 2023 and became director of operations in 2024. On Nov. 1, 2025 she began full-time in the new executive director role.

No stranger to the non-profit world, Carlson served as president of the Dewey Memorial Hall Board until recently and is credited with leading the team that brought the organization through COVID and a significant revival. She is a founding board member of the W. E. B. Du Bois Center for Freedom and Democracy. Her Silo Media projects were mostly for nonprofits and involved

fundraising campaigns, social media and consulting.

Executive Director of the Schumacher Center for New Economics and founder and Board Member Emeritus of Berkshire Community Land Trust, Susan Witt, worked closely with Carlson and encouraged her continued involvement and role expansion with BCLT. Witt said "Thanks to the commitment of a volunteer board and the help of great part-time assistants, BCLT and its sister organization CLTSB has achieved much in its 46-year history. But it is now time for a full-time executive director to build the organizations to their full potential. Grounded in the Berkshires with skills honed in the non-profit community, Beth Carlson is the right person at the right time for this task."

Carlson began full-time in November. Expressing her passion for the mission of the CLT, she stated, "Affordable access to land is critical to the health of our local com-

munities. Land speculation had concentrated ownership in fewer and fewer hands. Placing land into a community land trust and making it available in perpetuity for workforce housing, farming, local retail, and light manufacturing can revitalize the local economy."

A reception celebrating the recent acquisition of River Run Farm and welcoming Carlson to the new role will be held in the spring of 2026. The event will also honor David Fix, Schumacher Center Director of Operations, for his years of work assisting the board of directors and maintaining governance and supporting operations for both organizations.

For more information about Berkshire Community Land Trust, Community Land Trust of the Southern Berkshires, and Farmsteads for Farmers, people may visit [berkshirecommunitylandtrust.org](http://berkshirecommunitylandtrust.org). Beth Carlson may be emailed at [beth@berkshirecommunitylandtrust.org](mailto:beth@berkshirecommunitylandtrust.org).

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**June 27.....Lake George Cruise & Lunch .....\$185**  
**July 11.....Provincetown by Fast Ferry.....\$220**  
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**Aug 30.....8-Day Nova Scotia Cruise .....from \$1699**

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

## OPINION

# Berkshire Hilltown addresses Solar Battery Energy Storage System proposals

By Henry Hagenah  
Guest Columnist

Plastic signs littered lonely intersections and the front yards of Becket's more opinionated residents.

("Dangerous Gigawatt Lithium Battery Storage," "Save Our Forest," "Protect Our Drinking

Water" and No BESS.")

The Becket Conservation Chair instructed a packed room observing the first of four proposed Solar Battery Energy Storage System applications that the Commission's purview was narrow, "How does the project affect wetlands and does it violate the Wetlands Protection Act. Save other comments for the Planning Board."

When a Commissioner noted that a steep access road would erode into a vernal pool, the group nodded in agreement. But some came loaded for bear. One resident asked why BlueWave Solar thinks we would be persuaded by bucolic slide images of solar arrays and sheep. He didn't take a breath until an officer gently persuaded, "Please calm down sir, have a seat." Others spoke of the danger that firemen would face. One gentleman in a red trucker hat stormed out, "This is Bull.... Hand-outs were distributed without permission. Thank you, we'll do our own research."

Solar BESS store excess electricity generated during periods of solar production and release it during peak demand. Most current installations rely on lithium-ion batteries, with newer systems increasingly using lithium-iron-phosphate chem-

istries that are less likely to overheat and catch fire.

Erin Smith, of the Environmental League of Massachusetts stated, "There have been a number of high profile events like Moss Landing, California that are alarming, however, the risk of a battery fire is incredibly low." In Massachusetts, "lithium-ion battery systems have been operating safely since 2019. The Moss Landing fire (2025) involved a 300 megawatt system and required the evacuation of at least 1,200 residents. However the technology is older and the batteries are comprised of nickel, manganese and cobalt. The 2.33, 3.32 and 3.82 megawatt battery systems proposed for Becket are lithium-iron-phosphate; more stable and less prone to thermal runaway.

Massachusetts' Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and the Department of Environmental Protection outline safety standards and public health considerations for battery storage: "FAQ on Safety and Public Health." See also DEP's "Guidance on Public Health, Safety and Environmental Impacts of Electric Battery Storage." (Aug. 20, 2025).

With the 2024 Clean Energy Act, Massachusetts is encouraging companies to build solar/battery storage to promote clean energy, reliability, and bring down energy costs. However, a burgeoning anti-battery movement appears to be sweeping across the state and many proposed projects have been delayed or denied.

With 125 existing BESS projects operating throughout the state, only six are in



This photo shows sheep grazing by a solar array.

Submitted photo

Berkshire County (Cleanview.com) and companies like BlueWave appear to be eyeing western Massachusetts. This is partly because larger, more rural parcels-in towns like Becket-may allow solar arrays to be positioned so they are not as conspicuous, and neighbors might have to strain through thick woods to see the features of a particular site.

Columbia Law School, Sabin Center for Climate Change has published "33 False Claims about Solar, Wind and Electric Vehicles." False Claim 2 analyzes the claim that toxic heavy metals such as cadmium and lead leach out from solar panels. False Claim 4 rebuts the claim that clearing trees for solar panels negate any climate benefits. "An average acre of solar panels in the US reduced approximately 204-232 times more CO2 per year than an acre of forest."

For many, the debate unfolding in Becket reflects

a tension within the environmental movement between the desire to preserve landscape/habitat and the urgent need to decarbonize at scale. For those prioritizing carbon reduction, the negatives associated with BESS are less concerning. This is particularly the case in a town that doesn't have a shortage of wooded habitat and homes aren't as proximate to proposed sites. While certainly preferable to place solar panels on rooftops, brownfields and parking lots, developing solar at scale requires bigger acreage.

For the three Becket solar applications that are pending (one is agrivoltaic), the sites are mostly flat and protected with swales, retention basins and erosion controls. The solar features will be largely invisible to neighboring homes and those traveling on town roads. For a fourth site that has not been formally submitted there is significant elevation change but

fewer wetlands concerns and the arrays will be visible to those traveling a short section of Rte. 20 and the Mass Pike. Two of the sites have been logged and degraded and two of the sites are mostly second-third growth forest. All of the sites abut state forest and privately owned woods where there is an abundance of habitat.

Author of 20 books on nature and the environment, Bill McKibben, writes that "Solar power is the biggest tool we have to slow the pace of global warming, which in turn is the biggest crisis the world has ever faced." In the Santa Fe New Mexican he expresses support for a 96 megawatt BESS (Rancho Viejo Solar), and is critical of opponents who cite fire risk. "They have latched onto a particular kind of NIMBYism-one that pretends to support renewable energy but always insist that it be built somewhere else. I think the deepest risk comes in rapid

alterations to the planet's climate, those are the fires y'all are dealing with already."

McKibben encourages, "Yes in Our Backyards (YIMBY)," Mother Jones magazine (June, 2023), describing a wind project in the Adirondacks' where a large environmental group was opposed. "Those turbines would degrade the wilderness, they thought. I'd just as soon not have to look up at those towers...Having written the first mainstream book on the greenhouse effect, I understood that the deeper threat to this forest was that if we didn't stop burning fossil fuels, then there wouldn't be a real winter to den up the animals; that if it kept warming, the birch and beech and maple that blazed red and yellowed orange in the early autumn would be replaced... that the challenge to the character of the place I loved came from not building those turbines."

As of this writing three of four Becket solar/BESS applications have been decided by the Conservation Commission and the fourth proposal is not jurisdictional to them. A six month moratorium is being readied for Town approval on March 7. The Town Planning Board, ZBA await and several bills before the State legislature are pending.

Perhaps-after thorough deliberation--YIMBY defeats NIMBY, environmentalists outlast preservationists, and no odd duck gets trampled. And just maybe our modest little hilltown can be proud of its state and local government for having the audacity to recognize something so fundamental as climate science.

## RUSSELL

### 250th Knox Trail anniversary honored

RUSSELL – On Feb. 28 from 2-4 p.m., in honor of the 250th Anniversary of Henry Knox's mission to bring artillery from Fort Ticonderoga to Boston, the Russell Public Library welcomes guest speakers Ben Haley, National Register Director of the Massachusetts Historical Commission and Dennis Picard, "living history" expert and former Director of the Sheffield Historical Society and Properties in the Berkshires and Storowton Village Museum, West Springfield.

Ben Haley will present, "Commemorating Henry Knox and the Noble Train of Artillery" in the Automobile Age." The approximately two-month, 300-mile endeavor by 25-year-old Knox is now a fairly well-known story, but was obscure until the early 20th century.

In April 1925, the Massachusetts Legislature

established a three-person commission to find and mark the route. The 1920s marker project generated the interest in Knox's expedition that remains to this day. What remains unknown to many is that the markers are not necessarily along the route Knox took, nor were they intended to be. This part of the story will be told through the rich correspondence surviving in the collection of the Knox Commission at the Massachusetts State Library.

Dennis Picard will share some details of Henry Knox and his men's wintry expedition to retrieve over fifty bronze and cast iron artillery pieces housed in upstate New York at Fort Ticonderoga and their arduous movement over lakes, rivers and the rocky slopes in Massachusetts, from the town of North Egremont through to Springfield and beyond to Dorchester Heights. Though a piece of local lore, some



Dennis Picard

parts of this saga are still debated and remain controversial. Picard has a personal connection with this event in our history as he participated in one portion of the recreation of this trek during the bicentennial of 1976.

People may register by email [rpldirector@townof-russell.us](mailto:rpldirector@townof-russell.us), call 413-862-6221 and leave a message or come in and sign up at the library by Thursday, Feb. 26.

### Library announces upcoming events

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

The library will have the Monthly Book Club on Tuesday, March 3 from 6-8 p.m. The book is "The God of the Woods" by Liz Moore. Books are available at the library. Register by email [rpldirector162@gmail.com](mailto:rpldirector162@gmail.com), call 413-862-6221 and leave a message or come in and sign up at the library by Monday, March 2. The Monthly Book Club on April 7 from 6-8 p.m. will discuss "Firekeeper's Daughter" by Angeline Boulley. Books will be available by mid-March.

On Saturday, March 14 from 2-4 p.m. there will be a presentation on General Henry Knox with Robert Hoogs

from the Monterey Historical Society. He will present about how the Boston bookseller, turned General, led an expedition from Fort Ticonderoga to Boston. The Russell Historical Commission will have a display of items related to this period on display. People may register by email [rpldirector162@gmail.com](mailto:rpldirector162@gmail.com) call 413-862-6221 and leave a message, or come in and sign up at the library by Thursday, March 12.

Children may join Miss Dawne for "Sweet News, the Maple Syrup Story" on Wednesday, March 18 from 5-6:30 p.m. They will learn the history and steps in making maple syrup, create a project and eat syrup on pancakes. There is no fee. They may register by email [rpldirector162@gmail.com](mailto:rpldirector162@gmail.com), call 413-862-6221 and leave a message or come in and sign up at the

library by Monday, March 16.

Adults may join Montana Paradise on Tuesday, March 24 from 6-8 p.m. for "Fantastic Folding," an origami workshop. They will learn to fold several origami forms to create beautiful small bouquets or mobiles. All materials will be provided. People may register by email [rpldirector162@gmail.com](mailto:rpldirector162@gmail.com), call 413-862-6221 and leave a message or come in and sign up at the library by Friday, March 20. This workshop is limited to the first 12 registrants.

Parents are invited to bring their children ages 0-4 years for a weekly story time with Maggie Lufkin on Thursdays from 10-11 a.m. The Russell Public Library's "Library of Things" is now available for folks to borrow from. Items include a variety of tools, appliances and leisure

## CHESTER



Submitted photo

Laura Lenski lead children in dancing following a story at the Hamilton Memorial Library on Feb. 19 during school vacation week.

### Kids enjoy vacation program at Hamilton

CHESTER – The Hamilton Memorial Library, 195 West Main St., had a wonderful, energetic school vacation event on Thursday, Feb 19.

Laurel Lenski of

Intrinsic Movement led an active, creative special Story and Fun Time. Following a delightful story, the children had a great time dancing, playing with the parachute and working with rhythm

all while learning to follow directions correctly. It was a great way for the children to be active during these gloomy winter days and to have fun with old and new friends.

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## CUMMINGTON

### Seniors eligible history award

CUMMINGTON – The William W. Streater History Award sponsored by the Cummington Historical Commission offers a \$2,000 scholarship to all graduating high school seniors residing in Cummington.

Acceptance to any accredited two or four-year college or university makes them eligible to apply. Applications must be submitted prior to May 15. They must include at least a five-page double spaced essay or recorded interview or multimedia presentation about any aspect of Cummington history, i.e., people, places, events, organizations, families, etc.; official transcript of their scholastic record and two letters of reference, one of

which must be from a person not associated with their school.

Applicants will be judged on these and the accuracy of information presented. The Cummington Historical Commission files are available by appointment to assist with their research.

Shortly after May 15, the members of the Cummington Historical Commission will meet and evaluate all applications. Winners will be personally notified and schools will receive an announcement that can be included in the awards assemblies. Actual payment of the award will be made to the student after successful completion of the first semester of college.

Winners are requested to volunteer three hours at the Kingman Tavern Museum on one Saturday of their choice during July and August.

Fully completed applications must be submitted by mail: Cummington Historical Commission, P.O. Box 10, Cummington, MA 01026, email [historical@cummington-ma.gov](mailto:historical@cummington-ma.gov) or to any member of the Cummington Historical Commission prior to May 15, 2026.

If applicants have questions or would like research assistance, they may email Karen Westergaard at [18kjwestergaard@gmail.com](mailto:18kjwestergaard@gmail.com) or Carla Ness at [historical@cummington-ma.gov](mailto:historical@cummington-ma.gov) or call 413-695-6569.

### Friday Night Cafe features Erica Terpening-Romeo

CUMMINGTON – Next up at the Friday Night Cafe is Erica Terpening-Romeo on Friday, Feb. 27.

Terpening-Romeo is the founder, director, producer and brilliance behind Hilltown Theater Anonymous. She will bring her non-anonymous solo theater piece to the cafe:

The Songbook: A Haunting in Reverse is an exploration of maps, ghosts, muses and memory. It is roughly an hour of mostly talking with some songs trying to get to the very bot-

tom of something round, narrow and deep. At 7p.m. an optional, casual, interactive exercise for anyone who wants to be there takes place. The show begins at 7:30 p.m.

All are welcome 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 will be provided. People should bring their own beverages.

Once again this is brought 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 Ashfield, 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

### Democrats to caucus Feb. 26

BECKET –The annual Becket Democratic Caucus is scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 26 at 6 p.m. in the downstairs Community Room at Becket Town Hall, 577 Main St.

Refreshments will be

served. The agenda is to elect delegates to the state Massachusetts Democratic Convention in May, who will nominate candidates for Democratic September primary. Following the caucus, a regular

committee meeting will be held to discuss the importance of the annual town census, the Annual Town Meeting and the annual spring elections. Any questions people may call Tommie L. Hutto-Blake at 551-208-0215.

### Athenaeum lists upcoming events

BECKET – The Becket Athenaeum, 3367 Main St., lists upcoming events.

Ongoing events include: baby and toddler playgroup meets Tuesdays from 10-11 a.m.; one-on-one tech support, 30-minute appointments available on Wednesdays 2:30-4:30 p.m.; story time and craft on Saturdays from 10:30-11:30 a.m. and story time with stay and play on Saturdays at 10:30 a.m. Registration is appreciated for the story time by visiting [bwlibrary.org/storytime](http://bwlibrary.org/storytime). For more information, people may visit [bwlibrary.org/events](http://bwlibrary.org/events).

Ompractice online fitness

and mindfulness highlights are sip and stretch with Dannika on Mondays at 8 a.m., yoga for strength and balance with Niki on Wednesdays at 8:30 p.m., seated mindful movement for stress relief on Thursdays at 4 p.m. and core foundations challenge – take any three classes to support a strong core. New member drop-in office hours are Tuesdays at 2:30 p.m.

On Tuesday, March 3 at 1:30 p.m. the Book Club meets. The book is “The Left Hand of Darkness” by Ursula K. Le Guin. On Monday, March 9 at 6 p.m. the Cookbook Club meets.

Participants will share food they prepare from “The Complete Vegetarian Cookbook” by America’s Test Kitchen.

On Thursday, March 19 from 6-8 p.m. is Game Night. On Monday, March 23 at 6 p.m. there will be an American Revolution event moderated by Senator Paul Mark. There will be more details later.

On Tuesday, March 24 from 6:30-9:30 p.m. is Movie Night for adults. The movie “Wicked: For Good” starts at 7 p.m. Thursday, March 26, the Becket Athenaeum closes at 6 p.m.

### MassDOT announces I-90 bridge repair

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

The work is scheduled now through Friday, Feb. 27 from 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m. each day and will require lane closures. Appropriate signage, law enforcement details, and advanced message boards

will be in place to guide drivers through the work area. Drivers traveling through the affected areas should expect delays, reduce speed, and use caution. All scheduled work is weather dependent and subject to change without notice.

For more information on traffic conditions, travelers are encouraged to: Download the Mass511 mobile app or visit [www.mass511.com](http://www.mass511.com)

to view live cameras, travel times, real time traffic conditions, and project information before setting out on the road. Users can subscribe to receive text and email alerts for traffic conditions. Dial 511 and select a route to hear real time conditions. Follow @MassDOT on X (formerly known as Twitter) to receive regular updates on road and traffic conditions.

## OTIS

### Council on Aging plans trips: one a day trip, the other three days

OTIS – The Council on Aging will visit Lancaster, Pennsylvania again this year to see the biblical presentation of Joshua.

The three-day tour is set for May 12 through May 14.

The cost for a double occupancy is \$619, triple is \$599 and a single room is \$799. The price includes round trip travel via coach, two nights at the Eden Resort with two breakfasts. Seniors from all

towns are welcome.

The performance and a shopping excursion on the way home and all taxes and tips are also included.

For more information and to reserve a spot, peo-

ple may call Diane Dyer at 413-269-6335 or email her at [ddyer555@hotmail.com](mailto:ddyer555@hotmail.com) or call Elsie DeVoti at 413-329-8099 or email to [Tdevotician@aol.com](mailto:Tdevotician@aol.com).

Last year’s trip to see the

biblical presentation of Noah and the Ark was so successful, the COA decided to plan another similar trip for this year.

Then on Wednesday, Aug. 5 is a trip to see a Kenny Rogers Tribute program by Dave Karl at the Log Cabin in Holyoke. Karl has performed for the COA before. The all-

day event leaves at 9:15 a.m. and returns about 5 p.m. The trip includes the performance and lunch of hors d’oeuvres, clam chowder and either twin lobsters or prime rib and round-trip transportation.

For more information, people may contact Dyer or DeVoti at the above numbers or email addresses.

## PITTSFIELD

### BEAT hosts webinar about non-native fish stocking

PITTSFIELD – Berkshire Environmental Action Team announces the launch of its campaign “Stop Non-Native Fish Stocking,” a public education and advocacy effort urging the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to end the routine stocking of non-native fish in rivers, streams, lakes and ponds.

BEAT will host a free public webinar on March 3 from 6-7:30 p.m. titled “The Harmful Practice of Fish Stocking in Massachusetts and What You Can Do to Help,” to provide ecological context, review key findings, and offer space for discussion and questions, while also supporting informed public engagement around fisheries management decisions and providing practical guidance on how to push for policy change, including how to effectively contact MassWildlife and state officials. People may

RSVP by visiting at <https://www.thebeatnews.org/BeatTeam/event/stop-fish-stocking-webinar/>. Registration is required

The campaign highlights the ecological consequences of current stocking practices and aligns with state commitments to biodiversity and climate resilience. The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife spends millions of dollars to raise and stock waterways with non-native fish for recreational fishing. According

to state information, stocked fish are generally unable to survive long-term, resulting in extremely high mortality rates shortly after stocking and potentially contributing to excess nutrients.

Other independent research shows that stocking non-native fish disrupts aquatic ecosystems and negatively impacts native species. These outcomes run counter to the Massachusetts Biodiversity Mandate, which directs state agencies to protect native species and biodiversity across the Commonwealth. By advocating for an end to non-native stocking, BEAT seeks to modernize fisheries management in a way that prioritizes ecosystem health and public accountability.

This campaign is part of BEAT’s broader mission to protect the natural systems that sustain wildlife and communities in the Berkshires and beyond. BEAT’s work integrates science, advocacy, and community engagement to address emerging environmental challenges and ensure that public resources support resilient, biodiverse ecosystems.

Registration details for the March 3 webinar and additional campaign resources are available by visiting <https://www.thebeatnews.org/BeatTeam/stop-stocking/>. People may email Berkshire Environmental Action Team at [team@thebeatnews.org](mailto:team@thebeatnews.org) with questions.

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AD DEADLINE: March 4, 2026

AD SIZE: 5.25"x6" for ONLY \$99

**Get to know Hilltown Real Estate by Adams**

*Meet Your Merchants*

Location: 2 Packard Park (General) Worthington, MA 01098

Phone Number: 413-238-0300

Website: [HilltownRealEstate.com](http://HilltownRealEstate.com)

Hours of Operation: By appointment only

Owner/Manager Name: James D Adams  
Agent: Amy Coyne  
Agent: Erik O. Cuba

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What makes you stand out from the competition? Hilltown Real Estate has the knowledge and the unique challenge and sellers in Hill...

**Get to know Moltenbrey's Market**

*Meet Your Merchants*

Location: Rte. 112, Huntington

Phone Number: 413-667-3426

Hours of Operation: Mon.-Fri. 8am-6pm, Sat. 8am-4pm

Owners/Manager Name: Darryl Fisk

How long have you been in business? 40 plus years for Darryl. Grandpa Frederick Moltenbrey bought the business from Earl Miller, who started it in approx. 1910.

Why do you enjoy this business? People. For example for the past five or six years at Christmas time an anonymous customer gives to assist anonymously those in need temporarily. Grandfather started this tradition and it continues.

Describe your product or service. Handcut and fresh ground meats, hand-seasoned and smoked kielbasa. We also offer freshly made sandwiches, wraps, soups and prepared meals to go. A full display and selection of fresh fruits and vegetables – often seasonal and locally, organically grown.

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## SCHOOLS &amp; YOUTH

## COLLEGE NOTES

## Dean's Lists announced

DEAN'S LIST  
Ohio University  
Athens, Ohio

Sierra Allen of Montgomery

St. Lawrence University  
Canton, New York

Annika Jensen of Westfield, Class of 2026 and political science and global studies major

University of Rhode Island  
Kingston, Rhode Island  
Larissa Riley of Chesterfield  
Delaney Cantwell of Cummington  
Julia Langenheim of CummingtonTrevor Canon-Smith of Easthampton  
Dylan McGinn-Stevens of Easthampton  
Ally Burke of Westfield  
Katie Burzynski of Westfield  
Zachary Price of Westfield  
Quinn Rowe of Westfield  
Alana Guidette-Bocchino of OtisUniversity of Tampa  
Tampa, FloridaRiley Marney of Williamsburg, a freshman majoring in nursing  
Natalie Oleksak of Westfield, a freshman majoring in accounting

## Local nursing students receive 'Blessing of the Hands' at Emmanuel College

BOSTON – More than 70 nursing students received the Blessing of the Hands on Friday, Feb. 6 at Emmanuel College.

Local students participating in the ceremony include Lydia Donatelli of West Chesterfield and Rowan McDonald of Westfield. This meaningful

ceremony is a long-standing tradition at the Maureen Murphy Wilkens School of Nursing and Clinical Sciences for second-year nursing students as they prepare to begin their first clinical.

Hosted in collaboration with Emmanuel Mission and Ministry in the campus

chapel, the Blessing of the Hands recognizes nursing students' hands as instruments of care, comfort and respect. The ceremony affirms nursing as a commitment to skilled practice, compassion and respect for the dignity of every person as students enter clinical practice.

## STCC hosts eighth annual Community Dental Day March 28

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Technical Community College Dental Sciences Department, in partnership with the Valley District Dental Society, will host the eighth annual Community Dental Day on Saturday, March 28 from 8 a.m.-4 p.m., in Building 20 at STCC.

This free event provides an opportunity for area residents, who may not be receiving regular dental care to obtain necessary treatment at no cost. Licensed dentists from the Valley District Dental Society, along with STCC dental hygiene and assisting students, will provide a range of services, including patient education, health screenings, diagnosis, X-rays and limited treatments such as fillings, extractions, sealants and assessments of urgent issues. While cleanings will not be provided during the event, patients needing one may schedule a low-cost fol-

low-up visit at STCC's dental clinic.

"Community Dental Day plays an important role in helping meet the needs of our community while giving our students meaningful, real-world clinical experience," said Christopher Scott, Dean of the School of Health and Patient Simulation at STCC. "We invite community members who need dental care to make use of this no-cost service. Through our collaboration with local dental professionals, we're able to provide high-quality care while also equipping our students with the skills they need to succeed in their future careers."

STCC offers pathways to dental careers through two programs. Students can seek a two-year associate degree in Dental Hygiene or a one-year certificate in Dental Assisting.

Dr. Michael Nardi, an event organizer with the Valley District Dental

Society volunteer dentists, highlighted the impact of Community Dental Day. "Too often, people delay getting dental treatment because it can be expensive or difficult to access," Nardi said. "This event allows us to offer timely care to individuals who need it most, while also helping them understand how to maintain their oral health in the long run. I'm proud to take part in an initiative that has such a positive impact on our community."

Valley District Dental Society is a supporter of STCC through generous financial support for scholarships and dental kits.

The event is open to the public and no insurance is required. Patients can also return to STCC's dental clinic for affordable follow-up care if needed. Community Dental Day is open to the public on a first-come-first-served basis. People may call 413-755-4900 if they have questions.

## WILLAIMSBURG



Photo courtesy of Meekins Library

This collage featuring a moose is just one of the collages by artist Cyndy Sperry on display in the Neil Hammer Gallery at the Meekins Library, 2 Williams St., Williamsburg.

## Meekins to host artist Cyndy Sperry

WILLIAMSBURG – The Meekins Library, 2 Williams St., will host an exhibit by artist Cyndy Sperry in the Neil Hammer Gallery.

In this exhibit, Sperry translates small moments from different sketchbooks into large, tapestry-scale

collages. The pieces incorporate woodblock prints, silkscreen imagery, charcoal figure drawings, painted papers and leftover student work from the summer program at Sugarhill Art. The New England boreal forest, rocky Maine Coast, paint-

ings by Edward Hicks, the lions of the Ishtar Gate and Processional Way from Babylon and Piero Della Francesca's Adoration weave into the work as well as many walks in the woods and river swims alone and in good company.

## Taber Art Gallery features 'River Valley Radical Futures'

HOLYOKE – A new exhibition at Holyoke Community College's Taber Art Gallery asks visitors to imagine a future Pioneer Valley 100 years after the fall of capitalism.

"River Valley Radical Futures" runs through Thursday, March 12. The gallery will host a closing talk from project lead and curator Alix Gerber and book launch on Thursday, March 12 from 5-7 p.m.

The show features the work of eight area artists and has its origins in the Making Radical Futures Lab at Smith College in Northampton. Gerber is a post-doc fellow and associate director of Smith's Design Thinking Initiative.

"The lab uses participatory and speculative design practices to explore collaborative ways of imagining futures without capitalism," Gerber said in a statement about the show. "Worker co-operatives, mutual aid networks, and other community groups came together through a series of work-

shops throughout the Pioneer Valley to imagine how their values and current work might lead to future, alternative economic systems."

Those sessions led to the creation of an illustrated map of the Connecticut River Valley 100 years beyond the fall of capitalism. In "River Valley Radical Futures," the map is brought to life by paintings and sculptures and other artwork – "artifacts excavated from the future we imagined," says Gerber.

Gallery visitors will see body extensions and creature masks, cow brushes and bells made from local materials, a floating house design, a tool sharing station, a secret-baring mural, a flood system made from local clay and an apothecary, among other pieces.

The exhibition includes the work of artists Sunny Allis, David von Dufving, Andrea Hairston, Mary Kate Cleary, Bo Kim, Sharon Leshner (a.k.a. Sharona Color), Michael Madeiros, and Laura Torracco.

"This is an exciting proj-

ect that opens up the art-making process from what is usually a single artist materializing their thoughts alone in the studio into a collaborative effort between artists, educators, community workers, facilitators and organizers," said gallery director Rachel Rushing. "By collaborating across disciplines and experiences the workshop participants were able to imagine the kind of future their work could make possible."

"When visiting the Taber, you'll see artwork that has begun the process of bringing those ideas to life," Rushing said. "Imagination is at the core of this exhibition, and I hope visitors will be inspired and energized to continue imagining what kind of future we all hope to create, together."

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

PLEASE REMEMBER TO RECYCLE THIS NEWSPAPER

## PUBLIC NOTICES

## INVITATION FOR BIDS

The Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) will accept sealed bids on behalf of the Town of Blandford, MA for improvements to a portion of Russell Stage Road. Sealed bids marked "Russell Stage Road" will be received by FRCOG, 12 Olive St. Ste 2, Greenfield, MA 01301, until March 25, 2026 at 2PM when they will be opened and publicly read. PREQUALIFICATION BY MASSDOT IS REQUIRED FOR THIS PROJECT. The Class of Work is PAVEMENT SURFACING and the Total Project Value is estimated at \$54,076.

Wage rates for this bid are subject to MGL Chapter 149, Section 26 - 27f inclusive. This bid is being undertaken per MGL Ch 30 §39M requiring a 5% bid bond/deposit and 50% Labor and Materials Payment Bond.

Qualified bidders who are Minority/Women/Disabled Owned Business Enterprises are encouraged to apply. Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity, and Workforce Participation goals apply.

Specifications and bid instructions are available for download from <https://frcog.org/bids>. Downloading from this site will

allow for automatic notifications of any addenda or clarifications.

The Town of Blandford is the awarding authority and reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids in total or in part as they may deem in the best public interest.

02/26/2026

Notice of Chester  
Special Permit Granting  
Authority  
Public Hearing  
Special Permit Review for  
Cell Tower Modifications at  
65 Old State Highway,  
Chester, MA 01011

The Planning Board of the Town of Chester, as the special permit granting authority, will hold a public hearing to conduct a special permit review for a proposed modification of the cell tower located at 65 Old State Highway, Chester, MA.

The public hearing will be held as follows:

Place: Chester Town Hall,  
15 Middlefield Road,  
Council on Aging room  
Date: March 11, 2026  
Time: 5:00 pm

The special permit review is for a proposed modification of the existing cell tower as follows: Remove fifteen antennas and six

1 5/8" coax cables. Install six antennas, four RRRs, two OVPS and one 1 1/4" 3 x 6 hybrid and one 1 5/8" 6 x 12 hybrid cable.  
02/26, 03/05/2026Commonwealth of  
Massachusetts  
The Trial Court  
Probate and Family Court  
Hampshire Probate and  
Family Court  
15 Atwood Drive  
Northampton, MA 01060  
(413)586-8500  
Docket No.  
HS23P07 44EA  
Estate of:Casimir R. Kazimierzczak  
Date of Death: 10/05/2023  
CITATION ON PETITION  
FOR SALE OF REAL  
ESTATE BY A PERSONAL  
REPRESENTATIVETo all interested persons:  
A Petition for Sale of Real Estate has been filed by: Jan M. Mastej of Chicopee, MA requesting that the court authorize the Personal Representative to sell the decedent's real estate at a private sale.

## 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 03/13/2026.

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.

Witness, Diana S. Velez Harris, First Justice of this Court.

Date: February 12, 2026  
Mark S Ames,  
Register of Probate  
02/26/2026Commonwealth of  
Massachusetts  
The Trial Court  
Probate and Family Court  
Hampshire Probate and  
Family Court  
15 Atwood Drive  
Northampton, MA 01060  
(413)586-8500  
Docket No.  
HS26P0083EA

## Estate of:

Mary Louise Wickland

Also known as:

Mary L. Wickland,

Mary Lou Wickland

Date of Death: 01/16/2026  
CITATION ON PETITION  
FOR FORMAL  
ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons:

A Petition for Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative has been filed by Matthew B Robbins of Carlisle, PA requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that Matthew B Robbins of Carlisle, PA 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 03/31/2026. 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

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

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

Date: February 18, 2026  
Mark S Ames,  
Register of Probate  
02/26/2026

# OBITUARY

## Lorena Mae "Lorie" Thayer, 83

CUMMINGTON – Lorena Mae "Lorie" Thayer, 83, of Bryant Road passed away peacefully at her home on the afternoon of Sunday, Feb. 8, 2026 surrounded by her family. Lorena was raised on a dairy farm in Southamton, the daughter of the late Elwyn and Louise (Searle) Fowles.

She attended local schools, graduating from Easthampton High School and then University of Connecticut with her Bachelor's degree in Physical Therapy. Lorena married Clifford Thayer and they settled in Cummington to begin their family. She worked for Ashmere Nursing Home, Northampton VNA and later Berkshire Health systems/Berkshire Medical Center as a physical therapist before retiring.

Lorena was very involved with 4-H, serving as a Volunteer Leader and town 4-H committee chair for many years. She was a

member of the West Cummington Congregational Church and the Harvest Club. She and her husband established Splendorview Farm, known for its award-winning Dorset, Suffolk and Southdown sheep exhibited locally, at the Big E and national shows in Kentucky and Missouri. Her children and grandchildren continued that family vocation and brought her great joy. Lorie enjoyed following her grandchildren's activities and joined in on many sports events and country music concerts.

She especially loved the outdoors, watching the birds and admiring the beauty of nature's flowers. She was predeceased by her husband, Clifford Thayer and two brothers: Wayne and Meryl Fowles. She is survived by her son, Kyle Thayer and his wife Cara of Cummington,



her daughters; Shawn Thayer of Cummington, Alison Mason and her husband Fran of Worthington and Kimberley Thayer and her fiancé Adam Szymojko of Haydenville; five grandchildren; Samantha, Olivia, Taylor, Logan and Grace. She also leaves her sister, Christine Fowles of Southamton and several nieces and nephews.

Services were held at Ahearn Funeral Home on Friday, Feb., 20, 2026 with Minister Stephen Philbrick, Officiant of the West Cummington Congregational Church. Burial will be in the spring at Dawes Cemetery. The family asks that if one wishes, donations in Lorena's memory may be made to the Hillside Agricultural Society, c/o Flower Fund, Cummington Fair, P.O. Box 70, Cummington, MA. 01026.

## DEATH NOTICE

### THAYER, LORENA MAE "LORIE"

Died Feb. 8, 2026  
Burial will be in spring at Dawes Cemetery



### Nobody dreams of having multiple sclerosis

Some dreams are universal: hitting a ball over the Green Monster; winning the World Series with a grand slam in the bottom of the ninth inning. Finding out you have MS is not one of them.

Multiple sclerosis is a devastating disease of the central nervous system where the body's immune system attacks the insulation surrounding the nerves. It strikes adults in the prime of life - and changes lives forever.

To help make the dream of ending MS come true, call 1-800-FIGHT MS or visit us online at [nationalmssociety.org](http://nationalmssociety.org).

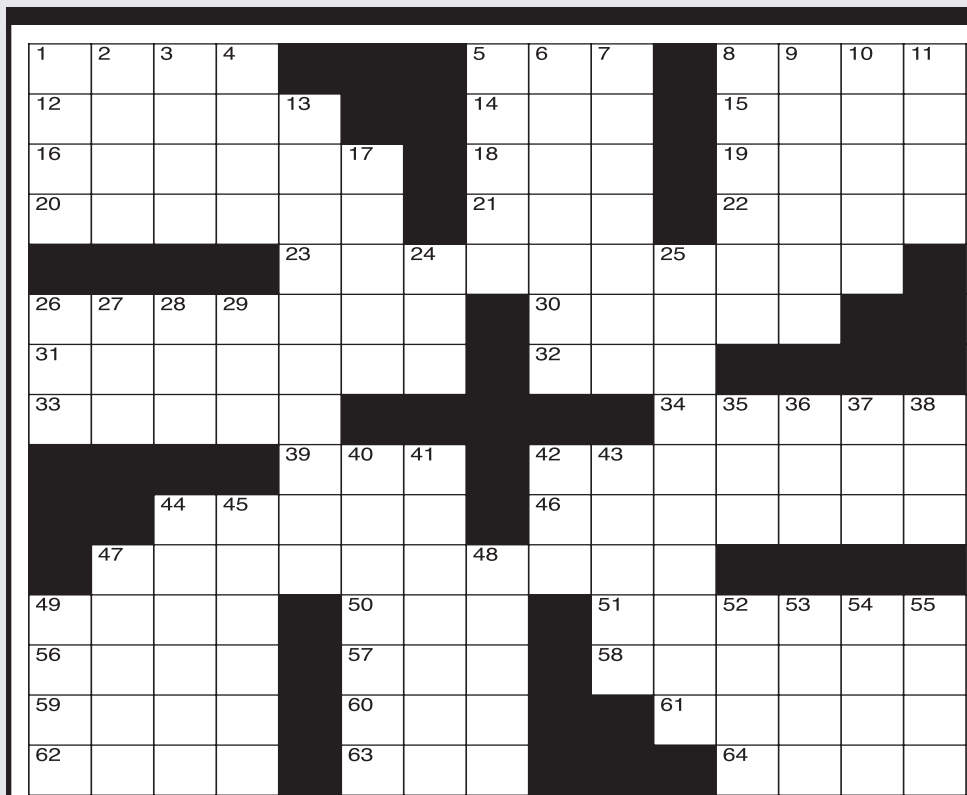


## Country Journal OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries. One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice (with a word limit of up to 500 words) and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: [obits@turley.com](mailto:obits@turley.com).

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



### CLUES ACROSS

1. What travelers must do
5. Calendar month
8. Hopefully quickly
12. Once more
14. Bravo! Bravo!
15. "Cheers" actress Perlman
16. Astronomy unit
18. Savings vehicle
19. Get your ducks in this
20. Right away
21. Popular sports league
22. Containers
23. Entireties
26. One who wassails
30. Turned-up position
31. Extreme modesty
32. Writing utensil
33. Rewards (archaic)

34. Ancient capital
39. S. American wood sorrel
42. General discomfort
44. Philippine island
46. A witty saying
47. One who summarizes
49. Covered in
50. Mimic
51. Henry was a notable one
56. Daughter of Hera and Zeus
57. Retired NFLer Newton
58. Playground equipment
59. Concept
60. Satisfaction
61. Fishing net
62. Hammer end
63. A father's male child

64. Japanese drink
- ### CLUES DOWN
1. Off-Broadway figure
  2. Gelatinous substance
  3. Concern
  4. "Lick It Up" rockers
  5. Serbian river
  6. Part of a hat
  7. Bowl-shaped drinking vessel
  8. Semitic language
  9. Utter a shrill cry
  10. Long times
  11. Animal parts
  13. Causing annoyance
  17. Amorous talker
  24. Attempt
  25. Harmonic effects
  26. Cost per mile
  27. They \_\_
  28. Bitterly regret
  29. Not even
  35. A way to drop

36. Title of respect
37. World leader
38. Georgia rockers
40. National capital
41. Great Plains people
42. Duck-sized dinosaur genus
43. Architectural recesses
44. Member of U.S. Navy
45. Mountainous
47. Kite bird
48. Sweetheart (archaic)
49. Popular snack made of potato
52. 70s songsters The Bee \_\_
53. SE China port \_\_-men
54. Something to fill up
55. League of Legends character

## THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPES

### ARIES

**Mar 21/Apr 20**  
Unleash your inner architect. Your focus is laser sharp. Use this incredible mental clarity to map out a long-term goal that can lead to professional success.

### TAURUS

**Apr 21/May 21**  
You might uncover a previously unnoticed talent or find a fantastic, easy way to increase your income stream. Your instincts about finances are particularly sharp.

### GEMINI

**May 22/June 21**  
You are stepping into a week of elevated confidence and personal magnetism. It's the perfect time to make a splash, meet new people or launch a personal project.

### CANCER

**June 22/July 22**  
This week brings soothing energy, allowing you to find deep comfort and resolution with any lingering personal matters. A moment of quiet reflection will bring a profound realization about your path forward.

### LEO

**July 23/Aug 23**  
Your social connections are bringing incredible joy and opportunity. A friend or colleague has valuable information that can directly benefit your goals.

### VIRGO

**Aug 24/Sept 22**  
All eyes are on your professional achievements, and recognition is due. Expect positive feedback, a nod from an important figure or a chance to take on more.

### LIBRA

**Sept 23/Oct 23**  
This week ignites your desire for learning and adventure, Libra. If you've been putting off a trip or a new course of study, the time to commit is now.

### SCORPIO

**Oct 24/Nov 22**  
Complex issues feel manageable this week, Scorpio. You have the emotional intelligence to navigate and resolve long-standing challenges in shared resources or relationships.

### SAGITTARIUS

**Nov 23/Dec 21**  
Sagittarius, your one-on-one relationships, both personal and professional, are reaching a new peak of understanding and support. A shared goal with a key person becomes much clearer.

### CAPRICORN

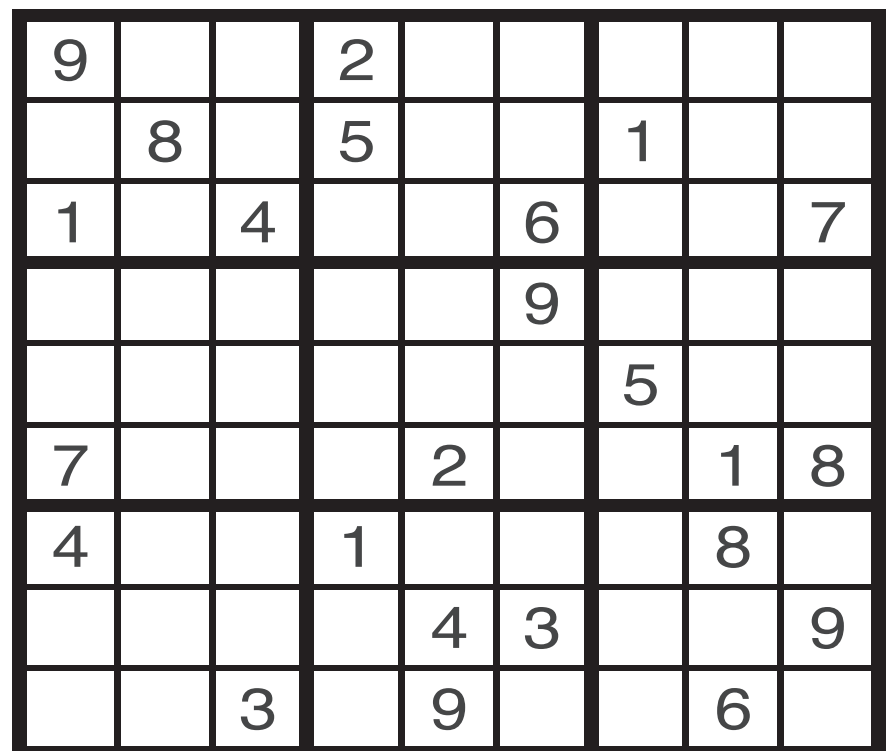
**Dec 22/Jan 20**  
You feel a vibrant surge of energy and vitality this week, Capricorn. It's an ideal time to commit to a new health routine or simply enjoy the ease and flow of your daily tasks.

### AQUARIUS

**Jan 21/Feb 18**  
Dive into what sets your soul on fire, Aquarius. Your creative imagination is running wild, delivering innovative solutions and exciting ideas for self-expression.

### PISCES

**Feb 19/Mar 20**  
The cosmos is supporting your home and emotional life, Pisces. You feel a wonderful sense of security and belonging. It's a great time for connecting with your roots.



## SUDOKU

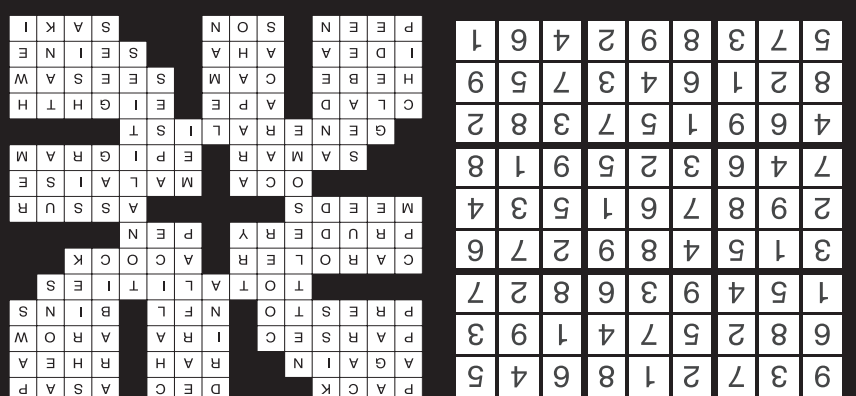
### Here's How It Works:

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

### Fun By The Numbers

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

## answers



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# SUMMER CAMP

Check Out These Great Camps!

## Registration open for HCC Summer Youth Programs

It's still winter, but it's not too early to start thinking about summer.

Registration is now open for 2026 Summer Youth Programs at Holyoke Community College.

Starting July 7 and running through August 8, HCC will offer 16 week-long, in-person summer programs for youth aged 8 to 16.

For more than 40 years, HCC has offered fun, challenging summer education activities for youth, providing early opportunities for students to experience a college environment guided and encouraged by experienced professionals.

HCC's 2026 on-campus

summer youth programs run Monday through Friday, some for a full day and others for a half day.

All in-person programs will be held on the main HCC campus, 303 Homestead Ave., except for cooking classes, which are held at the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute, 164 Race St., Holyoke:

**July 6-10:**

**Cooking without Borders with Chef Marangelly Vargas-Gonzalez (ages 9-16):** In this lively hands-on camp, young chefs will team up to chop, stir, and create tasty dishes from around the world. Each day brings a new theme and a chance to dis-



cover fresh ingredients, cool cooking techniques, and the joy of working together in the kitchen. By week's end,

they'll walk away with new cooking skills, delicious recipes to show off at home, and plenty of tasty memories. (9 a.m. – 3 p.m., \$425)

**Fun Bites with Chef Diana Swanigan (ages 9-16):** Join us for an exciting week of hands-on culinary fun, where young chefs will discover the joy of cooking delicious, easy-to-prepare meals to share with family and friends. Participants will work together to chop, season, cook, and taste a variety of recipes – all made from scratch. Each day introduces new menu themes, ingredients, and techniques designed to build confidence in the kitchen. (9 a.m. – 3 p.m., \$425)

**July 13-17:** Cooking without Borders with Chef Marangelly Vargas-Gonzalez (ages 9-16, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., \$425)

**Fun Bites with Chef Diana Swanigan (ages 9-16, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., \$425)**

**ROBLOX Coders (ages 8-10; 11-14):** Discover the Lua coding language while designing experiences in ROBLOX, an online universe where you can create anything you dream of. New developers will learn to use ROBLOX's Studio software to reimagine the popular game genres with their own custom code. Instructor Brittany Pietskowski. (9 a.m. to noon for ages 8-10; 1 to 4 p.m. for ages 11-14, \$199)

**July 20-24:** Around the World with Chef Diana Swanigan (ages 9-16): Cuisine around the world serves as a universal language that unites people across cultures through shared flavors, traditions, and stories. Learn to prepare full-course meals from Asia, Puerto Rico, Greece, Italy,

and New Orleans. (9 a.m. – 3 p.m., \$425)

**Make Your First Video Game (ages 8-10; 11-14):** Go beyond the limitations of traditional 2D game design classes and create an immersive 3D world. Students will learn the physics behind 3D games, explore beginner event scripting, level design, controlling the flow of gameplay, and storytelling. Instructor Brittany Pietskowski. (9 a.m. – noon for ages 8-10; 1 – 4 p.m. for ages 11-14, \$199)

**Passport to Flavors with Chef Marangelly Vargas-Gonzalez (ages 9-16):** This hands-on cooking camp takes kids on a delicious journey across global cuisines, exploring flavors, techniques, and ingredients that make each culture unique. Dive into fun daily themes like diner classics, Mexican favorites, Mediterranean feasts, Filipino street bites, and southern comfort food, all while building confidence one tasty dish at a time. (9 a.m. – 3 p.m., \$425)

July 27-31:

Around the World with

Chef Diana Swanigan (ages 9-16, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., \$425)

**Minecraft Designers (ages 8-10; 11-14):** Learn how to create a custom map, design structures to share between worlds, build with Redstone and Command blocks, and create custom textures for you to import at home or share with friends. Instructor Brittany Pietskowski. (9 a.m. – noon for ages 8-10; 1 – 4 p.m. for ages 11-14, \$199).

**Passport to Flavors with Chef Marangelly Vargas-Gonzalez (ages 9-16, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., \$425)**

**August 3-7:**

**Python Programmers (ages 8-10; 11-14):** Learn the world's fastest-growing programming language favored by Google, NASA, YouTube, and the CIA. Learn how to code with Python to create engaging apps and games. Instructor Brittany Pietskowski. (9 a.m. – noon for ages 8-10; 1 – 4 p.m. for ages 11-14, \$199).

For more details or to register for Summer Youth Program classes, please go to: [hcc.edu/summer-youth](http://hcc.edu/summer-youth).

# summer@HCC

## Holyoke Community College Summer Youth Programs for Ages 8-16

Save your spot and register today for summer fun!

**July 27-31, Minecraft Designers (ages 8-10, 11-14)**  
**August 3-7, Python Programmers (ages 8-10, 11-14)**  
**July 20-24, Make Your First Video Game (ages 8-10, 11-14)**  
**July 13-17, ROBLOX Coders (ages 8-10, 11-14)**  
**July 6-10 and 13-17, Fun Bites with Chef Swanigan (ages 9-16)**  
**July 20-24 and 27-31, Around the world with Chef Swanigan (ages 9-16)**  
**July 6-10 and 13-17, Cooking without Borders with Chef Vargas-Gonzalez (ages 9-16)**  
**July 20-24 and 27-31, Passport to Flavors with Chef Vargas-Gonzalez (ages 9-16)**

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Registration Link  
[bement.org/summer](http://bement.org/summer)