

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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CHESTER

Author talks on trolley book

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

Local author Stephen V. Cormier has a new book coming out called, "Good Golly...Missed Trolley."

Known for his books on local history, this tome deals with the evolution of various trolley systems within Western Massachusetts and their direct impact on urban mass transit. Cormier's book details the rise and fall of early systems from the stagecoach in the early 1800s to the horse-drawn Omnibus (1826) and the horsecar (1865), which lost favor due to the "manure problem."

Cable cars were introduced and still run in San Francisco in 1875 and cable systems were soon used to go up to the Mt. Tom Summit House. The advent of electricity would lead to even more transit options, including trolleys.

"The book reveals, in detail, what I call the 'Hilltown Dilemma,' where the lack of trolley service within the greater area resulted in population loss and economic despair," Cormier said. "Unfortunately, the Huckleberry line did not provide the service that the hilltowns desperately needed."

One of the trolley's proposed in the Berkshire Trolley Merger Bill of 1910 would be from Lee to Huntington and be dubbed the Huckleberry Line. Designed to not only move passengers, potential benefits included transporting soapstone, hearthstone, local granite and produce from area farms. It was seen as having the potential to provide an economic boom

BOOK, page 7

CHESTERFIELD

Help sought to transform former scout camp

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

According to Jakob Palches, it took about 20 minutes to have the legal notices read aloud at the foreclosure auction of the Chesterfield Scout Camp on Oct. 3, and about three minutes to get to the winning bid of \$1.4 million.

It was not open to updating their facilities for the project's accessibility needs.

The Ashmere Project had been eyeing potential sites throughout New England during their rental years and learned last fall that the Chesterfield Scout Camp was going into foreclosure. The rest, as they say, is history.



Representatives of Ashmere Project look over plans of the former Chesterfield Scout Camp.

Thus ended a four-year search for a permanent site for "The Ashmere Project," a nonprofit group that runs summer camping retreats for adults, who have disabilities.

"It was a wild experience," Palches said. Palches has been part of this work for the past 20 years, starting at a camp on Martha's Vineyard. A group of volunteers broke off several years ago to begin a new enterprise in Western Massachusetts.

For the past four years, the group has rented space from Berkshire Lake Camps on Ashmere Lake in Hinsdale. While that location had a lot to offer,

Palches, otherwise known as the Camp Ranger, described how the group prepared for the auction. A Board of Directors had formed earlier and had already filed their 501(c)3; that letter of approval was dated the day before the auction demonstrating that sometimes things fall into place at the right time. They had done their due diligence ahead of the auction including having an inspector look through the facilities and reviewing the conservation restrictions on the property.

Property restrictions require that over half of the 200 acres have to be managed forest. Things

looked feasible on both counts and the Board voted to proceed. A combination of donations and debt got them to the purchase price.

Palches grew up on Martha's Vineyard and had first come to Western Mass to study wheelchair development and design. Under a self-developed major at UMASS, he worked with advanced students from its mechanical engineering department to design wheelchair innovations as their capstone projects. Some of those designs have since gone on to further development and possible manufacturing, he said.

There are several

Work is already underway at the former Chesterfield Scout Camp, which has been purchased by The Ashmere Project to run summer retreats for friends with disabilities and the volunteers, who support them. Submitted photos

aspects of The Ashmere Project that make it unique. Board of Directors Chair Maggie Moyers explained that a lot of people and organizations are passionate about the idea of enriching the lives of children with disabilities, especially in Massachusetts. "But few opportunities exist for adults, and very few where people are not paid," Moyers said. This model fits the organization's mission "to create a community of friends who celebrate diversity and foster inclusion, independence and equity."

"We have done a really good job creating a structure that's very different from many other non-profits," Moyers concluded.

During its renting years, the Project's annual budget was about \$100,000, which covered

CAMP, page 9

BLANDFORD

Select Board holds all board meeting

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

The meeting of the Select Board on Monday, March 2 at 6 p.m. followed the meeting with the Water Department.

Instead of the regular meeting, this was an all-boards meeting with representatives from the Board of Health, Conservation, Council on Aging, Assessors, Town Clerk, Accountant, Water Department, Library and Highway attending. Budgets were reviewed and a few appeared to be over the line item, but reclassification of an incorrectly posted cost will fix any problems.

Library Director Nicole Daviau said the library is set to move into the town hall space before June 1. Chair Cara Letendre said this might be a good time to consider moving departments around, sharing space and when the library moves into its expanded quarters, a second room could open up for meetings, which is becoming a need.

The Board of Health would like to use the accountant's office and the building inspector's office could be available as well. If any department has any thoughts or suggestions, they may email the Select Board.

A fine tuning of the inclement weather policy according to Select Board member Jackie Coury is that if town hall is closed, anyone who is regularly scheduled to work on that day will be compensated.

Council on Aging Director Margit Mikuski said the COA telephone was not working; this has since been taken care of. There is a recall on the COA van for a small piece of plastic that needs to be fixed.

Highway Superintendent Ray Hultay said that the invitation for bids for the Russell Stage Road project had been posted. The highway garage is losing heat as the heating oil is gelling. The tanks need to be covered to protect them from the weather also they are directly under high tension wires and need the extra protection.

Hultay has two quotes for painting and refurbishing the tanks, both in excess of \$10,000. Town Administrator Cristina Ferrera directed him to get another quote because the cost exceeds the \$10,000 amount.

He also said there could possibly be a small

MEETING, page 6

BLANDFORD

Field Driver and Fence Viewer positions still remain open

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

The elected position of Field Driver has not been filled for several years. It is a time-honored position. The first mention for the town, however, dates to 1946, when Blandford was undoubtedly more agriculturally based than it is today.

Fence Viewer is another position of the same era

and there are two positions still maintained by the town, each a three-year term.

There were no nominations for either Field Driver or Fence Viewer at the Annual Town Caucus March 2. Papers are available from Town Clerk Doris Jemiolo. She said, "If someone were truly interested in becoming involved in town politics, having their name on the ballot would provide recog-

nitiation down the road."

In recent years, the Field Driver was reduced to a single slot. This has become somewhat of an honorary position and frequently new residents have been nominated. The same for Fence Viewer.

More recently, but still several years ago, the Field Driver was contacted about a loose horse on North Blandford Road.

Massachusetts General Laws, Ch. 49, sec. 24 lists the duties of Field Driver as, "Every field driver shall take up horses, mules, asses, neat cattle, sheep, goats or swine going at large in the public way on common and unimproved land within this town and not under the care of a keeper and any other inhabitant of the town may take up such cattle or beasts so going at large on Sunday

and for taking up such beasts on said day the field driver or such other inhabitant of the town may in tort recover for each beast the same fees which the field driver is entitled to receive for taking up like beasts."

There are no longer many "beasts" and backyard egg-laying fowls don't count.

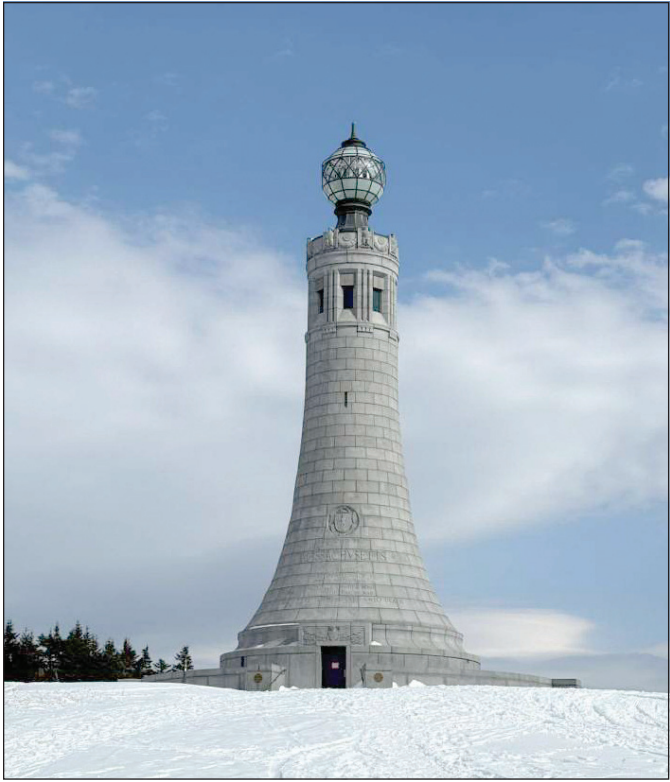
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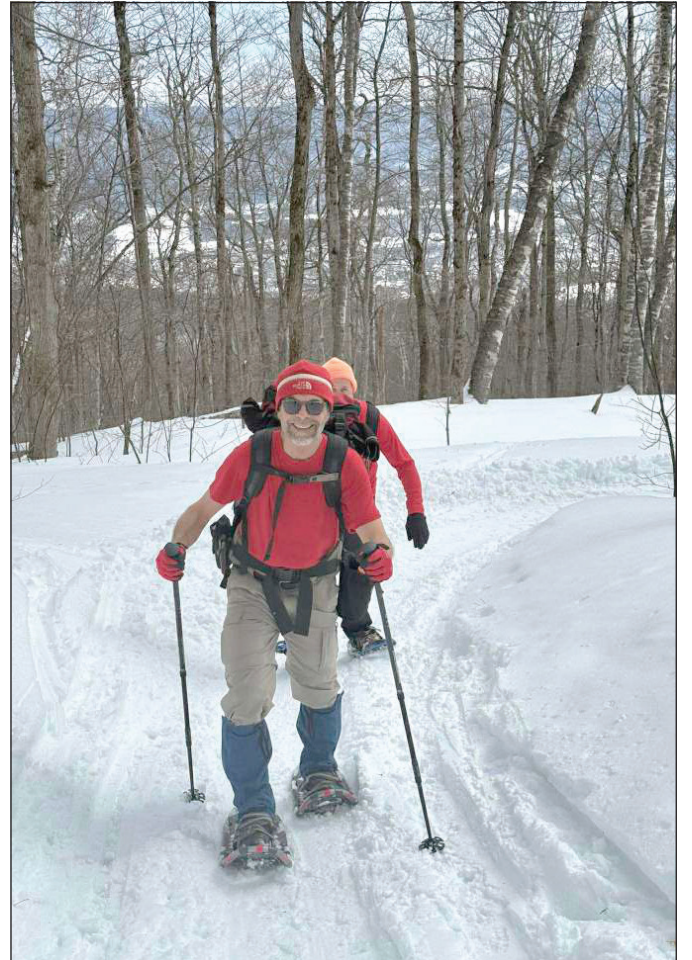
HILLTOWN HIKING ADVENTURES



The Mount Greylock Veterans War Memorial Tower, completed in 1932 and dedicated on June 30, 1933, stands at an elevation of 3,491 feet, making it the highest point in Massachusetts.



Bascom Lodge, located at the summit of Mount Greylock, was constructed between 1932 and 1938 and is a significant example of 1930s park architecture, named after John Bascom a DCR Commissioner.



Chet and Greg make their way up Bellows pipe on snowshoes.

Hikers trek to Mt. Greylock summit

Constructed in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corp, the Thunderbolt is a Class A backcountry ski trail from the summit of Mount Greylock to Greylock Glen.

Back in the day, this challenging trail hosted international downhill races. The official record of 2 min 8.6 sec was set by Norwegian Olympian, Per Klippgen in 1948, still stands.

Last winter we did this challenging snowshoe up to the summit in three feet of snow on the Gould Trail, now it's an annual event.

This year the Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers took a relatively easier yet longer route following the Bellows Pipe Trail to the summit. The Bellows Pipe is used by the Thunderbolt Ski Club for getting to the top of the Thunderbolt Trail with "skins," which are covers for skis offering traction.

No hiking or snowshoeing is allowed on the Thunderbolt in winter to

keep the ski conditions prime.

At the summit, the hikers visited Bascom Lodge. It has been a retreat for hikers and travelers for nearly 80 years. The current structure was built in the 1930s to replace the original lodge, which burned down in the late 20s.

Bascom Lodge was designed in the craftsman style by Joseph McArthur Vance, an architect from Pittsfield, who designed several notable local buildings including the Colonial Theatre and the Mahaiwei Theatre.

The lodge was constructed by the CCC beginning around 1933 and was opened to the public in 1937. The most iconic structure on the Mount Greylock Scenic Byway is this 92-foot-tall stylized granite tower known as the Massachusetts Veterans War Memorial Tower.

It was dedicated in June 1933 to commemorate the courage, endurance, loyalty and self-sacrifice of all ser-

vicemen and servicewomen from the Commonwealth, wherever these qualities have been shown, in the uniform of the state or the nation.

In August 2018, it was chosen as one of the nation's official 100 World War I Centennial Memorials, a tribute marking the anniversary of the end of WWI. Because of its lighted memorial beacon, it is often mistakenly referred to as a lighthouse.

The memorial beacon is lit nightly except during bird migration in spring and fall and it can be seen from great distances. The tower, accessed by a circular staircase, provides a stunning 360-degree view across New England and eastern New York State, 60 to 90 miles away.

The Thunderbolt Ski Runners is a non-profit ski and snowboard club located in Adams. The club was established in 2008 by a group of northern Berkshire outdoor sport enthusiasts, who share a common love



Stephanie Greg and Chet are shown at the top of the Thunderbolt trail with views looking east.

for Mount Greylock and the Thunderbolt Ski Run.

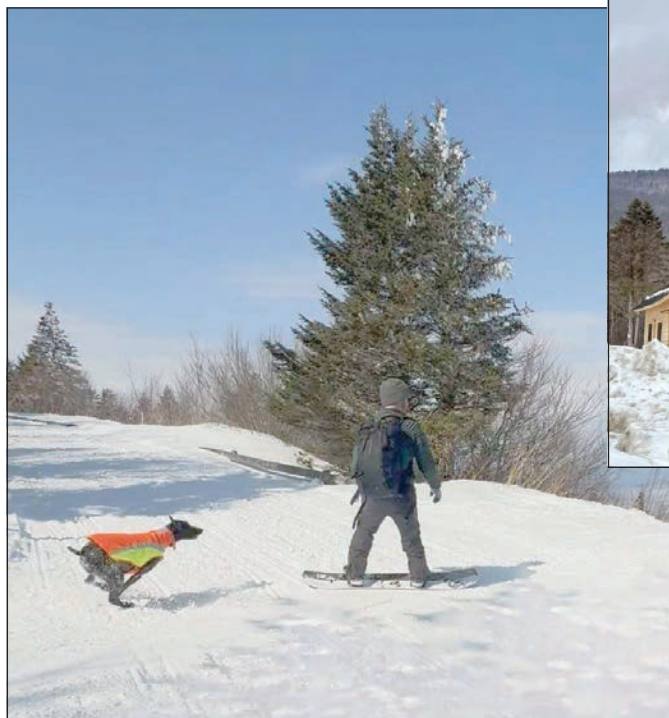
Its members are united by a common mission in protecting, main-

taining and improving the integrity and legacy of the Thunderbolt Ski Run. The hike up to the summit on

Bellows Pipe has over 2,000 feet in elevation for a seven mile up and back this past Saturday.



Cybil reached the summit of Mount Greylock.



Skiers and snowboarders have a ball on the Thunderbolt.



The Greylock Glen Outdoor Center is owned by the town of Adams, recently built to house activities, events and a full kitchen. This centralized location offers parking and restrooms.



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BECKET

Becket Art Center offering exciting programs in March

BECKET – The Becket Arts Center, 7 Brooker Hill Road, on Saturday, March 14, 21 and 28 from 10:30 a.m.-noon, will offer a freestyle dance program with Delsie Dunn as the guest facilitator.

This opportunity to discover ways to move to music with intention and openness is guaranteed to warm up the body and lift the spirit. People should bring loose-fitting clothes, a towel, water bottle and indoor shoes or go barefoot. Session fee is \$15 non-members and \$10 for

members. For registration and more information, people may visit becketartscenter.org.

Just in time for St. Patrick's Day, the Becket Arts Center will present Kevin O'Hara's "Travels with Missie: The Photographs," on Sunday, March 15 from 2-3 p.m. O'Hara will share lush images and humorous anecdotes from his extraordinary 1,720-mile journey around Ireland with Missie, his lovable, but sometimes ornery donkey. For tickets \$10 non-members and \$5 for

members.

On Tuesday, March 17, the Becket Arts Center will offer a "Learn to Meditate: Calming the Wild Horses of Your Mind." Part several courses, the class is designed to help participants shift from "doing" mode, rushing from one task to the next, to "being" mode, providing a toolkit to navigate life's challenges with grace and focus. Feel free to bring a meditation cushion or mat; chairs will be available. Suggested donation is \$15 and \$10 for members

or pay what they can. Walk-ins welcome, though registration is encouraged.

This class will also be held on Tuesdays, March 24 and 31.

On Saturday, March 21 from 6-8 p.m., the Becket Arts Center will offer a reading of "A Year of Magical Thinking," a play based on Joan Didion's award-winning memoir. Paula Langton will present this spare, quietly gripping study of vulnerability and grief. Suggested donation is \$10 for members

and \$20 for non-members. For registration and more information, people may visit becketartscenter.org.

The next Maker Mondays will be held on Monday, March 23 from 6:30-8 p.m. The program is free.

On Saturday, March 28, from noon-4 p.m., the Becket Arts Center will offer a Sashiko Hand Stitching Workshop. This centuries-old Japanese embroidery technique uses a simple running stitch to create bold and geo-

metric patterns. Students will choose from a variety of motifs to make squares that can be transformed into a pocket, sachet or coaster. All skill levels are welcome, though high school students under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Workshop fees are \$80 for members; \$60 to \$70 for Arts Center members; \$40 for Card to Culture Members and \$25 for high school students. For more information and registration, people may visit becketartscenter.org.

Becket Athenaeum announces upcoming news and events

BECKET – The Becket Athenaeum, 3367 Main St., on Monday, March 23 from 6-8 p.m., hosts Revolution in America: Past, Present, Future with Senator Paul Mark.

Following a short documentary screening, there will be a discussion about what revolution means to those attending. RSVP is appreciated by visiting bwlibrary.org/

revolution.

Thanks to generous funding from Fairfield County's Community Foundation and in partnership with Becket-Chimney Corners YMCA, the Athenaeum is able to once again host a raffle where households can enter to win a week of Becket Day Camp for local children ages 5 to 12. They must enter by Tuesday, March 31 by visit-

ing bwlibrary.org/camp26.

The third annual Poem in your Pocket Day is in April. All ages to submit a poem they have written to be included in pocket poem displays that will be distributed around our community during the month of April. They should submit their poem for Poem in Your Pocket Day by March 31 to bwlibrary.org/pocket.

The Becket Athenaeum is collecting small, broken or otherwise unwanted electronics that are no bigger than a toaster (think tv remote, computer mouse, small radio, watch/clock, etc) for a take-apart/tinkering table that will be part of an event for Becket Washington Elementary School students in late May. If people have items to donate, they may bring them

to the library during open hours. They will cut off donations when they reach a sufficient collection.

Ongoing events include baby and toddler playgroup and caregiver connection Tuesdays from 10-11 a.m., story time with stay and play Saturdays at 10:30 a.m. RSVP appreciated by visiting bwlibrary.org/storytime.

Game Night is Thursday,

March 19 from 6-8 p.m. More information is available by visiting bwlibrary.org/Mar19game. Movie night for adults is Tuesday, March 24 from 6:30-9:30 p.m. More information is available by visiting bwlibrary.org/Mar24movie.

Hours are Tuesday from 1-7 p.m., Wednesday from 11 a.m.-7 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

PITTSFIELD

Q-MoB rolling out arts-focused activities

PITTSFIELD – In direct response to the escalating crisis of social isolation, Q-MoB announces a sweeping new initiative to foster connection, wellness and resilience among rural queer men. Beginning this March, the organization is rolling out a robust calendar of social, recreational and arts-focused activities designed to bring

queer men together in the Pioneer Valley.

The U.S. Surgeon General has officially declared an epidemic of isolation as one of the most dangerous public health threats currently facing the nation and this crisis disproportionately impacts rural queer men.

Upcoming activities include Rainbow Dodgeball,

at 54 Old Ferry Road, Northampton Mondays at 7 p.m.; Q-MoB Queer Men's Smith Spring Bulb Show and Lunch, 100 Elm St, Northampton; Saturday, March 14 at 11:30 a.m.; Q-MoB Pioneer Valley Queer Men's Planning Coffee Klatch, 9 West Center St., Florence, third Sundays monthly; next on March 1, at

11 a.m. and Q-MoB After-Hike Beer and Supper at New City Brewing, Easthampton on Sunday, March 22 at 3 p.m.

For more information, or to RSVP for any of these upcoming events, they may check out the Q-MoB website, the Q-MoB Western Mass Calendar or call Q-MoB at 413-344-8162.

CUMMINGTON

Friday Night Cafe takes place March 13

CUMMINGTON – Josh Wachtel always comes with surprises as he performs Friday, March 13 at the Friday Night Cafe.

In addition to singing an eclectic array of songs about everything and anything, simultaneously relevant, poignant, observant and fun, he plans to get people singing, bang out some beats and maybe even tell a few tales. An interactive audience is welcome.

The show is from 7-9 p.m. in the Vestry 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. Bring your own beverage.

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.

MONTGOMERY

Grace Hall Memorial Library lists events

MONTGOMERY – Grace Hall Memorial Library, 161 Main Road, will host Ghost of New England on Saturday, March 21 at 3 p.m.

This free event is an adult (PG-13) evening of supernatural storytelling and theatrical magic written and performed by Jonah Knight. The program features one chilling legend from each New England state, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut, blending regional folklore, documented history and live magical effects.

Designed for adults and teens, the performance emphasizes atmosphere and storytelling rather than horror, offering a thoughtful and entertaining look at New

England's rich supernatural heritage.

Jonah Knight is a professional storyteller and magician known for blending history, folklore and theatrical illusion into engaging live performances. With a passion for New England's cultural traditions, Knight has presented programs at libraries, historical societies, and community venues throughout the region. His performances combine carefully researched narratives with interactive magical moments, creating an experience that is both educational and unforgettable.

For more information, people may call Grace Hall Memorial at 413-862-3894.

Cookbook Club will meet on Thursday, March 19 and cordially invites every-

one to High Tea in the Library at 6:30 p.m. The library will serve tea and other treats. People should bring their favorite tea time recipe to share and learn from other cooks their favorites.

Blind date with a Book will continue through Tuesday, March 31. People select one of the Blind Date Books, all are rated 3.5 or higher with Good Reads. People are asked to fill out the "Book Review" bookmark and return it by mail.

Greg Maichack will conduct a pastel workshop "Vincent Van Gogh The Iris" on Saturday, April 4 at 11 a.m. This pastel painting workshop is designed for both sheer beginners to advance participants.

People may call the

library for more information at 413-862-3894. Library hours are Tuesday from 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m., Thursday from 4-8 p.m. and Saturday from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

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OPINION

GUEST COLUMN



Is there income tax on Social Security benefits?

Dear Rusty:

The Trump Administration is saying that now there will be no taxes on Social Security benefits. Since we're getting ready to start our 2025 income tax return, can you explain how this all works?

Signed:
Confused Taxpayer

Dear Confused Taxpayer:

You are obviously referring to the so-called "One Big, Beautiful Bill" and how that bill affects income tax on your Social Security benefits. And this is because of the publicity surrounding the so-called "one big, beautiful bill" enacted last year, which claims to "eliminate income tax on Social Security benefits." Well, that bill did, yet technically didn't, fully eliminate income tax on benefits. Allow me to explain.

The OBBB does eliminate income tax on most SS benefits, but it does so in a somewhat unique way – by providing an additional \$6,000 (per person) deduction to your federal taxable income as reported to the IRS. Thus, you will pay less total income tax when you file your taxes with the IRS because of that additional deduction to your taxable income.

The extra deduction is available to those over age 65 and is meant to offset the income tax which will still be levied by the IRS on the SS benefits you received in 2025. Essentially, the rules governing income tax on Social Security benefits have not changed.

The IRS will still levy income tax on your SS benefits if your combined income from all sources (known as your "provisional income") is over \$32,000 as a married couple filing jointly or more than \$25,000 if you file as an individual. If your provisional income is below the threshold for your IRS filing status, you will pay no income tax on your received 2025 SS benefits.

But if your provisional income exceeds the threshold for your IRS filing status, then somewhere between 50% and 85% of your received SS benefits will be taxed (how much SS income to be taxed depends on your combined income in 2025). By now, you should have received form 1099-SSA which advised of your 2025 Social Security income, including any income tax you had withheld from your SS benefits.

This income should be reported when submitting your 2025 income tax return. If your "provisional income" is over \$32,000 as a married couple filing jointly (or over \$25,000 as an individual filer), then your 2025 SS benefits will still be taxed by the IRS. But when completing your 2025 Income Tax Return, you will also be able to claim an additional \$6,000 per person (\$12,000 if you file jointly), which will likely offset any income tax you must pay due to the SS benefits you received in 2025.

If you use a tax preparer or tax preparation software, they will guide you through this calculation. Note, too, that the \$6,000 per person deduction amount will be less if your combined taxable income is more than \$150,000 as a married couple (or more than \$75,000 as a single filer).

Be aware, though, that the OBBB is temporary tax accommodation which expires after tax year 2028. And that's because the process used to pass the bill in Congress (a "budget reconciliation" process) didn't actually change SS law; rather it provided a way around it to offset income tax paid on SS benefits.

So, to recap, the IRS can still levy income tax on your received Social Security benefits but, because of the OBBB, you will likely also (depending on your provisional income level) receive an extra deduction which offsets any taxes calculated on your Social Security benefits.

Finally, be aware that if your first husband also predeceases you, you will then become eligible for a surviving ex-spouse benefit from him, even if he has remarried.

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

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

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

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.

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.

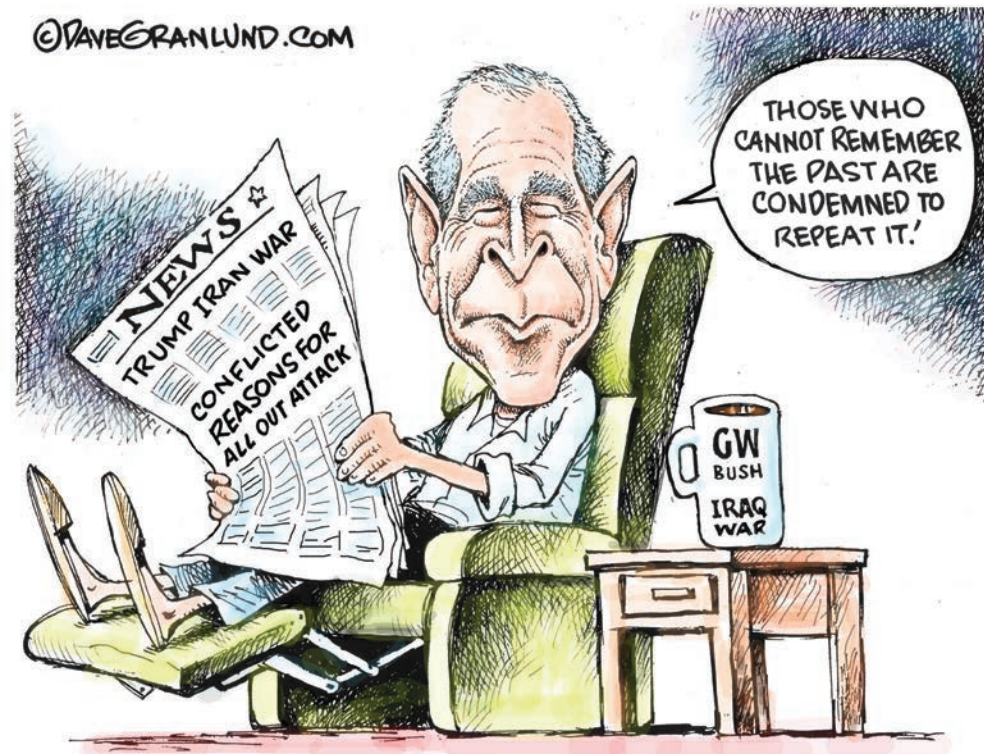
Campaign news

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.

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GUEST COLUMN

An herb catalog and a favorite herb

One of my favorite seed and plant catalogs of all time is Richters Herbs (richters.com). I look forward to the paper copy arriving in the mail by early December.

The company is out of Ontario, Canada, and offers over 1,200 unique varieties, mostly herbs of all kinds with a few vegetables thrown in for good measure. I've ordered from them for well over two decades and think their products are just great, everything from common culinary herbs to unique medicinal plants and everything in between, even dye plants and ornamentals.

I love how the seeds are packaged in foil lined envelopes and quantities are lib-

eral, often giving you enough seed for two or three years of sowing, depending on the variety. On occasion I have had to order plants that I couldn't find locally and despite the distance, they arrive in good shape.

Basil (*Ocimum spp*) is one plant in particular that we typically order seed of, and we will soon be starting it indoors. The Richters catalog boasts 29 varieties, and we grow nine of them in the

Paul Rogers Herb Garden at Old Sturbridge Village.

A trip to our herb garden in season is really worthwhile. Who doesn't like Italian or Genovese basil? Picture the pesto!

But in addition to our old favorites, there is lemon, anise, cinnamon and spice, each with fragrant leaves. Looking for unique foliage? Try dark opal, whose leaves are tinted dark purple or bush basil, whose tiny leaves altogether make a round globe of a plant, and who could leave out lettuce leaf, with its crinkled pale green leaves.

Over the years I have found that there are just a

GARDEN, page 5

On March 2, I received an email from a Worthington resident that he just saw a red-winged blackbird.

Male red-winged blackbirds arrive before the females. They are one of the first birds to return to northern breeding grounds, arriving in late February or early March.

Red-winged blackbirds are abundant songbirds, who inhabit marshes, wetlands and fields. The male is glossy black with bright red and yellow shoulder patches or epaulets. Females have streaked brown plumage.

The highly territorial males often sit on high perches, singing and displaying their epaulets. Their "conk-la-ree" is heard frequently.



Male red-winged blackbird

BIRDS, page 5



By Ellenor Downer

They are known for "dive bombing" crows, hawks and even humans to defend their territory. They primarily eat insects such as beetles, dragonflies and moths during the breeding season and seeds and grains during fall and winter.

They nest in loosely associated colonies in shrubs or cattails and are found across most of Northern

America. They are polygamous and a single male may mate with up to 15 different females in his territory. Red winged blackbirds can form huge roosts during the winter of up to a million birds.

Brimfield resident

A Brimfield resident sent an email recently. He said, "On Saturday I was driving to West Springfield to put up some picture at the library for an exhibit. Some members of the Allen Bird Club are displaying photographs there for the month of March. On the way I stopped by a nest in Ludlow that bald eagles have used for at least three years."

In Brimfield, he said, "Lately we have been seeing a Cooper's several times in the yard and a broad-winged hawk was seen on Feb. 22. The broad-winged hawk sat in a tree in front of the house for over an hour. Last year a pair of broad-wings had a nest on the next door neigh-

Country Journal TEAM



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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.



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OPINION

HILLTOWN HISTORY

Offering a wee bit o' history on Irish beer

By Deborah Daniels
Correspondent

A good Irish stout comes to mind for helping to keep a world gone mad on an even keel.

So how does a beverage with 4 – 6% alcohol by volume work its magic? Beer is made of water, barley and hops to which a bit of yeast is added. The yeast gets the fermentation going, which releases alcohol.

The barley is wheat grain that is malted. Malting allows the wheat to sprout, which releases the starch for the yeast enzymes to digest. The next process is to soak the grains in hot water to release the sugar, known as mashing the grain.

Next hops are added to give flavor and a touch of bitterness to the blend. Hops are immature flower buds from a specific hemp plant. The hops in ancient times acted as a natural preservative to the beer. Barley was plentiful and it was used to make bread since the dawn of civilization.

So bread and beer were dietary staples. You might say civilization has always thrived on alcohol: fermented honey made mead, fermented apple juice made cider, fermented grape juice made wine. Most water was too contaminated to drink. Perhaps the alcohol was just the antibacterial beverage that kept the human race alive.

Today there are hundreds of variations in beer types that can be made as the Great American Beer Festival held in Denver, Colorado every year can attest. There were 263 brew-

eries in the 2023 festival with 9,298 types of beer entries.

The main categories of beer types are ales, lager, wheat beer, sour ales and craft beer. Craft beer so popular today was how all beer was created in the past. The local brewery made the beer in one's hometown and that was what they drank.

The brewer could experiment and design all manner of local brew if he was creative and had a variety of ingredients. Mostly he made what locals liked and that was it. Today there is a tremendous choice in brews. There are ales like IPA (India pale ale), pale ale, brown ale, porter and stout that have a fruity sometimes bitter taste.

There are lagers such as pilsner, amber, pale and dark lagers that are lighter, crisper and less fruity than ales. Wheat beers are made with both barley and wheat that appears cloudy but has a light taste. Sour ales are made with wild yeast for a tart and funky taste. Craft beer is beer flavored with spices and fruit and sometimes aged in barrels.

There is also non-alcoholic beer where alcohol is removed from already brewed beer or the alcohol is limited during brewing by using a different type of yeast that does not produce sugars. Near beer was made during Prohibition by the big brewers, who were almost put out of business. There is a beer for all tastes.

The first commercial brewery opened in the U.S.A. in 1612 by Adrian Block and Hans Christiansen located in lower Manhattan. George Washington enjoyed

a porter beer, dark style of beer, made with molasses. He had a written copy of the recipe suggesting that he made this brew. Lager beer got its name from the German word for storeroom.

German brewers dug cellars in the ground and filled it with lake ice to keep the beer cool in summer. They planted Chestnut trees over the cellar because it had a large leaf canopy and shallow roots. They served beer at these sites which is how we got beer gardens. Arthur Guinness opened his brewery in 1759. He survived the heavy tax on Irish beer, far higher than the tax on any British beer until Ireland was emancipated from English rule. Guinness Stout made in Dublin became legendary supplying drink for much of the British Army.

Arthur Guinness left his business to three of his sons and not to his first son. However all three sons died early and his first son was left to manage the business for the next 10 years until his death. One can only wonder why the first son was not his first choice to run the business. Stout is a dark ale with a coffee, chocolate, with caramel notes ale most notable because it was Guinnesses biggest seller. It was known as the smooth Irish Guinness stout. The business certainly thrived and was ultimately sold to Heineken, the Netherlands largest brewing company in 1975. For Your Information



This map of Ireland shows breweries locations.



the head on a beer is made of nitrogen foam.

A word about the alcohol content in beer. It has a range of 4-8% alcohol by volume with most beer being

4-5% on average. One beer (12 oz) is equivalent to one shot of 80 proof liquor. However it must be remembered that the shot of whiskey is felt faster because it is absorbed quickly and a beer is gradually absorbed slower as it is consumed. Beer has been the tippie that takes the edge off a rough work day for centuries, his-



Casks where beer is fermenting. It is now fermented in copper and steel vats.



This is an example of an Irish greeting.

Submitted photos

torically more favored by men than women. That fact may be changing. There is no disputing that beer goes to the waist, in the form of fat, a padding most women wished to avoid.

Raise your shillelagh and perhaps a toast to Shamrocks this St. Patrick's day. And good luck finding that pot of gold.

BIRDS

from page 4

bor's property. They could see the nest from their deck, but I was never able to see the nest walking around near where they described its location."

Turkey vultures

On Feb. 11, the Brimfield resident saw a turkey vulture in the center of Palmer near the intersection of Routes 20 and 32. This week, his wife saw 25 turkey vultures flying above that area. They often see vultures soaring over that area and the first of the year shows up in mid-February. He said, "I believe the vultures nest in the area, possibly on or near Mount Dumplin that is just north of

the turnpike ramps."

Other birds and more

The Brimfield residents still has lots of junco about as well as a healthy the gray squirrel population. Recently they saw two and sometimes three red squirrels. He is enjoying the longer days and looking forward to warmer temperatures.

Red-tailed hawk

A Rutland couple saw a red-tailed hawk quickly grab a gray squirrel her husband shot. They watched it hungrily consume a "warm meal" in the yard. They moved their feeder nearer to the house due to the deep snow. They have lots

of black-capped chickadees and woodpeckers come to the new location

Bluebirds

An Oakham resident sees bluebirds on a daily basis. She enjoys watching them.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or 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.

GARDEN

from page 4

few obstacles to growing great basil. Seeds should be planted indoors – rarely will they do well from an outdoor sowing.

Start basil about the same time that tomatoes are sown, in mid to late March. Make shallow furrows and space the seed one-eighth of an inch apart in rows within a small pot or seed pack. When true leaves form pluck out the tiny seedling and transplant it into a cell of a four or six pack, or an individual tiny pot.

Grow on indoors until the weather improves. Basil is particularly cold sensitive, so be sure that all danger of frost has passed before transplanting it into the garden.

Downy mildew disease was discovered to be prevalent some years back. While I don't take any particular precautions, and my basil shows little sign of the familiar leaf blotching, Richters does offer seeds of resistant varieties for you to try if this disease has been troublesome in your garden.

Basil foliage has also been known to burn if plant-

ed outdoors without a period of hardening off. For this reason, gradually get seedlings used to bright sun and wind over the course of a week before planting in the ground.

Provide your transplants with fertile, well-drained soil in a sunny spot. If, over the course of the summer you notice that the leaves are no longer grass-green, but instead are pale or even turning brown, your plants may have a nitrogen deficiency.

I usually have had to "top dress" my basil twice after planting, each time with a sprinkling of balanced organic fertilizer and some aged compost. Usually they green up in a matter of days.

Basil has the insatiable desire to flower. We must "deadhead" or the plant will fulfill its earthly desire to reproduce by making and dropping seed, all at the expense of foliage production.

Since we grow this plant for its leaves and not its seed, or its flowers for that matter, clip away the buds at the first sign of them. Another chal-

lenge to basil growing has been the Japanese beetle.

Basil leaves riddled with chew marks should best be removed. Japanese beetles are relatively easy to hand pick in the morning and at night.

A gentle tap on a leaf will easily knock beetles into a wide mouth jar of soapy water positioned underneath. Ideally, basil leaves should be harvested after the dew has dried in the morning but before the sun shines too brightly; at that particular time its oils are the most pungent.

Enjoy the new catalog recommendation and be sure to get those basil seeds started by the end of the month.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 34 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.

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
Website: 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 • burgychurch.org
Facebook:
First Congregational Church of Williamsburg
YouTube Channel: 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
hilltowncommunitychurch.com
Facebook: 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
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

Pioneer Valley Assembly of God

Pastor Javier Melendez
63 Old Chester Rd., Huntington MA 01050
413-667-3196
pvaglfe@gmail.com
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



Shown are Interim Water Superintendent Steven Grondin, Water Commissioner Peter Thayer and Water Commission Chairman Bradley Curry.
Turley Publications photo by Mary Kronholm

Select Board go over change orders with Water Commissioners last week

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

BLANDFORD – The Select Board met with the Water Commissioners on Monday, March 2 at 5 p.m. to review finances and change orders.

Two representatives from Wright-Pierce, senior instrumentation engineer, James Papadimitriou and professional engineer Michael McManus attended the meeting as well.

Financially, the Water Department has \$1,812,000 in grants and of that, \$1,735,000 is available for construction. The Water Treatment plant needs \$273,000 for upgrades and 25% of that is a matching fund from the town.

The upgrades to the system are required to satisfy a consent order from the state. The consent order pointed out things that needed to be corrected for the water users to

receive the best possible water under appropriate conditions. For example, a basket strainer needs to be installed on the water intake line from the open water source. The upgrades were in the Change Order No. 7A including the redesigning of the emergency stop circuit and the auto-controls.

The Select Board ultimately approved this change order.

The second, Change

Order No. 8, according to a representative from Wright Pierce, “allows us to get to home plate,” and complete the work. This at a cost of \$22,271.75, which as the board approved, will come from the department’s capital expenditure line. The cost is a charge by Baystate Regional Contractors and Select Board member Jackie Coury said she would write them a letter discussing customer service concerns.

Porter Memorial Library lists events

BLANDFORD – Regular activities at the Porter Memorial Library, 87 Main St., include every Wednesday morning from 10:30-11:30 a.m. Book Squirms time.

Children visit for stories, songs and sensory play, plus socializing for preschoolers and their caregivers.

CommuniTea Reads takes place Saturday, March 21 at 11 a.m. for a discussion of “The Correspondent” by Virginia Evans, a story told entirely in written letter formant. Books are available at the

library. New members are always welcome.

Friday, March 27 at 4:30 p.m. the Pokemon Club will gather for trading, trivia and talk about cards and the game. Local Pokemon lovers get together at the library monthly to enjoy their hobby. As a special enticement to visit the library, happening all month long is a free DVD giveaway. The staff is reviewing the collection and weeding out some movies/programs. People may stop by often to see what’s available. It is first come, first choice and no limit.

COA offers lunch

BLANDFORD – The Council on Aging’s Annual St. Patrick’s Day corned beef and cabbage luncheon is set for Friday, March 13 at noon.

The menu features, along with the entree, green punch, home made Irish soda bread and crème de menthe cake.

The fourth Friday luncheon, March 27, will offer diners Shepherds’

pie, tossed salad and banana pudding for dessert with the regular accompanying beverages.

People may call the COA to reserve a place, leave name and number of people attending by calling 413-848-4279, extension 400. There is no charge for the luncheons but a \$5 per person contribution will help maintain the program.

Blandford Congregational Church hosts Seder meal

BLANDFORD – The Blandford Congregational Church will host a Seder meal on Friday, April 3 at 6 p.m. in the fellowship

hall at the Chapel on Main Street.

The Seder meal traditionally begins Passover, the Jewish celebration of

the Biblical story of the Jews’ Exodus from slavery in Egypt. There will be several traditional dishes and Pastor Ciprian Droma will

not only explain the significance of the celebration, but the ritual foods served. There is no charge for the Seder meal.

Blandford Historical Society... Did You Know?



Rev. John Keep 1781-1870

Editor’s note: The Blandford Historical Society will submit this “Did You Know?” column on a regular basis.

In the early nineteenth century, a young minister stood in Blandford’s meeting-house preaching to a hilltown congregation.

Few could have imagined that he would later help shape one of the most influential reform colleges in America and cast a vote that would help change the course of American education. That minister was Rev. John Keep.

Keep arrived in Blandford in 1805, a 24-year-old Yale-educated minister beginning his career. Shortly afterward, he married Lydia Hale, whom he met in town. Their son, Theodore John

Keep, was born in Blandford a few years later. For 16 years, Keep served as pastor of the town’s Congregational church.

During these years, Americans increasingly debated slavery and the nation’s moral direction. Religious revivals known as the Second Great Awakening encouraged the belief that faith and education could improve society and inspired reform movements across the country.

While living in Blandford, Keep visited the hillside where Black Revolutionary War veteran Jethro Jones and his family lived alongside other Black families, and where they are buried today. According to local accounts, Keep orga-

nized a group of these and other Black children into a school – said to have been the first school for Black students in the nation.

Like many New England families, the Keeps later joined the westward movement of the young nation.

But before leaving Blandford in 1821, Keep drew on the recollections of longtime residents to describe the hardships of early hilltown life and the growth of the church at its center. His address remains one of the earliest written histories of the town.

A Vote That Changed American Education

After leaving Blandford, Keep became involved in securing funds for the establishment of Oberlin College

in Ohio in 1833, one of the most progressive and forward-thinking schools of its time. He initially served as acting president and was later named to the board of trustees.

In 1835, Oberlin’s trustees faced a historic question: whether to admit Black students. The board was evenly divided. Rev. John Keep cast the deciding vote in favor.

That single vote helped make Oberlin one of the first colleges in the United States to educate Black and white students together. Soon afterward, the school also began admitting women, becoming one of the earliest institutions to provide higher education to people of both races and both sexes.

Oberlin soon became

a center of the abolitionist movement and many of its students went on to work in education and social reform. Keep spent the remainder of his life raising funds for the school.

Widely honored and affectionately known as “Father Keep,” he died in Oberlin at the age of 89 and is buried there beside his wife of 59 years. Their son followed him into the ministry and remained active in the affairs of the college until his death.

From helping educate Black children in the hills of Blandford to casting the deciding vote that echoed across the nation, Rev. John Keep’s life reminds us that Blandford is truly a “small town with a big history.”

Candidate contests include Select Board (4) Water Commission (2) on election day ballot

BLANDFORD – The Monday, March 2 caucus was possibly one of the better attended in recent years. There were 37 registered voters present. There will be at least two races on the June 13 ballot. Nominations for Select Board member from the floor were for Bradley Curry, Corrine Shartrand, Cara Letendre and William Levakis.

The run-off vote to put two names on the ballot gave those slots to Curry and Shartrand. However, both Letendre and Levakis have taken out papers to have their names on the ballot as well. They need 20 certifiable signatures and turn them in to the Town Clerk by Saturday, April 25 for certification by the Registrar of Voters.

The second race on the ballot will be for Water Commissioner. Both Stephen Jemiolo and Levakis were nominated for that seat and both have signed the nomination papers so their names will be on the ballot.

Other nominations

were unopposed; Assessor for three years, Stephen Jemiolo, incumbent; Board of Health for three years, Pat Lombardo, incumbent; Cemetery Commissioner for three years, Peter Sparks, incumbent, 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, Katherine McDonough and Town Clerk, Doris Jemiolo, incumbent.

No one was nominated for Fence Viewer for three years; Fence Viewer for two years or Field Driver for three years.

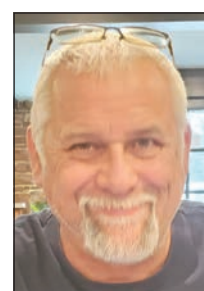
Ron Racine was not able to sign the caucus nomination and he will take out nomination papers this week.



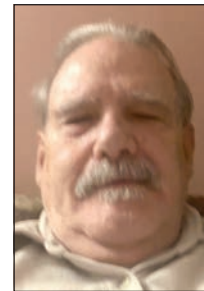
Corrine Shartrand



Cara Letendre



Bradley Curry



William Levakis

POSITIONS

Fence Viewer duties as specified by the MGL encompass 21 sections of Chapter 49 and cover location, height, types of fences and/or boundaries, and specific areas of dispute which a Fence Viewer has oversight.

Jemiolo said, “The positions are still elected slots and need to be filled, even though duties have become nearly non-existent.”

The earliest reference to either Field Driver or its co-office of Fence Viewer is

in 1693 and again in 1698 in the State Archive collection of early acts, while still a colony. The acts are called Province Laws.

The verbiage, although much longer than what today’s MGL reads, is about the same, stating, “...it shall and may be lawful to and for any other person or persons, as well as the hawards or field-drivers, to take up and impound or cause to be impounded any swine, neat cattle, horses or sheep,

as shall be found damage-feasant in any corn-field or other inclosure or swine found unyoked or unringed, neat cattle, horses or sheep going upon the common, not allowed to feed there by the major part of the proprietye who are impowred to permit the same; any law to the contrary notwithstanding. And the owners or clauners of any such creatures impowred as aforesaid shall pay the fees...”

An act regulating fenc-

es and creating the position of Fence Viewer came along earlier in 1693 and the law required two Fence Viewers. This is still a requirement of the MGL today.

The prologue to the act reads, “For the better preventing of damage in corn-fields and other improved and common lands, by horses, neat cattle, sheep or swine, going at large.”

Time-honored positions, yes, time consuming, not so much.

MEETING

office space available at the Highway Garage, but it would take some cleaning out first. He also told the board he preferred his office space at the garage.

One other thing Hultay brought to the board’s attention was that Granville will have to close a portion of Route 57 requiring emer-

gency vehicles to take a 21-mile detour, which he found unacceptable. He would like to see Cobble Mountain Road opened, at least temporarily, for emergency purposes. Russell and Granville will be part of the discussion. The meeting closed to allow people to attend the town caucus.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO RECYCLE THIS NEWSPAPER

from page 1

from page 1

CHESTER

Hamilton Memorial Library events

CHESTER – The Hamilton Memorial Library, 195 Route 20, had a special story time on Thursday, March 5.

The children learned all about how the U.S. Postal system and mail delivery works and how to address an envelope. The children had a fun time working on letters and pictures to send to loved ones in the mail.

They created a pen pal list, which included the new address of one of their families who is moving away. The families have grown close and are excited to be able to keep in touch. The two books read by Maureen Suriner, library director were “How to Send a Hug” by Hayley Rocco and “Delivering Your Mail” by Ann Owen.

Book Club: Meets the third Wednesday of every month at 4:30 p.m. On Wednesday, March 18, they will be discussing two books. The first, “The Housemaid” by Freida McFadden is a suspenseful bestseller about a maid working for a fami-



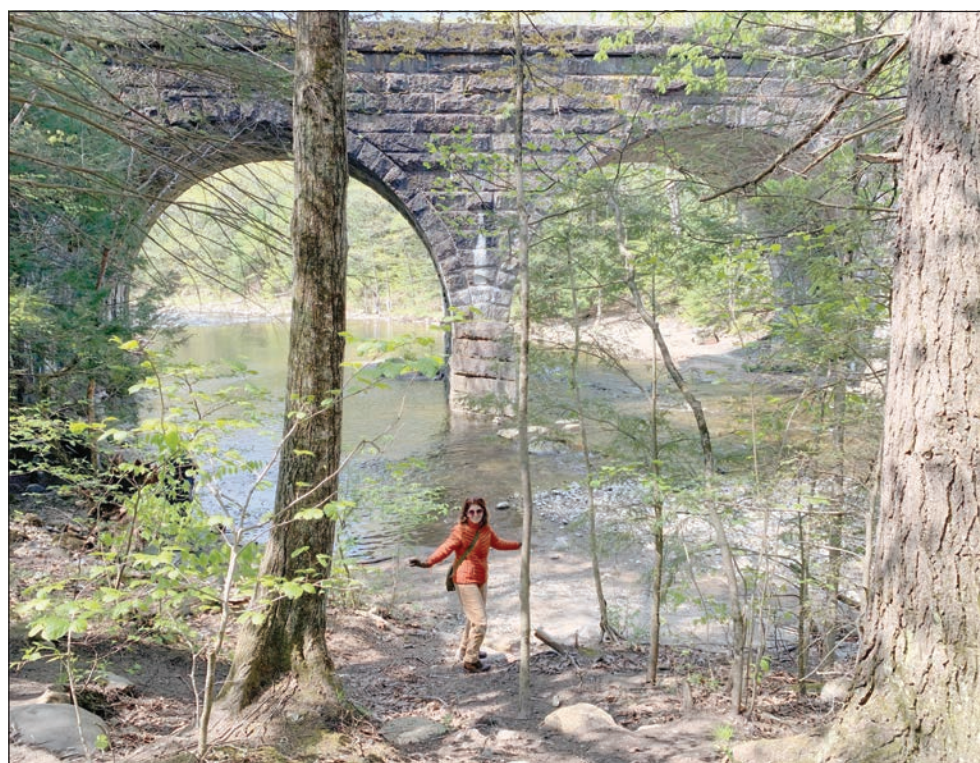
Children learned all about the U.S. Postal system at the special story time on Thursday, March 5. Library director Maureen Suriner reads to the children. Submitted photo

ly with secrets. The second book “Remarkably Bright Creatures” by Shelby VanPelt is a story of friendship, reckoning, and hope that traces a widow’s unlikely connection with a giant Pacific octopus. They will have snacks and lively discussion.

Intrinsic Movement

Let’s Play, Learn and Dance welcomes back special guest, Laurel Lenski, on Thursday March 19 at 11a m. during their regular story and fun time. Lenski always gets the fun going with her contagious enthusiasm and energy. This is perfect for younger patrons.

from page 1



Hike sponsored by the Westfield River Watershed Association and the Naturalist’s Club visit keystone arches bridge. Submitted photo

Hike to keystone arches

CHESTER – The Westfield River Watershed Association and the Naturalists’ Club are offering a Keystone Arches hike on Sunday, March 22 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Tom Condon, a board member of both organizations, will lead the walk in Chester following the old railroad bed. Registration is required for this nearly five-mile hike, which has moderate elevation changes.

Tom Condon is enthusiastic about this hike along the old tracks of the early 19th century railroad that was once jokingly called the “Railroad to the Moon” by locals. He explains, “It wasn’t a voyage to outer space, of course, but in the 1800s the idea of sending a railroad over the Berkshires felt nearly as impossible.”

The man, who designed the railroad over the mountains, was George Washington Whistler, father of the famed artist, James McNeill Whistler. “Yet

through ingenious switchbacks, daring grades and elegant stone bridges, Whistler engineered the first mountain rail crossing in North America,” adds Condon.

Nancy Condon, who is co-leading the hike, continues, “Today, those once-marvelous bridges lie hidden in the deep forests along the Westfield River, cloaked in moss, mystery and history. Join us as we venture into that forest, tracing the old rail bed and uncovering the extraordinary craftsmanship of Whistler’s father.”

This hike is 4.7 miles up and back, gaining 488 feet with easy/moderate ups and downs. Participants need to dress for the weather and pack a snack or lunch to enjoy on the trail. Registration is required. The hike will be cancelled in the event of heavy rain or snow. Hikers will gather at the Chester Elementary School, Middlefield Road in Chester by 10 a.m. The hike is 4.7 miles up and back,

gaining 488 feet with easy/moderate ups and downs. Be sure to dress for the weather and pack a snack or lunch to enjoy on the trail. Registration is required. Heavy rain or snow cancels.

To register, people may call 413-454-2331 or e-mail tomnancycondon@gmail.com. Tom Condon is a retired teacher, former National Park ranger, author, long-time board member of the Naturalists’ Club and a member of the Westfield River Watershed Association. He has been leading hikes and canoe trips for over five decades. He received awards for both his teaching and naturalist skills.

The Westfield River Watershed Association was established in 1953 to protect and improve the natural resources of the watershed, as well as to expand recreational and other land use opportunities for people’s enjoyment and for sound ecology. The website is westfieldriver.org.

BOOK

to industries in decline.

Cormier said that the book discusses the New Haven Railroad’s numerous monopoly attempts to control overall transportation in the western part of the state. That, coupled with the improvement of roadways and highways, would ultimately spell the end of the trolley system.

The book is available for sale on Amazon for \$19.99. Books can also be purchased and signed by the author at one of these upcoming talks for \$14.99. Books will also be available for sale at the Littleville

Fair’s Pancake Breakfast on Sunday, April 26.

Cormier will speak and answer questions at the following events this spring: Sunday, March 22 at 1 p.m. at the Chester Railway Museum (sponsored by the Western Mass Hilltown Hikers); Thursday, April 2 at 6 p.m. at the Otis Library; Thursday, April 16 at 7 p.m. at the Blandford Historical Society; Saturday, April 18 at 11 a.m. at the Hinsdale Public Library; Saturday, April 25 at 11 a.m. at the Huntington Public Library and Wednesday, May 27 at 6 p.m. at the Hatfield Public

Library.

Later this year, Cormier will speak at 6 p.m. at the West Springfield Library on Wednesday, July 15; at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, July 22 at the Becket Athenaeum; at 10 a.m. on Saturday, Sept. 12 at the Springfield City Library and at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 19 at the Grace Hall Memorial Library in Montgomery.

Future committed presentations with dates to be announced will be coming up in Worthington, Russell, Middlefield, Chesterfield, Chicopee, Northampton and Westfield.

OTIS

Otis Library hosts author of ‘Good Golly, Missed Trolley’

OTIS – The Otis Historical Commission and Otis Preservation Trust in coordination with the Otis Library present local author Steven Cormier discussing his book, “Good Golly, Missed Trolley” on Thursday, April 2 at 6 p.m. at the Otis Library, 48 North Main Road.

Cormier will share the history and impact of the various trolley systems within western Massachusetts, followed by a question and answer session. Admission is free but registration is required.

The period of the trolley system was short in length, however highly significant toward the population it served. “Good Golly Missed Trolley” details the horse drawn omnibus to the horsecar and ultimately the electric trolley, offering a means of mass transit to all citizens.

Evolving at the turn of the 20th century, the electric trolley fostered growth by means of extending suburbs, the creation of neighborhoods and the stimulation of rural economic development. The trolley offered a means of transportation for both the work force as well as for those wishing to travel to a desired location. The trolley system gave farmers a means to deliver their products to market, along with various freight services in the region.

Over time, the trolley system faced many challenges within western Massachusetts. “Good Golly, Missed Trolley” highlights the challenge of trolley service in the hill town areas. Eventually, the trolley system ended, impacted by big business, politics and new advancements in transportation.

Otis Preservation Trust works with the Otis Historical Commission to organize and preserve the history and heritage of Otis for future generations by supporting efforts to preserve, restore, repurpose and educate about buildings,



Steven Cormier

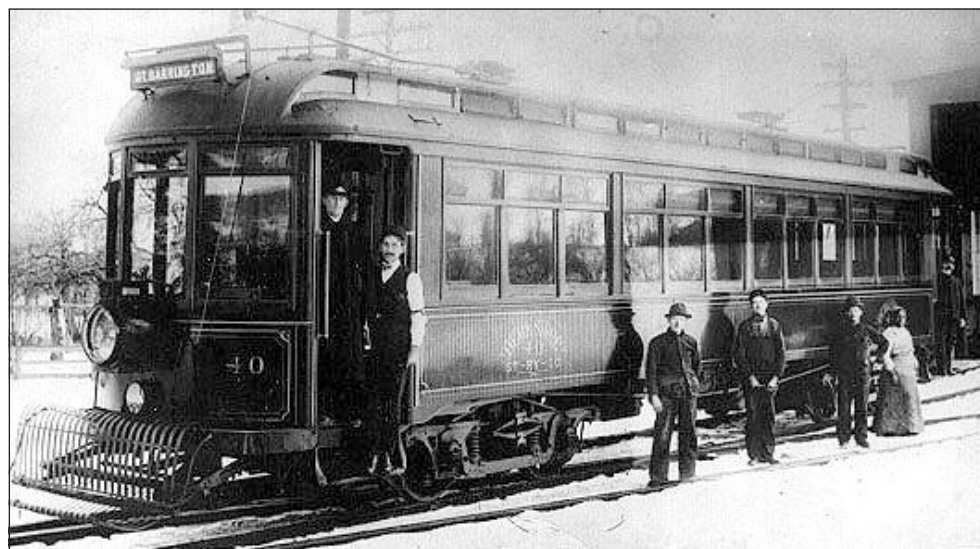


monuments, lands and memorabilia of Otis.

OPT is a not-for-profit (501c3) organization operated for fundraising and educational purposes. This program is supported in part by a grant from the Otis Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, an agency of the Commonwealth of

Massachusetts.

The event is at 6 p.m. on Thursday, April 2, in-person only at the Town of Otis Library. Space is limited. To register for this free event or for more information, people may call 413-269-0109, or stop by the Otis Library. There is no charge to attend this event but pre-registration is required. Donations are welcome.



Council on Aging to host dementia training on April 8

OTIS – Council on Aging Director Karen Yvon announces a program on Dementia Training for the community along with a potluck lunch on Wednesday, April 8 at noon in the COA room at Town Hall.

Matthew Pinto, MS, MHC dementia specialist and executive director at The Landing at Laurel Lake will conduct the informational training session. He will cover topics including understanding dementia and its impact on the brain, common signs, symp-

ptoms and stages, communication strategy, person-centered approaches to dementia care and how to promote dignity, safety and quality of life. The Landing at Laurel Lake is an assisted living facility.

Nonotuck Resource Associates, Inc. will have an information table about Adult Family Care Services for families caring for those at home. People may register for this event by calling the COA at 413-269-0100, extension 5 with name and number attending.

Otis COA announce March happenings

OTIS – Council on Aging Director Karen Yvon announces the upcoming March events.

The regular COA events will continue on Mondays and Wednesdays throughout the month

Exercise class is every Monday at 10:30 a.m. at the COA center at Town Hall. Wednesdays are food pantry days from 9-11 a.m. People should be sure to pick up their items on time.

Mat Yoga is every Saturday at 9:30 and Chair Yoga is every Thursday at 10 a.m.

Brown Bag will be ready for pickup on Friday, March

20 at 11 a.m. and again on Wednesday, April 1.

A special event this month is Wednesday, March 18 at noon. This is a dessert potluck with Bob Kidd who is a retired biology teacher. He will talk about animal tracks and animal scat. And there will be a Bingo game.

There are still a few openings for the Joshua trip May 12 to 14 to Lancaster, Pennsylvania. If people have any questions about any of the COA programs or need assistance, they may call either Kendra Rybacki or Director Yvon at the COA at 413-269-0100.

MEET *your* merchants 2026

Get to know

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Dana Greene

Location:
Serving the Hilltowns & Western Massachusetts

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dgtree818@gmail.com



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finished work meets the client's practical needs and visual goals.

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Tell us about your business:

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Why do you enjoy your business?

I enjoy working in creative collaboration with clients. Each project brings unique opportunities and challenges, and I value the problemsolving and craftsmanship that go into making every job successful.

Get to know

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Location: 59 Russell Road
Huntington

Phone Number: 413-667-2279

Hours of Operation:
Mon.-Fri. 8am-5pm; Sat. 8am-4pm

Owners/Manager Name:
Tara Grenier/Nathan Grenier



How long have you been in business?

Established in 2006

What makes you stand out from the competition?

We have you covered for all seasons' tasks and jobs at hand – gardening, grilling, caring for pets, dressing appropriately, heating and cooling your house; beginning a new hobby like making maple syrup or starting spring seeds. We offer a large selection of Carhartt, Red Wing and Chippewa.

Describe your product or service.

In our inventory we include many unusual gifts for all ages, as well as daily necessities. We carry supplies for maintaining your car, plumbing and wiring your home. We also stock a large supply of lawn and garden

products including plants, chemicals, soils and fertilizers. Be sure to come and check us out for any item you might need, even if it may not have been mentioned here.

Why do you enjoy this business?

We love working with the customer – getting to know them personally, going out of our way to help them find what they need. We hope that we always give them that helpful, personal shopping experience. **We deliver.**



Meet Your Merchants

Get to know

Maple Corner Farm

Meet Your Merchants

Owners:
Leon and Joyce Ripley

Location:
794 Beech Hill Rd.,
Granville, MA

Phone Number:
413-357-8829

Website:
maplecornerfarm.com



How long have you owned the business?

Maple Corner Farm was founded in 1812. Since then, the farm has passed through eight generations of the Ripley family. Leon and Joyce and their three sons have owned and operated the farm since 1972.

bacon, sausage, ham, and eggs are served 8:00am-1:00pm. Maple syrup, maple candy, maple cream, and homemade jam, jelly, fruit butters, and specialty foods are available for sale year round at the farm. Summertime brings Pick Your Own Blueberries at our blueberry farm on North Lane in Granville! During the winter months we have cross country skiing and snowshoeing.

Tell us about your business:

The farm produces hay, pure maple syrup and maple products, pick your own blueberries, and grass fed beef. In Mid February through early April, the Maple Sugar House is open to visitors. You can watch the maple sap being made into maple syrup. On weekends during maple sugaring season, pancakes, french toast,

Why do you enjoy your business?

We enjoy working outdoors with the changing seasons. We enjoy and look forward to meeting new customers and visiting with our current regular customers.

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.

What makes you stand out from the competition?

The only fully stocked, competitively priced, grocery market in a 12-15 mile radius of Huntington.

Describe your product or service.

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Get to know

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Meet Your Merchants

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

Phone Number: 413-238-0300

Cell Number: 413-205-7580

Website:
HilltownRealEstate.com

Hours of Operation:
By appointment only

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



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What makes you stand out from the competition?

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Why do you enjoy this business?

What makes this business so enjoyable is being a part of the towns community and working closely with the families to better their lives.

CHESTERFIELD

CAMP

from page 1

programming and operations. Despite having a good understanding of the scout camp's infrastructure, they have encountered a few big surprises especially learning that insurance on the place will run \$50,000 a year. The Ashmere Project likely to be renamed at some point, given their new digs typically has a relatively low overhead: almost all staff are volunteers and much of their operational costs and needs have largely come from donated goods and monies.

Palches said they will start small this year and run a two-week retreat to continue to serve the 30 friends, with disabilities who have taken part since 2022. Plans include a volunteer orientation from June 24 to 26 and hosting two one-week sessions with some friends staying through for both weeks from June 27 to July 5 and then July 5 through July 11. Volunteers will stay to start the clean up from this opening session on July 12.

A culminating event

each year is putting on a play for families and the public, which will take place on July 10. They have an arts grant to help cover the costs of this piece, are nailing down a site for the performance, and figuring out a way to rent wheelchair accessible and regular vans to get everyone to the theatre.

Long range, they plan to expand the number of weeks of programming and the number of friends that can take part, with an eye to including adults, who live locally Palches said. Also in their long range planning is opening up the site to other groups for rent as part of raising revenue. Last winter, a group rented the grounds for a winter hammock camping trip and two of the volunteers will be getting married at the camp next summer. When all repairs are made, Palches believes the site will be able to house up to 200 people in a rustic setting. Moyers also believes the site and

operational policies could be in place to open up rentals in 2027. "We really want to serve Chesterfield and the surrounding community and have it open as much as possible," Moyers said. "Our future is bright."

This is due in no small part to an outpouring of local support especially from the town of Chesterfield. "This is the friendliest town environment I've ever encountered," Palches said, adding that Town Administrator Brenda Lessard has been incredibly helpful. Area residents and even former scouts have already started pitching in, donating three cords of firewood, plowing at no cost and consulting on how to repair a chimney to name just a few contributions. The Congregational Church has donated a lunch potluck for one of the work days. As a token of thanks, the Project plans to take part in Chesterfield's 4th of July Parade.

They've also had help and interest from groups

like the UMASS Outdoor Club and the Mass Office of Outdoor Recreation, which has granted funds to help build inclusive trails that can be independently managed by more of the friends who use wheelchairs.

"We're excited to build community with other organizations," Palches said.

Call for volunteers

Now that they have a site and schedule, the next step is to continue repairing the camp buildings and to create the first stage of a wheelchair accessible trail system on the grounds. One of the challenges is the breadth of the property. As a scout camp, it served hundreds of scouts using circles of tents over many acres, separated by up to a half mile trek to shared areas like the dining hall.

A volunteer pool has started forming and includes some landscape designers, who will help put in the first accessible trail in April. Many more people are needed. Cabins need to

be repaired, cleaned, painted and brought up to code. People with all kinds of skills are welcome, as are materials and tools. Anyone willing to pick up and even bring paint brushes, cleaning supplies, rakes or carpentry tools is welcome. There are also plenty of ways for people, who do not have special construction skills to help.

While some work began last fall, work weekends are coming up beginning at the end of March. Projects include clearing brush and debris, trail building, cabin and building repairs, ramp building, and general construction. All activities will culminate with final safety checks before the June retreat.

Inclusive work weekends will begin on May 1 and run on alternating weekends. Friends with disabilities should come with their own support people, if needed. The project already has some adaptive carpentry equipment on hand. There will be some

space available in cabins for people to stay but this would be more suitable for those comfortable with rustic camping. Anyone planning to come to the area from out of town wishing to stay in a hotel or Air B&B should book accommodations soon, due to area college graduations in the spring.

The project also needs donation both financial and equipment. One significant need for this year's program is for appliances and items to equip the mess hall for large scale cooking.

Anyone interested in helping should sign up on the "Get Involved" page of the Project's website by visiting ashmereproject.org. Everyone, who wants to stay informed on progress should sign up for the Ashmere Project's newsletter, also on the website. Social media users can follow The Ashmere Project on Facebook and Instagram. Questions may be emailed to Palches through info@all-outadventures.org.

MEET your merchants 2026



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SCHOOLS & YOUTH

HRHS students present 'Oliver'

WORTHINGTON – Hampshire Regional High School performances of the classic musical “Lionel Bart’s Oliver” by Lionel Bart’s are Friday, March 13 and Saturday, March 14 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, March 15 at 2 p.m.

All performances will take place at the Hampshire Regional High School auditorium. The production is directed by Myka Plunkett and Nicole Tripp, music directed by Graham Christian and choreographed by Engelbrecht. Students in the cast range from grades fifth-12.

Ticket prices are: \$15 adults, \$10 for seniors and children under 18 and \$5 for Hampshire Regional High School students and staff. HRHS students and staff can get \$5 tickets by visiting the main office. Tickets are available by visiting GoFan link: <https://gofan.co/app/school/MA23946>, by calling 413-437-5582, emailing hrh-stickets@gmail.com or at the door. There is a service fee for all tickets purchased online.



A gang of orphans rehearse for the musical “Oliver” at Hampshire Regional High School.

Photos by Jen Burdick Photography and Art



Phoebe Bowser (left) looks on as Thomas Sullivan frames himself on Eamonn Hilnbrand shoulders during a recent rehearsal.



Tessa Niell and Charlotte Dunn rise above the swirling crowd during a scene in “Oliver.”

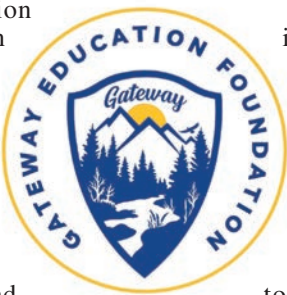
GEF hosts annual trivia night

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

HUNTINGTON –The Gateway Education Foundation announces its fifth annual trivia night fundraiser on Saturday, March 21 at Blandford Town Hall, 1 Russell State Road, Blandford.

Doors will open at 6 p.m. with the trivia contest launching at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$25 per person (if coming individually or in a small group; A team of eight is \$175. Prizes will be awarded for the winning team and for

the best table theme award. There will also be raffles for door prizes along with a 50/50 raffle.



Teams are invited to bring their own dinners or food and drinks. Tables will compete in rounds of trivia questions to take the top prize. Since it formed in 2012, the Gateway Education Foundation has funded over 125 “out-of-the-box” learning opportunities totaling over \$119,000 for Gateway students. Projects have included literacy programs, Model United Nations,

robotics, band and choral competition trips, elementary school musicals, summer reading programs, “One School One Book” programs, visits from a portable planetarium, a visit from the Mystic Aquarium Touch Tank and even studying the physics of roller coasters.

GEF funds unique experiences that cannot be covered through the school budget. All of this is made possible through their annual trivia night and through donations from the general public.

People may visit Gateway Education Foundation.org for more information. A link for purchasing tickets is on the home page.

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WESTFIELD

Alzheimer’s Support Group meets March 25

WESTFIELD – The Alzheimer’s Association Support Group at Armbrook Village will meet on Wednesday, March 25 at 6 p.m. in the Armbrook Village Senior Living and Memory Support Community, 551 North Road.

Caregivers and family members are invited to

enjoy light refreshments and to share their personal experiences and strategies for communicating with their loved ones. The public is welcome. To join this group, people may call 413-568-0000 or email reception@armbrookvillage.com. Groups are held on the last Wednesday of the month.

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OBITUARIES

Rosemary Salvini Caputo, 91

Feb. 19, 1935 –
Feb. 21, 2026



Rosemary “Mimi” Salvini Caputo, 91, passed away on Feb. 21, 2026, at the Life Care Center of Rhea County, Tennessee. Born in Chester, Massachusetts, she was the daughter of Alfred and Margaret (Sturgeon) Salvini. On May 12, 1956, she married Joseph Caputo and later settled in Huntington, where she spent most of her life.

From an early age, Rosemary showed determination and independence. After graduating from Chester High School, she put herself through business school and went on to work for many years in

hand protectors, which she later produced, marketed and ultimately sold along with the business. She was never one to sit still for very long.

Her drive and creativity extended into her life with Joe. Together, they shared a passion for building and restoring homes. Rosemary also enjoyed a successful career in Hilltown Real Estate. After being widowed in 2009, she retired to their winter home in St. Petersburg, Florida. There,

she embraced a life surrounded by friends, sunshine, the beach and her flower filled gardens.

She loved her home and her cat and spent countless hours creating beauty through gardening, decorating and painting. Everything she touched reflected her unmistakable style. In 2024, she relocated to Tennessee to be closer to family.

Affectionately known as “Mimi,” Rosemary will be lovingly remembered by her children, Jeffrey Michael Caputo (Monica) and Leslie Anne DeCloedt (Derek DeCloedt) and her cherished grandchildren Ian and Evan DeCloedt and Kelly and Jonathan Caputo. She is also survived by her sister, Phyllis Anne Donovan of Meriden, Connecticut. She was predeceased by her

beloved husband of 53 years, Joseph.

Those who knew her will remember “Mimi” for her strength, determination, and joyful spirit. She poured her heart and soul into everything she pursued, and her vibrant personality drew people to her throughout her life. Her absence will be deeply felt by her family and the many friends she made along the way.

Rosemary will be laid to rest beside Joseph in St. Thomas Catholic Cemetery in Huntington, Massachusetts. Arrangements are being handled by the Graham Hilltown Community Funeral Home. A graveside service will be held in the spring for family and friends. Date and time to be announced.

Harriet Kelso Gilman, 104

Harriet Kelso Gilman, Hampden County, Massachusetts’ oldest citizen, passed away on Jan. 9, 2026. She was 104 years old.

In 2015, Mrs. Gilman was preceded in death by her husband of 72 years, US Army Col. (Ret.) James Wilbur Gilman. Together, the couple lived a military life of service for 25 years. They were stationed around the United States and in post-WWII Europe, before they “retired” back to the beloved Kelso Homestead Farm in the Berkshire Mountains of Massachusetts. It was there that Harriet Phyllis Kelso had been born to Leon Joseph Kelso and Elizabeth Miller Kelso on June 3, 1921. She was the sixth generation of Kelsos to live on the farm, which had been established by Revolutionary War Captain John Kelso in 1779. Harriet’s older brother, John Higgins Kelso, died in 2002.

Young Harriet attended the one-room school in Chester Center for grades 1 through 8, and graduated from Chester High School in 1939. As a rural youth, she was active with leadership in 4-H Club work and at local fairs. She then was accepted to Massachusetts State

College, now the University of Massachusetts and graduated in 1943 with a B.S. in home economics. While at college, Harriet met fellow student Jim Gilman, an ROTC cadet and football player. Upon graduation, Jim was commissioned a 2nd Lt. Cavalry officer in the Regular Army.

They married in 1943, and his young bride followed him to various Army posts during his training. Son James was born in 1944, days before they parted when Jim sailed to England for assignment to his wartime unit.

Harriet and 19-month old Jimmy departed for war ravaged Nuremberg, Germany in 1946. They sailed on one of the first ships of dependents able to join their husbands in the Army of Occupation. Jim became executive officer of the Army battalion headquartered inside the Nuremberg Palace of Justice, responsible for conduct of the “Nuremberg Trials” for leaders of the Nazi regime.

Because of Jim’s role, Harriet got a first-hand view of history in the making. She was able to visit the courtroom as the most notorious Nazi leaders were tried

for their crimes against humanity during WWII. After returning to the U.S. in 1947, the family relocated to northern Virginia and son Lee was born. The Army soon moved them to Ft. Knox, Kentucky and then Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas before they returned to Virginia in 1954.

Now, Harriet had the opportunity to achieve some of her goals. She earned her Elementary School Teacher’s certificate from George Washington University in 1956 and did master’s work at the University of Maryland. She taught elementary school and home economics for 15 years in Fairfax County, Virginia. The family was posted to Orleans, France in 1957.

Harriet spoke rudimentary French and enjoyed visiting wives of Americans stationed there, many of whom were homesick living in neighborhoods where few spoke English. The next year Jim was promoted to commander of a tank battalion and the family moved to an Army combat command in Gelhausen, Germany.



Here, Harriet devoted herself to boosting morale of the officers’ wives by organizing receptions, social events, and outings. They moved back to northern Virginia in 1960, where

Harriet resumed teaching home economics.

Just as in her early marriage days, Harriet was again on her own when Jim was posted to Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam in 1966 and to Huntsville, Alabama in 1968. In 1974, Harriet returned to Kelso Homestead Farm to care for her widowed mother. There, she and her husband began planting a blueberry orchard.

Harriet immersed herself in local affairs, serving as deacon of the First Congregational Church of Chester, as a member of the National and Chester Bicentennial Committees, as a library trustee, and as a Noble Hospital (Westfield) volunteer.

Perhaps most noteworthy, she also was a member of the “Hopefully Well Affected” Club in Westfield. In 2014, Jim and Harriet moved together to Armbrook

DEATH NOTICES

CAPUTO, ROSEMARY SALVINI

Died Feb. 21, 2026
Graveside service in spring, date to be announced

GILMAN, HARRIET KELSO

Died Jan. 9, 2026
Celebration of Life June 13 at 10:30 a.m.
First Congregational Church of Chester,
334 Skyline Drive, Chester

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.

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

PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE TOWN OF HUNTINGTON ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS PUBLIC HEARING

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) of the Town of Huntington will hold a public hearing on **Thursday, March 19, 2026 beginning at 6:30 pm** in Stanton Hall.

The Public Hearing is scheduled for 6:30 pm for the one year evaluation of the Special Permit Application of Jonathan Groff of 38 Russell Road to operate a new trailer sales, repair, parts and rental business (including U-Haul franchise) at 38 Russell Road (former Smith’s Sled Shop), Huntington, Parcel # H3-28-0.

The Special Permit Application will be available to view by appointment in the office of the Selectboard during regular business hours, as well as at the Public Hearing.

ZONING BOARD
OF APPEALS
TOWN OF HUNTINGTON
03/05, 03/12/2026

Commonwealth of
Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Probate
and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758
Docket No.
HD26P0447EA
Estate of:
David B Alward
Date of Death: 02/09/2026
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 **James R Alward of Easton, CT** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that **James R Alward of Easton, CT** 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 04/08/2026. 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 ad-

ministration 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. **Claudine T. Stoudemire**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: March 03, 2026

Rosemary A Saccomani,
Register of Probate
03/12/2026

LEGAL NOTICE TOWN OF HUNTINGTON PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC HEARINGS

The Planning Board of the Town of Huntington will hold 2 public hearings on **Monday, March 23, 2026 beginning at 6:00 pm** in Stanton Hall for changes to the Huntington Zoning Bylaw, according to MGL Chapter 40A, Section 5.

The first Public Hearing will include 1) Adding a definition for Large Scale Ground Mounted Commercial Solar installations to Section I.F. Abbreviations & Definitions, 2) Adding language to Section IV.T. ...Solar Bylaw... Large-Scale Ground-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Installations to clarify the power source allowed for such commercial installations, 3) Changing Section V. Special Permits to specify most “Use” Special Permits to expire (and require renewal) in five (5) years, rather than the currently specified four (4) years.

The second Public Hearing will begin at 6:15 pm and will cover changes voted in favor of at the 2025 ATM, but which may need to be voted again at the

2026 ATM because of potential procedural deficiencies in 2025 required by MGL Chapter 40A, Section 5. These changes are: 1) Removing page numbers from the Header of the Zoning Bylaw, leaving page numbers in the Footer, 2) Numerous revisions and additions, including a new Section I.V.S: Accessory Dwelling Unit Bylaw (ADU) to replace the now obsolete Section I.V.S: Accessory Family Dwelling Unit Bylaw (AFDU) required by the Affordable Homes Act, Chapter 150, Sections 7 and 8 of the Acts of 2024 by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Replacing that bylaw also requires changing Section I.F. Definitions and Sections IV.B.1b. and IV.B.1e. under “Residential Uses”, 3) Minor revisions to Section IV.I. Signs, to clarify original intent of former changes and 4) Minor revisions to Section V. Special Permits, to clarify original intent of former changes. All text changes will be available for review at the Public Hearing and at Town Hall **by appointment only** during regular business hours (Monday-Thursday 10-3).

PLANNING BOARD
TOWN OF HUNTINGTON
03/05, 03/12/2026

**TOWN OF HUNTINGTON
Public Hearing
Wednesday, March 25, 2026
5:00 PM
Town Hall
24 Russell Road, Huntington
Proposed FY26 CDBG
Application**

The Town of Huntington, in association with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, will conduct a public hearing regard-

ing the FY26 Community Development Block Grant Program. The hearing will take place at **5:00 PM on Wednesday, March 25th, 2026, in person at the Town Hall, 24 Russell Road, Huntington, MA 01050.** If the meeting is cancelled due to inclement weather, the hearing will take place during the rescheduled Selectboard meeting.

The public is encouraged to attend this hearing to discuss the town’s FY26 application to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities for up to \$950,000 in available Community Development Block Grant Funds. All persons with questions or comments regarding the grant application will have an opportunity to be heard. Those unable to attend can send written comments to the Huntington Selectboard, 24 Russell Road, PO Box 430, Huntington, MA 01050, Attn: Jennifer Pelouquin.

The Town is encouraging input on community needs and projects which would benefit from grant funding. Projects currently being considered include the phase I construction of the Blandford Hill Infrastructure Improvement Project. Additional projects may be discussed and may be included in the grant application.

Persons who require special accommodation for the hearing should contact the town at least one week prior to the hearing date at (413) 512-5200. For further information contact Sarah Maroney at PVPC at (413) 781-6045 or smaroney@pvpc.org. 03/05, 03/12/2026

PUBLIC NOTICES ARE NOW ONLINE

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

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

visit www.publicnotices.turley.com

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The Town of Oakham is seeking an experienced certified municipal **TOWN CLERK.** 10 hours a week. \$31.82 - \$40.30 depending on experience. Email admin@oakham-ma.gov for a full job description and town employment application.

The Town of Oakham is seeking an experienced working **HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT.** The Highway Superintendent serves as the working department head responsible for the planning, administration, and day-to-day operations of the Town's Highway department. Pay rate is \$31.82 - \$40.30/hr depending on experience. Email admin@oakham-ma.gov for a full job description and town employment application.

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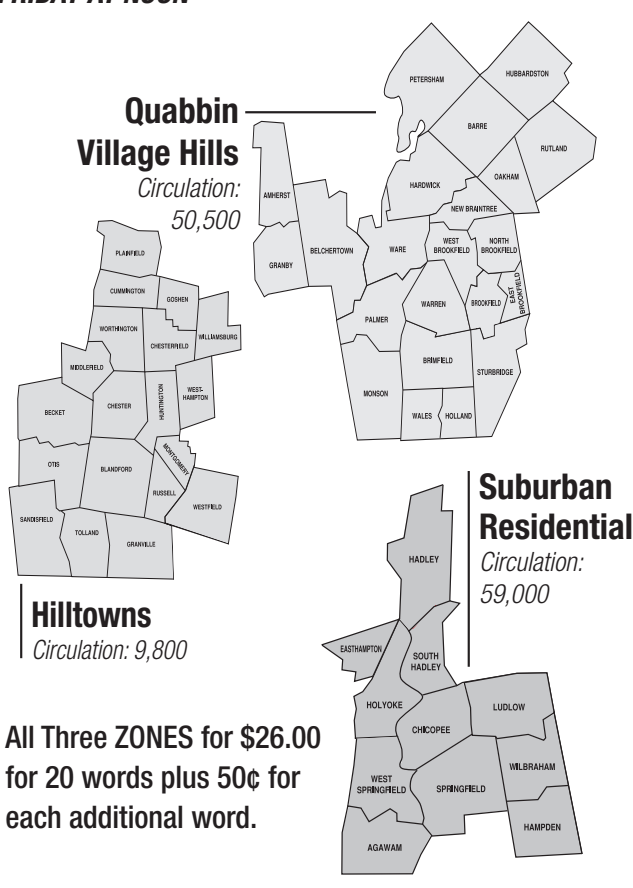
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DEADLINES: FRIDAY AT NOON

CATEGORY:			
1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28
29	30	31	32
33	34	35	36
37	38	39	40



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MIDDLEFIELD

Middlefield to hold annual caucus March 25

MIDDLEFIELD – The town of Middlefield will hold their annual caucus on Wednesday, March 25 from 4-8 p.m. at the Middlefield Town Hall, 188 Skyline Trail.

The following positions are to be on the caucus ballot. If any registered voter in

Middlefield is interested in running for one of the positions, they should send a letter of intent to the Town Clerk on Monday, March 23 at noon. They may send a letter of intent in person at the Town Clerk's Office, by mail to: Middlefield Town Clerk, P.O. Box 265, Middlefield,

MA 01243 or by email at Middlefield.clerk@gmail.com.

Positions on the caucus ballot are Select Board one position three year term, Board of Assessors one position for three year term, Cemetery Commission one position for three year term,

Library Trustee one position for three year term, Finance Committee one position for one year term, Finance Committee one position for three year term, Planning Board two positions for three year terms and Town Moderator one position for one year term.

Council on Aging lists lunch menu

MIDDLEFIELD – The Middlefield Council on Aging announces the senior lunch menu for Wednesday, March 19.

The menu is a choice

of cheese and chive quiche or spaghetti with meat sauce and Brussel sprouts, garlic bread, chilled pears and St. Patrick's Day cake. Bingo will follow lunch.

WORTHINGTON

COA lists March 19 lunch

WORTHINGTON – The take out lunch sponsored by Council on Aging and Highland Valley Elder Services, take out meal on Thursday, March 19 from noon-1 p.m. with pick up at the Town Hall, 160 Huntington Road.

The menu will be cheese and chive quiche or salmon

with dill sauce with steamed rice, zucchini, corn casserole and gelatin. To reserve a meal, seniors should call or text 413-238-1999 by Friday, March 13 and give their name, number of meals, the name of the person also receiving the meal, and their meal choice.

New enrollee forms are

available at the Town Hall bulletin Board and the COA bulletin board at Corners Grocery. They can also fill one out when they come to pick up their meal. Seniors should bring a bag with then to carry their meals to the car. People may call Phyllis Dassatti at 413-238-5962 if they have any questions.

Rod and Gun Club holds raffle

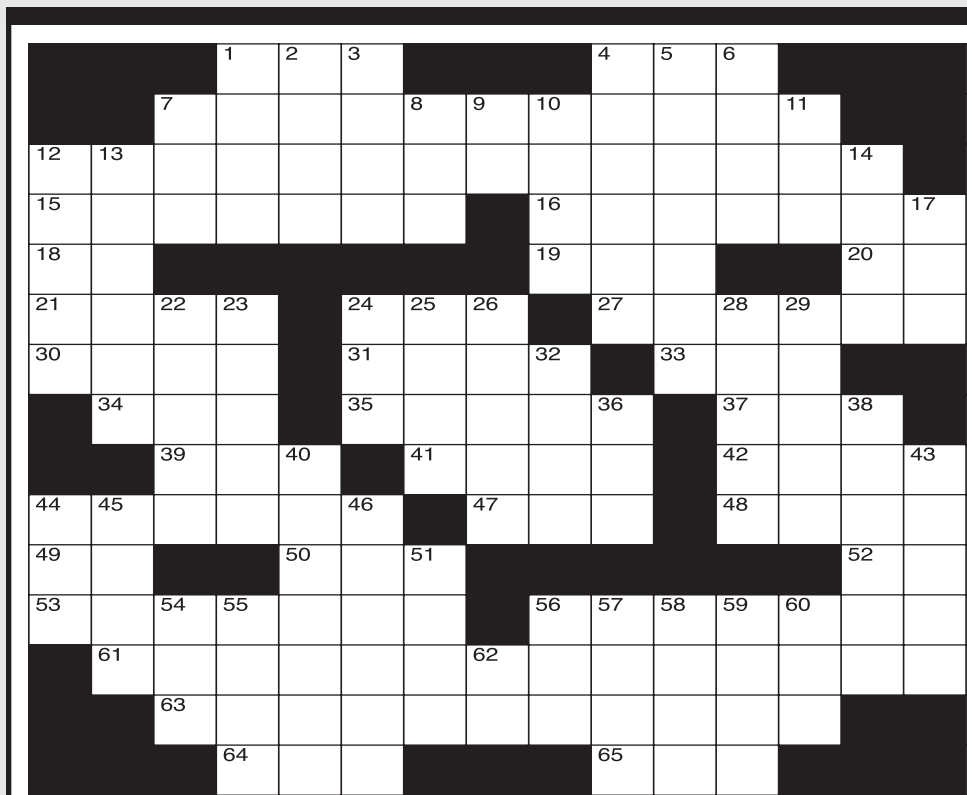
WORTHINGTON – The Worthington Rod and Gun Club will be holding a raffle with two hand made pieces made and donated by two of their members.

Elodi McBride has hand pieced and quilted a beautiful piece she calls "Fields of Shamrocks," an Irish lap or twin size quilt. This is the

second quilt she has donated to the club. The second piece in the raffle is an amazing hand turned cherry bowl with mahogany and walnut lid made and donated by member John Marge. Marge has donated many pieces to benefit the club.

There will be two drawings and the first winner will

choose their prize. Drawing will be done at their annual corned beef dinner on Saturday, March 14. People do not need to be present as preference of prize will be written on their ticket. Donation is \$10 per ticket. People may call Vicki for tickets at 413-667-0085 or inquire with any club member.



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Blockchain-based entity
- 4. A woolen cap of Scottish origin
- 7. Painted with glue
- 12. Legendary crooner
- 15. Structure made with strips of wood
- 16. Tropical fruits
- 18. Commercial
- 19. Comedienne Gasteyer
- 20. The Ocean State
- 21. Ancient Scot
- 24. Basics
- 27. Stated propositions
- 30. Scottish island group
- 31. Expression of annoyance
- 33. Large tree
- 34. Engine additive
- 35. Conspiracy
- 37. Drunkard

- 39. Someone who is morally reprehensible
- 41. Ancient Syrian city
- 42. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls
- 44. Carry (slang)
- 47. Sweet potato
- 48. European river
- 49. The Golden State
- 50. Windy City ballplayer
- 52. New Testament
- 53. Possess spiritually
- 56. A treeless grassy plain
- 61. Popular historical novel
- 63. In a law-abiding way
- 64. A place to sleep
- 65. Criticize

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Impression in a surface
- 2. Computer language
- 3. Relating to the ear

- 4. Occupant
- 5. Member of Great Plains people
- 6. Social media firm
- 7. Digital audiotape
- 8. Midway between east and southeast
- 9. Chronic, progressive disease
- 10. Chinese lute
- 11. Not wet
- 12. Moves wings up and down
- 13. Communication devices
- 14. Swiss river
- 17. Female sibling
- 22. Receive
- 23. Relating to a type
- 24. General's assistant (abbr.)
- 25. Steep bank
- 26. Taxi driver
- 28. Moves into without difficulty
- 29. Bicycle manufacturer
- 32. Traditional rhythmic pattern
- 36. Fugitives are on it
- 38. Bitter-tasting organic substance
- 40. Die
- 43. Matched
- 44. Literary genre ___-fi
- 45. Cannot
- 46. Pounded
- 51. British rock group
- 54. Debt relief order
- 55. 2006 NL Cy Young winner
- 56. Green vegetable
- 57. Tough outer skin of fruit
- 58. ___ Spumante (Italian wine)
- 59. Ailments
- 60. Famed singer Charles
- 62. Camper

THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPES

ARIES

Mar 21/Apr 20

A collaboration brings out your best side, Aries. Someone else's strengths may complement your drive right now. You'll get a lot of things done this week.

CANCER

Jun 22/Jul 22

This week you may have the opportunity to find beauty in small things, Cancer. A simple walk or a quiet meal with a loved one can bring about peace and insight.

LIBRA

Sept 23/Oct 23

Figure out the perfect middle ground between work responsibilities and fun this week, Libra. If you delegate some of your tasks, you may free up time for personal enjoyment.

CAPRICORN

Dec 22/Jan 20

Capricorn, financial stability is something you should carefully consider this week. A smart decision you made in the past may not be the best way to continue forward.

TAURUS

Apr 21/May 21

Your patience pays off in a relationship, Taurus. A long-term goal you share with a partner starts to move into the planning stages this week. Enjoy the excitement ahead.

LEO

Jul 23/Aug 23

You are the life of the party right now, Leo. Your warmth draws people to you, making this a great time for networking. A job offer may come from your efforts.

SCORPIO

Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, optimism is your guiding light this week. Your "can-do" attitude may inspire others who cross your path in the days to come. Lots will get done in little time.

AQUARIUS

Jan 21/Feb 18

Aquarius, you may feel a strong draw toward community or giving back this week. Helping out a neighbor will bring you satisfaction, or you can volunteer.

GEMINI

May 22/Jun 21

Gemini, joyful news arrives via a friend in the next few days. Celebrate the successes of others, as your own turn for good news is right around the corner.

VIRGO

Aug 24/Sept 22

An act of kindness you performed recently may come back to you in surprising ways, Virgo. The universe will reward your generous spirit. You may continue to pay it forward.

SAGITTARIUS

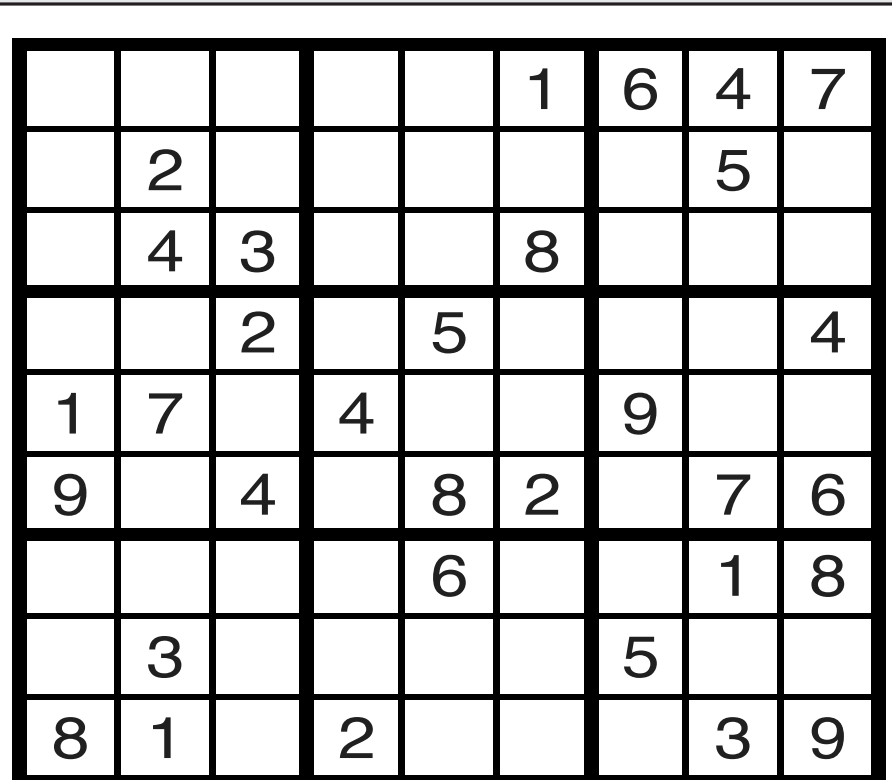
Nov 23/Dec 21

Deep conversations may lead to a breakthrough, Sagittarius. You might start to understand someone else or a situation on a whole new level.

PISCES

Feb 19/Mar 20

It's important to trust your intuition, Pisces. This is leading you toward a very happy coincidence by the end of the week. Someone special becomes involved.



SUDOKU

Fun By The Numbers

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

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

answers

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SUMMER CAMP

Check Out These Great Camps!

The benefits of attending summer camp

Summer camp is something akin to a rite of passage for millions of youngsters each year. Many adults look back fondly on their experiences at summer camp, often crediting such times as formative periods in their lives.

Summer camp benefits children in myriad ways. Recognition of the many advantages of attending summer camp can serve as a great reminder of just how fun it can be for children to spend their time away from school at a camp of their choosing.

• Campers continue to socialize throughout summer.

Socializing isn't just for the school year. While children in high school might be independent enough to come and go with their friends during summer break, kids who are still in elementary school or middle school might not be old enough to handle such freedom. That can make it hard to stay in touch with friends, which in turn can contribute to feelings of boredom and loneliness. Camp provides ample opportunities for young children to socialize during a time of year when they might not see their school friends as often as they're used to.

• Campers can expand their horizons. Though some summer camps are exclusive to residents of certain communities, many tend to feature children from numerous towns or municipalities. Such camps provide an opportunity for campers to expand their horizons by engaging with youngsters who come from different backgrounds. Indeed, the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University notes that summer camp may be the first time children spend substantial amounts of time with people whose backgrounds differ from their own.

• Camp can get kids off their devices. Modern children are growing up in a digital world, and parents know how hard it can be to get kids to put down their devices and get outdoors. But the key to making that pivot could be access to outdoor play spaces. A 2025 study from researchers at the University of Michigan published in the journal Health and Place found that efforts to reduce kids' screen time are more successful when children are given a chance to play outside. Many summer camps are structured around outdoor play, making them a

potentially invaluable ally as parents seek to help children cut back on the time they spend using their devices. Children who do not attend camp and live in households where both parents work or in single-parent households where Mom or Dad works may be forced to spend much of summer indoors, which could increase the frequency with which they turn to devices to occupy their time.

• Camp adds structure to summer days. Once a school year ends, the structure a school day provides vanishes into thin air. Couple that with extracurricular

activities that go on hiatus during summer vacation, and kids accustomed to structure are left with little to do and no need to schedule their time. That can add an aimlessness to summer days. Camp can provide the structure kids are accustomed to but still offer a break from responsibilities like homework or the commitments required of extracurricular activities.

There's no shortage of benefits to enrolling youngsters in summer camp, where kids can socialize, grow and get off their devices while engaged in structured but stress-free activities.

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